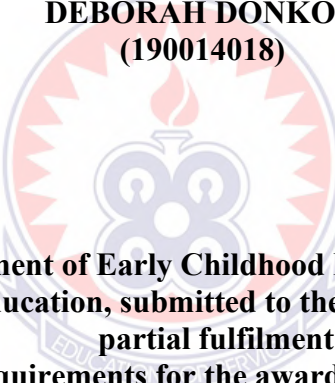


UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

**EXPLORING PARENTAL SOCIO-ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES AND
SCHOOL ATTENDANCE AMONG EARLY GRADE LEARNERS IN THE
EKUMFI DISTRICT**

**DEBORAH DONKOH
(190014018)**

The logo of the University of Education, Winneba, is a circular emblem. It features a central lamp with a flame, set against a background of a sunburst or starburst pattern. The emblem is surrounded by a border containing the university's name.

**A thesis in the Department of Early Childhood Education, Faculty of Applied
Behavioural Sciences Education, submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, in
partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the award of the degree of
Master of Philosophy
(Early Childhood Education)
in the University of Education, Winneba**

MAY, 2025

DECLARATION

CANDIDATE'S DECLARATION

I, Deborah Donkoh, hereby declare that this thesis, 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 project work was supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of project work laid down by University of Education, Winneba

Name of Supervisor : Professor Yaw Nyadu Offei

Signature :

Date :

DEDICATION

To my loving parents, Mr. and Mrs. Eburey Donkoh, who have been my guiding light unwavering support throughout my academic journey. Your selfless sacrifices, encouragement and trust in me have made this achievement possible. I am forever for your love and dedication.

To my siblings, Michael, Christy, Christian, Priscilla and Obed, whose patience, understanding and support have been a constant source of strength and inspiration.

This thesis is dedicated to you all, with love, appreciation and gratitude.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the following individuals for their support and contributions to my Masters journey.

First and foremost, I will like to thank my supervisor, Professor Yaw Nyadu Offei for his exceptional guidance, expertise and encouragement throughout this research project. His unwavering support and constructive feedback have been instrumental in shaping my research and academic growth.

I am also deeply grateful to my family, particularly my father, Mr. Samuel Eburey Donkoh, and my sibling, Michael Donkoh for their unconditional love, support and sacrifices. Their presence in my life has been a constant source of motivation and inspiration.

I would like to extend my thanks to my colleagues and peers for their stimulating discussions, helpful feedback and camaraderie. I have learned so much from them, and I appreciate their friendship and support.

Lastly, I would like to acknowledge the inspiration and mentorship I received from Mr. Ebenezer Kofi Narh Adinku (late), which has had a profound impact on my academic and personal growth.

Thank you all for your contributions to my educational journey. I am forever grateful.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Content	Page
DECLARATION	iii
DEDICATION	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vi
LIST OF FIGURES	x
ABSTRACT	xi
CHAPTER ONE	1
INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Background to the Study	1
1.2 Statement of the Problem	6
1.3 Purpose of the Study	10
1.4 Research Objectives	10
1.5 Research Questions	10
1.6 Significance of the Study	11
1.7 Delimitations of the Study	12
1.8 Limitations of the Study	13
1.9 Operational Definitions of Terms	14
1.10 Organization of the Study	15
CHAPTER TWO	17
LITERATURE REVIEW	17
2.0 Overview	17
2.1 Theoretical Framework	17

2.1.1	The Social Reproduction Theory (Bourdieu, 1977)	17
2.1.2	Investment Theory	18
2.2	Conceptual Framework	20
2.3	Concept of Socioeconomic Status	21
2.4	Parents/Guardians Socio-economic Factors and Children's Education	25
2.4.1	Education	25
2.4.2	Parents/Guardians' Occupation	26
2.4.3	Family Size	27
2.4.4	Social and Cultural Influences	28
2.5	Balancing Parents/Guardians Socio-economic Activities with Children's School Attendance	28
2.6	Parents/Guardians' Perceptions on Involvement and Children's Education	30
2.7	Factors Influencing Parents' Perceptions about Involvement	33
2.8	Balancing Socio-economic Activities Parental Involvement in Education	34
2.9	Parental Involvement Activities at Home and School	36
2.10	The Role of the Teacher and the School Administration	37
2.11	School Leadership and Parental Involvement	38
2.12	The Learner and Parental Involvement	40
2.13	Parental Motivation	41
2.14	Trust and Parental Involvement	42
2.15	Parental Associations and Involvement	43
2.16	School Environment and Parental Engagement	43
	CHAPTER THREE	45
	METHODOLOGY	45
3.0	Overview	45
3.1	Research Paradigm	45

3.2	Research Approach	48
3.3	Research Design	52
3.4	Population	53
3.5	Sample and Sampling Techniques	53
3.6	Instrumentation	54
3.7	Trustworthiness of the Study	55
3.8	Data Collection Procedures	60
3.9	Data Analysis	61
3.10	Ethical Considerations	62
CHAPTER FOUR		63
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION		63
4.0	Introduction	63
4.1	Analysis of Data	63
4.1.1	Research Question One:	63
4.1.2	Research question two:	69
4.1.3	Research question three:	78
4.1.4	Research Question 4:	88
CHAPTER FIVE		99
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS		99
5.0	Overview	99
5.1	Summary of Findings	99
5.2	Key Findings	100
5.3	Conclusions	100
5.4	Recommendations	101
5.5	Suggestions for Future Studies	102

REFERENCES

104

APPENDIX

119



LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2.1: Conceptual Framework of the Study

21



ABSTRACT

The study explored parental socio-economic activities and school attendance among early grade learners' in the Ekumfi District. The study was guided by the social reproduction and the investment theory. The interpretivist paradigm rooted in the qualitative approach was selected for the study. The study employed phenomenological design. The population however consisted all parents of pupils in Akwansa Kokodo D/A Basic School. However, the accessible population consisted of only early grade parents. Ten (10) parents were selected for the study by means of purposive sampling. The instrument used for data collection was semi-structured interview guide. A thematic analysis was adopted to analyze the data obtained. The study established that specific socio-economic activities undertaken by parents in the Ekumfi District were agricultural activities such as fishing and farming, masons, tailors, hawkers, fruit and vegetable sellers, and the operation provision shops. Finally, some of them are formally employed as teachers and nurses. Additionally, parental education, age, large family sizes, and cultural norms were confirmed as their socio-economic factors that hinder pupils regular school attendance. Moreover, the parents believed that to ensure their involvement in their children's education to promote their regular school attendance, they should make time to establish open lines of communication between schools to enable them to corroborate effectively with them such as during PTA meetings. Finally, the parents cherished that in order to maintain a balance between their socio-economic activities and their children's school attendance, the empowerment of women, proper education of the girl child and the spirit of hard work can enable them do so. Conclusively, collaborating and communicating effectively with the schools were confirmed as other potential strategies. Therefore, the study recommended that public basic schools in the Ekumfi District should stablish efficacious open-door policies and communication with the parents to enable arrest of absenteeism among early grade children. Finally, the Ekumfi District Assembly should consider initiating policies that would empower parents in the District especially those in the areas where poverty level is high, so that they can earn decent incomes, take good care of their children and provide a good enabling environment in the home to enhance learning.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Children are universally acknowledged as central agents of development, and their overall well-being serves as a measure of a nation's social and economic progress. Accordingly, child development and protection have been enshrined in the global development blueprint, particularly the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (UNESCO, 2004). UNICEF (2004) disclosed that in the year 2000, approximately 233 million children aged between 5 and 18 in urban zones of developing nations were involved in some form of remunerated activity. This trend presents significant implications for economic progress and human development. Numerous investigations have strongly criticized the inclusion of children in economic ventures due to its harmful consequences on education, health, morals, psychology, and overall development (UNICEF, 2004; ILO-IPEC, 2002). As stated in UNESCO's 2005 enrolment data, about 72 million children who were of primary school age were not enrolled in school by 2005 (United Nations, 2007). A joint survey by UNESCO and UNICEF revealed that actual attendance rates may reveal an even higher number of children out of school than official enrolment figures suggest (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2005).

A majority of these out-of-school children, more than two-thirds, live in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. Simultaneously, millions of children engage in income-generating activities at the expense of formal education. The International Labour Organization (ILO) reported in 2006 that around 218 million children aged 5 to 17, about 14 percent of the population within that age group were engaged in labour in

2004. Of this number, 126 million were involved in hazardous occupations threatening their health, safety, and moral development. Several considerations influence how children divide their time between school, work, and play. Though attending school could potentially enhance future income and success, immediate financial needs of the household often drive parents to direct children into economic work instead.

Although education is regarded globally as a fundamental right and a major pillar of socio-economic development, maintaining consistent school attendance for early grade pupils continues to pose a significant problem in many regions worldwide (Glewwe et al., 2021). Multiple barriers, particularly those rooted in the socio-economic situation of parents, influence this challenge. A deep understanding of the link between parental economic engagements and children's school attendance is critical in crafting responsive educational policies. Empirical evidence from countries like the USA, India, and Nigeria has consistently established a strong correlation between low family income or occupational status and irregular school attendance, as well as high dropout rates (Cooper et al., 2020). In the South African context, irregular employment and socio-economic hardships among parents also lead to reduced school presence and poor academic outcomes (Thomas & Zimmermann, 2017).

Numerous studies demonstrate that the type of employment and job stability of parents significantly impact children's school participation (Kalmijn, 1994). Those employed in stable, well-paying jobs are more likely to afford educational materials and create a supportive learning environment, enhancing school attendance (Johnson & Reynolds, 2018). Conversely, those engaged in unstable or low-income occupations often struggle with time constraints and financial obstacles, making it difficult to prioritize their children's education.

Scholarly opinions differ when it comes to the impact of family size on children's academic success. While some studies argue that having more children leads to divided attention and fewer resources per child, thereby lowering school attendance (Smith & Jenkins, 2019), others contend that with adequate support systems, larger families may not necessarily compromise education (Brooks-Gunn et al., 2018). Gender-based cultural roles also tend to skew educational opportunities, particularly disadvantaging girls, which negatively influences attendance (UNESCO, 2021). Additionally, parental aspirations for education, communal values, and available social support systems greatly influence how parents balance economic work with ensuring their children go to school (Lareau, 2011).

Africa grapples with unique economic and infrastructural challenges that substantially affect school attendance. Issues such as high poverty levels, poor access to educational facilities, and cultural expectations are widespread across the continent. As such, examining how parents' livelihoods affect schooling is vital for understanding the underlying obstacles faced by African children (UNESCO, 2021). Studies continue to confirm that economic instability and job insecurity among parents in Africa negatively influence school attendance (Thomas & Zimmermann, 2017). Scarce income and irregular job schedules make it difficult for parents to consistently support their children's schooling.

A study conducted by Moll et al. (2020) in Nigeria found that consistent school attendance was more prevalent among children whose parents were both educated and gainfully employed. Similar findings in Ghana by Ampaabeng et al. (2017) indicated that both parental income and job type were key factors in school participation. In Africa, large household sizes also contribute to resource shortages, thereby reducing the capacity to support all children in school (Mensch & Lloyd, 2018). In Kenya,

Ngware et al. (2019) revealed that children from larger families were often pushed into economic roles, especially when resources were insufficient, reducing their time for schooling.

Cultural values and norms also heavily impact school attendance in African communities. Traditional roles and gender-based responsibilities often limit school participation, especially for girls (UNESCO, 2021). Moreover, whether or not a community prioritizes education can greatly influence how parents perceive and support schooling (Mensch & Lloyd, 2018). For instance, Oketch and Mutisya (2017) found that customs such as early marriage and household responsibilities undermined girls' education in some African settings. A study in Zimbabwe by Taruvinga and Odhiambo (2019) highlighted how local community values could either encourage or obstruct parental engagement in children's education.

Ghana, situated in West Africa, continues to face its share of socio-economic hurdles impacting school attendance. Despite considerable progress in education access, systemic challenges like poverty, entrenched cultural norms, and inadequate resources persist. Thus, understanding how parents' livelihood activities affect early school participation in Ghana is pivotal. Stable employment and decent income have been shown to enhance children's chances of consistent attendance (Ampaabeng et al., 2017). Parents in unstable or poorly paid jobs often struggle to support their children's educational needs.

According to Agyei-Mensah et al. (2020), children from smaller families in Ghana tend to attend school more regularly compared to those from larger families. Cultural expectations, particularly surrounding gender, also influence attendance. Oduro and Boakye (2018) reported that chores and social norms often prevent girls from attending

school regularly. Ampaabeng et al. (2017) found that higher parental education and income significantly contributed to school readiness and attendance among children.

Another study by Duflo et al. (2020) analyzing rural communities in Ghana confirmed that children from large families were more likely to have inconsistent school attendance due to strained household resources. The Ekumfi District in Ghana's Central Region, where this study is focused, experiences unique socio-economic conditions that challenge children's school attendance. These include poverty, limited livelihood opportunities, and cultural expectations. Assessing how these specific conditions influence parents' ability to ensure their children's education is critical to designing meaningful educational interventions in the area.

Ampaabeng et al. (2017) reiterated that stable employment and education among parents led to better attendance in early grades. Additionally, factors like parental occupation, family size, and educational background influence school presence in the Ekumfi District. As household size increases, support for schooling becomes stretched, often negatively impacting attendance rates (Agyei-Mensah et al., 2020). Children from smaller families showed more consistent attendance, suggesting that household resource availability plays a role. Finally, parental values and community support also influence the extent to which parents engage in their children's schooling (Ampaabeng et al., 2017). While global research provides essential context, a focused exploration of Ekumfi District offers deeper insight into how parents' socio-economic realities affect early grade school attendance. As a rural district in Ghana's Central Region, Ekumfi exemplifies a unique socio-economic landscape where parents engage in a variety of jobs and encounter specific barriers that affect school consistency for their children.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Regular school attendance at the early grade level is widely acknowledged as a critical foundation for children's cognitive, social, and emotional development. Early grade learners who attend school consistently are more likely to acquire essential literacy and numeracy skills, develop positive learning attitudes, and sustain academic progression through later schooling years (UNESCO, 2018). Conversely, irregular attendance during these formative stages often results in learning deficits that persist throughout a child's educational life, increasing the risk of grade repetition, low achievement, and eventual dropout. Globally, absenteeism among early grade learners remains a persistent challenge, particularly in low- and middle-income countries where household economic pressures intersect with schooling demands. Research suggests that children from socio-economically disadvantaged households are more likely to experience irregular attendance due to competing household responsibilities, poverty-related constraints, and limited parental engagement in schooling (World Bank, 2020). These challenges are often more pronounced in rural districts where livelihoods depend heavily on subsistence and informal economic activities.

In the Ghanaian context, government interventions such as the Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE), the Capitation Grant, and the School Feeding Programme were designed to reduce financial barriers to schooling and improve attendance. Despite these initiatives, evidence indicates that irregular attendance persists, especially among children in early grades in rural and coastal communities (MoE, 2019). This suggests that while policy efforts address school-related costs, household-level socio-economic realities continue to exert significant influence on children's participation in schooling. Parental socio-economic activities constitute a central factor shaping children's school attendance patterns. In many rural districts in

Ghana, parents and guardians engage in agriculture, fishing, petty trading, artisanal work, and seasonal labour as primary livelihood strategies. These activities are often labour-intensive, time-sensitive, and dependent on children's participation, either directly through child labour or indirectly through domestic support roles (GSS, 2021). Such demands may conflict with school schedules, leading to lateness, absenteeism, or withdrawal from school.

Studies have shown that parents' income levels, educational backgrounds, employment stability, and work schedules significantly influence decisions related to children's schooling (Rolleston & Iyer, 2019). Parents with unstable or low-income livelihoods may prioritize short-term economic survival over long-term educational investment, particularly when schooling does not yield immediate economic returns. In this context, children's attendance becomes vulnerable to fluctuations in household economic activities. Parental perceptions and attitudes toward education further complicate the relationship between socio-economic activities and school attendance. While many parents recognize the long-term value of education, their lived experiences of poverty, unemployment, or limited educational attainment may shape scepticism about the tangible benefits of schooling (Lewin, 2017). Such perceptions can reduce parental motivation to enforce regular attendance, monitor school participation, or engage actively with teachers and schools.

Existing empirical studies in Ghana have largely adopted quantitative approaches to examine determinants of school attendance, focusing on measurable variables such as household income, parental education, and distance to school (Ampiah & Adu-Yeboah, 2016). Although these studies provide valuable statistical associations, they often fail to capture the nuanced experiences, beliefs, and decision-making processes of parents and guardians whose socio-economic activities directly affect children's daily

attendance. Moreover, many studies concentrate on upper primary or junior high school levels, with limited attention given to early grade learners. This represents a significant gap, as early childhood and lower primary stages are critical for habit formation related to school attendance and learning engagement (UNICEF, 2019). Understanding attendance challenges at this level is essential for designing early interventions that prevent long-term educational disengagement. The voices of parents and guardians themselves are also underrepresented in existing literature. Research tends to rely on school records, teacher reports, or household surveys, which may not fully reflect parents' lived realities, constraints, and coping strategies. A qualitative exploration of parents' views can provide deeper insight into how they perceive schooling, balance economic responsibilities, and negotiate competing demands on their time and resources (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The Ekumfi District presents a particularly relevant context for examining these issues. As a predominantly rural district with a high dependence on fishing, farming, and small-scale trading, Ekumfi is characterized by seasonal and informal economic activities that often involve entire households. These livelihood patterns create conditions where children's labour and availability are closely tied to household survival, potentially disrupting regular school attendance. Reports from the Ghana Education Service have indicated concerns about lateness, absenteeism, and fluctuating enrolment in early grade classrooms within parts of the Central Region, including Ekumfi District (GES, 2022). However, there is limited district-specific empirical research that interrogates the underlying socio-economic drivers of these attendance patterns from the perspectives of parents and guardians themselves.

The choice of Ekumfi District is further justified by its socio-economic vulnerability and limited access to social support systems compared to urban centres. Understanding

how parents in such contexts navigate the tension between economic activities and children's schooling can generate contextually grounded evidence to inform local educational planning and community-based interventions. Additionally, existing policies often assume that reducing direct school costs is sufficient to ensure regular attendance. This assumption overlooks indirect costs such as opportunity costs of children's time, parental labour demands, and household survival strategies. Investigating these dimensions qualitatively can expose policy blind spots and inform more holistic approaches to improving attendance (Sabates et al., 2021).

This study therefore addresses a critical gap by qualitatively exploring parental socio-economic activities and their influence on early grade learners' school attendance in the Ekumfi District. It moves beyond surface-level correlations to examine parents' lived experiences, perceptions, and strategies for balancing livelihood demands with educational responsibilities. By focusing on parents' views regarding school attendance, their involvement in their children's education, and the perceived outcomes of such involvement, the study contributes to a more nuanced understanding of parental agency within constrained socio-economic environments. This perspective is essential for designing interventions that are culturally sensitive, economically realistic, and community-driven. Furthermore, the study responds to calls in recent educational research for context-specific, qualitative investigations that foreground stakeholder voices, particularly in marginalized and rural settings (Tikly & Barrett, 2017). Such evidence is crucial for translating national education policies into effective district-level practices. Ultimately, the problem this study addresses lies in the persistent mismatch between educational policy intentions and the socio-economic realities of parents and guardians in districts like Ekumfi. Without a clear understanding of how parental livelihood activities shape school attendance decisions at the early grade level, efforts

to improve access, equity, and learning outcomes may remain ineffective. This study is therefore both timely and necessary, as it seeks to generate empirically grounded insights that can inform policy, practice, and future research on school attendance in Ghana.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

This study explored the parental socio-economic activities and school attendance among early grade learners' in the Ekumfi District.

1.4 Research Objectives

The following research objectives were formulated to guide the study:

1. To investigate the socio-economic activities undertaken by parents/guardians within the Ekumfi District.
2. To understand the parents/guardians socio-economic factors that hinder the regular school attendance of children in the Ekumfi District.
3. To find out the views of parents/guardians in the Ekumfi District concerning their involvement in their children's school attendance and its probable outcomes.
4. To find out from the parents/guardians in the Ekumfi District on how to they can balance their socio-economic activities with the school attendance of their children.

1.5 Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study:

1. What are the socio-economic activities undertaken by parents/guardians within the Ekumfi District?
2. What are the parents/guardians socio-economic factors that hinder regular school attendance of children in the Ekumfi District?

3. What are the views of parents/guardians in the Ekumfi District concerning their involvement in their children's school attendance and its probable outcomes?
4. How can the parents/guardians in the Ekumfi District balance their socio-economic activities with the school attendance of their children?

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study is significant in advancing scholarly understanding of the complex relationship between parental socio-economic activities and early grade learners' school attendance within rural and semi-rural contexts. By adopting a qualitative approach, the study moves beyond descriptive statistics to uncover the lived experiences, perceptions, and decision-making processes of parents and guardians. This contributes to theory-building in educational sociology and rural education by illuminating how household livelihood strategies intersect with schooling demands, particularly at the early grade level where attendance habits are formed and sustained.

The findings of the study are expected to be valuable to education policymakers and planners, particularly at the district and regional levels. Evidence generated from the Ekumfi District will provide context-specific insights that can inform the design of policies and interventions aimed at improving school attendance among early grade learners. Such evidence can guide the refinement of existing initiatives, including community sensitization programmes, parental engagement strategies, and flexible school support mechanisms that take into account the economic realities of parents and guardians.

The study also holds practical significance for school administrators, teachers, and community education stakeholders. By highlighting parents' views on school attendance and their involvement in their children's education, the study offers a basis

for strengthening home–school collaboration. Understanding the constraints parents face in balancing socio-economic activities with educational responsibilities can enable schools to adopt more empathetic, inclusive, and culturally responsive engagement practices that support regular attendance and sustained learner participation.

Finally, the study contributes to future research by addressing empirical gaps in the literature on early grade attendance in rural Ghana. It provides a qualitative baseline that subsequent studies can build upon, including comparative studies across districts or mixed-methods investigations. By foregrounding parental voices and contextual realities, the study enriches the evidence base needed for sustainable educational development and supports broader national and global efforts to achieve equitable access and participation in basic education.

1.7 Delimitations of the Study

This research was geographically limited to the Ekumfi District. Although this location offered valuable insights into the relationship between parental socio-economic activities and children’s school attendance, the conclusions drawn may not be applicable to other districts or regions due to differing local conditions, economic situations, and cultural settings. The investigation specifically focused on how the economic engagements of parents or guardians affected the attendance of early-grade learners enrolled at Akwansa Kokodo D/A Basic School. Additionally, the research was conducted within a defined timeframe, meaning that only data gathered during this period were considered, and any changes that occurred afterward were not included in the findings. Finally, the study concentrated exclusively on the following sub-themes: the nature of parents’ or guardians’ socio-economic activities; the socio-economic factors influencing school attendance; parents’ or guardians’ roles in their children’s

education; and strategies parents use to reconcile their economic duties with their children's school attendance.

1.8 Limitations of the Study

One limitation of this study is its qualitative design, which, while providing in-depth insights into parents' lived experiences and perceptions, limits the generalizability of the findings. The views and experiences of parents and guardians in the Ekumfi District may not fully represent those of parents in other districts with different socio-economic, cultural, or educational contexts. As a result, the findings are context-specific and should be interpreted with caution when applying them to broader populations.

Another limitation relates to reliance on self-reported data from parents and guardians. Participants may consciously or unconsciously provide socially desirable responses, particularly on sensitive issues such as children's school attendance, child labour, or parental involvement in education. This may affect the accuracy and completeness of the data, despite efforts to establish rapport and assure participants of confidentiality during the data collection process.

Finally, the study was constrained by time and accessibility challenges. Parents and guardians engaged in intensive socio-economic activities and had limited availability for extended interviews, which affected the depth of probing in some cases. Additionally, seasonal variations in economic activities within the Ekumfi District influenced parents' perspectives at the time of data collection, potentially limiting the extent to which the findings capture changes in attendance dynamics across different periods of the year.

1.9 Operational Definitions of Terms

Parental occupation: It refers to the specific job or profession that parents or guardians engage in to earn a living. It includes categories such as teaching, farming, business, healthcare, engineering, or any other occupation that individuals are employed in to support their family.

Employment status: Employment status refers to the current work situation of parents or guardians. It distinguishes between individuals who are employed, meaning they have a job or occupation and are actively working, and individuals who are unemployed, indicating they are not currently engaged in paid work but are actively seeking employment.

Early grade learners: Early grade learners, within the context of this study, are students enrolled in the initial stages of formal education, typically ranging from kindergarten to grade three. They are children in the age group of approximately 5 to 9 years who are attending primary school and are in the early stages of their academic journey.

School attendance: School attendance refers to the regular and consistent physical presence of early grade learners in the educational institution where they are enrolled. It is measured by the number of days or hours that students are physically present in school during a specified period, such as a school term or academic year.

Academic performance: Academic performance refers to the achievements and outcomes of early grade learners in their educational pursuits. It includes indicators such as test scores, grades, classroom participation, and other measures that assess students' progress and accomplishments in academic subjects.

Family size: Family size refers to the number of individuals who are part of the same household and share common resources and responsibilities. It is determined by

counting all individuals, including parents, siblings, and other family members, who reside in the household on a regular basis.

Social factors: Social factors encompass various elements of the social environment that may influence parental socioeconomic activities and early grade learners' school attendance. This can include aspects such as social support networks, community resources, parental networks, peer interactions, and access to social services.

Cultural factors: Cultural factors refer to the values, beliefs, traditions, and practices of a particular community or society. In the context of this study, cultural factors include aspects such as cultural norms around education, attitudes towards schooling, cultural expectations, and the influence of cultural practices on parental socioeconomic activities and early grade learners' school attendance.

Socioeconomic challenges: Socioeconomic challenges refer to the obstacles, difficulties, or limitations faced by families or individuals due to their socioeconomic circumstances. In the context of this study, socioeconomic challenges can include factors such as limited financial resources, lack of access to educational opportunities, economic instability, or barriers that hinder parental involvement and students' school attendance.

1.10 Organization of the Study

This thesis is structured into five chapters. Chapter One presents the introductory aspects of the study, covering the background, the problem statement, the study's purpose, objectives, and research questions. It also includes the significance of the study, its delimitations and limitations, definitions of key terms, and the overall organization of the research. Chapter Two reviews related literature, summarizing the contributions of previous researchers and scholars to the topic. Chapter Three outlines the research methodology, detailing the design, research approach, study population,

sample size, sampling methods, data collection instruments, procedures for gathering data, techniques for analyzing the data, and ethical considerations observed. Chapter Four provides an in-depth analysis and discussion of the data collected. Finally, Chapter Five offers a summary of the entire research, highlighting key findings, conclusions drawn, recommendations made, and suggestions for future investigations.



CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Overview

This chapter presents the review of literature related to the study. It begins with a discussion of the theoretical framework, followed by a review of the key themes as outlined in the research questions that directed the investigation. The chapter primarily focuses on three key components of literature: theoretical foundations, empirical studies, and the conceptual framework.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

2.1.1 The Social Reproduction Theory (Bourdieu, 1977)

This study draws upon Pierre Bourdieu's Social Reproduction Theory as one of its key theoretical foundations. The theory highlights how social inequalities are passed from one generation to the next through the distribution of social and cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986). It offers a perspective through which one can examine the relationship between the economic activities of parents or guardians, household structure, and the school attendance patterns of early-grade learners. According to this theory, a family's socio-economic standing shaped by factors such as education, occupation, job stability, and household size determines the level of material and human capital available to support a child's schooling (Bourdieu, 1977). Those from higher socio-economic backgrounds often possess greater social and cultural assets, such as strong social networks, financial resources, and access to quality educational opportunities (Lareau, 2003). These advantages tend to promote school attendance and sustained engagement in academic activities for young learners.

On the other hand, families with limited socio-economic means are more likely to encounter obstacles that hinder regular school attendance (Sirin, 2005). These challenges may include financial hardships, insufficient educational resources, and cultural attitudes that prioritize immediate income over long-term educational benefits (Bourdieu, 1977; Lareau, 2003). In families with numerous dependents, resource constraints can further reduce the amount of attention and academic support parents can give to each child (Amato, 2005).

The Social Reproduction Theory also emphasizes how cultural and social variables influence a family's economic behavior and capacity to support educational needs (Bourdieu, 1986). Beliefs, traditions, and values help shape parents' attitudes toward schooling, the importance they place on academic achievement, and how actively they participate in their children's educational journeys (Duru-Bellat, 2008). Moreover, social relationships and community-based support systems can expand or limit parents' access to economic resources that would otherwise empower them to invest meaningfully in their children's academic success (Stack, 1974). By applying this theoretical lens, the study captures the connections between socio-economic status, family conditions, cultural influences, and school attendance in the Ekumfi District (Bourdieu, 1977; Lareau, 2003). This theory thus allows for a deeper understanding of how underlying structural and societal elements maintain inequality and how these dynamics manifest in local educational contexts.

2.1.2 Investment Theory

Investment Theory provides a framework for understanding how parents pass on both biological traits and human capital to their children to promote their development (Becker & Tomes, 1986). Generally, parents or guardians are invested in the well-being of their children and will commit both time and financial resources to their education

to help them gain knowledge and skills that build their future competitiveness (Guner, 2014). However, due to the limited resources that many parents face, they are often compelled to prioritize how much time and money they can spend on their children's education depending on their economic standing (Becker & Tomes, 1986). Families with greater economic resources are more likely to earn higher incomes, which enables them to purchase educational materials like textbooks, stationery, and pay for tutoring to reinforce their children's academic foundations. When parents invest sufficiently in their children's early education, it encourages joy and engagement in learning, which in turn leads to consistent school attendance.

Conversely, children whose parents or guardians face economic hardship often lack such support, making them less likely to attend school regularly (Willingham, 2012). Donkor (2010) supports this point by stating that low-income families may struggle to meet even their basic needs, which limits their ability to provide educational support. According to Becker and Tomes (1986), households with high socio-economic status (SES) have easier access to loans or credit, while those with lower SES often lack such access. This difference affects their ability to acquire essential or supplementary resources for their children's education and, by extension, influences the children's willingness to be consistently present in school. Additionally, the theory suggests that family size has an inverse relationship with the amount of investment parents can make per child (Becker & Tomes, 1986). In larger families, limited wealth must be spread across more children, thereby reducing individual educational investment. Haveman and Wolfe (1995) argued that children generally attain higher levels of education than their parents, depending on how much time and financial investment they receive. They emphasized that a combination of parental ability and educational choices determine income levels and the quality of time and material input devoted to their children. This

theory was instrumental in this study as it helped examine how the financial and non-financial resources available to parents or guardians in the Ekumfi District influenced their investment in their children's education (Willingham, 2012).

2.2 Conceptual Framework

This study's conceptual framework, illustrated in Figure 2.1, outlines the connections between parental or guardian socio-economic activities and school attendance among early-grade pupils in the Ekumfi District. The framework highlights how parental socio-economic factors such as occupation, employment status, and household size directly influence whether early-grade learners regularly attend school. These factors represent the independent variables that shape the educational opportunities children can access. Additionally, the model identifies social and cultural influences as mediating variables. These include values, customs, belief systems, and community relationships that guide parental attitudes and behaviors toward education and economic responsibility.

Moreover, the framework incorporates the mediating role of parental socio-economic status and their involvement in their children's education. Parents' SES shaped by their employment, job security, and household composition affects their ability to provide support and resources for learning. Parental involvement refers to their participation in school-related activities, communication with teachers, and encouragement of academic achievement at home. Another important feature in the framework is the learners' perception of schooling, which acts as a moderating variable. This component represents how children understand and value their educational experiences, and it may either amplify or reduce the impact of socio-economic factors on school attendance. Altogether, this conceptual model illustrates that a blend of parental socio-economic background, family structure, cultural norms, and levels of involvement determines the

extent to which early-grade children in Ekumfi attend school consistently. The framework, therefore, provides a comprehensive structure for analyzing how these interrelated elements influence learner attendance and forms the basis for developing context-sensitive interventions.

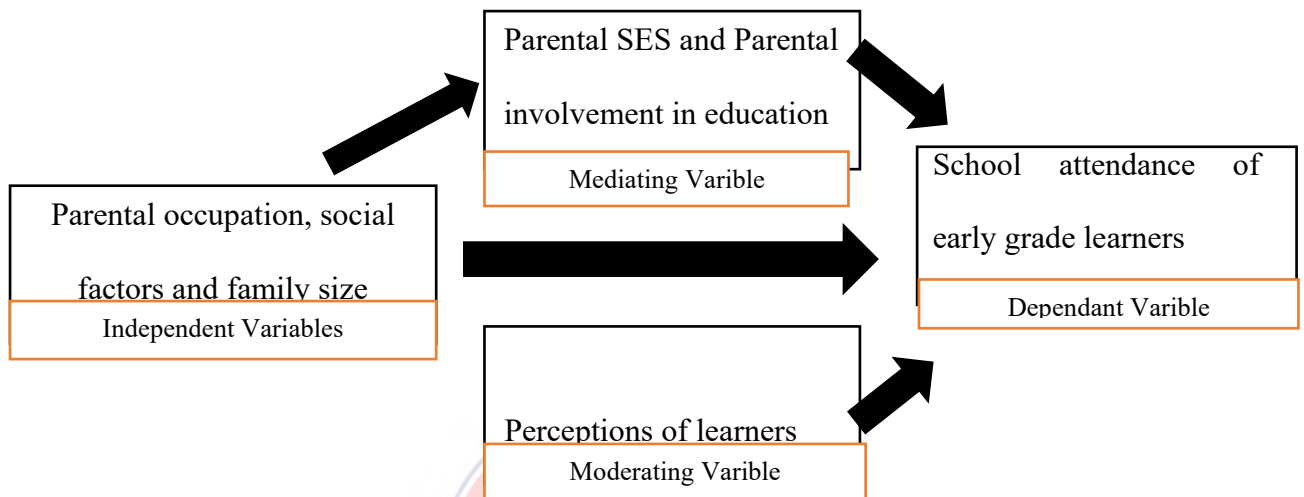


Figure 2.1: Conceptual Framework of the Study

Source: Researcher's Own Construction (2024)

2.3 Concept of Socioeconomic Status

Socioeconomic status (SES) is a broad measure that captures both the financial and societal standing of an individual or family in comparison to others, typically using factors such as household income, education, occupation, and cumulative earnings. While SES can reflect a group's standing, it can also be applied to a single person's condition based on similar indicators (Oakes & Rossi, 2023). SES is frequently used to describe economic disparities within communities. Parson et al. (2021) define SES as the level of family income, access to political influence, education levels, and employment status relative to others. According to Saifi and Mehmood (2011), SES is a composite measure based on income, occupation, and educational achievement, and it plays a significant role in determining academic success among children (Jeynes, 2022; Eamon, 2015).

SES includes one's educational qualifications, occupation, income, and class position, each of which can influence life opportunities either positively or negatively. Within any society, members may possess varying levels of education and occupy different social classes; upper, middle, or lower. A person's source of income, derived from their job or business, largely determines the kind of living they can afford. In most cases, parents bear the responsibility of raising and educating their children, which is why understanding their SES is so important (Ogunshola & Adewale, 2012).

The term "socioeconomic status" merges social and economic dimensions. Hossain, Islam, and Biswas (2017) argue that a family's social position relative to others is determined by their financial status, level of education, and employment. Economic status typically refers to the income or wealth owned by an individual or family. In psychological research, parent education and family income are often used as proxies for SES, while occupational status is less frequently applied (Davis-Kean et al., 2019). Although these indicators tend to be interrelated, each provides distinct advantages to a child. For example, parent education is strongly linked to values and behavior, while family income relates more closely to tangible resources like books, housing, and school supplies (Duncan & Magnuson, 2003). Some researchers argue that SES indicators should not be merged but instead analyzed individually to capture their unique impacts (Duncan & Magnuson, 2003). Sean (2013) also highlights that SES includes family income, educational qualifications, and occupational status all of which affect a family's role in society. SES is commonly classified into three levels: high, middle, and low. Children from higher or middle SES households are generally more exposed to learning tools and a stimulating environment at home than their peers from lower SES families (Rana, 2015).

Poor socioeconomic conditions are known to have damaging effects on a child's learning potential, largely due to limited opportunities and external stressors present in such homes (Eamon, 2015; Jeynes, 2022). The quality of a child's education is heavily influenced by the family setting in which they are raised. It is within the family unit that children first develop their identity, values, and basic attitudes toward education and life. The behaviors, beliefs, and economic status of the household shape these formative experiences. Through observing and participating in everyday activities at home, children absorb lessons on relationships, respect, self-worth, and discipline.

Parents who are financially secure and educated tend to offer their children greater academic support and life opportunities. Drummond and Stipek (2004) noted that low SES families tend to focus primarily on providing basic needs and emotional support, often neglecting the academic side due to limited resources. These parents may not see themselves as key players in the child's education and, when combined with financial hardship, their children may face a setback in school performance. Researchers agree that family SES strongly correlates with children's cognitive and academic growth. Typically, low-SES families are seen as disadvantaged, with fewer resources and lower levels of educational achievement, and this inequality is associated with poorer school outcomes. In Kenya, many young people in slum communities are excluded from formal education opportunities due to poverty. Limited public schools serve large populations in these informal settlements, restricting access to secondary schooling and training programs (Kiiru et al., 2009). Ngware et al. (2019) found that 74% of low-income families in formal housing enrolled their children in public schools, compared to 52% from informal settlements. Conger and Donnellan (2007) explained that economic pressure in families leads to stress, which can cause conflict and reduce the

quality of parenting. Financial instability may also result in families cutting back on even essential needs, damaging the home environment and child development.

On the flip side, high-SES parents are better positioned to invest in their children's education by providing high-quality learning materials, access to tutoring, a nurturing home atmosphere, and stimulating extracurricular activities. Sothan (2019) emphasized the connection between SES and parental education and income. These elements ultimately affect a family's ability to secure education for their children. Al-Mataalka (2014) noted that parents' varying levels of SES result in different work schedules, which affects how much time they can spend with their children. According to Azido and Dzagbete (2016), family income impacts children's motivation and learning process. Ghaemi (2014) suggested that the relationship between SES and academic performance may vary depending on the value different income groups place on education.

Studies by Liu et al. (2020) revealed that the SES-achievement correlation in China is similar to that in the United States. While educational inequalities have reduced slightly, higher-SES families in well-resourced areas still show stronger academic performance. Among Chinese migrant families, those whose parents were actively involved in school activities had children with better academic outcomes, even if their SES remained low (Fang et al., 2017). Other scholars have consistently shown that family background, including SES, explains much of the variation in students' academic success, sometimes more than the school environment itself (Berkowitz et al., 2017; Lawson & Farah, 2017).

2.4 Parents/Guardians Socio-economic Factors and Children's Education

2.4.1 Education

Aside from a parent's occupation, another key element that affects children's academic outcomes is the level of education attained by their parents. Parents who prioritize education generally find it easier to support their children's learning needs. Their educational levels can be categorized broadly into higher and lower education. Those classified as highly educated typically possess credentials such as the Senior Secondary School Certificate (SSCE), National Diploma (ND), National Certificate in Education (NCE), Higher National Diploma (HND), and bachelor's degrees (Odedokun & Muraina, 2019). Some may also hold advanced degrees such as Master's or Doctorates in various disciplines. Christa (2017) discovered that 65.35% of children from educated families pass standardized public exams with credit scores. Parental education influences both their professions and their economic strength. Their level of education often shapes their expectations and values regarding their children's education. Parents with more formal education tend to demonstrate parenting behaviors that foster educational achievement, which contributes to improved student outcomes. A higher education level is associated with better life quality, lower unemployment, improved health, and reduced incarceration rates (Odedokun & Muraina, 2019).

According to Sarigiani (1990), the educational level of parents correlates with the academic goals and achievements of their children. In his study, which grouped parents into those with college-level and non-college-level education, it was found that children of more educated parents had higher aspirations and ambitions for future learning. These parents typically provide more academic support outside school hours, including help with homework, tutoring, and career guidance, leading to better school performance. As parents aim for their children to preserve or improve upon the family's

social status, they instill confidence and high expectations, which can positively affect academic results. Mallan (2009) asserted that children often mirror their parents' confidence and develop self-esteem, but also warned that excessive parental expectations might cause stress and underachievement. Eccles (2005) supported the idea that children learn by observing behavior at home.

2.4.2 Parents/Guardians' Occupation

Parents play the most influential role in raising children, which is why families are recognized as the primary unit of socialization. It is through their efforts that children are taught the norms and behaviors that help them become functional members of society (Adekey, 2002). A study by Mudassir and Abubakar (2015) in Malaysia found that children whose parents worked in formal sectors performed better academically than those with parents in informal employment. However, the researchers didn't explore how much time parents spent on their jobs and its direct impact on school performance. Gratz (2006) noted that parents in lower-tier occupations often work long hours for modest pay, which leaves them little time to support their children's education.

Ajayi (2003), in a study in Nigeria, found that occupation, second only to education, predicted student school attendance and performance in mathematics. Children of parents with higher-status jobs tended to earn better grades because their parents could afford learning materials and create a conducive environment for academic growth. Graetz (1995) echoed these findings, identifying parental SES as a leading factor in school attendance and educational success. According to Considine and Zappala (2002), families with educational, social, and economic advantages tend to have children who perform better academically, partly due to the emotional and psychological support they provide.

In Uganda, Bjorkman (2005) linked educational investment to family income. He found that families with lower income levels enrolled fewer girls in school and faced wider gender disparities in education. Economic shocks reduced educational investments and harmed children's academic outcomes. In particular, the girl-child was often overburdened with household responsibilities, which hindered her performance compared to boys. Similarly, Mogaka (2012) in Kenya observed that children from large, uneducated families performed worse in school than their peers from smaller, educated households. These studies suggest that low family income and the inability to afford educational resources significantly affect academic achievement.

2.4.3 Family Size

The number of children in a household also influences educational outcomes. Parents with many children often cannot provide adequate attention or resources to each child, especially in communities where income is low. This strain can lead to irregular school attendance. Families with large numbers of dependents are likely to experience resource dilution, where the limited financial, material, and emotional support is spread thinly, leading to poor academic engagement. Smith and Jenkins (2019) found that children from larger families often face reduced parental support, which impacts school attendance negatively. Mensch and Lloyd (2018) also stated that in Africa, larger family sizes reduce the probability of consistent school attendance due to intensified competition for educational resources. Agyei-Mensah et al. (2020) confirmed that children from smaller families were more likely to attend school regularly. Brooks-Gunn et al. (2018), however, suggested that family size alone may not determine educational success if effective support systems are in place.

2.4.4 Social and Cultural Influences

Social and cultural norms greatly impact both parental economic behavior and children's school attendance. Parents from certain cultural backgrounds may hold beliefs that delay schooling or restrict the types of economic activities available to them. These restrictions often disproportionately affect women and influence their ability to contribute economically. DiPrete and Jennings (2012) explained that cultural values, especially around gender roles, influence employment decisions and income levels, which in turn affect educational investments. Dika and Singh (2002) emphasized the role of cultural capital, which includes the skills, knowledge, and cultural awareness parents use to shape their children's education. These factors determine parents' aspirations and their capacity to support academic achievement. Social networks and community resources also matter. According to Putnam (2000), social capital defined as the relationships and support systems available in a community can provide access to educational opportunities and strengthen socio-economic engagement.

Cultural barriers such as language limitations and discrimination can reduce parental involvement. Ceballo and McLoyd (2002) found that in immigrant families, stress related to language and social integration correlated with low parental participation and poor school attendance. Pong and Ju (2000) showed that in communities with high income inequality, parental involvement and school attendance rates tend to drop. On the other hand, Leventhal and Brooks-Gunn (2004) pointed out that strong educational infrastructure and community support can lessen these negative effects.

2.5 Balancing Parents/Guardians Socio-economic Activities with Children's School Attendance

Research findings indicated that empowering parents, especially mothers, is crucial in helping them secure well-paying jobs, which in turn allows both parents to maintain a

balance between work responsibilities and ensuring their children's consistent school attendance. This insight aligns with Mensch and Lloyd (2018), who argued that social support systems and the prevailing values within a community significantly shape how parents engage in economic activities, thereby influencing children's educational participation. The findings emphasized that to break the cycle of imbalance between livelihood activities and parental involvement in education, there is a pressing need for parents to secure quality education for their children, especially girls. This ensures future generations are better positioned economically and can invest meaningfully in their own children's schooling. This aligns with Ampaabeng et al. (2017), who found that parents in stable, better-paying jobs are typically more capable of offering their children the educational support and materials needed for regular school attendance.

Another key point revealed in the study was that parents believe dedicating time to establish strong relationships with schools is critical in achieving a balance between economic responsibilities and their children's school commitments. This view supports the findings of Epstein and Sheldon (2002), who advocated for the creation of solid home-school partnerships that enable greater parental involvement. Such partnerships thrive on consistent communication, active participation in school events, and structured parent education initiatives. These interventions have shown a positive effect on improving student attendance (Jeynes, 2007). Additionally, scholars have highlighted that well-structured support systems can boost attendance among vulnerable students. Targeted efforts such as one-on-one mentorship, personal guidance, and counseling have been effective in addressing absenteeism and enhancing participation (Dynarski et al., 2008; Maynard et al., 2012). Beyond individual efforts, involving community-based organizations and public service institutions has proven beneficial. These collaborative relationships provide families with critical resources,

referrals, and emotional support, all of which help tackle the underlying causes of irregular attendance (Stewart, 2008).

Technological innovations also contribute to better attendance management. Tools like automated monitoring systems, reminder texts, and virtual communication platforms have been employed to strengthen connections between parents and schools, making it easier for families to stay informed and engaged (Balfanz et al., 2007; Kearney & Hyle, 2014). Moreover, school-wide attendance programs help reinforce the importance of being present. These may involve reward systems, close tracking of absenteeism trends, and early intervention protocols for students with frequent absences (Gottfried, 2010; McMillan & Reed, 2004). In summary, this section underscores that improving school attendance among early-grade learners requires coordinated efforts. Empowering parents economically, nurturing school-family partnerships, applying technology, and tapping into community support all serve to balance parental socio-economic duties with educational commitments.

2.6 Parents/Guardians' Perceptions on Involvement and Children's Education

Researchers commonly define parental involvement programs as the engagement of key caregivers such as biological parents, grandparents, foster parents, and guardians in school-related and developmental activities that promote children's academic and social well-being (Smith et al., 2019). These activities reflect various parental beliefs, routines, customs, and practices within the home and school environments aimed at enhancing students' academic performance and behavioral development (Coleman, 2018). Active parental participation in children's schooling is widely acknowledged as a factor that improves attendance and educational success (Doi et al., 2020; Wang & Sheikh-Khalil, 2014). To ensure this, school leaders should create structured systems

that facilitate collaboration between parents, communities, educators, and school administrators (Durisic & Bunijevac, 2017; Rapp & Duncan, 2012). Boonk et al. (2018) argue that for a parental involvement program to be truly effective, it must begin with a clear and contextually appropriate definition of involvement that reflects parents' insights into their roles, contributions, and available opportunities within their children's education.

Unfortunately, participation in school activities by parents has declined in many public schools around the world (Smythe-Leistico & Page, 2018). This trend can be attributed to several factors, including the absence of a clear understanding of what constitutes involvement, insufficient guidance for parents, and limited encouragement from school staff (Zenda, 2021). Understanding how parents perceive their involvement and how this connects to their children's attendance and success could lead to increased engagement by helping parents recognize their responsibilities as collaborative partners in the learning process (Durisic & Bunijevac, 2017). Effective parental engagement happens when parents are well-informed about their rights, responsibilities, and opportunities, and when schools create a welcoming environment supported by inclusive policies (Fernandez & Lopez, 2017; Flaherty et al., 2012). In contrast, many current parent feedback tools, such as one-way surveys, focus on satisfaction levels with school services but often overlook critical questions about parents' actual roles and the impact of their involvement on educational outcomes.

Fernandez and Lopez (2017) emphasize that a school climate open to parent engagement, reinforced by practical policies, is essential for motivating families to participate. Park and Holloway (2018) further note that schools embracing inclusive practices tend to attract more involved parents who are eager to address perceived gaps in their children's academic experiences. Parents' contributions to their children's

education go beyond formal school events. Activities like attending meetings, supervising homework, ensuring proper nutrition, and maintaining children's health are commonly viewed by parents as part of their normal responsibilities. However, students may perceive these interactions differently, often interpreting them as routine or obligatory. Allen and White-Smith (2018) highlighted that while parents reported high involvement, students ranked their parents' interest in learning much lower, suggesting a communication gap between the two groups. Although many studies focus on educators' and parents' viewpoints, students are often left out, despite being the primary beneficiaries of these efforts. Cook-Sather (2018) stressed the importance of integrating children's voices into research and practice concerning learning environments both at home and school. Including students' feedback can bridge the understanding gap between how parents and children perceive involvement and its role in academic progress.

Valdez and Bowman (2020) observed that academic achievement is shaped not only by cognitive skills but also by the support system surrounding the learner, which includes family, peers, and educators. Xerri et al. (2018) added that building strong relationships among parents, teachers, and students promotes engagement and a sense of purpose, further enhancing learning outcomes. Interestingly, when student perspectives are used to assess home-based involvement, their descriptions often differ from how parents portray their own behavior. Fernandez and Lopez (2017) found that less intrusive parenting styles those that foster autonomy and rely on indirect support, such as communication about school were more positively linked to academic performance than direct homework assistance. This suggests that empowering students to take charge of their learning may be more beneficial than constant parental oversight. In conclusion, a comprehensive understanding of parental involvement requires

considering the views of parents, educators, and students. Encouraging mutual recognition of roles and responsibilities, fostering clear communication, and building trusting partnerships between homes and schools are critical to enhancing attendance and learning outcomes for children.

2.7 Factors Influencing Parents' Perceptions about Involvement

Apart from school-specific influences, several life experiences and contextual factors shape how parents perceive their involvement in their children's education. These include economic status, employment records, educational levels, and time constraints. Bartz et al. (2017) found that within economically challenged African American populations, those parents who had steady jobs and held high educational expectations for their children were more actively involved in schooling. The study emphasized incorporating the strengths and cultural assets of parents, particularly the role of Black identity in fostering a sense of unity, into parental engagement initiatives. Bartz and colleagues further recommended that these programs should not focus solely on schools but instead promote collaboration between parents, school staff, and community organizations that provide resources and support in the neighborhoods where the children live. Fitzsimons et al. (2017) found that financial strain correlates with increased mental health challenges, poor parenting behaviors, and reduced participation in school-related activities, all of which affect children's academic progress.

Other studies have linked higher parental education levels to increased school involvement (Park & Holloway, 2017). However, time scarcity, often due to rigid work schedules and lack of paid leave, can restrict the extent to which low-income parents can engage in their children's academic activities (Carrillo et al., 2017). Spann et al. (2020) noted that children from low socio-economic backgrounds are more likely to experience irregular school support and limited academic opportunities, making them

more vulnerable to poor educational outcomes. Education level, financial stability, and time availability are key elements that influence parental decisions on how and when to get involved. For instance, Pierstorff (2019) found that limited parental involvement resulted in lower student performance in reading and mathematics. Kuhfeld et al. (2018) observed that increased parental guidance through academic conversations and school engagement led to better grade point averages across all adolescents, but the outcomes differed when it came to home-based help. Specifically, while academic guidance and school interaction were helpful for African American and Hispanic/Latino students, white students didn't benefit as much from home-based involvement lacking academic focus. More home-focused involvement combined with reduced academic guidance negatively affected school outcomes for white adolescents. Thus, understanding how parents perceive and navigate challenges related to education, finances, and time commitments is crucial when designing effective parental involvement strategies that enhance children's academic achievement.

2.8 Balancing Socio-economic Activities and Parental Involvement in Education

Existing research consistently shows that parental engagement plays a crucial role in improving students' school attendance. Epstein and Sheldon (2002) emphasized the importance of nurturing strong partnerships between home and school to encourage parental participation. Initiatives such as open lines of communication between teachers and parents, parental involvement in school events, and structured parent education programs have all been shown to have positive effects on student attendance rates (Jeynes, 2007). Numerous studies also highlight the benefits of targeted strategies that specifically aim to enhance school attendance among students who are at risk of falling behind. These include mentoring initiatives, individualized attention, and counseling

programs, which have proven successful in addressing absenteeism and boosting school participation (Dynarski et al., 2008; Maynard et al., 2012).

Creating a welcoming and supportive school environment is equally essential for promoting regular attendance. According to Battin-Pearson et al. (2000), schools that cultivate encouraging relationships, uphold clear behavioral expectations, and foster stimulating classroom experiences tend to report higher attendance figures. Additionally, early intervention measures designed to identify and address attendance-related issues such as anti-truancy campaigns, family outreach services, and school-based counseling have yielded favorable outcomes in curbing chronic absenteeism (Gottfried, 2014; Kearney & Graczyk, 2014). Effectively addressing the socio-economic hurdles that impede regular school attendance is critical. Interventions such as providing transport services, implementing free meal programs, and waiving school fees for low-income families are vital strategies to remove economic obstacles to attendance (Goodman et al., 2013; Lutz et al., 2015). Schools can also adopt wide-reaching attendance promotion campaigns that celebrate regular attendance, utilize technology to monitor absences, and offer incentives to encourage students to attend school consistently (Gottfried, 2010; McMillan & Reed, 2004).

Collaborative efforts between schools and external stakeholders such as community-based organizations, social service providers, and local government agencies can enhance parental involvement and reduce absenteeism. These partnerships often provide families with vital support services, educational resources, and referral mechanisms that help mitigate attendance challenges (Stewart, 2008). Moreover, incorporating digital tools like automated attendance tracking, SMS reminders, and online parent-teacher communication platforms has shown promise in improving parental engagement and, by extension, school attendance (Balfanz et al., 2007;

Kearney & Hyle, 2014). In summary, establishing a balance between parents' socio-economic duties and their participation in their children's education involves a comprehensive strategy. These include empowering parents economically, reinforcing school-community ties, using technology effectively, and implementing school-wide attendance initiatives that support at-risk learners.

2.9 Parental Involvement Activities at Home and School

Parenting practices refer to the actions parents take in nurturing their children, including activities that support their academic growth, such as helping with homework, attending school programs, volunteering in school functions, and participating in local events with their children (Ogg & Anthony, 2020). Home-based parental involvement encompasses engaging in academic tasks at home like completing assignments together, shared reading, and taking part in mentally stimulating outings such as trips to the museum, park, or zoo, and attending educational community programs. Many parents view homework as a valuable link between home and school that keeps them informed of their child's academic needs. When schools guide parents on the key skills their children must develop, parents are better prepared to offer the right kind of help at home. This empowers them to support the learning process effectively, even if they are not professional educators. Understanding the formats and criteria used by teachers for assessments such as quizzes and grades helps parents contribute more meaningfully to their children's academic growth (Bempechat, 2019).

According to Riswanto and Aryani (2017), standards-based formative assessments serve as useful tools for parents to gauge how they can support their children in completing schoolwork. Beyond academic help, parental supervision at home such as managing screen time or creating a study-friendly atmosphere also contributes to students' academic success. Parents in the study acknowledged that committing time to

their children's education encourages regular school attendance and improves academic performance. They believed that when they actively participate, teachers are better equipped to assess student strengths and areas needing improvement, enabling them to tailor support more effectively. This aligns with Muraina et al. (2021), who emphasized that consistent school attendance is essential to students' academic progress. Notably, 99% of surveyed parents agreed that being present at school regularly improves children's self-esteem and learning outcomes. This supports the findings of Osei-Owusu et al. (2018), who also reported that frequent school attendance has a positive effect on academic performance.

Additionally, the study revealed that parents viewed their involvement as enhancing their children's language skills and social development. This is in line with the work of Ambeken et al. (2012), who linked regular school attendance to the development of interpersonal and verbal communication skills. Furthermore, the study echoed the findings of Muzaza et al. (2017), who reported a positive connection between regular attendance and the improvement of children's psychomotor abilities. Lastly, the parents shared that their active participation helps reduce behavioral problems in their children. Eamon (2015) affirmed this by stating that consistent school attendance often contributes to a decline in disruptive behaviors among young learners.

2.10 The Role of the Teacher and the School Administration

The interaction between teachers, school administrators, and parents is one of the most important elements in fostering effective parental involvement. Yulianti et al. (2020) noted that modern schools are faced with the dual responsibility of equipping students with life skills while also delivering the academic content required. In achieving this, school leaders and teachers serve as key agents who must actively support and promote communication with families. Generally, society expects that schools and parents work

together in nurturing children's development. Most parents in the study revealed they have positive relationships with teachers, and some volunteer their time to help in school-related activities. However, many described these interactions as informal, limited mostly to scheduled parent-teacher conferences at the start and end of the academic year. A number of parents admitted they rarely visited the school unless specifically called upon for disciplinary matters involving their children.

William (2018) argued that parents sometimes withdraw from engaging in their children's academic lives due to their perception of teachers as the primary experts in education. This belief can gradually lead parents to step back from their responsibilities in supporting their children's education. Haymovitz et al. (2018) proposed an alternative approach to improve school culture and engagement through a concept called "social harmony." Their three-year study in a private school found that using therapeutic methods to promote social-emotional learning significantly improved student well-being, peer interactions, school climate, and teacher performance. Park and Holloway (2018) supported the notion that teacher-parent relationships are strengthened through active participation in school organizations that bring parents, teachers, and staff together. Such collaborative structures whether in the form of volunteer groups or school committees help to enhance parental involvement by offering inclusive spaces for dialogue, planning, and shared responsibility. In conclusion, for parental involvement to be truly effective, it must be nurtured through strong, consistent communication and cooperation between educators and families, anchored by mutual respect and shared goals.

2.11 School Leadership and Parental Involvement

School leaders often hold varying perspectives on the appropriate balance between the roles of families and schools in a child's education (Ramanlingam & Maniam, 2020).

However, most educators agree that active parental participation contributes to a positive school climate and supports academic achievement among students (Park & Holloway, 2018). To strengthen the relationship between schools and parents, Leenders et al. (2019) advocated for the use of organized, diverse networks through which schools can share their experiences and encourage involvement from various parent groups. Such networking requires teachers and administrators to commit beyond their professional duties, investing time and energy in community engagement to foster collective responsibility for improving education. Nevertheless, several scholars argue that many educators and school leaders lack the necessary skills to engage effectively with diverse communities and parents from different cultural backgrounds (Vorbeck, 2019). One key challenge is the limited cultural competence of teachers and administrators, which affects their ability to understand and collaborate with parents from minority groups. Goss (2019) highlighted that limited familiarity with minority cultures, educational philosophies, school policies, and leadership approaches can all act as barriers to parental involvement.

A deeper understanding of parental values and their Interactions with school leadership and teachers is central to building effective partnerships. Capotosto et al. (2017) emphasized that people construct their identities through experiences and expressions shaped by deeply rooted habits, assumptions, and knowledge. Thus, when educational leaders and teachers broaden their understanding of parental experiences and viewpoints, it becomes easier to close the existing communication and engagement gaps between homes and schools. By enhancing this mutual understanding, schools can foster more inclusive and responsive engagement strategies that bring families into the educational process as valued collaborators, not just observers.

2.12 The Learner and Parental Involvement

Parents play a fundamental role in the growth and educational journey of their children, and their involvement significantly contributes to academic success (Chen et al., 2020). However, the ways parents and students perceive this involvement and how these views affect school achievement and well-being can vary considerably (Sawyer et al., 2018). Allen and White-Smith (2018) conducted a dual-perspective study to explore both parent and student understandings of parental involvement in education. The study also examined how these perceptions were connected to students' academic performance and emotional well-being, especially in relation to demographic characteristics of both groups. The results showed notable differences between how students and parents understood parental involvement. Specifically, for each survey item, students and their parents held significantly different views. The greatest gap appeared in how interested parents were in what their children were learning at school. Students reported that their parents mostly focused on monitoring grades, while parents rated their own engagement with the learning process much more highly (Smith et al., 2019).

Allen and White-Smith (2018) pointed out that the majority of existing research centers on educators' and parents' perspectives, often ignoring student input. However, students are the direct recipients of educational support and, therefore, central to the success of any parental involvement strategy. In the study school, parents mentioned participating in school events and helping children with assignments, cooking, providing meals and clothing, and ensuring healthcare needs were met. Still, they viewed these tasks as routine obligations rather than meaningful interactions. Children's opinions were seldom solicited, and they were generally excluded from school-related meetings. Cook-Sather (2018) argued that young learners' voices should be actively incorporated into research and practical approaches to both home and school

learning environments. By listening to learners and understanding their perceptions of parental engagement, schools and families can build more inclusive and responsive strategies that strengthen the educational experience and promote consistent attendance.

2.13 Parental Motivation

Parents' beliefs about their role in their children's education significantly influence their motivation to be involved. Dove et al. (2015) argued that parental engagement is often shaped by cultural norms and values, which may sometimes be wrongly interpreted as disinterest. For instance, many Hispanic and African American families place great trust in educators and believe that their role should be limited unless explicitly requested to participate. Olvera and Olvera (2012) noted that while parental involvement is generally seen as beneficial, it doesn't always lead to positive outcomes. In some cases, overly engaged parents can place extra demands on school staff, straining school operations and potentially affecting the wider school community. In contrast, Otto and Karbach (2019) emphasized the advantages of active parental engagement, which has been consistently linked to improved educational outcomes for children.

From a policy perspective, involving parents in their children's education is viewed as a key pillar in educational reform. Yet, research on its direct effect on student achievement shows mixed results. Still, many scholars such as Costa and Faria (2017) argue that support and encouragement from parents positively influence a child's academic performance. Haines et al. (2015) found that most parents believed their involvement had a positive impact on their children's education. Despite the acknowledged benefits of parental participation, many families face hurdles such as limited financial resources, cultural barriers, and unfamiliarity with school systems. Hamlin and Flessa (2018) pointed out that some schools adopt deficit-based attitudes,

viewing parents particularly those from minority or low-income backgrounds—as less capable. These narrow definitions of what qualifies as “involvement” often exclude non-traditional contributions and discourage participation. Ultimately, parents vary in what motivates their engagement. However, most link their willingness to participate to the academic progress and success they see in their children.

2.14 Trust and Parental Involvement

Establishing trust is a cornerstone of effective relationships between families and schools. In a study conducted by Collier et al. (2020), surveys were administered to 1,234 parents and 209 teachers in a suburban district to assess mutual trust and its impact on student performance. The researchers utilized a Family-School Relationship Survey which included measures of trust, frequency and type of parent-teacher interactions, suggestions for improving trust, and background characteristics. They compared trust levels across school stages elementary (K-6), junior high (7-8), and high school (9-12) and discovered that parental trust in teachers was highest at the elementary level. A key recommendation from the study was that improved home-school communication plays a major role in strengthening trust. The increased levels of trust appeared to result from more frequent and meaningful communication between teachers and parents at the elementary stage. This underscores the significance of sustained and high-quality interaction as the foundation for building trust in educational settings. Collier et al. (2020) define trust as the confidence placed in a person’s or institution’s integrity, competence, or reliability, which encourages reciprocal engagement. Furthermore, the study indicated that the overall quality of family-school interactions was a stronger predictor of trust than how often those interactions occurred or the demographic backgrounds of the participants. Trust, in turn, was found to be positively associated with key indicators of student academic performance. As a result,

the researchers urged school leaders and staff to make deliberate and consistent efforts to cultivate trust with parents throughout their children's educational experience.

2.15 Parental Associations and Involvement

Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs) or similar parental bodies serve as essential platforms where parents can collaborate, share insights, and provide mutual support aimed at enhancing students' educational experiences. Murray et al. (2019) characterized parent associations as parent-led initiatives that establish organized channels for communication with school officials and create avenues for families to contribute time, funds, and resources to improve school outcomes. While it is expected that educators and administrators foster and promote parental involvement, many face challenges due to inadequate training in communication strategies tailored specifically for engaging parents (Camacho & Alves, 2017; Epstein, 2019; Goss, 2019). This lack of preparation often hinders effective collaboration between schools and families. Consequently, parent associations act as a bridge, offering a structured forum that helps align school activities with parental input and support. In addition to fostering communication, membership in parent associations creates a sense of ownership and shared responsibility. These groups can serve as springboards for implementing parental engagement programs that enhance student well-being at home, in school, and within the broader community. According to Murray et al. (2019), such collective efforts can lead to more unified and effective involvement practices that support both academic and social outcomes for children.

2.16 School Environment and Parental Engagement

Numerous school administrators emphasize the importance of encouraging parental involvement as a means of enhancing the learning environment for students. At some schools, parents have organized groups under the parent association to undertake

projects like improving school infrastructure and aesthetics. Some of these parents worked to establish a more inviting atmosphere and actively sought to involve newcomers in these activities. Nevertheless, participation was not uniform, as many parents showed reluctance to contribute to such beautification efforts. Similarly, school personnel often find it difficult to gain the involvement of families from lower-income backgrounds in school-related tasks (Caridade et al., 2020).

Despite the intentions of teachers and administrators, various challenges hinder active parental participation. These barriers include limited time availability, lack of understanding of how the school system operates, and difficulties in communication between educators and families (Hamlin & Flessa, 2018; Robinson, 2017; William, 2018). To create more effective parental involvement, schools must develop clear frameworks for evaluating the elements that influence such engagement. This includes analyzing the school atmosphere, practical considerations like logistics, the quality of school-home communication, and how parents perceive their role in their children's education (Garcia-Carrion et al., 2019). Experts agree that fostering a hospitable school environment necessitates comprehensive measures. This includes encouraging interactions between parents and teachers, providing dedicated spaces where parents can meet or consult with educators, and offering practical support such as childcare services (Daily et al., 2019). The concept of school climate refers to the broader ecological setting where individuals interact with others, objects, and symbols within their immediate surroundings. It has been identified as a key determinant of a child's developmental progress (Chun & Devall, 2019). Therefore, it is vital for educators and school leaders to identify and respond to the specific needs of parents in order to secure their active participation and collaboration in educational initiatives.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Overview

This chapter presents the methodological framework of the study. It details the research design adopted, the population studied, sample size and sampling methods, the research instrument utilized, procedures for data collection and data analysis, as well as the process undertaken to pretest the research instrument.

3.1 Research Paradigm

The research paradigm provides the philosophical foundation that guides how a study is conceptualized, designed, and conducted. It reflects the researcher's assumptions about the nature of reality (ontology), the nature of knowledge (epistemology), the relationship between the researcher and the researched (axiology), and the methodological approaches appropriate for generating knowledge (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). In this study, which explores parental socio-economic activities and school attendance among early grade learners in the Ekumfi District, the research paradigm is critical for framing how parents' lived experiences and meanings are understood and interpreted. This study is situated within the interpretivist research paradigm. Interpretivism is grounded in the belief that social reality is socially constructed and shaped by individuals' experiences, contexts, and interactions. From this perspective, reality is not singular or objective but multiple and subjective, varying across individuals and social settings (Schwandt, 2017). The interpretivist paradigm is therefore appropriate for examining how parents and guardians make sense of their socio-economic activities and how these meanings influence decisions related to their children's school attendance.

Ontologically, the interpretivist paradigm assumes a relativist view of reality. This means that reality is viewed as multiple, context-bound, and constructed through social interaction rather than existing independently of human perception (Guba & Lincoln, 2018). In the context of this study, parental socio-economic activities and school attendance are not treated as fixed or uniform phenomena but as experiences that differ across households depending on livelihood patterns, cultural norms, and local circumstances within the Ekumfi District. Epistemologically, interpretivism holds that knowledge is co-constructed through interaction between the researcher and participants. The researcher does not stand as a detached observer but engages with participants to understand their perspectives, meanings, and interpretations of their social world (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2018). This epistemological stance aligns with the study's aim of understanding parents' views, beliefs, and reasoning regarding their children's school attendance, rather than merely measuring attendance outcomes. The axiological assumptions of the interpretivist paradigm acknowledge that research is value-laden. The researcher's background, experiences, and positionality inevitably influence the research process, from the framing of questions to data interpretation (Tracy, 2020). In this study, reflexivity is essential, as the researcher must remain aware of personal assumptions about education, poverty, and parental responsibility while engaging respectfully with parents and guardians in the Ekumfi District. Methodologically, the interpretivist paradigm supports qualitative approaches that prioritize depth, meaning, and context. Qualitative methods such as interviews and open-ended discussions are particularly suitable for capturing parents' narratives about their socio-economic activities and the challenges they face in ensuring regular school attendance for their children (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). This methodological

orientation enables rich, detailed accounts that quantitative methods alone may not reveal.

The choice of a qualitative methodology is further justified by the exploratory nature of the study. Existing research on school attendance in Ghana has largely focused on quantitative indicators and macro-level determinants, leaving gaps in understanding how parents themselves interpret and navigate attendance challenges. An interpretivist paradigm allows the study to address these gaps by foregrounding parents' voices and lived realities (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Within the interpretivist framework, meaning is seen as embedded in social and cultural contexts. The Ekumfi District, with its predominantly rural economy and reliance on fishing, farming, and informal trading, provides a unique socio-cultural setting in which parental decisions about schooling are made. Understanding school attendance in this context requires sensitivity to local livelihood systems, cultural expectations, and household survival strategies, all of which are best examined through an interpretivist lens. The research paradigm also informs how data are analyzed and interpreted. Rather than seeking causal explanations or generalizable laws, interpretivist analysis focuses on identifying patterns of meaning, shared understandings, and divergent perspectives among participants (Braun & Clarke, 2021). In this study, data analysis emphasizes thematic interpretation of parents' accounts to reveal how socio-economic activities shape attendance decisions.

Trustworthiness, rather than statistical validity and reliability, is central within the interpretivist paradigm. Criteria such as credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability are employed to enhance the rigor of qualitative findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Nowell et al., 2017). These criteria guide the study's strategies for ensuring that parents' perspectives are accurately represented and that interpretations are grounded in the data. The interpretivist paradigm also supports the ethical stance of the

study. Respect for participants' voices, experiences, and autonomy is fundamental. By treating parents and guardians as knowledgeable agents rather than passive subjects, the paradigm aligns with ethical principles of respect, beneficence, and justice (Orb, Eisenhauer, & Wynaden, 2016). This is particularly important when researching communities facing socio-economic vulnerabilities.

Furthermore, the paradigm allows for contextualized insights that can inform policy and practice without claiming universal applicability. While findings from the Ekumfi District may not be statistically generalizable, they offer analytical insights that can resonate with similar rural and coastal districts in Ghana and other sub-Saharan African contexts (Yin, 2018). This form of transferability is consistent with interpretivist research goals. The interpretivist paradigm also complements the study's focus on early grade learners. Attendance behaviors at this level are deeply embedded in family routines, parental beliefs, and daily livelihood practices. Understanding these dynamics requires attention to subjective meanings and everyday experiences, which are central concerns of interpretivist inquiry (UNICEF, 2019). By adopting this paradigm, the study challenges deficit-oriented explanations that often blame parents for irregular attendance without considering structural and economic constraints. Instead, it situates parental decisions within broader socio-economic realities, offering a more nuanced and empathetic understanding of attendance challenges (Tikly & Barrett, 2017).

3.2 Research Approach

The research approach refers to the overall strategy that guides how data are generated, analyzed, and interpreted in order to address the research objectives. It operationalizes the philosophical assumptions of the research paradigm into concrete procedures for inquiry (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). In this study, which explores parental socio-economic activities and school attendance among early grade learners in the Ekumfi

District, the research approach is deliberately aligned with the interpretivist paradigm to ensure coherence between philosophical stance and methodological execution. This study adopts a qualitative research approach. Qualitative research is particularly suitable for studies that seek to understand meanings, perceptions, experiences, and social processes as they are constructed by individuals within specific contexts (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Given that parental decisions regarding children's school attendance are embedded in complex socio-economic realities, a qualitative approach allows for an in-depth exploration of these dynamics beyond what numerical data can capture. The qualitative approach emphasizes exploration rather than measurement. Instead of quantifying the extent of absenteeism or correlating variables statistically, the study seeks to understand why and how parental socio-economic activities influence school attendance. This exploratory orientation is essential for uncovering the underlying motivations, constraints, and coping strategies employed by parents and guardians in the Ekumfi District (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018).

A qualitative approach is also appropriate because the phenomenon under investigation is context-dependent. Parental socio-economic activities in Ekumfi are shaped by local livelihood systems such as fishing, farming, and petty trading, which differ significantly from urban or industrial settings. Qualitative inquiry allows these contextual factors to be examined holistically, preserving the richness and complexity of participants' lived experiences (Yin, 2018). The approach prioritizes participants' voices as primary sources of knowledge. Parents and guardians are treated as knowledgeable agents who actively interpret and respond to their socio-economic environments. Through open-ended engagement, the study captures parents' narratives regarding school attendance, parental involvement, and perceived educational outcomes, thereby producing knowledge grounded in everyday realities (Tracy, 2020). Another defining feature of

the qualitative approach is flexibility. Data collection and analysis occur iteratively, allowing emerging insights to inform subsequent inquiry. This flexibility is particularly valuable in rural settings where participants' availability and socio-economic activities may influence the research process. It enables the researcher to adapt interview probes to explore unanticipated but relevant issues related to attendance and livelihood demands (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2018).

The qualitative approach also supports depth of understanding through prolonged engagement and detailed data. Rather than seeking large samples, the study focuses on a smaller, purposefully selected group of parents and guardians who can provide rich, relevant information. This depth enhances the study's ability to reveal nuanced patterns and meanings related to attendance behavior (Patton, 2015). Data generated through a qualitative approach are typically textual and narrative in nature. Such data are well-suited for thematic and interpretive analysis, which allows the researcher to identify recurring ideas, shared meanings, and divergent perspectives among participants (Braun & Clarke, 2021). In this study, thematic interpretation facilitates a comprehensive understanding of how socio-economic activities intersect with schooling decisions. The qualitative approach is particularly effective for examining sensitive and value-laden issues. Discussions around poverty, child labour, absenteeism, and parental responsibility may be difficult to quantify or disclose in structured surveys. Qualitative engagement creates space for trust-building and ethical sensitivity, enabling participants to express their experiences openly and honestly (Orb, Eisenhauer, & Wynaden, 2016). Furthermore, the approach aligns with the study's emphasis on early grade learners. Attendance patterns at this stage are closely linked to family routines and parental beliefs, which are best explored through qualitative inquiry. Understanding how parents perceive the importance of early schooling and

how they manage competing demands requires attention to subjective meanings and everyday practices (UNICEF, 2019).

The qualitative research approach also contributes to policy-relevant knowledge. While it does not aim for statistical generalization, it offers analytical insights that can inform district-level planning and community-based interventions. Policymakers can draw on these insights to design attendance strategies that are responsive to parental realities and local economic conditions (Sabates et al., 2021). In terms of rigor, the qualitative approach emphasizes trustworthiness rather than conventional notions of validity and reliability. Strategies such as credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability guide the research process to ensure that findings are robust and grounded in participants' accounts (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Nowell et al., 2017). These criteria strengthen the academic quality of the study. The qualitative approach also encourages reflexivity on the part of the researcher. The researcher's role as the primary instrument of data collection requires ongoing reflection on how personal assumptions and positionality may influence data interpretation. Reflexivity enhances transparency and strengthens the integrity of the research process (Tracy, 2020). By adopting a qualitative approach, the study addresses gaps in existing literature that has largely relied on quantitative methods to explain school attendance. It provides complementary insights that deepen understanding of parental decision-making processes and socio-economic constraints, thereby enriching the evidence base on education in rural Ghana (Rolleston & Iyer, 2019). The approach is further justified by the study's focus on parental perspectives rather than institutional outcomes. Understanding attendance through parents' eyes offers an alternative lens that challenges deficit narratives and situates attendance decisions within broader structural and economic contexts (Tikly & Barrett, 2017).

3.3 Research Design

The research adopted a phenomenological design. According to Smith et al. (2019), phenomenology aims to capture and comprehend the lived experiences of individuals and the meanings they assign to these experiences within a specific context. This design focuses on how individuals interpret and understand particular events, allowing researchers a window into participants' social worlds. O'Reilly and Kiyimba (2015, p.14) described phenomenology as "a way of thinking that stresses the need for researchers to comprehend the world of participants from their own perspectives and how they make sense of their surroundings." This study employed both descriptive and interpretive phenomenology. Descriptive phenomenology emphasizes providing a direct, unfiltered account of participants' experiences, whereas interpretive phenomenology involves analyzing and making sense of those experiences (Matua & Van Der Wal, 2015). These approaches reflect differing levels of researcher involvement. The descriptive method requires the researcher to remain as close as possible to the participants' accounts, while the interpretive method encourages analytical abstraction and thematic interpretation (Smith et al., 2019). Matua and Van Der Wal (2015) argue that descriptive phenomenology helps reveal often overlooked aspects of personal experiences, while the interpretive approach offers insights into the broader context and influences surrounding those experiences. Given that this study focused on exploring the relationship between parents' socio-economic activities and their children's school attendance, it was necessary to apply both phenomenological approaches. This dual strategy ensured a thorough understanding of participants' perspectives and the broader context.

Phenomenology was selected for its core principles, particularly its focus on subjectivity the belief that a phenomenon may hold different meanings for different

individuals, or even varying meanings for the same person in different situations (Langdrige, 2017). Understanding how individuals interpret and react to a phenomenon is crucial for gaining insight into their behaviors and decisions. According to Rassi and Shahabi (2015), individuals' experiences shape how they make meaning and inform their actions within their specific contexts. The phenomenological approach also promotes open-ended exploration, enabling participants to describe their experiences freely without being limited by predefined responses. This freedom allows participants to elaborate on what they go through, how they perceive it, what significance it holds for them, and its impact on their lives. Such detailed exploration provides a richer and more meaningful understanding of the participants' world, particularly regarding the socio-economic responsibilities of parents and their children's attendance at school, key concerns in this research.

3.4 Population

According to Kusi (2012), a population refers to a collection of individuals sharing similar characteristics that the researcher is interested in studying. In this research, the broader population consisted of all parents residing in Ekumfi Township. However, the study focused specifically on parents of students attending Akwansa Kokodo D/A Basic School. Within this group, the accessible population was limited to parents of learners in the early grade levels.

3.5 Sample and Sampling Techniques

A sample refers to a group of individuals, events, or situations selected from a larger population for study. Amoah and Eshun (2015) describe a sample as a portion or a subset of a population chosen for research purposes. In qualitative research, Creswell (2013) recommends using between three and five participants, while Young (2015) suggests a range of eight to fifteen. These guidelines are based on the premise that

qualitative studies prioritize depth over breadth, selecting small samples that provide rich and insightful information (Polit & Beck, 2010). In this study, the researcher employed purposive sampling, which is a non-random technique where individuals are selected based on specific characteristics relevant to the research objectives (Wiersma & Jurs, 2005). After evaluating the context and nature of the research (Henning et al., 2007), ten participants were deliberately chosen—comprising six parents and four guardians. For consistency, all were referred to as “parents” throughout the analysis, as will be evident in Chapter Four. Agyedu et al. (2013) emphasized that purposive sampling is ideal when the goal is to collect detailed and meaningful data from individuals who possess unique or relevant attributes. Similarly, McMillan and Schumacher (2001) explained that this technique involves selecting participants who meet specific criteria deemed essential by the researcher. By focusing on such participants, the study ensured that the data gathered would directly relate to the investigation into how parental socio-economic activities affect school attendance among early-grade learners.

3.6 Instrumentation

In order to explore individual opinions and gain deeper insight into the situation (Skovdal & Cornish, 2015), an individual in-depth, face-to-face semi-structured interview was conducted by the researcher. In accordance with suggestions in the qualitative research literature (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2019; Wolcot, 2015), I began the interviews with a semi-structured thematic guide. I started with the general open-ended questions based on the themes and then gradually probe deeper with specific questions based on participant responses. The interview consisted of four Sections thus, Section I, Section II, Section III, and Section IV. Section I considered the Socio-Economic Activities of Parents/Guardians, Section II highlighted the Parents/Guardians Socio-

Economic Factors and School Attendance, Section III presented the Parents/Guardians Involvement in Children's Education, whilst Section IV considered Balancing Socio-Economic Activities with Children's School Attendance. In all, the interviews were conducted for all the participants. Each interview took place at a time and place chosen by the participant in either the local Ghanaian Language or English depending on the preference of the participant. The interviews lasted for an average of 50 minutes with each participant. Interviews are advantageous since it enables researchers to gain in-depth information concerning the problem under investigation (Creswell, 2018).

3.7 Trustworthiness of the Study

Strategies for collecting data in qualitative research such as face-to-face semi-structured interview that was used in this study was designed to be explorative; often involving continuous contacts between the researcher and the participants (Silverman, 2013; Green & Thorogood, 2014). This led to the development of a researcher-participant relationship that eventually made the researcher become involved in generating and interpreting information (Creswell, 2009, Råheim et al., 2016). Qualitative research approach therefore, accepts the role of researchers in generating knowledge and does not claim complete objectivity in its practice. This exposes qualitative research to criticism from research traditions such as quantitative research that is steeped in logical positivistic philosophy emphasizing on objectivity and statistics rather than personal interpretations of data (Golafshani, 2013). The lack of objectivity however, does not compromise the quality and integrity of qualitative research findings. As long as researchers openly identify the values and biases that they bring to the study and take conscious steps to reduce the extent to which they influence the knowledge generated, trustworthiness can be improved (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2019). Trustworthiness of qualitative data therefore, referred to the extent of confidence that a qualitative

researcher takes to ensure that data are collected, analyzed, and reported (Carlson, 2010). Below were the procedures I employed to reduce my influence on the participants and the research process during the process of collecting and analyzing data.

Qualitative research considers that the researcher is an important instrument in collecting, describing, and interpreting information therefore having an imperative influence on the overall outcome of research. In this sense, Carlson (2010) posited that it is an important requirement of qualitative researchers to utilize reflexivity; a conscious process of self-reflection in which researchers recognize that they have significant influences on research development and participant engagement (Råheim et al., 2016). Exploring this, according to Kvale (1996), could help reduce biased subjectivity in which researchers avoid reporting evidences that contradicts their own expectations, opinions, and conclusions.

In this study, I was abreast of and acknowledge that the role that I played in this research was influenced by my educational and professional background and experiences. Another challenge that has been identified in qualitative research data collection is unequal power relations between interviewers/group members and interviewees with interviewers often dominating and exerting influence on interviewees consciously or unconsciously thereby compromising responses (Creswell, 2009; Green & Thorogood, 2009). Being aware of this, I made sure that the interview resembled a classroom discussion by playing the role of a facilitator or moderator.

I consciously avoided assuming any position of power or dominance but rather, moderated only the discussion by intermittently introducing the issues to be discussed and leaving participants to recount their experiences and interpretations. This conscious awareness was maintained throughout the research process including during the entire

data collection process. Reflecting on these made me watchful and observant taking care not to let my biases or personal circumstances affect the information I received or my interpretation of things. I brought myself to the level of the participants. At all times, I made it a point to assure participants that their views and experiences are respected by informing them that, “It is a learning process”.

The use of terms “validity”, “reliability” and “generalizability” are contested in qualitative research. This controversy is because of quantitative connotations and its deep roots in positivist philosophy (Golafshani, 2013). Despite this, Given and Saumure (2018) purported that, the concepts; credibility, dependability, and transferability are crucial for ensuring trustworthiness in a qualitative study. Credibility is defined as the determination of the extent to which an instrument actually measures what it is intended to measure (Long & Johnson, 2020). It is a concept used to indicate the credibility (to use qualitative terminology) of the information produced in research. Indeed, Given and Saumure (2018) noted that the term credibility instead of validity is often preferred in qualitative research circles due to the fact that while validity, as used in quantitative terms, reflects the accurate “measurement” of a variable, credibility reflects accurate or thick “description” of a phenomenon.

According to Creswell (2009), validity is established through statistical techniques in quantitative research. But steps such as triangulation (using different data sources to reach the same conclusion) and member-checking (a procedure in which refined parts of qualitative data are taken back to participants to establish the accuracy of the meanings a researcher has given to themes and descriptions) are two important ways of checking credibility of qualitative research data. Since a single instrument was used, Carlson’s (2010) argument to go for a combination of data from tripod sources was ignored. Meanwhile, member checking will be done through a confirmatory and

repetitive pattern of questioning and discussion during the interviews and focus group discussion to ensure that respondents re-confirmed the experiences they were recounting.

Green and Thorogood (2009) referred to reliability to accuracy and consistency in collecting, coding, and reporting of data as well as thoroughness of analysis. Also, as contested concept, qualitative research establishes reliability (preferably called dependability in qualitative terms) in ways that are different from other research paradigms like the quantitative paradigm. Creswell (2009) suggested steps such as peer debriefing (explaining one's analyses and conclusions to colleagues) and auditing of the decision trail (where a researcher presents details of all procedures to the conclusions of the study sources for others to evaluate the worth of the study by following the lines of action) as good for improving reliability in qualitative research. In order to improve dependability in this study, the researcher used the same semi-structured thematic guide in all interviews to ensure that the participants responded to similar questions thereby maintaining consistency throughout those phases of data collection.

The researcher herself conducted all the interviews. In order to reduce the extent to which the my own experiences in the field influences my findings, the transcript was handed over to my project's supervisor to read through the data transcripts and to hold discussion of the analysis, findings and conclusions for feedback purposes. I also made it a point to give a clear, step-by-step presentation of all procedures, decisions, and actions in the study report in a bid to improve dependability.

Green and Thorogood (2009) concurred that generalizability is the extent to which the account of a particular situation or population can be extended to other persons, times, or settings other than those studied. Whilst this concept is important to other research

paradigms, Polit and Beck (2010) noted that qualitative research does not necessarily aim to generalize but, rather, to provide rich, contextualized understanding and insight of some aspect of human experience by intensively and systematically studying particular cases. Deeply believing in the subjectivity or uniqueness of human experience, qualitative researchers do not subscribe to claims that research findings can be taken out and applied to other contexts or settings.

However, findings obtained from individual qualitative studies like this present one adds to already existing qualitative research literature on the subject of investigation. Together, this body of literature potentially generalizes across contexts (Skovdal & Cornish, 2015). The intention with which this study was conducted is therefore not that of broad generalization but rather that of providing rich, context-specific descriptions of parental socio-economic activities and school attendance of their children at the early grade level.

Added to existing qualitative literature on this topic, the findings here provided broader generalizations as Kvale (1996) noted that the findings of qualitative studies may, through analytical generalization, be applied to other situations. In view of this, qualitative researchers are encouraged to provide sufficient evidence to allow readers to make critical assessments of the extent to which the study's findings could apply in another setting. In keeping with this, I endeavored to provide sufficient evidence through a step-by-step presentation of this research steps and thick descriptions of the participants account to allow readers make their own critical assessments and analytical generalizations.

Confirmability is a neutral criterion for measuring the trustworthiness of qualitative research. If a study demonstrates credibility and fittingness, the study is also said to possess confirmability (Speziale & Carpenter, 2011). In ensuring confirmability, I

ensured that I put aside my opinions in the analysis of the data by reading the transcripts over and over again such that I became familiar with the ideas therein, which will be evident in the description of the data analysis process to be presented in the report. Also, I ensured that I provided a justification for the methodology used for the study by referencing appropriate authors and giving a clear description of the manner that the data was collected and analyzed such that readers can find it easy to decide on the acceptability of the findings.

3.8 Data Collection Procedures

An introductory letter was obtained from the Departmental Head, Early Childhood Care and Development, University of Education, Winneba to seek permission from the study site and to accordingly inform selected participants for their cooperation and assistance during the data collection. The researcher personally collected the data from parents at their residence. I took the introductory letter with me throughout the entire process due to the nature of the case and the sampling technique that was used for the study. The researcher on each parent conducted a face-to-face interview. Before, the commencement of each interview, I explained verbally the purpose of the study and the demand of each section. The face-to-face interview allowed me to listen carefully to the views of the interviewees and establish rapport. The advantage of individual face-to-face interviews over group interviews is that in group interviews, participants may be influenced by others and may feel the need to conform (Kvale, 1996). In group interviews, it is not always possible to observe confidentiality or prevent the adverse effects that group participation may have on certain individuals. During the interview, each participant was given ample time to respond to the questions. Each interview lasted for about 60 minutes. I used four weeks to interview the participants of the study. There was no time for interviewing the participants each day. I met the participants

depending on their schedules. After every interview, the session was audio-taped with a recording device and later transcribed for data analysis. This helped to maintain the original data for analysis.

3.9 Data Analysis

The analysis process will begin with measures to ensure transparency in the data storage, management, and transcription. All data from interviewees was audio-recorded with the consent of participants and stored in password-protected folders on my personal computer. I performed all translations and transcriptions myself before merging the final textual data from audio recordings. To increase reliability in qualitative data analysis, Parker (2011) suggested that researchers strive to maintain consistency in the coding process. In the coding process, inter-coder reliability is crucial for increasing reliability (MacPhail et al., 2016). To this end, a coding team comprising three Master of Philosophy students using qualitative methods for their research and myself set up to code the data individually. The team met after all members had completed their coding to discuss the codes for agreement. Coding disagreements were thoroughly discussed until consensus was reached. The analyses was done following thematic analysis approach.

Sandilowski and Barroso (2013) noted that qualitative analysis processes such as thematic analysis allows for a transparent presentation of research results by laying bare the degree of transformation of data from description to interpretation. Thus, despite criticisms of thematic analysis approaches as poorly branded and lacking concrete existence relative to analysis approaches like content analysis (Vaismoradi et al., 2013), it has the ability to help identify, analyze and report patterns within textual data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Finally, my views based on the data obtained were elaborated on and backed with related literature reviewed.

3.10 Ethical Considerations

Prior to participating in the study, all participants (parents or guardians) were provided with a clear explanation of the research purpose, procedures, potential risks and benefits, and their rights as participants. Informed consent should be obtained from each participant indicating their voluntary agreement to participate. The participants were also informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time without consequences.

Participants identities and personal information were kept strictly confidential. All data collected, including audio recordings, interview transcripts, and field notes, should be anonymized and stored securely. The use of pseudonyms or codes were implemented to protect participants' identities during data analysis and reporting.

Participants were informed about the use of audio recording during the interviews and their explicit consent should be obtained. They should also have the option to decline audio recording if they feel uncomfortable. Measures should be taken to ensure the privacy and security of audio recordings and authorized researchers should only access them.

Participation in the study should be voluntary, and participants should not face any form of coercion or pressure to take part. They should have the freedom to decline participation or withdraw from the study without any negative consequences.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Introduction

The chapter presented the results and the discussion of the data collected from the respondents for answering the research questions. It was in Two Sections thus; A and B. Section A presented the presents the analysis of the research questions whereas Section B dealt with the discussion of the research questions.

4.1 Analysis of Data

4.1.1 Research Question One: What are the specific socio-economic activities undertaken by parents/guardians in the Ekumfi District?

The core intent of this research question was to identify the specific socio-economic activities undertaken by parents/guardians in the Ekumfi District. In addressing this, the responses outlined by the participants were summarized under the following sub-themes.

Theme 4.2.1.1: Self-employment

Foremost, it was revealed that majority of the parents interviewed were self-employed.

It was followed by the following comments:

I grew up in a family of five and none of my siblings even made it up to O'level. My father told me that he cannot afford to pay my fees so he gave me a piece of land to farm on when I came of age (Parent 5).

Another also mentioned emphatically that:

I use to accompany my father for fishing when I was young. As a result, he taught me how to fish when I was about age thirteen and it prevented me from attending school regularly because I fell in love with the fishing business. And that had made me a fisherman now (Parent 1).

A woman shared an experience that she would had loved to attend school but her father said she will not waste her money on his female children because their office is the kitchen. As a result, she was handed over to a man to marry at her early teens thereby

preventing her to fulfill her dreams of becoming a lawyer as she intended to. She went on to pronounce that after the marriage, her husband set up a petty trade business for her unfortunately, fifteen years after the marriage, her husband passed away. With a critical look at the nugatory salary she makes from the business, she decided to go back to her relatives for a piece of land to farm on for her to be able to cater for her four children and herself. Indeed, the experiences shared by this woman were bitter.

Another parent also had this to say:

Both my late parents' family were having vast areas of land so they did not bother to send me to school at all. They claimed that attending school was a waste of my time since the only thing I need in life is money and with those lands, I can become someone in future. Due to this, I followed them. Though, I am not poor but if I am educated a bit, I hope it will be better for me to cater for my children's needs as expected (Parent 6).

Theme 4.1.1.2: State-employment

Furthermore, two of the parents shared that they government-employed but their salary is not able to cater to the needs of their family to the optimal level. As such, they engage in other petty businesses to their work to serve as a support. One mentioned that:

As you already know or have heard, in this country, teachers' salary even at the degree level is a peanut let alone someone like me with a diploma. The salary cannot even afford my children's school fees and feeding fees not to talk of other bills. Therefore, I engage myself in the selling of fruits and vegetables to act as a support (Parent 9).

Another concluded by saying that:

Even people with high educational levels who receive salaries twice and or thrice such as mine are complaining about hardship. How much more someone like me? Since, I am a bit free after school, I have decided to sell farm produce to support my husband and my other relatives (Parent 3).

Theme 4.1.1.3: Self-searching jobs

Moreover, some of the parents shared that owing to the nature of the living arrangements within the District, it compels most of the individuals to engage in one activity and or the other to boost them economically.

I am a seamstress but what I had observed is that, at certain times during the year, I find it very difficult to raise adequate amount of money to support my children's education. People will bring their clothes for sewing. After sewing them, getting your money becomes a problem not they do not want to pay but they don't have the money. Due to this awful situation, I decided to go for a piece of land to farm on to assist me in times I am in need (Parent 10).

Another parent mentioned that:

Due to the living conditions here, it has made me to start hawking fish. Eih, everyday, prices of goods keeps on increasing but the money I make from my farm is remaining steady. Therefore, I have decided to add hawking to it to enable me to support my husband to cater for our children's educational needs (Parent 7).

One participant shared that:

I am a mason but can you believe that I can stay at home for a week or two without working? I will be visiting various sites for work but to no avail. With this, how can I give my children better education with a critical examination of price fluctuations on-going in the country presently? Therefore, I consulted some fishermen in the area to give me a call up when they are going fishing to serve as an assistance (Parent 3).

Another concluded by saying:

Though I am an electrician but as the adage goes "all days are not equal". You can sit in this shop for the whole day without you getting any job. How can I cater for my family? Meanwhile, my late father's relatives have vast acres of land and now cocoa is of price, I decided to get a piece of land to farm on in order to raise money to cater for my family's needs (Parent 5).

The specific socio-economic activities undertaken by parents/guardians in the Ekumfi District were found to be agricultural activities such as fishing, cocoa farming, and the production of other crops such as plantain, cassava, cocoyam and the likes. However, the findings established that some of the parents were masons, tailors, hawkers, fruit

and vegetable sellers and the operation of provision shops. However, few some of them were teachers and nurses.

Discussion of Findings of Research Question 1

The findings under Research Question One reveal that parents and guardians in the Ekumfi District engage predominantly in self-employment and informal livelihood activities, including farming, fishing, petty trading, hawking, tailoring, masonry, and other artisanal work, with only a few in state employment such as teaching and nursing. This pattern reflects a livelihood structure largely rooted in the informal and subsistence economy. These findings are significant when examined through the lens of Social Reproduction Theory and Investment Theory, as they illuminate how parents' economic positions shape both their life trajectories and their children's educational experiences. From the perspective of Social Reproduction Theory, Bourdieu (1977) argues that social inequalities are reproduced across generations through the transmission of economic, cultural, and social capital. The narratives of parents who were denied schooling due to poverty, gender norms, or family livelihood priorities illustrate how limited educational opportunities in one generation translate into constrained occupational options in adulthood. Many parents' engagement in farming, fishing, and petty trading reflects a continuation of inherited economic roles rather than outcomes of personal choice, reinforcing Bourdieu's notion of structural continuity within social classes.

The accounts of parents who were withdrawn from school to farm or fish underscore how economic capital deficits intersect with cultural beliefs to reproduce disadvantage. For instance, parents who described education as a "waste of time" in their childhood reveal how habitus deeply ingrained dispositions shaped by social context influences perceptions of schooling (Bourdieu, 1977). These habitus-driven orientations continue

to shape livelihood strategies in adulthood, positioning self-employment and informal work as normalized and often inevitable outcomes. Gendered dimensions of social reproduction are also evident in the data. The female participant who was denied education due to patriarchal beliefs that “a woman’s office is the kitchen” demonstrates how gender norms function as mechanisms of social reproduction. Such norms restrict access to cultural capital for girls, resulting in adult economic vulnerability and dependence on low-income activities such as petty trading and subsistence farming. This finding aligns with empirical studies in Ghana and sub-Saharan Africa showing that gendered educational exclusion perpetuates women’s concentration in informal economic sectors (Unterhalter et al., 2016).

Investment Theory offers a complementary explanatory framework for understanding parents’ current socio-economic activities. Investment Theory posits that individuals and households allocate resources including time, money, and labour based on expected returns (Becker, 1993). Parents’ engagement in multiple income-generating activities reflects rational responses to economic insecurity, inflation, and unstable earnings. For many parents in Ekumfi, diversification into farming, hawking, or fishing alongside primary occupations represents a strategy to stabilize household income and meet basic needs, including children’s schooling. However, the findings suggest that low returns on both education and labour shape parental investment decisions. Parents employed in state institutions such as teaching expressed dissatisfaction with salaries, describing them as insufficient to support their families. This perceived low economic return on formal education challenges the assumptions of Investment Theory, which presumes that education yields reliable economic benefits. Similar findings have been reported in Ghana, where low public-sector wages weaken the perceived payoff of educational investment (Akyeampong & Rolleston, 2018). The convergence between Social

Reproduction Theory and Investment Theory is evident in parents' narratives that reflect constrained choices rather than free economic agency. While Investment Theory emphasizes rational decision-making, Social Reproduction Theory highlights how such decisions are bounded by structural inequalities. Parents' reliance on land inheritance, family occupations, and informal networks illustrates how economic investments are shaped by pre-existing social structures rather than purely individual calculations.

Empirical studies converge strongly with the findings of this study. Research in rural Ghana consistently shows that farming, fishing, and petty trading dominate household livelihoods and that parents often combine multiple activities to cope with income instability (GSS, 2021; Owusu & Agyei-Mensah, 2019). Studies in coastal districts similar to Ekumfi have also reported that children's schooling is indirectly affected by parents' engagement in time-intensive and seasonal economic activities such as fishing and farming (Sabates et al., 2021). Additionally, convergent studies indicate that parents with limited education are more likely to engage in informal work and less likely to perceive schooling as a transformative investment (Rolleston & Iyer, 2019). The parents' reflections on regretting their lack of education, yet remaining trapped in low-skilled occupations, align with findings that limited cultural capital constrains upward mobility and reinforces intergenerational inequality (Tikly & Barrett, 2017). Nevertheless, some divergent empirical evidence exists. Studies conducted in urban and peri-urban Ghana suggest that even parents engaged in informal employment may strongly prioritize education and make deliberate sacrifices to keep children in school (Porter et al., 2017). In contrast, the Ekumfi findings indicate that while parents value education, economic precarity compels them to prioritize livelihood diversification, sometimes at the expense of consistent educational support. This divergence highlights the importance of context, particularly the rural–urban divide, in shaping parental

economic behavior. Another point of divergence concerns state-employed parents. While some studies argue that public-sector employment enhances household stability and educational investment (World Bank, 2020), the findings from Ekumfi challenge this assumption. Parents in salaried positions reported engaging in secondary economic activities due to inadequate wages, suggesting that formal employment alone does not guarantee economic security or sufficient educational investment capacity in rural Ghana.

4.1.2 Research question two: What parents/guardians socio-economic factors have a bearing on the regular school attendance of children in the Ekumfi District?

The prime intent of this research question was to discuss the parents/guardians in the socio-economic factors that have a bearing on the regular school attendance of children in the Ekumfi District. Indeed, all the potential findings are summarized under the sub-themes below.

Theme 4.2.1: Low and moderate socio-economic activities of parents compelling children to leave school

Indeed, all the participants mentioned that because they are financially moderate and or low, they have to make their children to stop schooling at times to engage in one occupation one way or the other during school hours to enable them raise money to cater for their needs. In fact, the parents' pronouncements did not seem to them as a way of punishing the children but during these occasions they are financially weak. A parent said this to validate this claim.

I owe a cocoa farm and cocoa in this area comes in abundance during certain times in the year. When the cocoa season is over, it becomes challenging for me to support them adequately. As I am old, I cannot carry out the cultural practices in the farm alone, I hire the services of labourers so that they can maintain the farm since these children cannot

assist me. With the money paid to these labourers the children skip school at times (Parent 10).

Another parent shared that:

The conditions at this place is sometimes worst due to the expensive nature of goods and services. Every penny you lose from your economic activity affects you tremendously. Therefore, when my wife is sick and or had travelled to purchase goods from the District capital, there will be no one to sell at her shop and I will lose customers gradually. As a result, I go there myself to sell there until she recovers and or arrives from her journey. These children are too young to attend school themselves. So, in times like this, they fail to attend school regularly (Parent 1).

Another mentioned that:

With this farming business, how much money to I gain let alone to hire the services of other people to assist me? It is the children who are going to spend the money afterwards. Meanwhile, they are not old enough to work. So whenever, I need a helping hand, at my farm, I have no option to resort to other peoples services so I make them to quit schooling during this time (Parent 8).

One concluded by saying:

That is why I gave birth; to get a helping hand as a person who was not able to climb higher the educational ladder but ended up being a fisherman. But considering the ages of these children, what can they do for me now? Whenever my business is bad, I make them quit school for a day or two (Parent 4).

Theme 4.2.2: Family sizes

Additionally, it was revealed that the family sizes of the parents compels them to engage themselves in certain socio-economic activities that had detrimental effects on the school attendance of their children. This was followed by the following comments:

Raising a child is very challenging let alone someone like me having seven children. As for me, looking at the way things are moving on right now, any legal business that will fetch me money, I will gladly welcome it for my family to enable me to cater for their basic needs. My wife is also a business woman who sells plantain and she is not always at home. Preparing these children for school is time consuming and there is no money. In times such as these, I make them to absent themselves from school (Parent 10).

The comments made by this parent exemplifies that the amount involved in raising his children at greater peaks at the educational level compels him to engage the himself in any economic activity that he lays his hands upon.

Another harnessed by saying:

Since I am not employed in the government sector and I have five children to cater for, I lay some of the burden to my elder sons at times but since they are also students they cannot do it to the maximal level. To me, those I had already assisted to the higher level is of great importance to me. So, I rather choose for the younger ones to absent themselves than for the elderly ones (Parent 9).

The comments made by this man suggested that it appears significant for him to even spend all his money to develop a single child since the person is up the ladder. Therefore, he will not stop on the way since doing it yields no merits to him as he expects. A pronouncement made by him stating “educating all these children to the Senior High School level is cos 90 but even if two of these make it to the tertiary level, they can assist the rest perfectly”. As a result, it is empirical to validate that this parent cannot be judged as exhibiting cold attitudes toward the education of his early grade children but rather realizes that school a child up to SHS level in Ghana nowadays cannot fetch the individual with any lucrative job.

Another ended this by articulating that:

When your child is attending school, you have to provide them with lots of things. We all can testify that children at this age when at school like sweet beverages. You can give them feeding fees and or even beneficiary schools enjoying the school feeding programme give them meals but they still want other additional snacks. Considering my financial status and I have five children to cater for, I prefer to make my early grade children to absent themselves from school on days I am not financially sound because they will be mocked by their peers. As for the elderly ones, they can cope at school with or without money especially the males (Parent 2).

Theme 4.2.3: Low women empowerment

Moreover, majority of the parents mentioned that the educational level of women was a contributing factor to the problem. It was followed by the following comments:

It is nowadays that females attend school. Even with that, most of them not even up to the maximal level. Quite apart from that, most of those that engage in businesses earn minimal incomes. Therefore, it poses all sorts of challenges to the men. Not that we are not willing to carry out our responsibilities, but, at least we should get a helping hand considering how prices of goods and services had increased nowadays. since I am the only one to cater for the whole family, when I am sick or not there for even three days, my children's school attendance are negatively affected (Parent 4).

Another echoed by saying that:

I did not receive any proper education. When I got married, he established me with a business but the income I raise from it is very low compared to what he makes. Even if I obtain a quarter of his income, I would be very glad. Therefore, I rely solely on my husband. Therefore, when his income reduces, our children's schooling is seriously affected (Parent 7).

A parent concluded by expressing that:

I am a diploma holder. How much is my salary? Because I could not climb higher, the salary cannot cater for my needs as a widow. Therefore, it is not all the time my children are able to make it to school (Parent 6).

Theme 4.2.3: Culture

In furtherance, it was mentioned that the cultural aspects of the society is a major contributor to the situation. It was followed by the pronouncements below:

Most females from my family, I don't get it whether it is a curse or what, they end up getting pregnant before completing junior high school. Because of this, I display positive attitudes towards their schooling. They can choose to follow their mother all the time. After all, the aim is to marry (Parent 5).

Another harnessed by mentioning that:

When you are spending your money on these children, you are not certain that they will not make your sweat be in vain. As they are young now, they can pay heed to pieces of advice but by the time they get to upper primary, most of them decide to run away from the school and

engage themselves in fishing and other farm activities especially the boys and you may not know of it. Due to the nature of our work, by the time you realize it, everything would be out of hand. Therefore, even some of the elderly ones forbid their young generations not to send their children to school. Though some of us failed to pay heed to them but I am not all that worried when my child says to me that he/she does not want to attend school on a particular day(s) (Parent 10).

In concluding this factor, a parent said that:

Even if I am to follow our cultural norms, none of my female children will have attended school. Though I did not kick against it but I am not in full support of female child's education. Fine, if you are willing, I will support you. Imagine the worst thing I went through five years ago when my husband travelled to Libya. For about five years, I had not heard from him. As a poor woman, I gathered some money to see my daughter through junior high school. Upon getting to form three, she got pregnant and all efforts went in vain and I recalled what my grandparents advised me on girl-child schooling years ago. There are many bad peers here. My last two children are all females. Although I support them, but when they feel like not attending school, I do not bother them (Parent 2).

Theme 4.2.5: Parental age

Finally, some of the parents mentioned that parental age is a contributory factor to the phenomenon. Indeed, some alluded the problem to old age whereas some said it was stemming from young age. It was accompanied by the following sentiments:

Parents that are around their late 60's especially some of the men who married at a tender age do not realize any benefits associated with early grade education. What they will say is that, during their time, you have to be of about seven years before you start schooling. So a parent like this will not even bother to check his wards school attendance having realized that these children are less than five years (Parent 9).

Another supported by saying that:

It is absolutely true. As for the old men, they still recognize that agricultural activities are of benefits to their children. The worst of it all is when they hear about graduate unemployment. They will not even bother to send you to school. Even when they do, they don't mind whether or not you attend. After all, they have the notion that you will by hook or crook join them later (Parent 5).

A parent who was in support of younger age of parents spelt out clearly that:

Marriage comprises lot of things. When you are young, you might think that you are strong enough to work for money. But I tell you, without

any proper guidance, you end up messing up your entire family. In fact, most young couples eager to look out for well-paid jobs leave their children at the expense of this. Though they can be educated but since they lack adequate guidance, it affects their children's education negatively (Parent 3).

Conclusively, a parent shared that:

What I had observed amongst most young couples is that, they may sometimes have the financial capacity to cater for their children's educational needs adequately, but, it is an eyesore to witness that due to lack of maturity on both sides, they become befuddled with lots of challenges thereby affecting their children's education as well (Parent 8).

In sum, the socio-economic factors that hinder the school attendance of children in the Ekumfi District are that since most of them had not achieved higher education, the income they raise is moderate and or low thereby compelling them to allow their children to absent themselves from school whenever they face any sort of financial barriers. Additionally, family sizes of the parents and the educational level of the women make them to engage themselves in certain socio-economic activities that had detrimental effects on the school attendance of their children. Finally, cultural aspects of the society and parental educational level were all found to be contributing factors.

Discussion of Findings of Research Question 2

The findings under Research Question Two reveal that multiple interrelated socio-economic factors low and moderate income levels, large family sizes, limited women's empowerment, cultural norms, and parental age significantly influence the regular school attendance of children in the Ekumfi District. These findings resonate strongly with Social Reproduction Theory and Investment Theory, offering a nuanced explanation of how structural inequalities and rational household decision-making jointly shape schooling outcomes for early grade learners. From the standpoint of Social Reproduction Theory, Bourdieu (1977) posits that social and economic inequalities are sustained across generations through unequal access to economic, cultural, and social

capital. The narratives of parents who intermittently withdraw their children from school to support farming, fishing, or petty trading illustrate how limited economic capital compels households to prioritize short-term survival over long-term educational accumulation. This practice reinforces the reproduction of disadvantage, as children's schooling becomes disrupted, thereby limiting their future access to valued cultural capital. The theme of low and moderate socio-economic activities compelling children to leave school demonstrates how economic necessity normalizes child absenteeism. Parents' statements that withdrawing children from school is not intended as punishment but as a coping strategy reflect a habitus shaped by chronic economic insecurity. In Bourdieu's terms, these dispositions make irregular attendance appear reasonable and even inevitable within households experiencing persistent financial strain (Bourdieu, 1977).

Investment Theory further explains these findings by framing parental decisions as rational responses to constrained resources. According to Becker (1993), households allocate resources based on perceived costs and returns. When income is unstable or seasonal, as reported by farming and fishing parents, the opportunity cost of schooling increases. Parents therefore "invest" children's time in income-generating or labour-support activities during periods of economic hardship, even if this undermines consistent school attendance. Family size emerged as a critical factor shaping educational investment decisions. Parents with many children reported prioritizing older children or those already advanced in the education system, while allowing younger ones to absent themselves from school. This aligns with Investment Theory, which suggests that households may concentrate limited resources on children perceived to have higher potential returns (Becker, 1993). Simultaneously, Social

Reproduction Theory explains how such selective investment perpetuates inequality among siblings and reinforces stratification within families.

Empirically, these findings converge with studies conducted in rural Ghana and similar contexts, which show that large household sizes strain limited resources and negatively affect children's school attendance, particularly at the early grade level (Sabates, Hossain, & Lewin, 2021; GSS, 2021). Research has consistently demonstrated that parents facing high dependency ratios are more likely to adopt coping strategies that compromise schooling regularity (Rolleston & Iyer, 2019). Low women empowerment and limited female education further compound attendance challenges. The findings reveal that women's low educational attainment and minimal income-generating capacity increase household vulnerability when male income declines. From a Social Reproduction perspective, gendered exclusion from education restricts women's access to cultural and economic capital, thereby reproducing gender and class inequalities that directly affect children's schooling (Unterhalter et al., 2016). Investment Theory also helps explain this dynamic, as households with dual income earners are better positioned to sustain educational investments. Where women's economic contributions are limited, the household's ability to absorb shocks diminishes, increasing the likelihood of children missing school during periods of male unemployment, illness, or absence. Similar patterns have been reported in empirical studies linking women's empowerment to improved child educational outcomes (World Bank, 2020).

Cultural norms identified in the study particularly those devaluing female education and normalizing early pregnancy or marriage represent powerful mechanisms of social reproduction. Parents' ambivalence toward enforcing attendance, especially for girls, reflects internalized cultural capital that positions marriage and domestic roles above formal schooling. Bourdieu (1977) emphasizes that such symbolic systems legitimize

inequality by making it appear natural and unquestioned within communities. Convergent empirical studies in Ghana and sub-Saharan Africa affirm that cultural beliefs significantly influence parental attitudes toward schooling, especially for girls in rural and coastal communities (Porter et al., 2017; Tikly & Barrett, 2017). These studies similarly report that parents may support schooling in principle but withdraw enforcement when children resist attendance, viewing disengagement as culturally acceptable.

Parental age also emerged as a salient factor, with older parents displaying scepticism about the benefits of early grade education and younger parents struggling with maturity and guidance despite financial capacity. Social Reproduction Theory explains older parents' attitudes as products of historical contexts where schooling was less accessible or valued, shaping a habitus that prioritizes agriculture over formal education. Younger parents' challenges, on the other hand, reflect limited social and cultural capital needed to translate economic resources into effective educational support. Divergent empirical evidence exists, however, suggesting that some low-income parents in other rural settings maintain strong commitment to uninterrupted schooling despite economic hardship (Ampiah & Adu-Yeboah, 2016). Unlike the Ekumfi context, such settings often benefit from stronger community enforcement of schooling norms or external support systems. This divergence shows the importance of localized socio-cultural and economic conditions in shaping attendance outcomes.

4.1.3 Research question three: What are the views of parents/guardians in the Ekumfi District concerning their involvement in their children's education towards its attendance and its anticipated outcomes?

This research question sought to map out the views of parents/guardians in the Ekumfi District concerning their involvement in their children's education towards its attendance and anticipated outcomes. The verifications made by the participants are presented under the themes below.

Theme 4.2.3.1: Provision of children with the basic educational needs

Foremost, all the parents perceived that making it a core mandate to provide children with the basic learning materials required of them at school will encourage them to attend school regularly. A parent shared that:

As a parent, trying as much as possible to provide your child with the necessary learning materials he/she requires will motivate the child to be in school even when the child is not (Parent 7)".

Another parent shared emphatically that:

"We as parents should try to visit our wards school to have verbal interactions with her concerning what they may require at school. This will make them active in their classroom at all times thereby inspiring them to be in school all the time (Parent 3)".

The researcher also recounted that majority of participants perceived that providing their children with them with better uniforms and stationeries can empower their children's regular attendance to school. During the interview, a parent articulated:

"It is very disturbing to realize that my child is in tattered clothes attending school. Their colleagues may mock at them and may have disinterest for school. Frankly, since it is our duty to provide our wards with basic learning materials, even in thick and thin, we should make sure make provide them to avoid being mocked at school" (Parent 4).

Theme 4.2.3.2: Regular attendance to school gatherings

Additionally, all the participants articulated that it is very imperative for them to attend meetings regularly. They indicated further that these gatherings play tremendous roles

in enabling them to cherish issues hindering their children's regular attendance to school. A parent said emphatically that:

"I attend meetings in this school but, many parents do not come. On several occasions, we are few and as we know, we do this reluctantly, we cannot figure how to better get to arrest absenteeism among our children" (Parent 9).

Theme 4.2.3.3: Regular communication with schools

Meanwhile, all the parents also raised contended that communicating with the schools can pave ways to enhance the regular attendance of their children. This was accompanied by the following comment:

"Most of the time, we are all busy but we have to make sure that we communicate with the schools to enable us to be well-versed with the welfare of our children" (Parent 2).

Additionally, all the participants perceived that since their children are their future hopes, they should be eager to do whatever it takes to ensure their regular school attendance despite the financial challenges they are facing. Parents' internal conviction about their role about their children's education seems of critical importance to them because in this century, to assume any lucrative job has a direct bearing on education. As a result, it has intrinsically motivated the parents to appreciate the need of their children to be in school at all times.

Theme 4.2.3.4: Providing home support

Additionally, the parents perceived that they support their children at home as means of ensuring their regular school attendance. The main support for the children's attendance was preparing their children and transporting them to school. The parents shared that with an examination of the ages of these children, they should prepare them for school. They added that since they are closer to them, they are their motivation and

they often do whatever they say. As a result, when they prepare them in time at home with all their meals ready, they face no challenges in attending school regularly.

Furthermore, the parents also acknowledge that the children need a helping hand in their assignments so they should offer a helping hand there. Although most of the parents were not educationally inclined to offer this helping hand but alleged that they can do so by resorting to the services of their elderly children and or other co-tenants. They appreciated that when these children observe that they are always doing well in their home works, it motivates them to be in school regularly because their teachers may not beat them. The following assertions verify the claim:

“I cannot do the homework but will not sit there idle. I just instruct their older siblings to assist them and we observe them until completion. When their older siblings are not there, I consult our immediate neighbours (Parent 3).

Another echoed by revealing:

I always instruct my children to assist their little cousin with his homework. Anytime they are not around, I look for a different person to him. He becomes happy when he scores all after presenting it to their madam the next day. So, he is eager to submit his homework to her madam everyday (Parent 1).

Theme 4.2.3.5: Enhancement of the learners academic outcomes

Subsequently, some of the parents mentioned that when the children attend school regularly, it enables teachers to diagnose their strengths and weaknesses that in turn improves on the academic performance of the children. It was followed by the following comments:

In every work, your regularity at the place boosts your performance and or yield and schooling is not an exception. Because the teachers are responsible for shaping the lives and the academic performance of our children, I am for sure that when they attend school regularly, they may find out where they need help to enable them to improve upon their academic performance (Parent 5).

Another supported by saying that:

Any child that attends to school regularly develops academically because the teachers are able to monitor their academic progress all the time and to shape them to do their best (Parent 1).

A parent harnessed that:

No matter how a child is weak, if the individual attends school regularly, it enables the teachers to keep the person on track always thereby making them to improve academically (Parent 6).

Another parent also had this to say:

When my wife was sick and because I was always busy, our little girl absented herself from school for a week. After she resumed, she was facing challenges in doing her home works that was unusual of her. But after sometime, she was not facing it anymore then I realized that, when children are absent from school, certain concepts are being taught by teachers that shall not be repeated again. So the child loses it all when he/she is absent making regular school attendance a prime predictor of children's academic performance (Parent 8).

A parent concluded on this point that:

As for this, I agree with it perfectly. Any learner, no matter how the person is weak in academics will achieve an improvement when him/her attends school regularly (Parent 7).

Indeed, the findings verified that, the parents perceived that regular school attendance have a direct bearing on the social and lingual skills of their children. The following assertions confirm this claim.

As the children play in class and or during break time, it enables them to improve upon the way they express themselves verbally. Also, it enables them to associate themselves socially with their peers without feeling shy (Parent 3).

Another buttressed by saying that:

I wonder the kind of statements my child can make. We don't make those assertions at home. She learnt them at school (Parent 9).

A parent also supported by saying:

The way my children interact with me when I come home is really astonishing to me. The manner in which they will come out with what

happened at school is amazing. We did not teach them that because we are always busy. They learnt these traits at school (Parent 9).

Another concluded on this by mentioning that:

The things we the parents do at home are few. When they attend school, they learn a lot because they interact with other children when playing and this improves their social competences and language skills (Parent 10).

Furthermore, the parents realized that children's regular school attendance develops their psychomotor skills. The quotations below verify this claim.

Play-based is one instruction pedagogy used by early grade teachers. As these children manipulate objects during play-based activities, they are able to develop their psychomotor skills to the maximum level (Parent 1).

Another harnessed by saying that:

As grown as I am, sometimes, I face challenges when trying to fix a challenge posed to me by my decoder. But, my little son told me that, he can do it. I questioned his ability but when I gave him the chance, he did prove himself. Afterwards, he told me that, he learnt it at school (Parent 5).

A parent concluded by asserting that:

My little son can handle my laptop leaves me in the dark as to how he knew all those hands-on activities. I did not teach him that. I am certain that since their madam had one and likes him very much, she taught him that (Parent 8).

Theme 4.2.3.6: Boosting parents/guardians finances

Moreover, some of the participants mentioned that their children's regular school attendance paves way for them to have ample time to engage in more economic activities. The statements below confirm this.

As for these children, when they are with you at home, you cannot leave them and go anywhere considering their age and disruptive behaviors they engage themselves in. this compels you to stay with them. But when they are off to school, you can do anything you what for your money (Parent 4).

Another supported by saying that:

During vacation, the way I suffer in catering for my business is very sad. They will be running here and there and you will be shouting. You cannot even do your own activities let alone to resort to other ones. But when they attend school, I am free to engage in any little economic activity that comes in my way (Parent 8).

Another concluded on this point by saying that:

When they attend school, I have ample time to move to any place I like to look out for jobs that will fetch me money to cater for them. When they are at home, these opportunities cease (Parent 5).

Theme 4.2.3.7: Less disruptive behaviours among children

Finally, the parents believed that their children's school attendance is linked to less disruptive behaviours at home. The quotations below confirm this perception.

Children of this age usually perceive what their teachers tell them to be true compared to what we the parents use to tell them. Therefore, when they attend school regularly, the teachers shape them morally on what to do and what they should refrain from. So when they come home and you tell them the same, thing, they will agree with you since their teacher had also informed them about it and this all stems from when your child attends school regularly (Parent 1).

In concluding on this point, a parent mentioned that:

The curriculum for these children is geared specifically towards the building of moral values. Therefore, what the teachers tell the children is what they are likely to display in their daily lives. This is because, children of this age trust whatsoever their teachers tell them (Parent 8).

In summary, these assertions confirm that the parents believed that their effective communication with schools and the provision of the required teaching and learning materials can assist the regular school attendance of their children. Finally, preparing them to school on time and rendering assistance to them in their homework also ensures their regular school attendance. Additionally, the parents observed that their involvement in their children's education enables teachers to diagnose their strengths and weaknesses that in turn improves on the academic performance of the children. Additionally, the parents addressed that ensuring regular school attendance have a

direct bearing on the social, lingual, and the psychomotor skills development of their children. Finally, they cherished that it paves way for them to have ample time to engage in more economic activities likewise reducing their children's disruptive behaviours at home.

Discussion of Findings of Research Question 3

The findings under Research Question Three reveal that parents' perceptions of their involvement in their children's education are deeply embedded in both structural conditions and purposive household actions. When interpreted through Social Reproduction Theory (Bourdieu, 1977) and Investment Theory, these views illuminate how parental practices simultaneously reproduce existing social structures and represent calculated efforts to improve children's future life chances. The convergence of these theories provides a robust lens for understanding how parental involvement shapes school attendance and anticipated educational outcomes in the Ekumfi District. From the perspective of Social Reproduction Theory, parents' emphasis on providing basic educational needs such as uniforms, stationery, and learning materials reflects attempts to equip their children with the minimum cultural and symbolic capital required to function effectively within the school system. Bourdieu (1977) argues that schools privilege certain forms of cultural capital, and children who lack these resources often experience marginalisation. Parents' concern that tattered uniforms expose children to ridicule highlights how symbolic deprivation can undermine school attendance by fostering shame and disengagement, thereby reproducing educational disadvantage. Investment Theory complements this explanation by framing the provision of learning materials as a rational household investment aimed at maximizing educational returns. Parents' narratives suggest that even under financial constraints, they perceive spending on basic school needs as a worthwhile allocation of scarce

resources because it increases children's motivation to attend school and enhances the likelihood of positive academic outcomes (Becker, 1993). This aligns with empirical studies in Ghana showing that parental provision of basic educational inputs significantly predicts regular attendance at the basic school level (Rolleston & Iyer, 2019).

Parents' views on attending school gatherings and meetings further illustrate the interplay between structural reproduction and strategic investment. From a social reproduction standpoint, limited participation by many parents may reflect constrained social capital, where parents lack confidence or familiarity with institutional norms of schooling. Bourdieu (1986) notes that unequal access to social capital limits families' ability to effectively engage with educational institutions, thereby perpetuating disparities in school participation and outcomes. Conversely, parents who consistently attend meetings demonstrate an investment-oriented orientation, recognising that engagement with teachers and school authorities enhances information flow and collective problem-solving around absenteeism. Empirical evidence converges with this finding, as studies across sub-Saharan Africa indicate that parental involvement in school governance and meetings is associated with improved attendance and learner engagement (Epstein, 2018; Sabates et al., 2021). Regular communication with schools, as highlighted by participants, further underscores the role of social capital in shaping attendance. Social Reproduction Theory suggests that parents who maintain frequent communication with teachers are better positioned to acquire institutional knowledge and educational dispositions valued by schools. This communicative engagement enables them to align home practices with school expectations, thereby supporting children's regular attendance and reducing the likelihood of exclusionary practices (Bourdieu, 1977).

From an Investment Theory perspective, communication with schools represents a low-cost but high-return strategy. Parents perceive that staying informed about their children's welfare and academic progress allows early intervention in attendance-related challenges, thereby protecting their educational investment. Convergent empirical studies confirm that parent-teacher communication enhances accountability and improves attendance, particularly in early grade education (Jeynes, 2017). The theme of providing home support such as preparing children for school, transporting them, and assisting with homework can also be interpreted as an attempt to compensate for limited institutionalised cultural capital. Bourdieu (1977) argues that families with lower educational backgrounds may lack the dominant cultural resources valued by schools, yet parents' efforts to mobilise older siblings and neighbours reflect adaptive strategies to bridge this gap. These practices, while supportive, may still reproduce inequality if the quality of assistance remains uneven. Investment Theory, however, frames these actions as pragmatic resource pooling within households and communities. Parents' reliance on siblings and neighbours to assist with homework reflects rational substitution where direct parental academic support is unavailable. Similar findings have been reported in rural Ghana, where extended family and community networks play a critical role in sustaining children's school participation despite parental illiteracy (Ampiah & Adu-Yeboah, 2016). Parents' strong belief that regular attendance enhances academic performance aligns closely with both theoretical perspectives. Social Reproduction Theory explains that consistent attendance allows children to internalise the dominant academic culture, linguistic codes, and behavioural norms rewarded by schools. Absenteeism disrupts this process, leading to cumulative learning gaps that reinforce existing inequalities (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990).

Investment Theory reinforces this view by positioning attendance as a necessary condition for realizing educational returns. Parents' lived experiences of children struggling after short periods of absence illustrate awareness of the opportunity costs associated with missed instructional time. Empirical studies strongly converge with this finding, consistently identifying attendance as a key predictor of academic achievement at the basic level (Gottfried, 2019). Beyond academics, parents' perceptions of improved social, linguistic, and psychomotor skills through regular attendance highlight schooling as a site of holistic capital formation. Social Reproduction Theory recognises schools as spaces where children acquire embodied cultural capital, including language use, social interaction skills, and behavioural dispositions. Parents' observations that such skills are not easily taught at home underscore how schooling compensates for limitations in home-based socialisation. Investment Theory extends this interpretation by suggesting that parents value schooling not only for academic credentials but also for the broader skill set that enhances children's future employability and social mobility. Convergent empirical evidence supports this, showing that early grade attendance contributes significantly to socio-emotional and psychomotor development (UNESCO, 2020). The finding that children's school attendance enables parents to engage in economic activities introduces a reciprocal dimension often underexplored in schooling research. From a social reproduction perspective, this reflects how schooling structures daily life in ways that sustain household economic survival. However, it also underscores how families remain dependent on schools as childcare institutions, a dynamic shaped by broader structural inequalities in labour markets and social protection systems. Investment Theory provides a clearer explanatory frame here, as parents perceive schooling as a dual investment that yields immediate economic returns through freed time for work and

long-term returns through children's education. Divergent studies, however, caution that in some contexts, economic pressures lead parents to withdraw children from school to support household labour, highlighting the fragile balance between schooling and livelihood strategies (Porter et al., 2017). Finally, parents' belief that regular attendance reduces disruptive behaviours reflects the moral and disciplinary role of schools in social reproduction. Bourdieu (1977) emphasises that schools transmit dominant moral values and behavioural norms that shape children's habitus. Parents' trust in teachers' authority suggests deference to institutionalised cultural capital, reinforcing the school's role in shaping compliant and socially acceptable behaviour.

4.1.4 Research Question 4: How can the parents/guardians in the Ekumfi District balance their socio-economic activities with the school attendance of their children?

The final research question proposed how the parents/guardians in the Ekumfi District can balance their socio-economic activities with the school attendance of their children. The verifications made by the participants in assisting to drive the name of the situation into the mud are presented under the themes below.

Theme 4.2.4.1: Making time to corroborate with schools

To begin, all the parents agreed that, making time to collaboration with schools is a potential way of addressing the issue of balancing their socio-economic activities with their children's attendance to school. The parents believed that dedicating part of their time to corroborate effectively with the schools may make the teachers aware of issues emanating from their work. As a result, it will make the teachers to give them the necessary guidance that will make them to be able to reduce the rates of absenteeism among their children. This was followed by the following comments:

Due to the challenges we face in giving our children better education, I sometimes give up especially when I am financially broke. But I am for sure that it is not the best for my child. I am for sure that when I share my view with the school, they can give me directives so that my child will be in school at all time. Therefore, as a parent, I dedicate part of my time for this (Parent 3).

Another buttressed by saying that:

For anything to be successful, there should be collaboration between the parties involved and children's education is not exempted from this. When we the parents collaborate with the schools effectively, they will direct us on what to do when we face challenges concerning the educational needs of our children no matter how busy we are (Parent 2).

Another said emphatically that:

Teachers are aware of the challenges we face. Sometimes, my children when absent from school and goes to school the next day, the teacher because of this took my number and asked me why and I shared my experience with her every little time I am free. She told me not to bother when such incident happens and that, she will know the way forward. I trusted her and since, that issue had not kept my children at home anymore (Parent 10).

Another concluded on this point by saying that:

Our collaboration with the school is very important so that the school shall recognize our challenges and show us the ways forward (Parent 9).

Theme 4.2.4.1: Making time to corroborate with schools

Theme 4.2.4.2: Open efforts with schools

All the parents acknowledged that although to ensure regular attendance of their children requires financial strength but their open and collaborative efforts with schools can assist in remedying the situation. The parents addressed that they had to work extra harder in order to meet the demands of their families thereby causing absenteeism among their children but they thought it wise to sacrifice part of their time to be open to the schools such that they can jawjaw to find a solution to the learners' absenteeism rates. A parent remarked that:

It is very crucial to factor out how we as parents to make provisions with the schools in our quest to ensure our children's regular attendance to

school. They can educate us on ways to cope when we are not financially sound. Some of us do not make our children to attend school because we don't have money for their feeding fee but they still eat when at home. No matter our work, we should dedicate part of our time for this. When we share problems such as these with them, they can show us the ways out (Parent 6).

A parent emulated similar statements:

When we the parents dedicate part of our time and reaches out to schools, they will welcome my ideas. When this happens, it means I can take part in decisions concerning the welfare of my child and it inspires me to respond to whatever I am called upon to react to within the school. In fact, I am for sure that effective collaboration between the school and parents may boost every parent to play active roles when it comes to their involvement in their children's education (Parent 10).

Theme 4.2.4.3: Making time to corroborate with schools

Furthermore, all the parents were in support on the need to make time for regular PTA meetings. They felt that it will be an avenue where they can address and negotiate issues that are hindering their involvement with the school. The parents also believed that it is the only avenue where they can all meet to share their various experiences with their colleagues to find out the probable means of balancing their work and their active involvement in their children's education. A parent shared that:

Although PTA is organized regularly, we would sacrifice part of our time to attend to enable us to discuss these things and together with the school. In this way, we may understand how to balance our work with our children's education to help them succeed as we want (Parent 4).

The above statements made by the participants announces their need to allot much of their time to attend PTA often to make the teachers to educate them on how they can solve the problems emanating from the mismatches between their socio-economic activities and their children's education.

Theme 4.2.4.4: Open lines of communication with schools

Moreover, all the parents announced the need to have effective and open lines of communication between the home and the school during the interviews. A parent spelt

out the importance of consistent communication efforts with parents, especially children whose parents are usually not available during school gatherings and or seldom visit the school. This she said may enable such individuals to appreciate the efforts they can put in place to enable them balance their jobs with their children's education. This was accompanied by the following comments:

I find time to communicate to the teacher on WhatsApp. I really enjoy using it because, it makes me recognize that though my absence makes me lose certain information but not all hope is lost because I am always privileged to whatever issues that emerge during these gatherings. And it has assisted me to keep my children in school frequently because I get all reports on my child (Parent 8).

The parents also suggested the need of schools to establish an open line of communication. This they elaborated can assist parents to monitor the attendance and progress of their children. A parent said that:

I usually tell the teachers of my children to ask to communicate with me freely when the need arises especially on issues pertaining to the academics of my child. I urge all parents to continually ask them every day and ask him/her to tell you she is doing at school and things bothering her. This helps the child to be alert in school so that she learns to cultivate the habit of being in school at all times (Parent 9).

4.2.4.5: Empowering women

In addition, it was established that empowering women can help all families to balance their socio-economic activities and their children's education. It was followed by the sentiments below.

In fact, most of us the women, due to the ways customs had undermined us in the society do not make us to be able to raise money to assist our husbands. We have become a burden to them because they are solely responsible for doing actually everything. So wherever they are not well and or no more, our children's education is negatively affected. Therefore, when the society empowers us, it shall go a long way for us to gather adequate capital to support our children's education in the absence of our husbands (Parent 1).

Another parent also had this to say:

Everything should be done by men. Most of the women do not assist us in anyway in terms of finances not that they don't want to be they do not have it. Most of the economic activities such as farming and fishing are solely undertaken by men. This poses challenges to us because the money we gather are not adequate to cater for all that we want. Even in some communities here, women are forbidden to undertake certain economic activities leaving them at a disadvantage. Therefore, when they are given equal chances like we men, it may make them financially sound to be able to support the educational needs of our children when we are financially weak (Parent 6).

A parent said on this point that:

Nowadays, things had changed. Men shouldn't be the only ones to be catering for the financial needs of the family. Women should also do so. However, here is the case that they are not given the privilege due to certain societal norms. This leaves the education of children at a disadvantage because in the absence of the father, children's educational needs cannot be met. Therefore, societies and heads of family should empower women to assume similar job opportunities as men (Parent 5).

Theme 4.2.4.6: Better girl-child education

Furthermore, some of the respondents verified that the provision of better education for the girl child to a higher level can assist in curbing the situation. The parents felt that the economic burden on them right now stem from the fact that most of their wives or the women within their communities are not financially sound due to their low level of education and this had brought all the burden on the men. They shared that proper education of the girl child may enable them to assume lucrative jobs in order to support their partners in the near future to curb this menace. The quotations below exemplifies this claim.

Educating females to a higher level assists them to obtain well-paid jobs to be able to assist their spouses in catering for all the educational needs of their children (Parent 3).

Another supported by pointing out that:

This is absolutely true because the wives we live with them here do not have better jobs because most of them are not well-educated. For manual

work also, how many women can weed, fish, undertake construction activities, etc. just to mention but just a few. Since they cannot do this, the income they raise from their activities is small making them unable to assist their husbands in the education of their children. However, with the provision of better education, they can get well-paid jobs to be able to assist in their children's education (Parent 8).

Another concluded on this point by saying that:

Providing them with education to a higher level is very essential to enable them to raise adequate income to support the educational needs of their children (Parent 5).

Theme 4.2.4.7: Positive parent perceptions toward education

Moreover, some of the parents observed the need for all parents to develop positive perceptions and attitudes towards the education of their children despite the stressful nature of their work. They felt that because one's perceptions affects his/her attitudes, when parents develop positive attitudes toward their children's education, it will compel them to make the necessary amendments that can enable them to balance their jobs with their children's education. It was accompanied by the comments below:

As parents, we are all aware of how our jobs can be stressful but, when we develop positive perceptions about the educational needs of our children, it shall inform us on the relevance of keeping our children in school at all times (Parent 4).

Another supported by saying that:

When we develop positive perceptions, it will shape our attitudes such that we may try as much as possible so that our children may not skip school due to one reason or the other although my work is very hectic (Parent 7).

In concluding this, a parent mentioned that:

I know the stress accompanied with my job. Meanwhile, as parents, we need to develop positive perception concerning our children's education as parents may shape our ways in dealing with challenges that come with it (Parent 9).

4.2.4.8: Spirit of hard work among parents/guardians

In furtherance, all the parents concluded that all family heads must endeavor to attach his/her rapt attention to economic activities they undertake. The notions of the participants must have stemmed from the fact that owing to the difficulty nature in finding and or engaging adequately in the ones they have in raising higher income for themselves likewise to support their children's education. The following assertions verify it.

Though most of us do not have well-paid jobs but, we are still surviving and keeping our children in school. Therefore, whatever activity we lay our hands on, we have to attach seriousness to it so that we get the required income from it for us to be able to cater for our children's educational needs (Parent 6).

Another supported by saying that:

Despite the little money I make from my business, we are still coping because, I don't joke with my job because, it my sole source of income. Therefore, I endeavor that my colleagues do the same (Parent 8).

Another parent concluded by mentioning that:

I attach seriousness to every job I lay my hands upon provided it will fetch me money and this has sustained I and my family for several years (Parent 7).

4.2.4.8: Creation of welcoming environment in schools

Finally, all the parents emphasized the need of schools to create a welcoming environment for them to visit without any form of hitches. They cherished that it shall accord them to obtain information about their wards and the school. A parent made this statement to support this revelation. Therefore, an open-door was remarked by the participants as the apt strategy. A parent mentioned that:

This policy is an age-old strategy but we schools seldom put it into practice. I am sure that parents are encouraged to pay regular visits to the schools, they will better understand what attendance means to their children (Parent 7).

These views made by the parents informs schools on the need to make their modes of communication very flexible for all parents to cherish the need to visit them at all times. This in turn caters for all parents more especially, those with weak educational backgrounds.

Conclusively, all the parents revealed that all parents should endeavor to provide better education for all their children such that their generation to come will not face those challenges. To them, the provision of this education may enable the children to obtain lucrative jobs in future to enable them to cater for the educational needs of all their children.

In a nutshell, in order for the parents/guardians to balance their socio-economic activities with their children's education is making time to corroborate effectively with the schools likewise the empowerment of women. Additionally, the provision of better education for the girl child to a higher level and the need for parents to develop positive perceptions and attitudes towards the education of their children were found to be potential measures. Additionally, parents/guardians viewed that making time for open lines of communication between schools and parents, collaborative efforts by all parties, likewise their regular attendance to school gatherings such as PTA can enable them to balance their work and their children's school attendance. Finally, the cultivation of the spirit of hard work by the parents/guardians likewise making it their core mandate to provide better education for all their children were other means that were addressed.

Discussion of Findings of Research Question 4

The study revealed that parents in the Ekumfi District acknowledged the challenge of managing their economic responsibilities while ensuring that their children attend school consistently. Many respondents stated that although they value education and

recognize its importance, the demands of their jobs especially those involving farming, fishing, or small-scale trading often prevent them from consistently supervising their children's school activities. These findings support Mensch and Lloyd's (2018) argument that household responsibilities and income-generating demands frequently limit parental engagement in their children's education. The data gathered emphasized that empowering parents particularly mothers through vocational training or income-generating activities may improve their ability to balance these obligations.

Parents further noted that they were more likely to support their children's school attendance when they had stable employment or supplementary income streams. This view is consistent with the conclusions of Ampaabeng et al. (2017), who found that economically stable parents are better positioned to purchase school supplies, pay fees, and supervise learning at home. It also affirms the claims of Guner (2014), who suggested that socio-economic stability enables families to invest more meaningfully in their children's educational needs.

A key theme that emerged was the belief that cultivating strong school-parent partnerships could help bridge the gap between economic work and school attendance. Participants stated that they felt more motivated to prioritize school attendance when schools maintained regular contact with them and encouraged their involvement through initiatives such as Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) meetings. These findings support the advocacy of Epstein and Sheldon (2002), who argued for deliberate home-school partnerships that create an environment conducive to parental involvement. Jeynes (2007) also emphasized that structured school-family engagement leads to increased school attendance and better academic results.

Participants also believed that communication with teachers and school administrators helped them stay informed and created accountability, which in turn improved their children's commitment to attending school. Some parents proposed that regular updates on student performance and school events would enable them to plan their economic activities more effectively. These insights are aligned with Maynard et al. (2012), who demonstrated that personalized interventions such as parent-teacher meetings and mentorship significantly reduce absenteeism. Stewart (2008) similarly emphasized the role of community and institutional support systems in strengthening school attendance outcomes.

Additionally, the study revealed that some parents relied on extended family members or older siblings to support the education of younger children, particularly during busy work periods. This coping strategy highlights the communal nature of childcare in many African contexts. However, the effectiveness of such arrangements depended largely on the level of shared responsibility within households. According to Dynarski et al. (2008), leveraging family and community networks to reinforce school attendance has been an effective model in several school-based programs.

The research also uncovered that parents appreciated technological solutions such as SMS alerts or phone calls from teachers as helpful tools in monitoring their children's attendance. These findings are consistent with those of Balfanz et al. (2007) and Kearney and Hyle (2014), who emphasized the importance of integrating technology into parent-school communication systems. These tools not only facilitated information sharing but also fostered trust and accountability among stakeholders. In conclusion, parents believed that in order to successfully manage both their economic tasks and their children's education, strategic partnerships with schools, community-based initiatives, and empowerment programs are essential. The findings affirm that

improving school attendance in economically constrained environments like Ekumfi requires collective action. Schools must proactively engage families, while local authorities and NGOs can implement targeted interventions to support parents. Programs focused on women's empowerment, vocational training, and flexible school scheduling may be especially effective in helping parents harmonize livelihood activities with their children's educational needs.



CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Overview

This chapter dealt with the summary of the study, summary of major findings, general conclusions drawn on the bases of the findings and recommendations that are assumed to be useful to enhance regular school attendance by early grade facilitators' in the Ekumfi District as well as suggestions for further studies.

5.1 Summary of Findings

This study explored parental socio-economic activities and school attendance among early grade learners' in the Ekumfi District.

Specifically, the study sought to:

1. find out the socio-economic activities undertaken by parents/guardians in the Ekumfi District.
2. understand the parents/guardians socio-economic factors that hinder the regular school attendance of children in the Ekumfi District.
3. addressed the views of parents/guardians in the Ekumfi District concerning their involvement in their children's school attendance and its probable outcomes.
4. found out from the parents/guardians in the Ekumfi District on how to they can balance their socio-economic activities with the school attendance of their children.

This study was guided by social reproduction and the investment theory. The interpretivist paradigm rooted in the qualitative approach was selected for the study. The study employed a phenomenological design. The population consisted all parents in Ekumfi Township. The target population however, comprised all parents in Akwansa

Kokodo D/A Basic School. However, the accessible population consisted of only early grade parents. Ten (10) parents were selected for the study by means of purposive sampling. Instrument used for data collection was semi-structured interview guide. Thematic analysis as propounded by Braun and Clarke (2006) was adopted to analyze the data obtained.

5.2 Key Findings

1. Parents in the Ekumfi District are predominantly engaged in agriculture-related work (farming and fishing), informal trading (hawking, fruit and vegetable sales), and artisanal activities (masonry, tailoring), with a few employed in the formal sector as teachers or nurses.
2. Irregular school attendance among early grade learners was largely attributed to low levels of parental education, large family sizes, cultural obligations, and the demands of labor-intensive occupations that limit supervision and educational support.
3. Parents generally believe that their involvement such as attending PTA meetings, supervising homework, and communicating with teachers enhances their children's school attendance and academic performance.
4. Parents indicated that balancing work and educational responsibilities is possible through effective time management, increased communication with schools, and the support of extended family or community members.

5.3 Conclusions

The diverse yet largely informal nature of parental occupations, characterized by long hours and low, unstable income, often limits the ability of parents to consistently supervise their children's educational activities and ensure regular school attendance.

Socio-economic constraints, particularly low income, limited education, and competing domestic or cultural roles, restrict parents' ability to prioritize and enforce regular school attendance for their children.

Parents recognize that their active participation in school-related activities positively influences their children's motivation, behaviour, and educational outcomes, even though socio-economic limitations sometimes prevent full engagement.

While socio-economic responsibilities can hinder parental oversight, collaboration between families and schools, combined with community support systems, can help parents better manage both livelihood demands and educational responsibilities.

5.4 Recommendations

The study therefore recommended that;

1. The Ekumfi District Assembly should implement livelihood improvement initiatives and vocational training programs to help parents, especially women, transition into more stable income-generating activities that enable them to better support their children's education.
2. Community sensitization campaigns led by the Ghana Education Service and local NGOs should be organized to raise awareness about the negative impact of socio-economic barriers on education and to encourage strategies that promote regular attendance despite financial or cultural pressures.
3. Schools in Ekumfi District should foster parent-friendly policies and outreach programs that encourage greater parental involvement, including flexible meeting times and regular updates on learners' progress to strengthen the home-school connection.

4. Schools in Ekumfi District should initiate community-based partnerships and adopt communication tools such as SMS alerts or phone calls to keep parents informed and engaged, thereby enabling them to balance work and educational supervision effectively.

5.5 Suggestions for Future Studies

Given the limitations and scope of the current study, the following directions are proposed for future research:

Widening the Geographical Scope

Future studies should consider exploring other districts or regions beyond Ekumfi to determine whether the findings in this study are consistent in other rural or urban contexts. Comparative studies across multiple districts could offer broader insights into how different socio-economic conditions influence school attendance.

Inclusion of Other Stakeholders

While this study focused on the perspectives of parents, future research should incorporate the views of other stakeholders such as teachers, school administrators, education officers, and pupils. This would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing school attendance from multiple viewpoints.

Use of Mixed Methods Approaches

Future investigations may benefit from employing a mixed-methods approach that combines both qualitative and quantitative techniques. This would enable researchers to validate themes identified in interviews through statistical analysis and strengthen the reliability and generalizability of the results.

Focus on Longitudinal Trends

Scholars could also consider conducting longitudinal studies to examine how changes in parents' socio-economic status over time affect children's school attendance and academic progress. This would help track patterns and evaluate the long-term effectiveness of interventions implemented in such communities.

Examination of School-Level Interventions

Another area worth exploring is how specific school-based policies or interventions such as feeding programs, scholarship schemes, or attendance monitoring systems affect attendance among early grade pupils. This could highlight practical strategies for improving attendance outcomes in resource-limited settings.



REFERENCES

- Adekeye, A. (2002). *Teaching social studies in Nigerian colleges*. Ule-Ife Press.
- Adewale, A.M. (2002). Implication of parasitic infections on school performance among school-age children. *Ilorin Journal of Science Education*, 2, 78-81.
- Agyedu, G. O., Donkor, F., & Obeng, S. (2013). *Teach yourself research methods*. University of Education, Winneba.
- Agyei-Mensah, S., Amoah, P. A., & Agyeiwaa, E. (2020). Family size and school attendance in Ghana: Is there a causal link? *African Population Studies*, 34(2), 5121-5131.
- Ajayi, K. O. (2003). Parents' education, occupation and real mother's age as predictors of students' achievement in Mathematics in some selected Secondary Schools in Ogun state, Nigeria. *Contemporary Research*, 4(1), 95–109.
- Akyeampong, K., & Rolleston, C. (2018). Low-fee private schooling in Ghana: Is growing demand improving equity? *International Journal of Educational Development*, 60, 242–252.
- Allen, Q., & White-Smith, K. (2018). “That’s why I say stay in school”: Black mothers’ parental involvement, cultural wealth, and exclusion in their son’s schooling. *Urban Education*, 53(3), 409-435.
- Al-Matalka, F. I. M. (2014). The influence of parental socioeconomic status on their involvement at home. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 4(5), 146-154.
- Amato, P. R. (2005). The impact of family formation change on the cognitive, social, and emotional well-being of the next generation. *The Future of Children*, 15(2), 75-96.
- Ambeken, O. A., Ukwayi, M. & Ogodo, Y. (2012). Students and teachers’ perception of the causes of poor academic performance in Ogun State secondary schools, Nigeria: Implications for Counselling for National Development. *European Journal of Social Sciences*, 13(2), 229-249.
- Amoah, J., & Eshun, D. (2015). *Doing your research project: A guide for first time researchers in education, health and social sciences* (4th ed.). Maidenhead.
- Ampaabeng, S. K., Tan, C. M., & Yamano, T. (2017). Parental occupation and children’s school readiness: Evidence from Ghana. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 53, 128-141.
- Ampiah, J. G., & Adu-Yeboah, C. (2016). Understanding the challenges of basic school education in rural Ghana. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 49, 143–152.
- Balfanz, R., Herzog, L., & MacIver, D. J. (2007). Preventing student disengagement and keeping students on the graduation path in urban middle-grades schools: Early identification and effective interventions. *Educational Psychologist*, 42(4), 223- 235.

- Bartz, D., Collins-Ayanlaja, C., & Rice, P. (2017). African-American parents and effective parent involvement programs. *Schooling*, 8(1), 1-9.
- Battin-Pearson, S., Newcomb, M. D., Abbott, R. D., Hill, K. G., Catalano, R. F., & Hawkins, J. D. (2000). Predictors of early high school dropout: A test of five theories. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 92(3), 568-582.
- Becker, G. S. (1993). *Human capital: A theoretical and empirical analysis, with special reference to education* (3rd ed.). University of Chicago Press.
- Becker, G. S., & Tomes, N. (1986). Human capital and the rise and fall of families. *Journal of Labor Economics*, 4(3), S1-S39.
- Bempechat, J. (2019). The case for (quality) homework: Why it improves learning, and how parents can help. *Education Next*, 19(1), 36-44.
- Berkowitz, N., Jones, A., & Doolittle, O. (2017). A research synthesis of the association between socioeconomic background, inequality, school climate and academic achievement. *Review of education research*, 10(2), 1-45.
- Bjorkman, S. (2005). Parent socioeconomic status and pupils' attainment. A case study of St. Jude Primary school. Malaba Town Council, Uganda. *Family Process*, 51(4), 483-497.
- Black, R. E., Victora, C. G., Walker, S. P., Bhutta, Z. A., & Christian, P. (2013). Maternal and child undernutrition and overweight in low-income and middle-income countries. *The Lancet*, 382(9890), 427-451.
- Boonk, L., Gijsselaers, H. J., Ritzen, H., & Brand-Gruwel, S. (2018). A review of the relationship between parental involvement indicators and academic achievement. *Educational Research Review*, 24, 10-30.
- Bora, A., & Ahmed, S. (2017). Parents' socioeconomic status and pupils' Mathematics achievement: Stepwise multiple regression analysis approach. *International Journal of Technical Innovation in Modern Engineering & Science*, 4(11), 316- 322.
- Bourdieu, P. (1977). *Outline of a theory of practice*. Cambridge University Press.
- Bourdieu, P. (1977). *Outline of a theory of practice*. Cambridge University Press.
- Bourdieu, P. (1986). *Forms of capital*. In J. G. Richardson (Ed.), *Handbook of theory and research for the sociology of education* (pp. 241-258). Greenwood Press.
- Bourdieu, P. (1986). The forms of capital. In J. Richardson (Ed.), *Handbook of theory and research for the sociology of education* (pp. 241-258). Greenwood.
- Bourdieu, P., & Passeron, J. C. (1990). *Reproduction in education, society and culture* (2nd ed.). Sage.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). *Qualitative research in psychology: Using thematic analysis in psychology*. Routledge. Inc.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2021). *Thematic analysis: A practical guide*. Sage.

- Brooks-Gunn, J., Han, W., & Waldfogel, J. (2018). First-year maternal employment and child outcomes: Differences across racial and ethnic groups. *Child Development, 89*(5), 1643-1661.
- Camacho, A., & Alves, R. A. (2017). Fostering parental involvement in writing: development and testing of the program Cultivating Writing. *Reading and Writing, 30*(2), 253-277.
- Cameron, S. (2010). *Access to and exclusion from primary education in slums in Dhaka, Bangladesh*. Research monograph No. 45 United Kingdom.
- Capotosto, L., Kim, J. S., Burkhauser, M. A., Oh Park, S., Mulimbi, B., Donaldson, M., & Kingston, H. C. (2017). Family support of third-grade reading skills, motivation, and habits. *AERA Open*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2332858417714457>
- Carlson, J. A. (2010). Avoiding traps in member checking. *The Qualitative Report, 15*(5), 1102-1113.
- Carr, L. T. (1994). The strengths and weaknesses of quantitative and qualitative research: What method for nursing? *Journal of Advanced Nursing, 20*(4), 716-721.
- Carrillo, D., Harknett, K., Logan, A., Luhr, S., & Schneider, D. (2017). Instability of work and care: How work schedules shape child-care arrangements for parents working in the service sector. *Social Service Review, 91*(3), 422-455.
- Ceballo, R., & McLoyd, V. C. (2002). Social support and parenting in poor, dangerous neighborhoods. *Child Development, 73*(4), 1310-1321.
- Chen, X., Cai, Z., He, J., & Fan, X. (2020). Gender differences in life satisfaction among children and adolescents: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Happiness Studies, 21*(6), 2279-2307.
- Christa, S. C. A. (2017). Teenage peer-to-peer knowledge sharing through social network in Secondary Schools. *Computers & Education: An International Journal, 10*(6), 45-57.
- Chun, H., & Devall, E. (2019). A parental involvement and academic socialization model: A cultural approach. *School Psychology, 34*(5), 555-565.
- Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2018). *Research methods in education* (8th ed.). Routledge.
- Coleman, J. S. (2018). *Parents, their children, and schools*. Routledge.
- Collier, M., Shenoy, S., Ovitt, B., Lin, Y. L., & Adams, R. (2020). Educational diagnosticians' role in home-school collaboration: The impact of efficacy and perceptions of support. *School Community Journal, 30*(1), 33-58.
- Conger, R. D., & Donnellan, M. B. (2007). An interactionist perspective on the socioeconomic context of human development. *Annual Review of Psychology, 58*, 175-199.

- Conger, R. D., Conger, K. J., Elder, G. H., Jr., Lorenz, F. O., Simons, R. L., & Whitbeck, L. B. (1992). A family process model of economic hardship and adjustment of early adolescent boys. *Child Development, 63*(3), 526–541.
- Cook-Sather, A. (2018). Listening to equity-seeking perspectives: How students' experiences of pedagogical partnership can inform wider discussions of student success. *Higher Education Research & Development, 37*(5), 923-936.
- Cooper, H., Charlton, K., Lindsay, J., & Greathouse, S. (2020). Parental socioeconomic status and children's school attendance: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 112*(3), 501-515.
- Costa, M., & Faria, L. (2017). Parenting and parental involvement in Secondary School: Focus groups with adolescents' parents 1. *Paideia (Ribeirao Preto), 27*, 28-36.
- Creswell, J. W. (2009). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approach*. Sage.
- Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Qualitative enquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches* (3rd ed.). SAGE.
- Creswell, J. W. (2018). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approach* (5th ed.). Sage.
- Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2018). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (5th ed.). Sage.
- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (4th ed.). Sage.
- Daily, S. M., Mann, M. J., Kristjansson, A. L., Smith, M. L., & Zullig, K. J. (2019). School climate and academic achievement in middle and high school students. *Journal of School Health, 89*(3), 173-180.
- Davis-Kean, P. E., Tang, S., & Waters, N. E. (2019). Parent education attainment and parenting. In M. H. Bornstein (Ed.), *Handbook of parenting: Vol. 2. Biology and ecology of parenting* (3rd ed., pp. 400–420). Routledge.
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2018). *The Sage handbook of qualitative research* (5th ed.). Sage.
- Dika, S. L., & Singh, K. (2002). Applications of social capital in educational literature: A critical synthesis. *Review of Educational Research, 72*(1), 31-60.
- DiPrete, T. A., & Jennings, J. L. (2012). Social and behavioral skills and the gender gap in early educational achievement. *Social Science Research, 41*(1), 1-15.
- Dodge, K. A., Goodman, W. B., Murphy, R. A., O'Donnell, K., Sato, J., & Guptill, S. (2013). Implementation and randomized controlled trial evaluation of universal postnatal nurse home visiting. *American Journal of Public Health, 103*(1), 189-196.
- Doi, S., Isumi, A., & Fujiwara, T. (2020). The association between parental involvement behavior and self-esteem among adolescents living in poverty:

- Results from the K- CHILD Study. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 17(17).
- Donkor, A. K. (2010). Parental involvement in education in Ghana: The case of a private elementary school. *International Journal about Parents in Education*, 4(1), 23–38.
- Dove, M. K., Neuharth-Pritchett, S., Wright, D. W., & Wallinga, C. (2015). Parental involvement routines and former head start children's literacy outcomes. *Journal of Research in Childhood Education*, 29(2), 173-186.
- Drummond, K.V, & Stipek, D. (2004). Low-income parents' beliefs about their role in children's academic learning. *The Elementary School Journal*, 104(3), 197-213.
- Duflo, E., Dupas, P., & Kremer, M. (2020). Education, HIV, and early fertility: Experimental evidence from Kenya. *American Economic Review*, 110(8), 2279- 2325.
- Duncan, G. J., & Magnuson, K. A. (2003). Off with Hollingshead: Socioeconomic resources, parenting, and child development. In M. H. Bornstein & R. H. Bradley (Eds.), *Socioeconomic status, parenting, and child development* (pp. 83–106). Erlbaum.
- Duricic, M., & Bunijevac, M. (2017). Parental involvement as an important factor for successful education. *Center for Educational Policy Studies Journal*, 7(3), 137- 153.
- Duru-Bellat, M. (2008). Social reproduction: Interactions between family and educational systems. In M. Arnot & K. Maynard (Eds.), *Gender and schooling: A reader* (pp. 115-123). Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Dynarski, M., Gleason, P., Rangarajan, A., & Woodworth, K. (2008). *Impacts of dropout prevention programs: Final report*. National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance.
- Eamon, M. (2005). Social-demographic, school neighbourhood and parenting influences on academic achievement of Latino young adolescents. *Journal of youth and Adolescence*, 88-99.
- Eamon, M. K. (2015). Social-demographic, school, neighborhood, and parenting influences on academic achievement of Latino young adolescents. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 34(2), 163-175.
- Eccles, K. (2005). Influence of parents education on their children's educational attainments: The role of parents and child perception. *London Review of Education*, 3(300), 191-204.
- Epstein, J. L. (2005). Attainable goals? The spirit and letter of the No Child Left Behind Act on parental involvement. *Sociology of Education*, 78(2), 179–182.
- Epstein, J. L. (2018). *School, family, and community partnerships*. Routledge.
- Epstein, J. L. (2019). Theory to practice: School and family partnerships lead to school improvement and student success. In *School, family, and community interaction* (pp.39-52). Routledge.

- Epstein, J. L., & Sheldon, S. B. (2002). Present and accounted for: Improving student attendance through family and community involvement. *Journal of Educational Research*, 95(5), 308-318.
- Fan, X., & Chen, M. (2014). Parental involvement and students' academic achievement: A meta-analysis. *Educational Psychology Review*, 26(4), 805-832.
- Fang, L., Sun, R. C. F., & Yuen, M. (2017). "Be useful to society": Parental academic involvement in rural to urban migrant children's education in China. *Asia Pacific Education Review*, 18(3), 361-371.
- FAO, WFP., & UNICEF. (2019). *The state of food security and nutrition in the world 2019: Safeguarding against economic slowdowns and downturns*. FAO.
- Fernandez, E., & Lopez, G. R. (2017). When parents behave badly: A critical policy analysis of parent involvement in schools. In *Critical approaches to education policy analysis* (pp.111-129). Springer.
- Fitzsimons, E., Goodman, A., Kelly, E., & Smith, J. P. (2017). Poverty dynamics and parental mental health: Determinants of childhood mental health in the UK. *Social Science & Medicine*, 175, 43-51.
- Flaherty, C. W., Sutphen, R. D., & Ely, G. E. (2012). Examining substance abuse in truant youths and their caregivers: Implications for truancy intervention. *Children & Schools*, 34(4), 201-11.
- Garcia-Carrion, R., Villarejo-Carballido, B., & Villardon-Gallego, L. (2019). Children and adolescents' mental health: A systematic review of interaction-based interventions in schools and communities. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 10, 918.
- Ghaemi, F. (2014). The relationship between socio-economic status and academic achievement in the classroom among Iranian University Students. *European Journal of English Language and Literature Studies*, 2(1), 49-57.
- Ghana Education Service (GES). (2022). *Annual education performance report*. Accra: GES.
- Ghana Statistical Service (GSS). (2021). *Ghana living standards survey round 7*. Accra: GSS.
- Ghana Statistical Service. (2018). *Ghana Living Standards Survey Round Seven (GLSS7). Main Report*. Ghana Statistical Service.
- Given, L., & Saumure, K. (2018). *Qualitative research and educational methods* (5th ed.). Routledge Falmer.
- Golafshani, N. (2013). Understanding reliability and validity in qualitative research. *The Qualitative Report*, 8(4), 597-607.
- Goodman, A., Joyce, R., & Smith, J. P. (2013). The long shadow cast by childhood physical and mental problems on adult life. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 110(15), 6012-6017.

- Goss, A. C. (2019). Power to engage, power to resist: A structuration analysis of barriers to parental involvement. *Education and Urban Society, 51*(5), 595-612.
- Gottfried, M. A. (2010). Evaluating the relationship between student attendance and achievement in urban elementary and middle schools: An instrumental variables approach. *American Educational Research Journal, 47*(2), 434-465.
- Gottfried, M. A. (2014). Chronic absenteeism and its effects on students' academic and socioemotional outcomes. *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk, 19*(2), 53-75.
- Gottfried, M. A. (2019). Chronic absenteeism and its effects on students' academic outcomes. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 41*(2), 213-239.
- Gratz, J. (2006). *The impact of parents' background on their children's education*. The Guilford Press.
- Green, J., & Thorogood, N. (2009). *Qualitative methods for health research* (2nd ed.). Sage Publication Limited.
- Green, J., & Thorogood, N. (2014). *Qualitative methods for health research*. Sage.
- Grolnick, W. S., Friendly, R. W., & Bellas, V. M. (2009). Parenting and children's motivation at school. In K. R. Wentzel, & A. Wigfield (Eds.), *Handbook of Motivation at school* (pp. 279-300). Routledge.
- Guba, E. G., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2018). Paradigmatic controversies, contradictions, and emerging confluences. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 213-263). Sage.
- Guner, A. (2014). Education and state formation revisited In *History of Education: Major Themes*. Routledge.
- Haines, S. S., Gross, J. S., Blue-Banning, M., Francis, G. L., & Turnbull, A. P. (2015). Fostering family-school and community-school partnerships in inclusive schools. *Research & Practice for Persons with Severe Disabilities, 40*(3), 227-239.
- Hamlin, D., & Flessa, J. (2018). Parental involvement initiatives. *An Analysis. Educational Policy, 32*(5), 697-727.
- Hanson, T. L., & McLanahan, S. S. (2011). Family structure and child well-being: Economic resources vs. parental behaviors. *Social Forces, 89*(3), 1033-1057.
- Haveman, R., & Wolfe, B. (1995). The determinants of children's attainments: A review of methods and findings. *Journal of Economic Literature, 33*(4), 1829-1878.
- Haymovitz, E., Houseal-Allport, P., Lee, R. S., & Svistova, J. (2018). Exploring the perceived benefits and limitations of a school-based social-emotional learning program: A concept map evaluation. *Children & Schools, 40*(1), 45-54.
- Henning, H., Van Rensburg, E. O., & Smit, Y. (2007). *Introduction to research methodology*. Wiley.

- Hossain, M., Islam, M., Biswas, B., & Hossain, M. (2017). The impact of students “socio-economic condition on academic performance in Public and National University of Bangladesh.” *Asian Research Journal of Mathematics*, 7(3), 1–16.
- Strand, S. (2014). School effects and ethnic, gender and socio-economic gaps in educational achievement at age 11. *Oxford Review of Education*, 40(2), 223–245.
- International Labour Organization. (ILO). (2018). *Decent work and the sustainable development goals: A guidebook on SDG Labour market indicators*. Department of Statistics.
- Jeynes, W. (2017). A meta-analysis on the effects of parental involvement on students’ outcomes. *Urban Education*, 52(1), 3–30.
- Jeynes, W. H. (2007). The relationship between parental involvement and urban secondary school student academic achievement: A meta-analysis. *Urban Education*, 42(1), 82-110.
- Jeynes, W. H. (2022). Examining the effects of parental absence on the academic achievement of adolescents: The challenge of controlling for family income. *Journal of Family and Economic Issues*, 23(2), 65-78.
- Johnson, R. C., & Reynolds, A. J. (2018). Parental occupation, education, and children's school readiness and fourth-grade achievement: An analysis of mediated pathways. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 44, 121-131.
- Kearney, C. A., & Graczyk, P. A. (2014). A response to intervention model to promote school attendance and decrease school absenteeism. *Child & Youth Care Forum*, 43(1), 1-25.
- Kearney, C. A., & Hyle, A. E. (2014). Identifying the function of school refusal behavior: A revision of the School Refusal Assessment Scale. *Journal of Psychopathology and Behavioral Assessment*, 36(4), 621-633.
- Kuhfeld, M., Gershoff, E., & Paschall, K. (2018). The development of racial/ethnic and socioeconomic achievement gaps during the school years. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, 57, 62-73.
- Kusi, H. (2012). *Doing qualitative research: A guide for researcher*. Emmpong Press.
- Kvale, S. (1996). *Interviews: An introduction to qualitative research interviewing*. Sage.
- Kvale, S., & Brinkmann, S. (2019). *Interviews: Learning the craft of qualitative research interviewing*. SAGE Publications.
- Langdridge, D. (2017). *Phenomenological Psychology. Theory, research and method*. Pearson Education.
- Lara, L., & Saracostti, M. (2019). Effect of parental involvement on children’s academic achievement in Chile. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 10(1464), 1-5.
- Lareau, A. (2003). *Unequal childhoods: Class, race, and family life*. University of California Press.

- Lareau, A. (2011). *Unequal childhoods: Class, race, and family life* (2nd ed.). University of California Press.
- Lawson, M. & Farah, J. (2017). A meta-analysis of the relationship between socioeconomic status and executive function performance among children. *Developmental Science, 21*(2).
- Leenders, H., de Jong, J., Monfrance, M., & Haelermans, C. (2019). Building strong parent-teacher relationships in primary education: The challenge of two-way communication. *Cambridge Journal of Education, 49*(4), 519-533.
- Leventhal, T., & Brooks-Gunn, J. (2004). A randomized study of neighborhood effects on low-income children's educational outcomes. *Developmental Psychology, 40*(4), 488-507.
- Lewin, K. M. (2017). Educational access, equity, and development: Planning to make rights realities. *International Journal of Educational Development, 55*, 54–65.
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Sage.
- Liu, J., Peng, P., & Luo, L. (2019). The relation between family socioeconomic status and academic achievement in China: A meta-analysis. *Educational Psychology Review, 32*(1), 49–76.
- Liu, J., Peng, P., & Luo, L. (2020). The relation between family socioeconomic status and academic achievement in China: A meta-analysis. *Educational Psychology Review, 32*(1), 49–76.
- Long, T., & Johnson, M. (2020). Rigor, reliability and validity in qualitative research. *Clinical Effectiveness in Nursing, 4*(1), 30-37.
- Lutz, W., Goujon, A., Samir, K. C., & Stonawski, M. (2015). Education and differential vulnerability to natural disasters. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, 112*(18), 5615-5620.
- MacPhail, R., Khoza, U., & Abler, V. (2016). *Doing qualitative research*. SAGE Publications Limited.
- Mallan, D. (2009). *Relationship between socioeconomic performance and students' academic performance of Senior secondary school in Kebbi*. Unpublished M.Ed. Dissertation, Usman Danfodiyo University Sokoto.
- Matua, G. A., & Van Der Wal, D. M. (2015). Differentiating between descriptive and interpretive phenomenological research approaches. *Nurse researcher, 22*(6), 22-27.
- Maynard, B. R., Salas-Wright, C. P., & Vaughn, M. G. (2012). High school dropouts in emerging adulthood: Substance use, mental health problems, and crime. *Community Mental Health Journal, 48*(6), 711-717.
- McMillan, J. H., & Reed, J. H. (2004). Parental involvement, academic success, and student motivation in elementary school. *The Journal of Educational Research, 97*(1), 42-52.
- McMillan, J. H., & Schumacher, S. (2001). *Research in education* (5th ed.). Addison Wesley Longman.

- Merriam, S. B., & Tisdell, E. J. (2016). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation* (4th ed.). Jossey-Bass.
- Ministry of Education (MoE). (2019). *Education sector performance report*. Accra: MoE.
- Mogaka, M. (2012). *Influence of parents' socioeconomic status on their children's performance in KCPE (2007-2010). A case of Keumbu Division Kiisi County*. Kenyatta University: Unpublished Thesis.
- Moll, D., Falch, T., Nilssen, T., & Nyhus, O. H. (2020). Parental labor supply responses to the abolition of daycare fees. *Journal of Labor Economics*, 35(3), 609-652.
- Mudassir, A., & Abubakar, N. (2015) The impact of parents' occupation on Academic performance in secondary school students. *Academic Journal of Social Sciences*, 3(1).
- Muraina, K. O., Umar, T.I & Kirti, V. (2021). Teachers' improvisation of instructional materials and mathematics learning gains among students in Kwara State: Counselling Implications. *Journal of Mathematical Applications in Education*, 5(2), 315-3229.
- Murray, B., Domina, T., Renzulli, L., & Boylan, R. (2019). Civil society goes to school: Parent-teacher associations and the equality of educational opportunity. *RSF: The Russell Sage Foundation Journal of the Social Sciences*, 5(3), 41-63.
- Muzaza, M., Bin, G., Darusalam, Ismath, M., & Ramzy, U. (2017). *Parental socio-economic status and academic performance of Secondary School Students in the Western Province of the Republic of Zambia*. doi: 10.13140/RG.2.2.27743.15520.
- Ngware, M. W., Kinyanjui, K. M., & Kabiru, C. W. (2019). The influence of household size on school attendance in rural and urban Kenya. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 68, 39-46.
- Nowell, L. S., Norris, J. M., White, D. E., & Moules, N. J. (2017). Thematic analysis: Striving to meet trustworthiness criteria. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 16(1), 1-13.
- Oakes, J. M., & Rossi, P. H. (2023). The measurement of SES in health research: Current practice and steps toward a new approach. *Social Science and Medicine*, 56, 769-784.
- Odedokun, S. A., & Muraina, K. O. (2019). Parental and peer factors as predictors of cigarette smoking among secondary school adolescents in Southwestern Nigeria. *Gender and Behaviour*, 17(2), 12971-12977.
- Oduro, A. D., & Boakye, K. E. (2018). The effects of socio-cultural practices on girls' education in Northern Ghana: A case study of Tamale Metropolis. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 9(13), 101-109.
- Ogg, J., & Anthony, C. J. (2020). Process and context: Longitudinal effects of the interactions between parental involvement, parental warmth, and SES on academic achievement. *Journal of School Psychology*, 78, 96-114.

- Ogunshola, F., & Adewale, M. (2012). The effects of parental socio economic status on academic performance of students in selected schools in Edu Lga of Kwara state Nigeria. *Family Process*, 51(4), 483-497.
- Ogunsola, F., & Adewale, A. M. (2012). The effects of parental socio-economic status on academic performance of students in selected schools in Edu Local Government Area of Kwara State. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Science*, 2(7), 230-239.
- Oketch, M., & Mutisya, M. (2017). Cultural practices, gender inequality and inconsistent attendance in Kenyan primary schools. *Gender and Education*,
- Olvera, P., & Olvera, V. I. (2012). Optimizing home-school collaboration: Strategies for school psychologists and Latino parent involvement for positive mental health outcomes. *Contemporary School Psychology (California Association of School Psychologists)*, 16(1), 77-87.
- Orb, A., Eisenhauer, L., & Wynaden, D. (2016). Ethics in qualitative research. *Journal of Nursing Scholarship*, 48(4), 1-8.
- Osei-Owusu, B., Twum Ampofo, E., Oteng Akyina, K., Ampomah, R., & Osei-Owusu, E. (2018). Socio-economic status of parents and its effects on the academic performance of students of Yamfo Anglican Senior High School in the Brong Ahafo Region of Ghana. *Advances in Social Sciences Research Journal*, 5(4), 48-58.
- Otto, B., & Karbach, J. (2019). The effects of private tutoring on students' perception of their parents' academic involvement and the quality of their parent-child relationship. *Educational Psychology*, 39(7), 923-940.
- Owusu, G., & Agyei-Mensah, S. (2019). Livelihood diversification and household welfare in rural Ghana. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 68, 1-10.
- Park, S., & Holloway, S. (2018). Parental involvement in adolescents' education: An examination of the interplay among school factors, parental role construction, and family income. *School Community Journal*, 28(1), 9-36.
- Parker, M. (2011). *The science of qualitative research*. Cambridge University Press.
- Parson, R. D., Hinson, S. L., & Sardo-Brown, D. (2021). *Educational Psychology: A practitioner-researcher model of teaching*. Thomson Learning Inc.
- Patton, G. B. (2012). *An introduction to research*. Sage Publications.
- Patton, M. Q. (2015). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods* (4th ed.). Sage.
- Pierstorff, A. M. (2019). *A quantitative comparative study of the homework diner program: Involvement of low socioeconomic status parents and the academic achievement gap*. Doctoral Dissertation, Northcentral University.
- Polit, D. F., & Beck, C. T. (2012). *Nursing research: Principles and methods*. Lippincott Williams & Wilkins.
- Pong, S. L., & Ju, D. B. (2000). The effects of change in family structure and income on dropping out of middle and high school. *Journal of Family Issues*, 21(2), 147-169.

- Pong, S. L., Hao, L., & Gardner, E. (2020). Social capital and academic achievement: Differential effects across children's immigrant generational status. *Sociology of Education*, 93(2), 127-149.
- Porter, G., Hampshire, K., Mashiri, M., Dube, S., Maponya, G., & Abane, A. (2017). Youth livelihoods and education pathways in sub-Saharan Africa. *Africa Review*, 9(1), 1–17.
- Putnam, R. D. (2000). *Bowling alone: The collapse and revival of American community*. Simon and Schuster.
- Raheim, M., Magnussen, L. H., Sekse, R. J. T., Lunde, A., Jacobsen, T., & Blystad, A. (2016). Researcher researched relationship in qualitative research: Shifts in positions and researcher vulnerability. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies on Health and Well-being*, 11, 309- 326.
- Ramanlingam, S., & Maniam, M. (2020). Teachers' perspective on the importance of parents' roles in students' academic achievement using school and family partnership model (Epstein): A qualitative study. *Universal Journal of Educational Research*, 8(8), 3346-3354.
- Rana, M. (2015). *The influence of parents' educational level on their children's academic performance*. Indus International Institute.
- Rapp, N., & Duncan, H. (2012). Multi-dimensional parental involvement in schools: A principal's guide. *International Journal of Educational Leadership Preparation*, 7(1).
- Rassi, F., & Shahabi, Z. (2015). Husserl's phenomenology and two terms of Noema and Noesis. *International Letters of Social and Humanistic Sciences*, 53, 29-34.
- Reardon, S. (2011). The widening academic achievement gap between the rich and the poor: New evidence and possible explanations. In G. J. Duncan & R. J. Murnane (Eds.), *Whither opportunity? Rising inequality, schools, and children's life chances* (pp. 91–116). Russell Sage Foundation.
- Riswanto, A., & Aryani, S. (2017). Learning motivation and student achievement: Description analysis and relationships both. *The International Journal of Counseling and Education*, 2(1), 42-47.
- Rolleston, C., & Iyer, P. (2019). Beyond enrolment: Attendance, participation, and learning in low-income contexts. *Comparative Education Review*, 63(3), 404–427.
- Sabates, R., Hossain, A., & Lewin, K. M. (2021). School attendance and educational outcomes in sub-Saharan Africa. *Prospects*, 50(1–2), 59–75.
- Saifi, S., & Mehmood, T. (2011). Effects of Socio-economic status on students' achievement. *International Journal of Social Sciences and Education*, 1(2), 119 -128.
- Sandilowski, A., & Barroso, P. (2013). *Qualitative research*. Cambridge University Press.

- Sarigiani, P. (1990). *Self-image and educational plans of adolescents from two contrasting communities*. San Francisco.
- Sawyer, S. M., Azzopardi, P. S., Wickremarathne, D., & Patton, G. C. (2018). The age of adolescence. *The Lancet Child & Adolescent Health*, 2(3), 223-228.
- Schwandt, T. A. (2017). *The Sage dictionary of qualitative inquiry* (4th ed.). Sage.
- Sean, F. (2013). The widening income achievement gap. Brown University, Educational leadership, secondary school students. *Multilingual Academic Journal of Social Sciences*, 3(1).
- Silverman, D. (2013). *Doing qualitative research: A practical handbook*. SAGE Publications Limited.
- Sirin, S. R. (2005). Socioeconomic status and academic achievement: A meta-analytic review of research. *Review of Educational Research*, 75(3), 417-453.
- Sirin, S. R. (2019). Socioeconomic status and academic achievement: A meta-analytic review of research. *Review of Educational Research*, 79(3), 1125-1168.
- Skovdal, M., & Cornish, F. (2015). *Qualitative research for development: A guide for practitioners*. Practical Action Publishing.
- Smith, J. A., Flowers, P., & Larkin, M. (2019). *Interpretative phenomenological analysis. Theory, method and research*. Sage.
- Smith, J., & Jenkins, R. (2019). The impact of family size on children's educational attainment: Evidence from the UK. *Journal of Population Economics*, 32(1), 237- 262.
- Smith, T. E., Reinke, W. M., Herman, K. C., & Huang, F. (2019). Understanding family school engagement across and within elementary-and middle-school contexts. *School Psychology*, 34(4), 363.
- Smythe-Leistico, K., & Page, L. C. (2018). Connect-text: Leveraging text-message communication to mitigate chronic absenteeism and improve parental engagement in the earliest years of schooling. *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk (JESPAR)*, 23(1-2), 139-152.
- Sothan, S. (2019). The determinants of academic performance: evidence from a Cambodian University. *Studies in Higher Education*, 44(11), 2096–2111.
- Speziale, Y., & Carpenter, P. (2011). *Doing qualitative research*. SAGE Publications Limited.
- Stack, C. B. (1974). *All our kin: Strategies for survival in a black community*. Harper & Row.
- Stewart, E. B. (2008). *School social work: An evidence-informed framework for practice*. Oxford University Press.
- Taruvunga, P., & Odhiambo, N. M. (2019). Community values, parental education support and children's academic performance in rural Zimbabwe. *South African Journal of Childhood Education*, 9(1), 678-687.

- Thomas, L., & Zimmermann, K. F. (2017). Parental labor supply responses to the abolition of daycare fees. *Journal of Labor Economics*, 35(3), 609-652.
- Tikly, L., & Barrett, A. M. (2017). *Education quality and social justice in the global South*. Routledge.
- Tracy, S. J. (2020). *Qualitative research methods: Collecting evidence, crafting analysis, communicating impact* (2nd ed.). Wiley-Blackwell.
- UNESCO. (2018). *Global education monitoring report: Meeting our commitments to education*. Paris: UNESCO.
- UNESCO. (2020). *Global education monitoring report: Inclusion and education*. Paris: UNESCO.
- UNICEF. (2019). *Early childhood education and school readiness in sub-Saharan Africa*. New York: UNICEF.
- Unterhalter, E., North, A., Parkes, J., & Rajagopalan, S. (2016). Gender, education and equality in low-income contexts. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 50, 1–8.
- Vaismoradi, M., Turunen, H., & Bondas, T. (2013). Content analysis and thematic analysis: Implications for conducting a qualitative descriptive study. *Nursing and Health Sciences*, 13(15), 398–405.
- Valdez, Y., & Bowman, J. (2020). *Student-parent relationships and academic success*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Van de Van, A. H. (2017). *Engaged scholarship: A guide for organizational and social research*. Oxford University Press.
- Vorbeck, T. A. (Eds.). (2019). *The Wiley handbook of family, school, and community relationships in education*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Wang, M., & Sheikh-Khalil, S. (2014). Does parental involvement matter for student achievement and mental health in high school? *Child Development*, 85(2), 610-625.
- Wang, M., Hill, N. E., & Hofkens, T. (2014). Parental involvement and African American and European American adolescents' academic, behavioral, and emotional development in Secondary School. *Child Development*, 85(6), 2151– 2168.
- Wiersma, M., & Jurs, U. (2005). *Philosophy of educational research*. Bloomsbury Academic.
- William, H. J. (2018). A practical model for school leaders to encourage parental involvement and parental engagement, *School Leadership & Management*, 38(2), 147-163.
- Willingham, D. T. (2012). Ask the cognitive scientist: Why does family wealth affect learning? *American Educator*, 36(1), 33-39.
- Wolcott, H. F. (2015). *The art of fieldwork*. Altamira Press.

- World Bank. (2020). *Ending learning poverty: What will it take?* Washington, DC: World Bank.
- Xerri, M. J., Radford, K., & Shacklock, K. (2018). Student engagement in academic activities: A social support perspective. *Higher Education*, 75(4), 589-605.
- Yin, R. K. (2018). *Case study research and applications: Design and methods* (6th ed.). Sage.
- Young, B. S. (2015). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation* (3rd ed.). Jossey-Bass.
- Yulianti, K., Denessen, E., Droop, M., & Veerman, G. J. (2020). School efforts to promote parental involvement: the contributions of school leaders and teachers. *Educational Studies*, 1-16.
- Zenda, R. (2021). Implementing a parental involvement policy to enhance Physical Sciences learner's academic achievement in rural secondary schools. *Educational Research for Policy and Practice*, 20(2), 125-143.



APPENDIX

INTERVIEW GUIDE

Semi-Structured Interview Guide for Parents

Dear respondent

My name is Deborah Donkoh, a final year graduate student at the Department of Early Childhood Education, University of Education, Winneba I am conducting a study on parental socio-economic activities on the school attendance of their early grade learners in the Ekumfi District. As part of the fulfilment of my Master's Degree requirements, I would be grateful if you could spend some of your time to answer out the questions. It is just for academic purpose. I promise to keep the responses as confidential as possible and I respect your human dignity. Thank you for your co-operation.

Section I: Socio-economic activities undertaken by parents/guardians

How would you describe the socio-economic status of families in the Ekumfi District?

- ✓ In your experience, what types of socio-economic activities do parents in the Ekumfi District typically engage in?
- ✓ Discuss any agricultural activities or farming practices that families engage in for sustenance or additional income.

Section II: Parental socio-economic factors hindering the school attendance of children

What socio-economic factors hinder early-grade learner school attendance in the Ekumfi District?

- ✓ Identify any common parental occupation or activities that are known to interfere with children's schooling in the Ekumfi District?

- ✓ What are the main challenges faced by parents in balancing their socio-economic activities and their children's school attendance in the Ekumfi District?
- ✓ How does your cultural norms interfere with children's schooling in this District?

Section III: Parents/guardians involvement in children's education

- ✓ How does the influence of parental socio-economic status on children's educational experience and school attendance?
- ✓ How do you involve yourself in your child's early-grade education?
- ✓ How important is parental involvement in your child's education?

Section IV: Balancing socio-economic activities with children's education

- ✓ How can you address the challenges or barriers do you face in balancing their socio- economic activities with their children's schooling?
- ✓ What are your views on how parents/guardians can do to ensure better school attendance in early-grade education within the Ekumfi District?
- ✓ Kindly share any examples of initiatives or programs that have been successful in addressing socioeconomic barriers to school attendance.
- ✓ To what extent does the accessibility and proximity of schools in the Ekumfi District influence parental engagement with their children's school attendance?
- ✓ What resources and support systems are available in the Ekumfi District to facilitate parental involvement in monitoring and supporting their children's school attendance?
- ✓ How do parental perceptions of the value of education impact their level of engagement with their children's school attendance?

Thank you for your time and participation