

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES AND THEIR INFLUENCE ON ACADEMIC  
PERFORMANCE OF JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN CAPE COAST  
METROPOLIS IN THE CENTRAL REGION OF GHANA

BY

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## DECLARATION

### **Candidate's Declaration**

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my original work and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or elsewhere.

Candidate's Signature: ..... Date: .....

Name:

### **Supervisors' Declaration**

We hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the thesis were supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of these laid down by the University of Cape Coast.

Principal Supervisor's Signature: ..... Date: .....

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Co-supervisor's Signature: ..... Date: .....

Name:

## ABSTRACT

This study examined the after-school activities and their influence on academic performance of Junior High School students in Cape Coast Metropolis in the Central Region of Ghana. A descriptive survey design was adopted using a sample of 364 students selected from six public Junior High Schools in Cape Coast. A questionnaire was used to gather the data. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the reliability of the instrument was 0.78. Frequencies, percentages, means, standard deviation and simple linear regression were used as statistical tools to analyse the data collected. The findings revealed that students frequently participate in a number of after-school activities (structured and unstructured) such as reading of text books, engaging in watching movies, engaging in house chores e.g., sweeping etc. On factors influencing participation in after-school activities, the results showed that students were not influenced to participate in activities. The results of the study further revealed that both structured and unstructured activities respectively do influence students' academic performance. It was recommended that parents and guardians monitor the choices of their wards in order to be aware with the kind of activities they engage in. Again, stakeholders such as the Ministry of Education (MoE), the Ghana Education Service (GES), teachers, parents and other equally relevant individuals educate students about education oriented after-school activities that would yield good results in the academic performance.

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DEDICATION

To my father and mother,

Mr. Dominic Turkson and Madam Mercy Incoom.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### **Background to the Study**

According to Hofferth and Sandberg (2001), despite the fact that 40% of adolescents' waking hours are flexible, little is known about the links of adolescents' choices of leisure time activities for academic, psychological and behavioural functioning. Participation in activities can provide opportunities to develop specific skills and to interact with nurturing and caring adults as well as a sense of belonging with particular peer groups and recognition from others. Time use and monitor studies have provided rich descriptive pictures of adolescents' daily lives including what teens do, who they are with and their affective states across their out-of-school experiences.

Adolescents use of after-school time, and the consequences of participating in different types of activities, is a growing concern to parents, teachers, human service professional, government and even the adolescents themselves (Pittman, Tolman, & Yohalem, 2005). The activities adolescents participate in after-school may be structured activities or unstructured activities. According to Pittman et al. (2005), structured activity is planned, directed, designed for child's developmental level and it is an organized activity with an instructional purpose. Whereas unstructured activity, is self-directed and occurs mostly when children explore their environment.

According Marsh (2002), participation in extra-curricular activities (ECA) is only one of the many choices adolescents make regarding their

discretionary time. Among the teens that participate in extra-curricular activities, some also participate in structured activities within the community such as sports teams, youth groups or hobbies. Others work at paid jobs or spend greater amount of their time helping families by caring for younger siblings. Others also engage in unstructured activities by spending much of their free time with their peers in an unsupervised setting or at home.

Adolescents mostly participate in out-of-school activities which either improve their development or hamper their development. Here, when adolescents engage in out-of-school activities like attending to assignment given in school, reading of novel or the dailies, it will contribute to the academic performance of the adolescent. However, it is perceived that in situations where adolescents become addicted to watching of cartoons on the television set, playing football and many other equally 'unprofitable' activities will hamper the academic performance of the adolescent at school.

Hendry (2003) hypothesized that if individuals do not meet their social and individual developmental requirements due to either external (accessibility and influence of others) or internal (self-motivation, interest) constraints, then progress through adolescence may be unsatisfactory and psychologically unhealthy. It is suggested that the type of activities in which adolescents participate in outside school play an important role in helping to meet these requirements. These activities can be structured or unstructured activities. For instance, studies of younger children by University of Wisconsin Madison psychologist Deborah Lowe Vandell as cited in DeAngleis (2001), found out that structured after-school activities such as music and art help develop skills such as concentration that can help them perform better in school.

Involvement in structured out-of-school activities may provide adolescents with a range of development enhancing opportunities that are not necessarily available in the more constrained domain of education. Conversely, some types of unstructured activities may predict adolescent adjustment difficulties and negative outcomes or may even enhance their physiological, psychological or social gains (i.e. general well-being of the adolescent).

According to Passmore and French (2001), majority of research into adolescent out-of-school behaviours focuses much on leisure activities. However, problems arise in conceptualizing leisure and the inconsistencies between and within studies with regards to how these activities are categorized. Adolescent leisure is often defined in terms of structured ECA. However, 'leisure' activities may encompass part-time employment/ trade and a range of unstructured and / or potentially negative activities (drug-taking, vandalism, and 'hanging-out'). A wider perspective that encompasses all adolescent out-of-school activity and allows adolescents to make the decision on how the activities are categorized in terms of structured type of activities (social, physical, creative, passive) and level of interaction (individual, group) may provide a better understanding of adolescents' time use outside school and the associated developmental consequences of their well-being. Hendry (2003) postulated that adolescent involvement in structured out-of-school activities improves life satisfaction and well-being (physically, psychologically, and socially) and contributes positively to development and smoothes the path to adulthood.

Whilst research has linked adolescent involvement in structured out-of-school activities with a range of positive outcomes, relatively little attention has focused on the factors predicting participation. Researchers need to explore the extent to which participation (and non-participation) in these types of activities is influenced by parental behaviours (including parenting style, support, expectations, values), adolescent-parent relationships, peer pressure and relationships, societal belief systems and a range of personal factors (motivation, self-concept, availability of resources).

It is also important to note that the vast majority of studies in the area of adolescent after-school activities have been conducted in the United States (Eccles & Barber, 2003). These studies may not be directly applicable to other parts of the world, and Ghana in particular. It is likely that unique cultural and environmental features shape adolescent behaviour in distinctive ways.

According to Ankomah (2009), research conducted in Ga Mashie, Accra on adolescent participation in after-school activities in areas such as premarital sexual relationship, drugs and academic achievements threw light on the issues such as the media and family influencing adolescents' participation which either hinders or improves their well-being.

The holistic development of adolescents is mostly centered on the activities (structured activities and unstructured activities) that they partake in outside the normal school hours. Adolescent students in the Cape Coast Metropolis do engage in varied forms of after-school activities such as engaging in sporting activities, reading books, engaging in personal extra-classes and group studies, watching television, trading, attending social gatherings, engaging in house chores, spending time to chat with friends (e.g.

via phones), among others. It has become expedient therefore, to investigate how their engagement in these activities (i.e. both structured and unstructured activities) impact on their academic performance.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Over the past few years, concerns have been raised by stakeholders predominantly teachers, that the performance, under-performance or non-performance of students is due to the kind of activities they engage in after-school. Students are found in partaking in varied forms of activities after-school such as performing chores at home, hanging out with friends, watching television, reading for pleasure, engaging in paid work, joining sports teams and clubs among others. These activities could either cushion or hinder the academic development of adolescent (Goerge, 2007).

According to Barber, Eccles and Stone (2001), participation in an activity like sports is associated with higher academic performance during high school and greater likelihood of attending college, and higher mental health is also linked to increased alcohol use during the high school years. This latter idea gives the impression that out-of-school activities could have an adverse effect on the academic performance of the adolescent.

Much of the previous research has examined a single activity domain and the corresponding links to academic and social performance. A number of studies (e.g., Eccles & Barber, 2003; Marsh, 2002; Bartko & Eccles, 2008; Landers & Landers, 2008; McNeal, 2005; Bartko, Eccles, & Barber, 2000), for example, have reported that participation in extracurricular activities is related to better academic performance. Whether or not to participate in



extracurricular activities, however, is only one of the many choices adolescents' make regarding their discretionary time.

Of those students that engage in extracurricular activities, some also participate in structured activities within the community such as youth groups, sports teams, and hobby or special interest clubs. Others work at paid jobs or spend significant amounts of time helping their families by caring for younger siblings. Still others elect to spend much of their remaining free time with their peers in unsupervised settings in the community or at home. Therefore, knowing only about extracurricular involvement provides a quite limited picture of students' out-of-school activities and their influence on other characteristics of adolescents' lives such as their academic performance.

Of the various researches reviewed, studies conducted were predominantly on extracurricular activities on academic performance. Adolescents in the Cape Coast metropolis participate in varied forms of after-school activities which may not be necessarily extracurricular activities such as sports, extra-classes, group studies, club meetings, religious meetings, social gatherings, trading, reading, chatting with friends among others.

The focus of this study is therefore to look at student's after-school activity choices and their influence on academic performance of Junior High School (J.H.S) students in the Cape Coast Metropolis. A broad array of activity indicators are included in order to capture the total picture of students' behavioral choices, including school-related extracurricular activities, structured activities, adult-led activities, unstructured leisure activities and paid employment.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study was to investigate the influence of after-school activities on students' academic performance. Specifically, the study was to:

1. Determine the type of after-school activities the J.H.S students participate in.
2. Assess the factors that influence students' participation in particular type of after-school activity (structured or unstructured activity).
3. Examine the impact of structured activities on students' academic performance.
4. Examine the impact of unstructured activities on students' academic performance.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions were used to guide the study:

1. What type of after-school activities do Junior High School students participate in?
2. What factors influence students' participation in after-school activities?

### **Research Hypotheses**

The following research hypotheses were used to guide the study:

1.  $H_0$ : There is no statistically significant influence of structured activities on students' academic performance.  
 $H_1$ : There is statistically significant influence of structured activities on students' academic performance.

2.  $H_0$ : There is no statistically significant influence of unstructured activities on students' academic performance.

$H_1$ : There is statistically significant influence of unstructured activities on students' academic performance.

### **Significance of the Study**

Parents and guardians will be made aware of this study which will enable them know the choice of activities their wards partake in. Therefore, the parent or guardian will be equipped with the requisite knowledge in terms of effective monitoring of their wards. Teachers will also ascertain the requisite information about the actual effects of the adolescent after-school activities. This will help to formulate instructions to facilitate the holistic development of the adolescent and enhance academic performance.

The result of the study will also guide the Ghana Education Service (G.E.S) which is a major stakeholder of education in the country to include programmes and activities that will ensure that policies on adolescents' after-school activities are rightly implemented and monitored. Adolescents could also be talked to about the various activities available and how they will make right and better choices to cushion their academic performance and their total being as a whole.

It will also guide school counsellors to guide students to successfully engage or involve themselves in after-school activities that will enhance their psychological, social and physical development and most importantly their academic performance.

### **Delimitation of the Study**

The study would be confined to schools in the Cape Coast Metropolis in the central region of Ghana. The study would be confined to all public basic schools in the Cape Coast Metropolis in the Central Region of Ghana.

Moreover, the scope of the study would be focused on how adolescents use their after-school time, the impact of adolescent participation in structured and unstructured activities and the factors that influence adolescent to participate in structured and unstructured activities.

### **Limitations**

In the ideal situation, a nationwide study is required. This would have given much confidence to any generalisations made. The time for the study and the resources available, however, made this impracticable. Hence, the selection of the six public Junior High Schools in the Cape Coast Metropolis of Ghana.

Not all the subjects taught in the Junior High Schools were used in the study to assess academic performance. This is because the subjects are so many and that time and resources available would have been a hindrance to the inclusion of all of them in the study. In view of this, English Language, Mathematics, Integrated Science and Social Studies were considered for the study, for the reason that these are core subjects that all students offer in the Junior High School (J.H.S). Four out of nine subjects taught at the J.H.S were used for the study, therefore, might affect generalisation of the academic performance of the whole J.H.S students.

## Definition of Terms

1. After-school Activities: These are activities that are carried outside the normal school contact hours. It includes all the activities that are conducted under the schools' umbrella but occurs outside the school and those that are not conducted by the school. In this study, after-school activities and out-of-school activities are used interchangeably since there is no clear-cut difference between the two concepts.
2. Extra-curricular Activities: These are academic or non-academic activities that are conducted under the auspices of the school but occur outside of normal classroom time and are not part of the curriculum (Bartkus, Nemelka, Nemelka, & Gardner, 2012).
3. Structured Activities: These are activities that are adult organised, planned and directed. They are physically and mentally stimulating to the individual and have instructional purpose (e.g., sport clubs and drama groups).
4. Unstructured Activities: These are the activities that are without formal rules and directions from adult leaders, feature few goals related to skill development and occur relatively spontaneously (e.g., watching television and 'hanging out' with peers).
5. Academic Performance: It denotes the educational goal (scores) obtained by a student over a certain period of assessments in the performance tests in Mathematics, English Language, Integrated Science and Social Studies. In the study, the scores obtained by students are considered as their academic performance in the said

subjects. It is typically assessed by the use of teacher ratings, test and exams (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2000).

6. Student: It refers to those undergoing formal education in the Junior High Schools.

### **Organisation of the rest of the Study**

The study examines the influence of adolescents' participation in after-school structured and unstructured activities on their academic performance in the Cape Coast Metropolis. This study is divided into five chapters. The first chapter is an introduction to the study. It involves the background to the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research questions, and significance of the study, delimitations and limitations to the study.

Chapter two focuses on the review of the related literature. It comprises both theoretical and empirical evidence of the study. It reviews literature on sub-topics such as theories on adolescence and concepts like factors that predict adolescents' after-school activities and the determinants of their participation.

Chapter three is basically about the methodology employed in this study. This includes the research design, population, sample and sampling procedures. It also looks at the design and administration of the instrument used for the study. The chapter also describes the procedure adopted in collecting data and how the data was analyzed.

Chapter four deals with analysis and discussion of data collected from the localities whiles the last but not least chapter, chapter five, focuses on the summary, conclusions, recommendations and suggestions for further studies.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### Introduction

In this Chapter, relevant literatures related to the study are reviewed. It takes a perusal of explaining the concepts of structured and unstructured activities, theoretical, empirical and conceptual issues underlying the study.

#### Types of after-school activities

##### Structured Activities

Adopting Larson and Verma's (2009) definition, structured (as opposed to unstructured) activities are freely chosen, physically or mentally stimulating to the individual and contain some structural parameters (sport clubs, bands, and drama groups). In addition, such activities are usually adult organized and directed, require a level of on-going commitment, include regular participation schedules and expectations regarding participation, emphasize skill development that is continually increasing in complexity and challenge, involve active performance requiring sustained attention and provide clear feedback on performance (Mahoney & Stattin, 2000).

Adolescent participation in structured out-of-school activities is often associated with positive behavioural outcomes implying that such activities directly shape adolescents' development. For example, researchers have found positive associations between participation in structured activities and academic achievement (Bartko & Eccles, 2003), high school completion (Mahoney & Cairns, 2007), self-concept (Eccles & Barber, 2003), educational

aspirations (Guest & Schneider, 2003), and social adjustment (Harrison & Narayan, 2003), and a negative correlation with tobacco use (Melnick, Miller, Sabo, Farrell, & Barnes, 2001), and alcohol consumption (Eccles & Barber, 2003).

It is argued that structured activities provide adolescents opportunities to acquire and practice a range of social, physical and intellectual skills, develop a sense of agency as a member of one's community, belong to a socially recognized and valued group, establish supportive networks of peers and adults, and experience and deal with challenges (Eccles et al., 2003). In addition, these benefits are enhanced by the presence of supportive adults, non-deviant peers, specific activity goals and clear structural parameters. This provides adolescents the opportunity to improve social and skill competencies and teach self-control, promoting positive adjustment and providing a protective context against involvement in risk behaviours (Eccles & Barber, 2003; Mahoney & Stattin, 2000; Rice & Dolgin, 2002).

### **Unstructured Activities**

A range of adolescent out-of-school pursuits take place without formal rules or directions from adult leaders, feature few goals related to skill development and occur relatively spontaneously (e.g., watching television, 'hanging out' with peers). All adolescents engage in these sorts of unstructured activities to some degree. In fact, 'hanging out' with friends is nominated as adolescents' preferred free time activity (van Roosmalen & Krahn, 2006). However, numerous studies have indicated that time spent 'hanging out' and lack of involvement in organised activities is predictive of delinquency (Togun, 2002), conduct problems, depression symptoms, poorer



school grades (Bartko & Eccles, 2003; McHale, Crouter, & Tucker, 2001), substance use (Caldwell & Darling, 2009), and more frequent gambling (Moore & Ohtsuka, 2000).

Mahoney and Stattin (2000) suggested that anti-social behaviours are more likely to occur during unstructured leisure because adolescents have greater opportunity to engage in these behaviours. Activities that are low in structure tend to lack conventional social relationships and are often overrepresented by deviant adolescents (Osgood, Wilson, O'Malley, Bachman & Johnston, 2006). As the proportion of deviant peers increase, the likelihood of anti-social behaviour being initiated, maintained and accelerated also increases.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The study suggests three major theoretical frameworks to explain the impact of extra-curricular activity (ECA) participation on students' academic performance. The three theoretical frameworks posited that the level of ECA participation has (a) negative effect on academic performance (zero-sum framework), (b) positive effect on academic performance indirectly as a result of non-academic achievements (developmental framework), and (c) positive effect on academic performance up a certain point beyond which participation leads to negative academic outcomes (threshold framework).

### **Zero-Sum Framework**

The earliest theoretical framework in the general education literature is the zero-sum framework, which arises from Coleman's (1961) seminal study. The zero-sum framework theorized that extra-curricular activities (ECA) participation has a negative effect on academic performance because students

devote more time for their extra-curricular activities at the expense of their academic studies (Coleman, 1961). Coleman viewed the student's society as a finite system in which commitment to academic, athletic, or social values represents a loss to the other two. As athletic participation was the main determinant of social status in school, Coleman argued that male students may prefer to invest time and energy in sport as an extra-curricular activity (ECA) and ended up neglecting their academic studies. Many schools in the early 1980s implemented the 2.0 Rule, where students must maintain an overall grade point average of 2.0 before they were allowed to participate in ECA (Joekel, 1985). The motivation behind the 2.0 Rule was that ECA participation resulted in diminishing academic performance (Camp, 2000; Joekel, 1985). Porter (2001) argued that heavy ECA participation interferes with academic work, resulting in students spending less time on their homework. ECA participation requires time commitments from students, and these time requirements are in direct competition with time that otherwise could have been spent on academic pursuits (Coleman, 1961; Camp, 2000; Marsh, 2002; Marsh & Kleitman, 2002; Porter, 2001).

Coleman's theory of the zero-sum framework has a significant bearing on this study since the theory theorizes that participation in extra-curriculum activities has negative effects on academic performance of students, this research seeks to find out the significance or otherwise of the theory amongst students in the Cape Coast metropolis.

### **Developmental Framework**

The dominant theoretical framework in the general education literature is the developmental framework by Broh (2002), which theorized that ECA

participation has a positive effect on academic performance indirectly as a result of the non-academic and social benefits associated with ECA participation.

Broh (2002) pointed out that there are three ways which ECA participation indirectly boosts students' academic performance. First, ECA participation helps students develop life skills and characteristics such as a strong work ethic, self-esteem, perseverance, locus of control, which are consistent with positive academic outcomes. Second, participating in ECA increases students' social status and accords them membership into the leading-crowd of academically oriented peer group, thereby facilitating higher academic performance. Third, ECA participation provides students with greater interaction with fellow students in the school, thereby building social ties and developing social capital. This social capital then acts as a form of social control that encourages students to follow school norms and thus attain academic success. ECA participation facilitates students to achieve better academic performance through acquiring life skills and attitudes (Holland & Andre, 2007; Larson, 2006; Lewis, 2004; Mahoney, Cairns & Farmer, 2003; Marsh, 2002).

Holland and Andre suggested that ECA participation helps students to acquire organizational, planning and time-management skills. They also suggested that ECA participation helps students to develop attitudes such as discipline and motivation; and to receive social rewards that influence personality characteristics (Holland & Andre, 2007). Marsh (2002) and Valentine, Cooper & Bettencourt (2002) found that ECA participation enhances students' self-concept, which in turn mediates positive effects on

other academic outcomes. ECA participation also promotes personal initiatives such as setting personal goals, evaluating what is needed to attain goals, and then actively acquiring the abilities and resources to achieve goals (Larson, 2006). Over time, the benefits of consistent ECA participation could generalize beyond the ECA setting towards academic pursuits such as in academic goal setting (Mahoney et al., 2003). Mahoney et al. conducted a longitudinal study and found that consistent ECA participation was associated with high interpersonal competence, educational status, and educational aspirations.

Lewis (2004) proposed the application of resilience theory to examine the positive impacts of ECA participation. Resilience is one's ability to respond positively to stress, adversity, and obstacles, learned as a result of exposure to challenging situations (Rutter, 2007). Lewis argued that ECA participation acts as an agent of resilience by providing students with new environments for self-discovery, opening up opportunities for achievement, and allowing them to assume meaningful roles in their school communities. Lewis also argued that ECA participation enhances students' self-esteem and self-efficacy and motivates them to work towards academic goals and social relations. This results in a stronger sense of school belonging, which can motivate students to work towards academic goals (Lewis, 2004). The achievement-oriented nature of ECA, especially sports activities, is an ideal context for building students' character (Fejgin, 2004). Fejgin found that students who participated in competitive sport activities developed a greater internal locus of control. By making experiences of both success and failure highly visible to participants and their peers, students realize that

achievements depend on individual effort. This link between performance and achievement in competitive sports might help students to establish a greater internal locus of control and achieve better academic performance (Fejgin, 2004).

Hansen, Larson, and Dworkin (2003) examined the developmental benefits of ECA participation and suggested that ECA participation provides students with six basic domains of learning experiences that may lead to positive academic outcomes. ECA participation assists the personal development of students by (a) facilitating identity development through trying out new experiences; (b) providing a context for developing personal initiative; (c) developing basic emotional, cognition, and physical skills; (d) building social connections to others through developing teamwork and social skills; (e) promoting interpersonal relationships; and (f) extending social networks with both peers and adults which are a source of social capital (Hansen et al. 2003). ECA participation may be a key factor in increasing students' sense of school belonging. Students who have a greater sense of school belonging were more likely to be more interested in school, more motivated, experienced less anxiety and had improved academic performance (Fredricks & Eccles, 2010).

Anderman (2002) found that students who felt a greater sense of school belonging obtained a higher grade point average, were more optimistic, and had fewer problems at school. Marsh (2002) argued that through ECA involvement, students experience a sense of meaning and purpose connected to the educational process, which increases their sense of commitment to the school. This results in shaping students' values and attitudes to become more

consistent with the academic-oriented school values and to the academic process in general as reflected through lower school dropout rates and school attendance (Marsh, 2002; Mahoney & Cairns, 2007).

Conclusions from these studies suggest that quality after-school activities can have positive impact on students' academic performance. Involvement in extra-curricular activities is consistently and positively correlated with good school attendance and good attendance is often correlated with higher grade point average (Olson, 2008). Smith (2008) posited that participation in extra-curricular activities provide students with unique development opportunities that positively impact on the students' self-concept. This may lead to higher academic expectations therefore better academic outcomes for students.

However, Reeves (2008) determined that parents and teachers might fear students may lose their focus on academics when they become too busy with after-school activities. This study, hitherto, seeks to determine the applicability of the framework on the study.

### **Threshold Framework**

An emerging theoretical framework in the extant literature is the threshold framework by Cooper, Valentine, Nye, & Lindsay (1999), which theorized that ECA participation has a positive effect on academic performance up to a certain point beyond which participation leads to negative academic outcomes.

The threshold framework posits that the association between ECA participation and academic outcomes resembles an inverted U-shaped function, in which academic outcomes increase at low and moderate levels of

ECA participation, level off, then decline at the highest participation levels (Marsh, 2002). The Threshold framework attributes the point of diminishing academic benefits to students' excessive time commitment which leaves students too little time for academic pursuits, similar to the zero-sum framework (Marsh, 2002). As such, the threshold framework strikes a compromise between the zero-sum framework's prediction that excessive time commitments result in declining academic performance and the developmental framework's prediction of positive non-academic developmental benefits (Marsh & Kleitman, 2002). Marsh (2002) found significant nonlinear effects of ECA participation on academic outcomes. Marsh and Kleitman (2002) also found that the number of ECA, time spent on ECA, and total ECA participation has nonlinear effects on academic outcomes. Similarly, Fredricks and Eccles (2010) reported that ECA participation has a non-linear effect on grades, educational expectations, and educational status. They argued that high levels of ECA participation weakened students' connectedness with others and take time away from academic pursuits (Fredricks & Eccles, 2010).

Marsh (2002) found that the students' academic performance declined at higher breadth and intensity of ECA participation and argued that the stress of balancing multiple ECA affects academic performance negatively. Cooper et al. (1999) reported a curvilinear trend between ECA participation and standardised achievement test scores—the amount of time spent on ECAs was positively associated with test scores, but at the highest participation levels, test scores declined dramatically. Knifsend and Graham (2012) found curvilinear relationships between breath of ECA participation and academic performance. They argued that moderate ECA participation provided students

with an optimal number of contexts to foster relationships with peers and promote a greater sense of school belonging. In contrast, students with high levels of ECA participation may experience difficulties determining where they fit in and belong with their peers (Knifsend & Graham, 2012). Randall and Bohnert (2012) reported a threshold effect between ECA participation and students' psychological and social development.

Conclusions from these studies suggest that performance increases to a point and then declines when participation in an activity continues. Thompson (2008) discussed this concept when stating "The level of commitment is much more important than the specific activity" (p.10). Not only can over-scheduling impact academics and level of commitment, it can also impact the student emotionally and physically which could lead to stress, fatigue and burn-outs.

Another downward side to participation according to Thompson (2008) might occur if students are involved in nearly every activity available such as piano lessons, football, youth group, fellowships, drama clubs, so there is an activity every day of the week. This may impact on the students' academic success. The framework therefore provides the researcher with the requisite information to conduct the study.

## **Conclusion**

In the present study the researcher examined prior studies in the general education literature that investigated the impact of ECA participation on students' academic performance. The study of the general education literature suggested three major theoretical frameworks. First, the zero-sum framework posited that ECA participation has a negative effect on academic



performance because students were devoting more time for their extra-curricular activities at the expense of their academic studies. Second, the developmental framework theorized that ECA participation has a positive effect on academic performance indirectly as a result of the non-academic and social benefits associated with ECA participation. Last, the threshold framework hypothesized that ECA participation has a positive effect on academic performance up to a certain point beyond which participation leads to negative academic outcomes.

While much has been done in understanding the impact of ECA participation on the general education literature, these studies were limited to specific geographical locations. That is, most of the studies were conducted in the United States of America and Australia. There are cultural and socio-economical differences between these countries and Ghana. By examining the impact of ECA, this study aims to affirm or dispute the potential determinants of after-school activities which were used in conducting the studies in the general education literature. The researcher urges other researchers to conduct future studies on the impact of ECA participation so as to extend the stream of research into particular course area in education and also other determinants of students' academic performance.

### **Empirical Studies**

#### **Outcomes associated with participation in after-school activities.**

Students participate in a wide variety of after-school activities, ranging from: solitary, passive activities such as watching television, playing on the computer and hobbies; to unstructured group activities such as 'hanging out with friends' and highly structured activities such as sport and dance; through

to family activities, chores, homework, volunteering and paid employment (Garton, Harvey, & Price, 2004; Gordon & Caltabiano, 2006). Adolescent participation in these different types of activities has been linked to a range of physical and psychological consequences. In addition, longitudinal studies suggest the activity choices adolescents make may have lifelong implications (Ankomah, 2009; Togun, 2002; Mahoney, Cairns & Farmer, 2003).

### **Structured Activities**

#### Adjustment and Well-being

Ragheb and Merydith (2001) conceptualised overall well-being as comprising five main components: physical, mental, emotional, social and spiritual. Evidence is accumulating that adolescent out-of-school behaviours influence well-being and adjustment to life.

It is often postulated that increased participation in sport or physical exercise not only improves physical and mental health but also leads to increased life satisfaction. The health benefits of exercise include improvements in metabolism, reduction in sports related injuries, enhanced immune system, increased serotonin levels (the chief ingredient in antidepressants), improved performance on mental tasks, and reduced anxiety, stress and depression (Haugland, Wold, & Torsheim, 2003; Kimball & Freysinger, 2003). In addition, adolescents participating in sport have a better relationship with their parents (including greater intimacy and more frequent touching), less drug use, higher grade point averages (Field, Diego & Sanders, 2001), a healthier self-image and lower emotional distress (Harrison & Narayan, 2003).

These benefits are often attributed to the physical exercise underlying many of these activities. It is possible that some of the benefits arise as a result of factors intrinsic to structured activities (as opposed to the activity itself) such as expectations regarding participation and on-going commitment, the need to collaborate with others, skill development and performance feedback.

Iso-Ahola and Crowley (2001) suggested that involvement in structured leisure activities acted as a deterrent to participation in anti-social activities by 'filling' free time, alleviating boredom and helping adolescents feel good about themselves. Furthermore, in structured programmes, acceptable behaviours are usually clearly presented, and consistent positive reinforcement is provided for pro-social behaviour (e.g., Tremlow & Saccok, 2008). Adolescents who tend to conform to societal norms have less psychological distress, more well-being, and greater support from friends and family than those who rebel against accepted rules (Olayinka, 2007). Thus it could be concluded that involvement in structured out-of-school activities encourages conformity and hence better adjustment and health.

Participation in structured extracurricular activities has been associated with increased school satisfaction (Gilman, 2001), high academic performance (Bartko & Eccles, 2003) and lower school 'drop-out' rates (Mahoney, 2001; Mahoney & Cairns, 2007). Structured activities may facilitate academic achievement and school satisfaction by enhancing adolescents' identification with their school and school values, increasing their investment in education and promoting better academic attitudes and habits. However, the positive influence of extracurricular activities may become detrimental if identification

with the activity displaces the broader school identity or the time invested in the activity imposes on homework commitments (Cooper, Valentine, Nye, & Lindsay, 1999).

Pro-social activity participation (defined as church attendance and/or involvement in volunteer and community service activities) predicts higher self-esteem (Barber, Eccles, & Stone, 2001). Conversely, anti-social activities with peers and little involvement in the community, family or neighbourhood correlate negatively with self-esteem and positively with stress, depression and avoidant coping strategies, such as drug consumption (Dumont & Provost, 2009). Maybe the discipline, self-direction and sense of competence that comes from participating, and achieving, in structured activities enhances self-esteem as adolescents build on existing skills and interests and are provided with opportunities to feel successful (Mahoney & Stattin, 2000).

As most of the research in this area is correlational, it is difficult to ascertain whether well-adjusted adolescents choose to be involved in structured after-school activities or whether participation in these activities improves adjustment and well-being. However, it is highly likely that the process is reciprocal in nature with each contributing to the other. Thus adolescents who rate themselves higher in social interest indeed report significantly overall higher life satisfaction than adolescents who report less pro-social dispositions (Gilman, 2001).

#### Sense of belonging

Social identity theory (Tajfel, 1998) suggested that the construction of group membership is important for finding a place in society, defining a sense of self and giving meaning to everyday existence. The social experience of

belonging to a group results in four linked concepts: social categorization, social identity, social comparison and psychological group distinctiveness. The value of belonging to a group is the provision of a social identity which provides the basis for both validating and influencing the individual's own values, attitudes and behaviours. Simultaneously, it provides social comparison with other groups and individuals by distinguishing differences between the groups and accenting similarities within the group. Group identification seems prevalent amongst adolescents as shown by studies in which adolescents readily group and label peers according to particular characteristics.

O'Koon (2007) stated that strong connections to society and social institutions act as a deterrent to negative behaviours and increase levels of consciousness and morality. According to O'Koon (2007), there are four elements of the connection: attachment, commitment, involvement and belief. A sense of connection is established through feedback and confirms an individual's sense of belonging to and acceptance within society. Adolescents who develop strong connectedness to significant others and society feel better about themselves in a variety of areas of functioning. In addition, participation in structured activities during adolescence establishes behavioural patterns and commitment to involvement in community, religious and political organisations during adulthood (Glanville, 2009; Schmidt & Padilla, 2003).

The social context of structured out-of-school activities involves guidance from adults who share a similar interest. The formation of relationships with these adults provides adolescents with valuable connections to the wider society, a source of emotional support, help in gaining access to

jobs and the ability to navigate the adult world (Hansen, Larson & Dworkin, 2003). In fact, research indicates that adolescents involved in structured out-of-school activities have significantly greater access to teachers, counsellors, coaches and other adult leaders than other students (Eccles & Barber, 2003).

Frequently, participation in organized activities results in a differentiated network of peer relationships consisting of classmates, other adolescents from the local neighbourhood and friends from leisure institutions (Knifsend, & Graham, 2012). Over half the participants in a study conducted by Patrick, Ryan, Alfeld-Liro, Fedricks, Hruda and Eccles (2009) showed that adolescents talented in sports or the arts reported making new friends, some from different grades, as a result of participating in their talent development activity. In addition, adolescents who participate in structured activities (compared to those who do not) reported the greatest number of involvement with peer relationships (Mahoney & Stattin, 2000). Involvement in structured activities provides a group of adolescents with shared experiences and goals they can discuss, effectively generating and reinforcing social networks. This contributes to their need for social relatedness and contributes to their identity as important, valued members of the community (Eccles et al., 2003).

Unlike informal peer groups, structured activities bring adolescents together who may not otherwise have developed a relationship (Hansen et al., 2003; O'Koon, 2007; Roberts, 2007), providing opportunities to meet and learn about peers from different ethnic, racial and social class groups, and increasing empathy, loyalty and tolerance (Hansen et al., 2003). For adolescents with marginal or low competence, participating in structured

activities provides an opportunity to form relationships with more competent, non-deviant peers (Mahoney & Stattin, 2000).

Some adolescents have difficulty establishing meaningful relationships and peer networks, resulting in loneliness (Hoza, Bukowski, & Beery, 2000). These adolescents describe themselves as rejected, alienated and isolated. However, group participation has been shown to alleviate loneliness (O'Koon, 2007). It is argued that contributing members of a group can receive conditional positive regard and consequently obtain some degree of psychological intimacy. Thus structured out-of-school activities may provide a social context for lonely adolescents to develop a network of relationships.

#### Skill development

Structured activities provide adolescents the opportunity to acquire and practice a range of life skills, including learning to cooperate and work as a team, communicate effectively, regulate emotions and set and take responsibility for achieving goals, developing leadership skills, improving social competencies and time management, and acquiring strategies to manage stress (Hansen et al., 2003). Larson (2006) noted that structured activities provide the context for developing initiative (important in adult life) as adolescents learn how to make plans, overcome obstacles and achieve desired ends.

The ability to work with others is the basic principle for cohesion in the family, community and nation (Cassel, Chow, Demoulin, & Reiger, 2000). Similarly, the success of many structured activities (sporting teams, bands, drama productions, choirs) depends largely on the degree each member properly executes expected, clearly defined roles, in co-operation with other

group members. In these activities each person is important and the process of achieving a common goal requires adolescents to work collaboratively, divide responsibility, respect each other and give and receive feedback.

Even though everyone has a certain level of responsibility, adolescents recognize that those in leadership positions carry greater responsibility (Hansen et al., 2003). Adolescent leaders learn to delegate, take others into account when making decisions and ask for assistance.

### **Unstructured Activities**

#### Social activities

Unstructured social activities constitute a large component of adolescents' lives. Adolescents like to spend their free time with peers, either face-to-face or via the telephone, discussing topics of interest such as behaviours of other group members, fashion, music and television programmes (Coleman & Hendry, 2000).

The social interaction underpinning many leisure activities serves as an important avenue for the development of friendship networks and is a beneficial cue to engaging in activities (Tergerson & King, 2002). Through friendships, adolescents develop social competence, receive security and support, and feel happy (Coleman & Hendry, 2000).

Delinquent involvement has been perceived as self-presentation in which a message of defiance is conveyed to and consequently rewarded by delinquent peers (Carroll, Durkin, Hattie, & Houghton, 2007). In fact Carroll et al. found that delinquent and at-risk adolescents attached significantly more importance to goals associated with developing a social image (e.g. delinquency, freedom-autonomy), while non-at-risk adolescents were more



concerned with goals associated with academic image. In addition, belonging to a 'gang' may satisfy needs (such as power, physical security, role models and purpose) which are not being met through more conventional avenues (Tremblow & Saccok, 2008).

Due to the spontaneous nature of unstructured out-of-school activities, frequent involvement in them may diminish parental monitoring efforts and knowledge of the adolescent's actions and social affiliates. Evidence from Mahoney and Stattin's (2000) study supports this thesis. However, the reverse interpretation may also be true, in that more effective parents' guide their adolescent's choice of leisure activities towards structured pursuits. It is possible that both processes may be interrelated as socialisation and selection tend to operate co-operatively rather than in conflict.

#### Passive Activities

Research suggests that adolescents spend 19 to 20 hours per week engaged in 'screen' activities such as watching television and playing computer games (Garton, Harvey, & Price, 2004), and it is their most common source of leisure (van Roosmalen & Krahn, 2006). It is reported that time spent watching television is negatively related to academic achievement (Cooper et al., 1999) and after watching television people state that they feel less relaxed, less happy and less able to concentrate, compared to how they feel after participating in sports or other activities (Leitner & Leitner, 2006).

However, although television watching is a frequent adolescent activity, in many cases it was not considered the activity of choice (van Roosmalen & Krahn, 2006) and provided the least amount of satisfaction (Garton et al., 2004). Rather, adolescents watched television when there was

nothing else to do and they were ‘stuck’ at home with nowhere to go. In addition, television watching is often combined with other activities (Robertson, 2009).

Although involvement in passive activities is often perceived negatively, there is an alternative perspective. For many individuals, adolescence is a time of stress and increased mental health problems. Not only do adolescents need to cope with developmental issues of identity, self-esteem, physiological changes and sexuality, but often their lives are dictated by a frenetic schedule of school, homework, extracurricular activities, paid work, social engagements and family obligations. Passive leisure may allow for recuperation and provide a means of managing stress not available through participation in active and challenging activities (Trenberth, Dewe, & Walkey, 2009). For example, reading books is a relatively popular adolescent activity, with 78% of the participants in Moffitt and Wartella’s (2002) and 51% in Nippold, Duthie and Larsen’s (2005) study reporting that they read for leisure.

Leisure reading is associated with academic achievement and purportedly used by some adolescents as a means of escape from social or school pressures (McHale, Crouter, & Tucker, 2001). Similarly, adolescents spend on average 40 hours per week listening to music (Klein, Brown, Childers, Oliveri, & Dykers, 2003) to help them relax, improve their mood, pass the time and relieve boredom. This suggests that passive activities have a complementary role to play in an adolescent’s otherwise active and happy social life, providing time for private reflection, rest and renewal, creative thinking and space to concentrate on difficult tasks (Rice & Dolgin, 2002).

It has been theorised that we are born with the need both to be alone and to be connected with others (Buchholz & Catton, 2009). Consequently, it is necessary to distinguish between loneliness and solitude. Larson (2006) defines solitude as the objective, self-chosen condition of being alone, often used as a time of rest, reflection and renewal. Thus adolescents may voluntarily choose to spend time alone and those spending an intermediate amount of time alone (25% to 45% of their out-of-school time) appear to benefit from this solitude in terms of better psychological adjustment, higher school grades and less depression (Larson, 2006). Talented adolescents in particular spend more time in solitude and enjoy solitary activities more than average students (Csikszentmihalyi, Rathunde, & Whalen, 2003).

Solitude also seems to have a renewing effect on mood, increasing subsequent alertness and cheerfulness (Larson et al. cited in Buchholz & Catton, 2009). In addition, Coleman (2002) points out that many solitary activities provide mental stimulation, invoking the processes of perceptiveness, recall, problem solving and creativity (e.g., art, music production, playing cards, computer games, and hobbies). In contrast, loneliness is a subjective condition which may or may not occur in physical separation from others (Larson, 2006), but is indicative of a discrepancy between an individual's desired and achieved interpersonal relations. Research indicates that the quality of peer relations and peer intimacy were the most significant predictors of loneliness (Uruk & Demir, 2003). Arguably, adolescents require a balance of active and passive activities in their life, with each making a contribution to their overall well-being.

## Boredom

Adolescent leisure boredom has been implicated in deviant activity involvement, particularly drug use and delinquency (Iso-Ahola & Crowley, 2001), frequency and quantity of alcohol consumption and smoking (Gordon & Caltabiano, 2006). Explanations of boredom include: a lack of awareness of stimulating activities; lack of intrinsic motivation to act to alleviate boredom constructively; a mismatch between the skills and the challenge at hand; the inability to exercise autonomy; or being forced to use energy or expend effort on tasks (Caldwell et al., 2009). These authors found that adolescents with lower intrinsic motivation and lower levels of perceived parental monitoring were more likely to be bored. They argued that their results predicted that lack of choice (i.e., feeling pressured by external factors) or perceiving nothing to do (i.e., no optimal arousing options) were predictive of boredom.

However, McHale et al. (2001) argued that ‘hanging out’ and involvement in other unstructured activities is something adolescents ‘fall back on’ when they have nothing more constructive to do. As these activities do not require the discipline, continuity of effort or team work demanded in many kinds of structured activities, it frequently leads to boredom (Larson, 2006).

## **Factors associated with participation in after-school activities**

### **Parental Influence**

In order to understand the reasons underlying adolescent participation in particular out-of-school activities, it is necessary to look beyond the activity and the individual to the wider society. It is seen as the main agent of socialization, responsible for children’s emotional and psychosocial

development and for facilitating the transition through adolescence. Thus an understanding of family (and in particular parent-adolescent) dynamics is important to gain a better understanding of adolescent out-of-school behaviour.

Contrary to popular belief, researchers in psychology, sociology and education have demonstrated that parental influence does not necessarily decline as children mature, but rather continues to have a substantial impact during adolescence (Jodl, Michael, Malanchuk, Eccles, & Sameroff, 2001). The cognitive, affective and behavioural attributes of adolescents are determined and moulded by an assortment of familiar and parental genetic and environmental factors. These influences contribute to both the stability and variations in the developmental patterns of adolescence (Neiderhiser, Reiss, & Hetherington, 2006). Parents influence their adolescents directly and indirectly, consciously and unconsciously, through modelling (Coleman, 2002), through the provision of guidance, advice, opportunities, constraints and reinforcement, by their parenting practices and through the values and beliefs they hold (Eccles & Harold, 2001).

#### Parenting and parenting styles

Miller (2003) defined values as deeply held and enduring standards about desirable and undesirable behaviour. They are abstract goals that apply across situations and serve as guiding principles in people's lives in the selection and justification of actions, and in the evaluation of others and events. Beliefs represent the individual's construction of reality and, like values, influence decisions and behaviours (Schwartz & Bardi, 2001).

Family process theory proposes that the interlinking family environment results in parents and adolescents sharing similar cognitive styles, values, attitudes and emotions (Larson, 2006). As primary socialising agents, parents have an extended period of time and many opportunities to transmit their values and beliefs to their children. That value systems are successfully transferred from parents to their children is supported by research which shows parents' values and beliefs directly predict adolescents' values and beliefs (Olayinka, 2007). Thus theoretically, the values and beliefs parents impart influence adolescents' out-of-school behaviours.

Parents may transfer their values and beliefs to their adolescent children through their own actions as role models, through the communication of their values, through the monitoring and enforcing of family values (including the dispensing of rewards and punishments), through their role as interpreters of reality and through the provision (or denial) of experiences and opportunities (Hendry, 2003).

The effect of modeling has mainly been investigated with reference to substance abuse and physical activity. Regardless of whether parents encourage or discourage use of drugs, adolescents are more likely to be substance abusers if their parents used drugs or alcohol (Anderson & Henry, 2004). Similarly, children of two active parents are significantly more likely to be active than children of two inactive parents (Moore, & Ohtsuka, 2000). Such research suggests that parental role modeling represents a salient form of behaviour that adolescents may emulate, eventually adopting the underlying values.

Parents also transfer beliefs and values to their children through the experiences and support they provide. For example, parental endorsement, support and encouragement have been positively related to time in after-school extracurricular activities and participation in non-school clubs (Huebner & Mancini, 2003), and adolescent boys' (and to a lesser extent girls') attraction to physical activity. Conversely, the most common reason given for discontinuing exercise was the absence of support (Field et al., 2001). Huebner and Mancini argued parental support and endorsement of structured out-of-school activities implies the parents' value adolescent involvement in these activities. Therefore it is understandable that they actively ensure their children's participation.

Parents also influence by discouraging participation in particular activities such as hanging around aimlessly, taking drugs, continuous television viewing, alcohol use and even involvement in organized activities (Hultzman, 2003). The primacy of parental influence is supported in Howard and Madrigal's (2000) study which revealed that mothers actively screen or qualify their adolescent's involvement in activities and may refuse participation due to a range of reasons including insufficient family income, commitment overload and timing of the activity.

Arguably, the relative support and encouragement provided by parents differ according to the value placed on participation in particular activities. Parents, who are aware that structured out-of-school activities provide unique opportunities for learning, and developing a range of social and other skills, urge their children to utilize their out-of-school time constructively.

Conversely, unsupportive parenting is more likely to result in adolescent involvement in delinquent activities (Juang & Silbereisen, 2009).

The importance parents attach to structured out-of-school activities appears to increase as socio-economic (Huebner & Mancini, 2003) and education levels (Schmidt & Padilla, 2003) increase. The researchers suggested that highly educated, affluent parents encouraged participation because they realised the social and cultural capital obtained from involvement in such activities. Parental support and encouragement also differs according to activity and gender. For example, in a study conducted by Huebner & Mancini (2003), parents reported providing greater encouragement of physical activity for sons than daughters and, as expected, boys expressed greater liking of physical activity than girls. Huebner & Mancini attributed these findings to parental values (and associated support and encouragement) regarding gender appropriate activities.

### Parenting Styles

Parenting style usually refers to the characteristics or patterns of behaviour exhibited by parents in the rearing of their children. Baumrind (1971) identified three qualitatively different patterns of parenting style based on authority: authoritarian, authoritative and permissive. Maccoby & Martin (2003) subsequently refined this typology by conceptualizing parenting style along two dimensions: parental demandingness and parental responsiveness. Demandingness referred to the regulation of children's behaviour through parental controls, supervision (monitoring) and demands for maturity. Responsiveness referred to parental acceptance and support of their children



through expressions of affection, responsiveness to sensitivity, and adaptation to their needs and desires.

Demanding parents successfully limit, monitor and supervise their children's behaviour, teaching them self-control and reducing adolescent involvement in risky, aggressive or norm-violating activities (Galambos, Barker, & Almeida, 2003). The consistent, fair and rational enforcement of rules is likely to result in stronger parent-child relationships as adolescents are more likely to accept and respect the parents' authority (Galambos et al., 2003). Conversely, low levels of parental action, characterized by weak levels of monitoring and enforcement of family policies increases the likelihood of alcohol misuse and other deviant behaviours (Roberts, 2007).

Parents often monitor their adolescents' whereabouts as a means of controlling their behaviour (Pettit, Bates, Dodge, & Meece, 2009). It may include parent initiated conversations about the adolescent's activity and friends, soliciting information from other children, parents and significant adults, or imposing and enforcing rules about where the adolescent can go and with whom (Laird, Petite, Bates, & Dodge, 2013).

Parental monitoring is often operationalised as parental knowledge and has been linked to adolescent delinquency, with low levels of parent knowledge predicting increases in delinquent behaviour (Kerr, Stattin, & Trost, 2009; Laird et al., 2013; Pettit et al., 2009). Pettit et al. suggested that lack of monitoring diminishes parental opportunity to intervene in peer friendships or antisocial behaviour before it escalates to more serious delinquent behaviours. In contrast, high parental knowledge has been linked to multiple measures of good adolescent adjustment (Kerr & Stattin, 2000).

However, what needs to be determined is the extent to which parental demandingness is linked to adolescent participation in structured out-of-school activities.

Adolescents need both intrinsic support (encouragement, appreciation, trust and love) and extrinsic support (external expressions of affection such as hugging and providing special material desires). By being warm and supportive, parents can build a relational base that makes their adolescents more likely to attend to, accurately understand and internalize their parents' values (Jodl et al., 2001). Research indicates a positive correlation between parental warmth, endorsement and support of activities with adolescent participation in structured out-of-school activities (Mahoney & Stattin, 2000). However, adolescents who participated in low-level structured activities (characterised by less adult supervision and a lack of skill building elements) tended to have less supportive parental relationships. Kerr and colleagues (Kerr & Stattin, 2000; Kerr et al., 2009) suggested that maintaining warm, trusting relationships increases adolescents' spontaneous disclosure of information. The parental knowledge gained from such disclosure (as opposed to active parental monitoring) is a primary factor in minimizing adolescent problem behaviours.

Although demandingness and responsiveness have independently been shown to influence value acquisition and adolescent behaviour, other research indicates that considering both these constructs simultaneously increases the accuracy and consistency of results (e.g., Adamczyk-Robinette, Fletcher, & Wright, 2002; Mahoney & Stattin, 2000). Maccoby and Martin (2003) combined the two dimensions of demandingness and responsiveness to create

four categories of parenting: authoritative (high demandingness, high responsiveness), authoritarian (high demandingness, low responsiveness), indulgent or permissive (low demandingness, high responsiveness) and indifferent or neglecting (low demandingness, low responsiveness). Further research by Shucksmith & Hendry (2008) supported the existence of these four distinct parenting styles. Permissive parenting (followed by authoritative parenting) was the most common parenting styles. Authoritative and authoritarian approaches were more common with younger adolescents, whilst permissive and neglectful approaches were more common with older adolescents, reflecting the loosening of the control/demandingness dimension as adolescents matured (Freeman & Newland, 2002).

Indifferent or neglecting parents, who are neither demanding nor responsive, display a neglectful or uninvolved pattern of parenting. They are disengaged from parental responsibilities and do not monitor their children's behaviours or support their interests, often because they are preoccupied with their own problems (Glasgow, Dornbusch, Troyer, Steinberg, & Ritter, 2007). With this style of parenting, independence is thrust on the adolescent too early and in amounts that are too difficult to manage. Indifferent parenting reduces both the availability of parental values to adolescents (due to the lack of clear standards and expectations) and adolescents' motivation to attend to parents (due to the lack of parental responsiveness), resulting in less accurate perceptions of parental value systems (Shucksmith & Hendry, 2008).

Robertson (2009) suggested that adolescents who perceive the family as not being interested in sharing leisure time or helping facilitate satisfaction of their leisure needs would seek satisfaction with peers, increasing the

likelihood of participation in delinquent types of activities. In fact, Shucksmith & Hendry, (2008) found that adolescent behaviour problems and poor adolescent-parent relations were associated with low levels of parental acceptance and control.

Parents characterised as indulgent or permissive engage in an indulgent style of parenting. They are tolerant, warm, accepting and committed to their children but exercise little authority and make few demands (Glasgow et al., 2007). Children of these parents are allowed considerable self-regulation. Although indulgent parenting is likely to limit the accessibility of parental values to adolescents because standards are not clearly articulated, parent responsiveness may increase adolescents' motivation to attend to parental messages (Shucksmith & Hendry, 2008). Robertson (2009) claimed that the extent to which the family satisfies the adolescent's leisure needs determines the leisure time shared with family. Adolescents who perceive their families as indulgent tend to lack independence or the ability to take responsibility. Consequently, it is likely that adolescent with indulgent parents who are readily able to satisfy the adolescents' leisure needs, may rely on their parents rather than seeking leisure satisfaction elsewhere.

Authoritarian parents attempt to mould and control the behaviour and attitudes of their children according to an inflexible set of standards. They tend to emphasize obedience, respect for authority and order at the expense of warmth and tolerance, discouraging verbal debate and expecting rules to be followed without explanation (Glasgow et al., 2007). Making decisions without consultation denies adolescents the chance to learn self-reliance

leading to a dependence on extrinsic motivation and less well-honed, self-regulatory abilities (Strage, 2008).

According to Olayinka (2007), adolescents who perceived their families as authoritarian spent more time in solitary leisure than in groups, with friends or with family, than adolescents from other family types. In such families adolescents may be restricted to spending time at home, but choose to be by themselves to avoid the high levels of conflict associated with controlling parents.

Authoritative parents effectively balance high levels of demandingness and responsiveness. They establish, and firmly and consistently enforce using non-punitive methods of discipline, rules and standards of behaviour (appropriate to the child's level of maturity). However, they are equally warm and supportive, encouraging bi-directional communication, validating the child's point of view and recognizing the rights of all (Glasgow et al., 2007). This type of parenting is believed to be the most successful in providing the necessary scaffolding to foster adolescent personal and social responsibility, while supporting their emerging autonomy and independence. In addition, adolescents with authoritative parents more accurately perceived parental values because they are more available and adolescents are more motivated to attend to parental messages (Shucksmith & Hendry, 2008).

Authoritative parenting also appears to play a key role in protecting adolescents from involvement in problem behaviours. Adamczyk-Robinette, Fletcher and Wright (2002) attributed lower levels of tobacco use amongst adolescents from authoritative homes to the tendency of authoritative parents to maintain high behavioural expectations, monitor their adolescents'

behaviour, exhibit high levels of trust and communicate openly. These authors suggested that as authoritative parents establish warm, positive bonds with their children, the likelihood that these adolescents will engage in behaviours that are not valued or supported by their parents is diminished. In addition, because authoritative parents are more likely to monitor and exert control over their children's behaviour, adolescents have fewer opportunities for participating in problem behaviours and greater risks of consequences should they be caught.

The implicit assumption underlying much of the earlier work on parenting styles was that parental authoritativeness fostered the various positive child outcomes. However, it could be argued that parenting style is determined by child behaviours, or the two may have a reciprocal relationship. Longitudinal studies confirm the positive effects of authoritative parenting and the deleterious effects of less supportive, more restrictive parenting. Firm, supportive parenting is associated with student retention of good academic self-concepts and halts the upward trajectory of externalizing problems, whereas the work and school orientation of adolescents from neglecting families deteriorated over time (Galambos et al., 2003).

Garton et al. (2004) found no relationship between perceived parenting style and adolescent preference for particular leisure activities, based on five category types (sport/physical, social, screen, risk and miscellaneous). However, differences may exist between parenting style and adolescent participation in structured versus unstructured out-of-school activities. For example, Mahoney and Stattin (2000), found a positive association between positive parent-adolescent relations, parental monitoring and trust, and

adolescent involvement in structured activities. Whether involvement in structured activities facilitated positive parent-adolescent relations or more effective parenting guided adolescents' choice of activities is open to interpretation. In any case, further investigation is required to explore this possible connection in more depth.

From the research it could be concluded that adolescents remain connected to their parents when there are open communication channels, an authoritative parenting style, provision of encouragement, warmth and structure, the involvement of adolescents in decision making and the provision of appropriate scaffolding enabling adolescents to become increasingly more autonomous. These adolescents are subsequently more likely to be influenced by their parents and hold similar values. However, research such as that conducted by Bogenschneider, Wu, Raffaelli, and Tsay (2008) revealed that parental influence on adolescent development may be moderated by the value parents place on particular socialization outcomes. The literature suggests that parents have an important role to play as leisure educators and in helping adolescents choose socially acceptable and beneficial leisure activities.

### **Peer Influence**

The process of socialisation not only involves the adolescent's interaction with various adults (parents, teachers, youth leaders, coaches), but also peers, with particular types of relationship patterns coming into focus at different developmental stages (Coleman, 2002). Peer relationships gain primacy during adolescence and are positively implicated in social and psychological adjustment. Through peer networks, adolescents are able to practice the roles and rules implicit in the setting, obtain resources that will

help support their functioning, establish a sense of community, receive reassurance of their worth and confirm their identity. Participation in a variety of social environments provides adolescents opportunities to widen their social network and to build connections with different social fields (Rubin, Bukowski, & Parker, 2008).

#### Time spent with peers

A major developmental task of adolescence is the establishment of satisfying and healthy relationships with peers. Through peer friendships, adolescents learn how to interact on the basis of equality and to make their own decisions (Meeus & Dekovic, 2005). The process of establishing peer social networks results in increased time spent with peers and a halving of time spent with parents (Hendry, 2003; Larson, 2006). However, time with peers is not negatively correlated with time with parents (Fallon & Bowles, 2007) as diminished family time is often replaced by time alone, usually in the bedroom listening to music, playing computer games, or playing outside.

Similarly, decreased frequency of contact with parents does not necessarily mean lessened closeness or poorer quality relationships (Hendry, 2003; Larson, 2006; O'Koon, 2007). Rather, adolescents need to know their parents are available for them when and if required. Several researchers have reported a correlation between warm, supportive parenting and positive friendship qualities (Cook, Herman, Phillips, & Settersten Jr, 2002; Meeus & Dekovic, 2005; Field et al., 2001; Lieberman, Doyle, & Markiewica, 2009; Parker & Bensen, 2004).

In contrast, low levels of adolescent-parent connectedness, incompetent discipline practices, and high levels of parental control/strictness



may result in alienation from parents, leading adolescents to invest more time in, and attention to, their peer relationships (Meeus & Dekovic, 2005). Thus high involvement with peers may be an indicator of lack of attention and concern at home, rather than a gauge of social competence. Variations in time spent with friends versus family also exist between different cultures, genders, ages and socio-economic status groups (Zej, tePoel, du Bois-Reymond, Ravesloot, & Meulman, 2000). Arguably, time spent with peers and closeness to peers affects the amount of influence peers exert.

#### Peer Selection

Despite the traditional perspective that peer groups influence adolescents to change their values, beliefs and behaviours to conform with group norms (Brown, 1999), it is now recognised that adolescents tend to choose friends whose values, backgrounds and interests are similar to their own and there is often considerable overlap between the values of parents and peers (Cairns & Cairns, 2005) argued that adolescents do not hapazardly fall into a crowd and then fall victim to normative pressures. Instead, adolescents' dispositions direct them to a particular crowd that provides "the best fit" (Garnier & Stein, 2012). Thus adolescents tend to associate with others who have similar sociometric status. Consequently, rejected or aggressive children tend to form relationships with other rejected or aggressive children, comparatively well-adjusted children of authoritative parents tend to establish and maintain friendships with other well-adjusted peers (Adamczyk-Robinette et al., 2002), and students affiliate with others who have similar academic and motivational characteristics (Ryan, 2001). The greater the similarity, the higher the reciprocity between the group and individual, whereas when there is

little similarity reciprocity is low (Kiesner, Cadinu, Poulin, & Bucci, 2002). This suggests that in many instances, rather than violating parental values, peer groups actually serve to reinforce them.

Jaffe (2008) identified five processes accounting for similarities among friends: socio-demographic conditions, providing proximity; differential selection, whereby individuals seek out similar friends; reciprocal socialization, whereby peer similarity is increased through interaction; contagion effect, in which individuals in highly cohesive group are more likely to participate in an activity they would not do on their own; and selective elimination, whereby non-conforming members voluntarily or forcibly leave the group. These processes may operate simultaneously or at different times in the group's existence and indicate the flexible nature of peer groupings. Even over the relatively short period of three weeks, close and coherent peer groups wax and wane in strength (Cairns, Leung, Buchanan & Cairns, 2005).

Proximity between people is a potent factor in determining friendships, due to familiarity, availability and expectations of continued interaction. For adolescents, friendship choices are usually directed towards other students in the same school and this bond is strengthened by spending time together outside of school (Coleman & Hendry, 2000). Vernberg (2000) suggested that adolescents may find it difficult to establish out-of-school friendships because they feel awkward meeting and joining established groups, although lonely adolescents may take up out-of-school activities or interests as a way of belonging (Coleman & Hendry, 2000).

Cotterell (2006) described adolescent groups as concentric circles which begin at the centre with close friends and widen outwards to exchange

networks (people who provide support or cliques), then to interactive networks or crowds (comprising local level groupings with whom the individual normally interacts). These groups are identified by dress, scholastic standing, extracurricular participation, social skills, socio-economic status, reputation and personality and are common across many different high schools (Brown, 2000).

At the personal level, friends provide support, companionship and reaffirm self-identity. Friendship networks range from three to four members and are remarkably stable across nationalities (Cotterell, 2006). Close friendship groups develop by choice and by mutual preference and their cohesiveness centers around a cluster of similar behaviours and attitudes such as hobbies, dress, leisure interests and attitudes to school (Coleman & Hendry, 2000). Girls' friendships are based on affection, intimacy, companionship, satisfaction and frequent contact (Jones & Costin, 2005). In contrast, boys' friendships are formed through mutual activities (Heaven, 2004).

Particular parenting behaviours (monitoring, encouragement of achievement, joint decision making) have been associated with specific adolescent characteristics (academic achievement, self-reliance, drug use), which in turn predict the peer group with which adolescents associate and the quality of that relationship (Garnier & Stein, 2012). It would appear that parenting practices influence adolescent orientation towards peers and that subsequent experiences in the parent and peer domain both influence adolescent behaviour (Bogenschneider et al., 2008).

Adolescents who characterise their parents as authoritative are more likely to be oriented towards peer groups that reward both adult and peer

supported norms. Boys characterising their parents as indulgent are more likely to be oriented towards groups with a 'fun-culture'. Parents perceived as uninvolved, indifferent, unresponsive (Bogenschneider et al., 2008; Freeman & Newland, 2002) or overly restrictive increase adolescent susceptibility to peer pressure, orientation towards peers who do not endorse adult values and the development of problem behaviours (Pettit et al., 2009). Thus, seeking advice from and being influenced by friends may be a reflection of an unsatisfactory relationship with parents (Fuligni & Eccles, 2003).

Adolescents make clear friendship choices in the knowledge that participation in different social networks will involve them in different specific behaviours (Shucksmith & Hendry, 2008). In addition, since a large part of adolescent consciousness and behaviour is centred on leisure experiences (Csikszentmihalyi & LeFevre, 2009), it seems reasonable to suggest that adolescent leisure preferences and participation patterns are important to the formation and evolution of peer groupings. Thus it is important to recognize adolescents' self-agency and their competency to choose friends according to shared interests, values and beliefs.

#### Power of Peer Influence

Acceptance by peers has been found to be equally important for both males and females at all stages of adolescence (Hendry, 2003). As a function of the desire to be accepted and to reinforce a sense of belonging, conformity often increases towards mid-adolescence and then gradually lessens as adolescents mature and become more confident in their independence and self-agency (Shucksmith & Hendry, 2008). It was clear from comments made to Shucksmith and Hendry that many adolescents go through an experimental

stage, in which participation in 'risky' behaviours is attributed to perceived peer pressure. Consequently, the benefits that accrue from being a part of a group may result in pressures to conform to group norms.

It appears that parents and peers serve as different informational sources in different aspects of adolescents' lives. Activities that are intrinsic to peer life, such as dress style, music, language, movies and dating customs seem to be peer influenced (Meeus & Dekovic, 2005; Rich, 2003). In addition, peers may exert more influence in the day-to-day context in which particular behaviours may occur. For example, on a daily basis adolescents may model the behaviour of their peers or encourage each other to engage or not engage in tobacco use (Adamczyk-Robinette et al., 2002). Similarly, peer gatherings in unstructured leisure settings may provide both a motive for, and increase exposure to drinking.

In contrast, parents remain more influential in future-orientated domains such as education and career (Hendry, 2003), with peer groups exerting limited influence on adolescents' beliefs about the utility value of school and whether they will be successful (Ryan, 2001). Accordingly, if parents recognise the value and encourage participation in structured out-of-school activities, their wards will be more influential in this domain, while peers may be more influential in non-structured out-of-school activities.

Although, Garnier and Stein (2012) have attributed peer pressure to adolescents' initial engagement in these behaviours, they argued that social selection and subsequent socialization better explained these adolescents' decision to participate in these activities. Members of friendship groups are similar to begin with and consequently influence each other in the direction of

greater similarity (Mounts & Steinberg, 2005). Adolescents who perceive incongruity between their own and their friends' attitudes and behaviour will end the friendship or modify their behaviour (Ryan, 2001).

At times, adolescents identify with, and are influenced by reference groups to which they do not belong (Brown, 1999; Kiesner et al., 2002). Thus adolescents with marginal or rejected status are found to be more easily influenced than high status group members (Cotterell, 2006) and those with no reciprocated (compared to reciprocated) friendships are more strongly influenced to commence smoking by their nominated best friend (Aloise-Young, Graham, & Hansen, 2004). These researchers proposed that individuals may change their behaviour in order to initiate friendships and consequently peer influence may be more salient prior to the formation of reciprocating friendships. Thus adolescents may modify their behaviour in an attempt to increase acceptance from peer groups with whom they identify and seek membership.

Peer pressures to conform are more likely to be subtle and indirect, rather than overt attempts to control or manipulate. Gossiping about other adolescents, teasing and humour clearly communicate acceptable and unacceptable behaviour without direct confrontation (Ryan, 2001). At times adolescents may be influenced by inaccurate perceptions of others' behaviours and expectations. For example, adolescents' own involvement in risk behaviours is more strongly related to their perception of friends' behaviour rather than actual behaviour (Bauman & Fisher, 2006).

Adolescents are not all equally susceptible to peer influence and the degree of peer influence fluctuates at different times and under different

conditions (Shucksmith & Hendry, 2008). Cotterell (2006) contended that strong ties between individuals enable greater influence to be exerted, especially if the ties are maintained through contact across different social settings. Thus to understand the influence of peers it may be necessary to assess the strength of the relationship. To determine the strength of peer ties requires distinguishing between adolescent involvement with peers (defined as the more superficial degree of participation in shared activities) and the quality of the relationship (Meeus & Dekovic, 2005). Thus the various levels of peer networks exert influence differently.

Parents who are responsive to their adolescents, available when needed and engage in bilateral discussions have children who are less - peer oriented and consequently less influenced by their peers' behaviours (Bogenschneider et al., 2008). Adolescents with good family support and connectedness appear to have less need to conform to peer demands, as they are better able to deal with stresses or inadequacies in the friendship domain and when confronted with a decision, parental rather than peer opinions are accepted (Rice & Dolgin, 2002). Even when the influence of peers is significant, parental monitoring has been shown to act as a buffer, counterbalancing the negative influence of peers (Bogenschneider et al., 2008). Thus while some adolescent groups may support and sustain delinquent and high risk behaviours, Coleman and Hendry (2000) contended that peer influence for most adolescents may be frequently over-estimated.

The examination of peer influence on adolescent behaviour has tended to focus on deviant or high risk behaviours such as drug use and delinquency. Yet, peer influences are not predominantly antisocial and most adolescents

report positive as opposed to negative peer pressures (Brown, 2000). Research investigating positive peer influences has generally concluded that peers model and reinforce parental behaviours and values (Fuligni & Eccles, 2003). Peers, like parents, do encourage pro-social behaviour such as academic achievement and aspiration (Stein & Newcomb, 2009) and protect adolescents from risk behaviour involvement (Maxwell, 2002). Therefore conformity can be a helpful, positive influence as much as a negative one, depending on the friendship group and its values.

Given the variability of peer influence, to what extent do peers affect participation in structured out-of-school activities? Huebner & Mancini (2003) found friend and parent endorsement were important for adolescents' participation in after-school extra-curricular activities, but peer pressure and parental endorsement were important for participation in non-school clubs. In Hultsman's (2003) study, 27.3% of adolescents surveyed indicated that they had not joined an activity in which they were interested due to perceived influence of peers (as opposed to 76.1% indicating perceived parental influence). Similarly, only 12.8% ceased an activity due to peer influence. In an Australian study (Clough, Traill, & Thorpe, 2005), only 22% of adolescent females claimed they would be discouraged from participating in a sport because their friends were not interested. Likewise, Brown (1999) discovered that adolescents generally reported little peer pressure with regard to time spent in extra-curricular activities. These studies indicate that peers do not play a prominent role in determining adolescent initial participation in structured or unstructured out-of-school activities.



The role of peers in supporting or hindering adolescent participation in structured out-of-school activities has received little research attention, despite the importance of peers in adolescents' lives. In addition, research into this area needs to take account of the complex web of interactions, obligations, patterns of identification, support and affiliation that adolescents have with parents, peers and other significant people in their lives.

### **Motivation**

Leisure is defined as activities individuals choose to participate in during their 'freetime' which optimally provided such benefits as stimulation, companionship, fitness and enjoyment (Argyle, 2006).

Researchers then investigated what it was that motivated individuals to participate in leisure activities. This resulted in a range of motivational theories such as Deci and Ryan's (1995) self-determination theory and Neulinger's (1981) model which examined the interaction between perceived freedom/constraints and intrinsic/extrinsic motivation. Other researchers investigated factors constraining such leisure participation (e.g., Hultzman, 2005), and the impact of personality (e.g., Eysenck, Nias, & Cox, 2002), self-esteem (e.g., Schmidt & Padilla, 2003), self-efficacy (Bandura, 1986) and societal influences (Hendry, 2003) on leisure choices and leisure participation. However, activities individuals freely choose to participate in during their 'free time' are not always regarded positively by the wider community (e.g., vandalism, drug use, gambling), and in addition may not be intrinsically satisfying or optimally arousing.

## Intrinsic Motivation

Manfredo, Driver and Tarrant (2006) argued that understanding leisure motivations is the key to determining why people engage in leisure activities. However, Argyle (2006) noted that many people are either unwilling or unable to express their motives. In addition, leisure takes many forms, with different leisure activities being stimulated by different desires. Thus marathon runners report challenge, health and fitness as being primary motives. Those involved in artistic endeavours report creativity factors, while those in adolescent sport programmes nominate fun and skill development (Argyle, 2006). Research also indicates that individuals' motives for initial participation may not be the same as for continued participation and may change or be dependent on factors such as age (Piper, 1994), gender (Passmore & French, 2001) and perceived ability (James, 2001).

In an attempt to explain this phenomenon, Iso-Ahola (1980) developed a triangular model divided in two with a dotted horizontal line. Factors contained in the peak above the dotted line represented 'open', easily accessed causes of leisure behaviour (such as "I enjoy it", "I'm good at it", "I like the social side of it"). Factors in the larger area below the dotted line represented the 'hidden' causes (such as inherited traits, early social learning, and societal influence). Given people's inability to determine accurately all the factors underpinning their participation in particular leisure activities, care must be taken in making assumptions and generalizations about adolescents' participation or non-participation in different out-of-school activities based on their own self assessments.

Motivation can be conceptualised as a continuum moving from high to low self-determination as one proceeds from intrinsic motivation, to extrinsic motivation and then a motivation (Deci & Ryan, 1995). An extrinsic motivation is the relative absence of motivation, while intrinsic motivation is the engagement in an activity for its own sake (Argyle, 2006). Deci and Ryan held that the convergence of interest, enjoyment and excitement signaled the presence of intrinsic motivation. Research demonstrates that enjoyment is the most frequently mentioned characteristic of leisure experiences and is a positive predictor of frequency of participation (Alexandris & Grouios, 2002; Passmore & French, 2001).

Most adolescents spend substantially more time watching television and engaged in other screen activities (which they perceive as less enjoyable) than in active leisure (Garton et al., 2004). In addition, adolescents report that 'hanging out' with friends is their most preferred and enjoyable leisure activity (Passmore & French, 2001). Csikszentmihalyi & LeFevre (2009) postulated that obligatory work (and presumably participation in other structured activities) masks the positive experience it engenders, as individuals tend to judge their desires by social conventions rather than the reality of their feelings. In fact, adolescents who claim that they do not enjoy participating in adult-organized, structured activities may make this claim based on perceived peer norms rather than the actual positive experiences they gain from participation.

Adolescents who actively participate in structured out-of-school activities consistently report experiencing both high motivation and concentration (Larson, 2000). Larson argued that participation in these types

of activities increased initiative and intrinsic motivation. Alternatively, competent, intrinsically motivated adolescents participate more and are more committed to participation in structured leisure activities (Munson, 2003). It could be contended that low intensity activities ('hanging out', watching television) provide opportunities to relax and recuperate from the mental tensions of school work and conforming to adult authority and structures.

Researchers such as Coleman and Iso-Ahola (2003) have emphasised the importance of perceived freedom as a defining component of leisure and as integral to intrinsic motivation. They argued that activities inducing high levels of perceived freedom (and consequently intrinsic motivation) are more likely to assist people maintain a sense of control and mastery, fostering 'hardy' personalities. In Passmore and French's (2001) study, adolescents rated freedom to make choices as an important determinant in their leisure participation. Yet in an experimental design, Mannell (2009) discovered that although participants in the high choice/high competitiveness condition experienced the most 'flow', those in the high competition/low choice condition also exhibited high levels of involvement and focus. This suggests that competitiveness may compensate for low choice.

Larson and Richard (2001) found that adolescents were bored 30% of the time during extracurricular activities. Caldwell & Darling (2009) attributed such boredom to the reduced autonomy adolescents were able to exercise in such obligatory activities. They argued that this boredom response occurs in adolescents when parents, teachers or coaches force them to expend effort and energy on obligatory routine practice tasks. In contrast, self-determination in activity choice was strongly associated with being involved (and not bored).

Yet, according to Larson and Richard's (2001) statistics, 70% of the time adolescents are not bored is during extracurricular activities. In fact, it is those adolescents not participating in structured out-of-school activities who are most bored, leading them to engage in substance abuse, extreme forms of sensation-seeking and antisocial behaviour like burglary and vandalism (Sommers & Vodanovich, 2000).

Ragheb and Merydith (2001) established four factors of free time boredom: the lack of meaningful involvement, the lack of mental involvement, the lack of physical involvement and the slowness of time. Thus boredom may actually be the result of an inability to cultivate a wide range of interests that can be converted into enjoyable activities (Hunter & Csikszentmihalyi, 2003). People do not develop interests in a vacuum, but require the support of a social system and cultural resources. According to Renniner (2000), the development of children's interests often requires adults to adjust the level of challenge or to assist in the development of goals or skills before children can achieve success independently. Adolescents too may still require some level of scaffolding until their interests are well developed and self-sustaining.

Personality factors also appear to impact on interests and intrinsic motivation. Eysenck, Nias, & Cox, (2002) illustrated how different sports, and even different positions within the same sport, attracted different types of people. The decision to participate in particular activities and the sensations experienced are dictated to some extent by stable individual differences. Thus it seems likely that personality may shape adolescents' preferred activities and facilitate (or impede) overall leisure participation.

## Extrinsic Motivation

Deci and Ryan (1995) suggested that extrinsic motivation can be divided into external regulation (external rewards and punishments), introjected regulation (internally controlling imperatives) and integrated regulation (internalised and integrated extrinsic regulation). It is common for people to strive for external rewards and they often form an integral part of leisure activities with trophies and prizes awarded for participation and good performance. Parents frequently use rewards to encourage their children to participate in particular leisure activities (Mannell & Kleiber, 2007), or punishments to decrease the likelihood of the child engaging in a particular behaviour (Woolger & Power, 2003). Rewards can include both social (praise, affection) and non-social (material goods, money, special privileges) consequences and vary considerably in their salience. Conversely, parents can punish children for their participation through their criticisms, emotional abuse and 'pushing' beyond natural limitations (Smith & Smoll, 2006). The resulting levels of stress and anxiety have proved to be a major reason for adolescents' withdrawal from sports (White, 2008).

The problem with rewards is that people come to construe their participation in an activity as due to receiving the reward, undermining their experience of self-determination and subsequently reducing intrinsic motivation. The more salient the reward, the more likely it is to undermine intrinsic interest in the activity (Woolger & Power, 2003). This over-justification effect has been demonstrated in numerous experiments (Deci & Ryan, 1995) and can have serious implications for adults in encouraging and maintaining adolescent participation in structured out-of-school activities.

Introjected regulation refers to activities that are motivated by internal pressures and describes a form of motivation in which actions are controlled or coerced by internal needs other than competence, self-determination or relatedness (Deci & Ryan cited in Mannell & Kleiber, 2007). For example, individuals may run because they believe it is healthy rather than for any real interest or enjoyment. Consequently, it could be argued that individuals who value the health benefits of participating in physical activities will be more likely to participate in such activities than those who perceive costs (such as loss of time, energy requirement, anxiety) to be a greater consideration. However, Kimieik, Horn and Shurin (2006) found that the value children placed on fitness participation (compared to participation in other activities) was not at all related to their level of moderately vigorous physical activity. They speculated that children (unlike adults) are probably not motivated by the utility of a task for achieving a future goal. Given that adolescents are portrayed as present orientated, introjected regulation possibly plays a minor role in motivating their participation (or non-participation) in particular types of activity. Researchers argued that although there are many benefits in participating in leisure activities requiring obligation and commitment, individuals often need an external 'push' to induce involvement.

Rigby, Deci, Patrick, and Ruyan (2002) proposed that individuals are able to experience intrinsic interest in externally controlled circumstances through a process of internalisation and integration. This process allows people to expand their sense of freedom and control over their social environment even in the face of potentially controlling factors, so that the activity becomes personally important and people do not feel they are

controlled by extrinsic rewards and regulations. Stebbin's (2002) notion of serious leisure provides an example of leisure behaviour that is often motivated by integrated extrinsic regulation.

#### Competence and Self-concept

Different types of activity contexts are associated with different values (Eccles & Barber, 2003). Thus involvement in particular types of activities structures the kinds of values and norms to which adolescents are exposed. In turn, these characteristics influence subsequent activity choices. According to a study conducted by Haggard & William's (2002), participants ascribed distinctive attributes to different groups of people such as guitarists, backpackers and chess players. Consequently, as individuals move through adolescence they become identified with a particular group of friends or crowd, partly as a result of the activities in which they choose to participate (Brown, Mounts, & Lamborn, 2003).

Likewise, people choose not to participate in particular activities due to their self-concept. According to Culp (2008), the strongest influence constraining adolescent girls from participating in outdoor sports and recreational activities was their own self-concept. Similarly, one of the biggest constraints against adolescent female use of public swimming pools was the critical gaze of others (James, 2001). These girls were embarrassed to be seen in their swimming attire and were concerned that their behaviour would attract the derision of others.

Researchers have contended that there is a strong correlation between competence at a leisure activity and degree of participation (Argyle, 2006). Bandura (1986) proposed that the perception that one has the ability to



perform a skill at a certain level (i.e., self-efficacy) acts as a motivator. He purported that self-efficacy had four sources: past successes, vicarious experience, persuasion and a positive psychological state. Self-efficacy has been successful in predicting success in gymnastic competitions, hockey teams (Argyle, 2006), fitness competency of children (Kimiecik et al., 2006), and academic performance (Eccles, Wigfield & Schiefele, 2007). Conversely, perceived lack of ability has been attributed to individuals giving up an activity or even failing to try (Fredricks & Eccles, 2002; Hands, Parker, Glasson, Brinkman, & Read, 2004). Thus many adolescent girls avoid 'active' spaces such as the school basketball courts fearing ridicule of their athletic incompetency or injury concerns (James, 2001).

According to Kimiecik et al., (2006) model of competence motivation, contends that individuals who perceive they are competent and in control of consequences (in a particular domain) are less anxious, more persistent, more intrinsically motivated and consequently more successful. Possibly successful performance or achievement provides a sense of mastery which in turn enhances self-efficacy (Schmidt & Padilla, 2003). However, in Patrick, Ryan, Alfeld-Liro, Fredricks, Hruda and Eccles (2009) study, adolescents' decision to commit to their talent activities appeared to be related less to their actual level of competence or ability and more to individual motivational characteristics.

Other research suggests that level of involvement, rather than level of self-efficacy, is a better indicator of continued participation. Frequency of participation, rather than self-efficacy, has been linked with positive motivation towards sport involvement, rock climbing, and children's

satisfaction with soccer (Alexandris & Grouios, 2002). In addition, highly involved aerobic dancers were more likely to continue participation than less involved dancers (McCarville, Crompton, & Sell, 2003). These findings suggest that adolescents may be withdrawing from structured out-of-school activities, not because of their perceived self-efficacy, but rather because they perceive they are not given an equal opportunity to participate compared to their peers.

#### Social Motivation

Interpersonal facilitators are those individuals or groups that enable or promote the formation of leisure preferences and encourage or enhance participation in leisure (Raymore, 2002). According to Samdahl & Jekubovich (2007), the most influential factor for shaping leisure time was social relationships. People do not just want to participate in leisure. They want to share leisure with someone, and members of a leisure group will often spend large amounts of time in conversations which have nothing to do with the group's activities (Argyle, 2006). The participation of friends, encouragement from friends and the sharing of leisure activities is equally important for adolescents (Culp, 2008; Hendry, Shucksmith, Love & Glendinning, 2003; Passmore & French, 2001).

Many leisure activities require the cooperation of others. In addition, the affiliative rewards associated with belonging to a leisure group may be a powerful source of motivation. In fact, Moore, Burland & Davidson (2003) speculated that participating in music alongside peers, in less formal and more sociable settings may be a critical component of musical success. The relaxed and cooperative atmosphere associated with rehearsals and performance

provides a forum in which peers can discuss their music with interested others and develop a sense of their musical self. These authors concluded that professional adult musicians maintained their motivation during their younger years as a consequence of these supportive peer groups. In comparison, the lack of social and peer support, combined with isolated practice, served to demotivate childhood musicians.

### **Conceptual Framework**

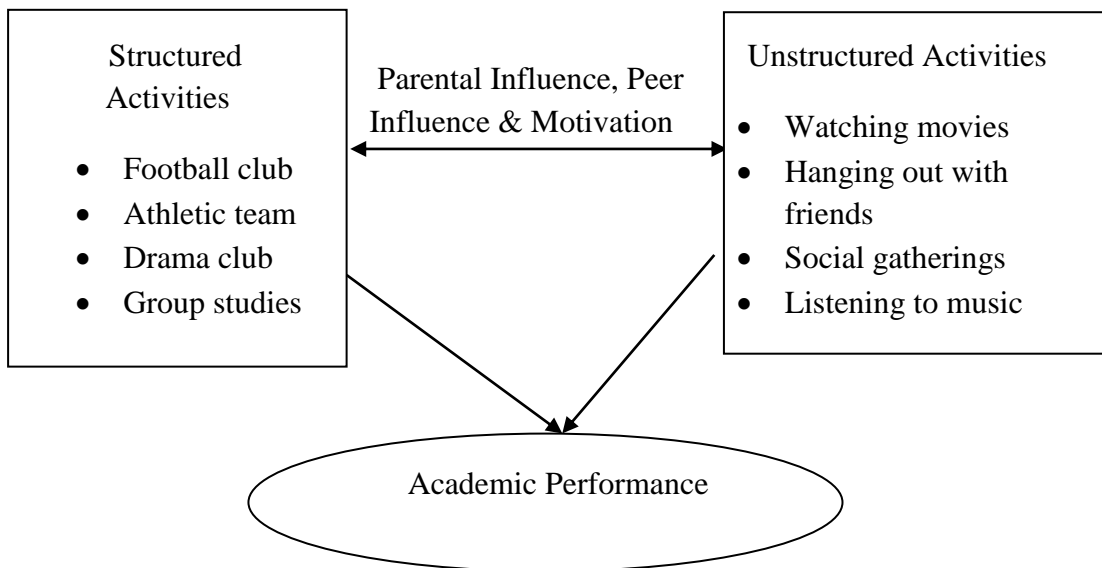
Students participate in varied forms of after-school structured activities ranging from: engaging in games such as football clubs, athletic teams, drama clubs, group studies, reading books and writing of poems; to unstructured activities such as “hanging out” with friends, house chores, watching movies, listening to music as well as engaging in social gathering e.g. beach parties and street jams.

As students, the frequencies with which they participate in these activities have a bearing on their academic performance. Participation in structured activity like sports has a better relationship with higher grade points (Field, Diego & Sanders, 2001); reading is associated with higher academic achievement (Bartko & Eccles, 2003; McHale, Crouter & Tucker, 2001). However, Cooper et al., (1999) pointed out that unstructured activity watching television has a negative effect on academic achievement.

Some studies show that parents, peers as well as motivation are factors that greatly influence a students’ choice of an after-school activity (structured or unstructured). For instance, in studies conducted by Howard & Madrigal, 2000; Coleman, 2002; Huebner & Mancini, 2003; Hultzman, 2003; Olayinka, 2007; showed that the frequency with which students participate in after-

school activities is highly influenced by parents. Studies conducted by Brown, 1999; Ryan, 2001; Garnier & Stein, 2012; Meeus & Dekovic, 2005; Cotterell, 2006; showed that peers influences the choice of after-school activities. Again, these studies showed that students involvement in after-school activities are influenced by motivation: intrinsic motivation (Alexandris & Grouios, 2002; Coleman & Iso-Ahola, 2003; Manfreda, Driver & Tarrant, 2006; Argyle, 2006), extrinsic motivation by Mannell & Kleiber, 2001; Deci & Ryan, 1995; Eccles, Wigfield & Schiefele, 2007) and social motivation by Moore, Burland & Davidson, 2003; Culp, 2008.

According to Coleman (2002), participation in after-school activities (structured and unstructured) have influence on academic performance. The model (figure 1) shows how participation in structured and unstructured activities leads to performance or non-performance academically. Also, it as well establishes whether these factors (parents, peer and motivation) play a pivotal role in students' choice of after-school activity participation and hence influence on academic performance.



*Figure 1:* Title: Conceptual framework for after-school activities and their effects on academic performance of students.

Source: Author's Construct, 2017

### **Summary of Literature Review**

In general, the literature reviewed indicated that adolescent well-being (physical, mental and social) is enhanced through participation in structured out-of-school activities. Many of the studies were uni-dimensional which fails to capture the multiple processes operating in adolescent participation in particular activities. Thus, there is a need to investigate a range of factors simultaneously to gain a better understanding of the impact of out-of-school activities.

Again, the literature reviewed also indicated that factors such as parental influence, peer influence and motivation play a pivotal role in the adolescents' choice of participation in an after-school activity whether structured or unstructured. The studies indicated that parents influence their

adolescents directly and indirectly as well as consciously and unconsciously so as the peer influence.

The majority of the studies were conducted in the United State of America and their results may be limited to this context. For example, structured out-of-school activities appear to commonly take place as extracurricular activities under the umbrella of the school system. Yet, in Ghana most structured out-of-school activities are not provided by the schools.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODS**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter presents the methodology for the study. The areas covered are the: research design, population, sample size, sampling procedures, data collection instrument, data collection procedures and data processing and analysis.

#### **Research Design**

The choice of research design for a particular study is based on the purpose of the study (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2004). For this study, descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. According to Gay (1992), the descriptive survey is an attempt to collect data from members of the population in order to determine the current status of that population with respect to one or more variables. This justifies the choice of descriptive survey design by the researcher because that is exactly what this study is all about. Osuala (2001) also indicated that descriptive survey research gives a picture of a situation or a population. It is basic for all types of research in assessing the situation as a pre-requisite for inferences and generalizations. The descriptive survey helps to deal essentially with questions concerning what exists with respect to variables or prevailing conditions in a situation (Frankel & Wallen, 1993). Again, as recommended by Leedy and Omrod (2010), this method is suitable for purposes of making generalisations from a

sample to a population so that inferences could be made about the characteristics, opinions, attitudes and past experiences of the population.

The descriptive survey design provides a more accurate and meaningful picture of event and seeks to explain people's perception and behaviour on the basis of data gathered at a particular time (Frankel & Wallen, 2000). This would allow for in-depth follow up questions and items that are unclear to be explained. More so, descriptive survey design has the potential to provide a lot of information from quite a large sample of respondents (Frankel & Wallen, 2000). That is, it helps the researcher to collect data on a large number of people.

Descriptive survey is useful because it can provide important information regarding the average member of a group. Specifically, by gathering data on a group of people, researcher can describe the average member, or the average performance of a member, of the particular group being studied. It is highly regarded by policy makers in the social sciences where large populations are dealt with using questionnaires, which are widely used in educational research since data gathered by way of descriptive survey represents field conditions (Osuala, 1991). Surveys also permit the researcher to study more variables at one time than is typically possible in laboratory or field experiments. It is an efficient and accurate means of determining information about a given population. The results from surveys are provided relatively quickly, and ensure higher reliability than some other techniques.

The descriptive survey design is beset with some shortcomings. According to authors such as Frankel and Wallen (2000) and Cohen, Manion



and Morrison (2004), in descriptive survey, there is the difficulty of ensuring that the questions answered are clear and not misleading.

According to Gay (1992), sampling error may occur due to chance selection of different individuals. Osuala (1991) has also pointed out that the descriptive study may have the problem of low response rates that can have adverse effect on the results of the survey.

It is also not in itself comprehensive enough to provide answers to questions and cannot establish causes and effects relationship (Osuala, 1991). Furthermore, according to Leedy & Omrod (2010), “one of the most subtly and ineradicably shortcomings of descriptive survey is the presence of bias” (p.132) and especially when one uses questionnaires.

The following were employed to reduce the bias nature of descriptive survey. Questions on the questionnaire answered were clear and not misleading. And in ensuring meaningful data analyses, respondents were entreated to answer questions thoughtfully and honestly.

Notwithstanding the difficulties and setbacks of the descriptive survey indicated above, it was still deemed the most appropriate and applicable for the study. Thus an advantage of the design is that it has the potential to provide a lot of information obtained from quite a large sample of individuals (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2000). It helped the researcher to gather accurate data on the after-school activities and its effects on academic performance of public junior high school students in the Cape Coast Metropolis.

### **Population**

Population refers to the large general group of many cases from which a researcher draws a sample and which is usually stated in theoretical terms

(Neumans, 2003). According to Amedahe (2004), the target group is about which a researcher is interested in gaining information and drawing conclusions is what is known as the population. It is a group of individuals who have one or more characteristics in common that are of interest to the researcher. In this study, the target population was students from all Junior High Schools (J.H.S) in the Cape Coast Metropolis which consisted of 7,487 students. For the purpose of the study, the accessible population constituted all J.H.S 3 students from public Junior High Schools in the Cape Coast Metropolis.

### Sample Size

In all a total of 364 respondents from six schools were used. According to Krejcie and Morgan (1970), the sample size of 364 respondents has an estimated population of 7000. Table 1 displays the details of the participants taken from each of the 6 schools.

Table 1 – *Sampling Distribution of Respondents*

Circuit	School	Sample Size
Pedu/ Abura	Ayifua St. Mary’s Anglican J.H.S	53
Ola	Imam Khomeini Islamic School	62
Aboom	St. Monica’s Girls J.H.S	116
Cape Coast	Church of Christ Basic School	45
Bakaano	Philip Quaake Boys’ J.H.S	47
Efutu	Efutu M/A Basic School	41
Total		364

Source: Statistics Section, Metro Education Office, Cape Coast (2016)

### **Sampling Procedure**

Sampling involves the process of selecting a portion of the population to represent the entire population (Amedahe, 2000). In choosing the sample of the schools for the study, stratified random sampling, simple random sampling and purposive sampling techniques were used. The stratified sampling in the view of Cohen and Manion, (1995) would guarantee proportional representative of the subjects and enable the researcher to study the differences that might exist between various sub-groups of the population.

The stratified random sampling technique was used in selecting the circuits since the Cape Coast Metropolis is divided into six blocks (circuits). There were sixty-one public Junior High Schools in the Cape Coast Metropolis; with each circuit having between nine (9) and eleven (11) schools. Therefore for equal representation of schools for the study, the researcher simple randomly selected a school from each of the six (6) circuits in the Metropolis.

In respect of the sample for the study, all J.H.S 3 students in the selected public schools were used for the study.

### **Data Collection Instrument**

The instrument used in the study was a questionnaire. Leedy and Omrod (2010), Amedahe (2000), postulated that questionnaire is widely used in all educational research; if developed to answer the research questions. It is effective for securing factual information providing structured often numerical data, being able to administer with or without the presence of the researcher and often being comparatively straight forward to analyze (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2000).

The questionnaire for the research was a five point Likert-scale type developed by the researcher to measure the frequency of participation in after-school activities. A four point Likert-scale was designed to assess factors influencing participation and also to examine the impact of participation in after-school activities (structured or unstructured) on students' academic performance. The questionnaire comprised five main sections (A, B, C, D, & E). Section A involves the personal data of the respondents; school, gender, age and class.

Section B consisted of 20 items on the research question 1. Research question 1 focused on frequency of participation in after-school activities. The five point Likert-scale of “*daily, once a week, more than once a week, monthly and never*” was used to assess the frequency with which J.H.S students participate in 10 chosen activities by researcher namely: sports, reading for pleasure, homework, chores, time with friends, watching television, school clubs, community clubs, religion, and paid work. Sports participation includes athletics team sports at school or community. The question about reading enquires about reading books, magazines, story books, or newspapers for fun rather than homework. Time with friends assesses unstructured time students (adolescents) spend “hanging out with their friends”. School clubs included all extracurricular activities except sports; community clubs included activities as service, hobby, clubs and scouts.

Section C consisted of 10 items on the research questions 2 which focused on the factors influencing participation. The four point Likert-scale provides a range of responses to a given statement; that is (1) Strongly Disagree (2) Disagree (3) Agree (4) Strongly Agree.

Sections D and E consisted 7 items each on both the research questions 3 and 4 which focused on the effects of structured and unstructured activities on academic performance. The four point Likert-scale provides a range of responses to a given statement; that is (1) Strongly Disagree (2) Disagree (3) Agree (4) Strongly Agree.

Likert-scale was considered by the researcher because it has the advantage of being relatively easy to develop. It also builds in a degree of sensitivity and differentiation of response while still generating numbers (Cohen et al, 2004).

### **Validity of Instrument**

The content validity of the questionnaire was established by submitting the questionnaire to the researchers' supervisors whose areas of specialisation is in educational psychology, measurement and evaluation and research methods, for their scrutiny and critique. Suggestions made by them addressed the weaknesses identified and thereby improved the content validity of the questionnaire.

### **Pilot-testing of Instrument**

According to Leedy and Omrod (2010), everything about the questionnaire should be piloted, nothing can be excluded, not even the type face or the quality of the paper. A pilot-test has several functions, principally to increase the reliability, validity and practicability of the questionnaire (Morrison, 1993). Thus, pilot-test checks the clarity of the questionnaire items, instructions and layout. It is also used to gain feedback on the validity of the questionnaire items. It is also used to eliminate ambiguities or difficulties in wording of the questionnaire among others (Morrison, 1993).

The need for a pilot-testing of the instrument was to establish validity and reliability of the items. There was also the need to find out if the instructions accompanying the items were clear enough and would, therefore aid the respondents to complete the questionnaires as accurately as possible. The instrument was pilot-tested on 50 J.H.S 3 students at the Mankessim Methodist Junior High School. They were administered and collected on the same day. The pilot-test was essential because it actually helped the researcher to know the internal consistency of the instrument and also helped to reshape and restructure the items. For instance, item 13 of the questionnaire from section B was changed from “I hang-out with friends, talk/ chat on phone, play cards and video games or use the internet” to “I engage in chatting with friends after school”. And also, item 27 of the questionnaire from section C was changed from “My parents allow me to participate in street jams or beach party, ‘hang-out’ with friends” to “My parents allow me to participate in social gatherings e.g. street jams and beach parties”.

### **Reliability of Instrument**

The reliability (internal consistency) of the questionnaire for the main study was estimated using Cronbach’s co-efficient alpha. According to Cronbach (cited in Ebel & Frisbie, 1991), co-efficient alpha can provide a reliability estimate for a measure composed of items of varying point values such as essays or attitude scales that provide responses such as strongly agree and strongly disagree with intermediate response options. The Cronbach’s co-efficient alpha for items in Sections B, C, D and E were 0.81, 0.79, 0.75 and 0.76 respectively. The overall Cronbach’s co-efficient alpha for the study was 0.78 (See Appendix C).

### **Ethical Consideration**

A permission letter was collected from the University of Cape Coast for the administration of questionnaire and the collection of data of the study. Ethical clearance was obtained from Institutional Review Board (IRB) from the University of Cape Coast for the study. Ethically, the questionnaire will always be intrusion into the life of the respondent in terms of time taken to complete the instrument and the level of sensitivity and possible invasion of privacy. In the case of the topic under study, because of the sensitive nature of the topic, the researcher sought the respondents' informed consent and encouraged respondents' to complete questionnaire even though the decision whether to become involved or to withdraw is entirely theirs. The guarantee of confidentiality, anonymity and non-traceability was also assured.

### **Data Collection Procedure**

The questionnaire was administered personally by the researcher to all the 364 students involved in the study in the six selected JHS in the Cape Coast Metropolis. The researcher used six weeks to go to all the sampled schools to administer the questionnaire. The data collection process started on the 12<sup>th</sup> December, 2016 and ended on 19<sup>th</sup> January, 2017, thus, spanning a period of six weeks. Of the 364 questionnaires administered, all were retrieved, meaning the return rate was 100%.

### **Data Processing and Analysis**

The responses to the questionnaires were first edited, coded and scored. The editing procedure was to check whether respondents had followed directions correctly, and whether all items had been responded to. Section A was on the demographic data of the respondents. These responses were

analysed using frequencies and percentages. The data on research questions one and two were analysed using means and standard deviations.

Simple linear regression was used in analysing the hypotheses because of its assumptions. For instance: (a) both the dependent and independent variables must be normally distributed (b) there must be a linear relationship between the dependent and independent variables (c) reliability of the measure must be high so that measurement error is low. The study satisfied all the above assumptions.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

#### Introduction

This chapter presents the results and discussions of the findings of the study. The data on research questions one and two were analysed through computation of means and standard deviations and simple regression analysis was used to analyse hypotheses one and two.

#### Results

##### Distribution of Respondents by School

Table 2 presents the school of the respondents in the study.

Table 2 – *Distribution of Respondents by School*

School	Frequency	Percent (%)
Ayifua St. Mary's Ang. School	53	14.6
Imam Khomeini Islamic School	62	17.0
St. Monica's Girls JHS	116	31.9
Church of Christ Basic School	45	12.4
Philip Quaque Boys JHS	47	12.9
Efutu M/A JHS	41	11.2
Total	364	100.0

Source: Field Data (Turkson, 2017)

From Table 2, (31.9%) were students of St. Monica's Girls JHS. It was followed by Imam Khomeini Islamic School with (17.0%), (14.6%) were from Ayifua St. Mary's Ang. School while (11.2%) were from Efutu M/A JHS. It

can therefore be seen that majority of the respondents involved in the study were students of St. Monica's Girls JHS.

### **Distribution of Respondents by Gender**

Table 3 presents gender of the respondents involved in the study.

Table 3 – *Distribution of Respondents by Gender*

Gender	Frequency	Percent (%)
Male	140	38.5
Female	224	61.5
Total	364	100.0

Source: Field Data (Turkson, 2017)

From Table 3, (61.5%) were females while (38.5%) were males. It is worth noting that more females participated in the study than males.

### **Distribution of Respondents by Age**

Table 4 presents age of the respondents in the study.

Table 4 – *Distribution of Respondents by Age*

Age	Frequency	Percent (%)
12-15years	242	66.5
16-19years	120	33.0
20-23years	2	.5
Total	364	100.0

Source: Field Data (Turkson, 2017)

From Table 4, (66.5%) were within 12 to 15 years while (.5%) were within 20 to 23 years of age.

**Research Question One: What type of after-school activities do Junior High School students participate in?**

Research question one sought to find out from respondents what after-school activities they participate in. The question was answered using responses from items 5 to 24. To determine the frequency from the responses, the cut-offs established were 1.0 – 1.9 = Never, 2.0 – 2.9 = Monthly, 3.0 – 3.9 = More than once a Week, 4.0 – 4.9 = Once a Week and 5.0 and above = Daily were used. Table 5 presents the frequency distribution of responses from participants on after school activities Junior High School students engage in.

Table 5 – *Results of the Analysis of Frequency of Participation in an After-school Activity*

No.	Statements	Mean	Std. D
1.	I engage in games e.g. football, netball, etc	3.22	1.43
2.	I engage in athletics e.g. jogging and running.	2.95	1.53
3.	I read story books	4.32	1.00
4.	I read text books	4.48	.85
5.	I engage in writing e.g. poems and stories	3.38	1.43
6.	I engage in personal extra-classes (studies)	3.86	1.49
7.	I engage in house chores e.g. sweeping	4.54	1.06
8.	I take care of my siblings	3.50	1.66
9.	I engage in chatting with friends after school	3.44	1.61
10.	I engage in listening to music	3.96	1.21
11.	I engage in watching movies	3.65	1.33
12.	I engage in watching kid shows e.g. cartoons	3.40	1.53
13.	I engage in stage performances e.g. drama and choir	2.73	1.59
14.	I engage in group studies	3.52	1.53
15.	I participate in keep-fit club	2.35	1.55
16.	I participate in social gatherings e.g. street jams or beach parties	2.06	1.38
17.	I participate in brigade	2.13	1.53
18.	I participate in youth fellowship and meetings	3.15	1.61
19.	I engage in part-time paid work e.g. bus boy (mate) or shop attendant	1.75	1.33
20.	I trade e.g. sell items (any kind)	2.26	1.64
	Overall mean	3.23	

Source: Field Data (Turkson, 2017)

N = 364

As shown in Table 5, the results showed that the respondents participated in after-school activities frequently. The result of frequency of participation of after school activity is summarized into two categories as: (a) once a week and (b) more than once a week.

Regarding once a week, respondents indicated that they participate in the following after school activities once a week:

1. Reading story books
2. Reading text books
3. Engage in personal extra-classes
4. Engage in house chores e.g. sweeping
5. Listening to music
6. Watching movies

However, respondents indicated that they participated in the following after-school activities more than once a week.

1. Engage in games such as football, netball etc.
2. Engage in athletics such jogging and running.
3. Engage in writing such as poems and stories.
4. Taking care of siblings.
5. Engage in chatting with friends after school.
6. Engage in watching kid shows such as cartoons.
7. Engage in stage performances such drama and choir.
8. Engage in group studies.
9. Participate in youth fellowship and meetings.

On the whole, the overall mean for frequency of participation in an after-school activity was 3.23. This value falls within the range given as cut-

off points for the five-point likert scale. Therefore, the mean value showed respondents participated in after-school activity more than once in a week. The study revealed that students participated in some after-school activities as demonstrated in Table 5. The findings of this study support earlier studies on participation in after-school activities (Garton, Harvey, & Price, 2004; Gordon & Caltabiano, 2006). Students participate in a wide variety of after-school activities ranging from: solitary, passive activities such as watching television, playing on the computer and hobbies; to unstructured group activities such as ‘hanging out with friends’ and highly structured activities such as sport and dance; through to family activities, chores, homework, volunteering and paid employment. Over half the participants in a study conducted by Patrick et al.’s (2009) showed that adolescents talented in sports or the arts reported making new friends, some from different grades, as a result of participating in their talent development activity.

In addition, students who participate in structured activities (compared to those who don’t) report the greatest number of peer relationships (Mahoney & Stattin, 2000). Involvement in structured activities provides a group of adolescents with shared experiences and goals they can discuss, effectively generating and reinforcing social networks. This contributes to their need for social relatedness and contributes to their identity as important, valued members of the community (Eccles et al., 2003). Students participating in sport have a better relationship with their parents (including greater intimacy and more frequent touching), less drug use, higher grade point averages (Field, Diego & Sanders, 2001), a healthier self-image and lower emotional distress

(Harrison & Narayan, 2003). The study appears to suggest that students participate in after-school activities as a result of the benefits they gain from it.

**Research Question Two: What factors influence students’ participation in after-school activities?**

The question was answered using responses from items 25 to 34. To determine the factors from the responses, the cut-offs established were 1 – 1.4 = Strongly disagree, 1.5 – 2.4 = Disagree, 2.5 – 3.4 = Agree, 3.5 – 4.0 = Strongly agree were used. Table 6 presents factors that influence students’ participation in an after school activity.

Table 6 – *Results of the Analysis of Factors Influencing Participation*

No.	Statements	Mean	Std. D
1.	My parents encourage me to participate in sporting activities e.g. football.	2.52	1.03
2.	My parents encourage me to participate in group studies.	2.98	1.11
3.	My parents allow me to participate in social gatherings e.g. street jams or beach party.	1.90	1.03
4.	My parents allow me to use the phone to browse and chat with friends always	1.93	1.04
5.	My peers encourage to me trade e.g. sell items (any kind).	2.04	1.09
6.	My peers influence me to participate in sporting activities e.g. football, athletics, etc.	2.56	1.08
7.	My peers influence me to participate in social gathering e.g. street jams and beach parties.	2.05	1.12
8.	My peers influence me to use the phone to browse and chat.	2.13	1.08
9.	I am encouraged by a role model to participate in group studies.	2.96	1.08
10.	I feel satisfied/ fulfilled when I engage in group studies.	3.01	1.08
	Overall mean	2.41	

Source: Field Survey (Turkson, 2017)

N = 364

As shown in Table 6, the results generally showed that the respondents were not influenced to participate in after school activities. The results of factors influencing participation of after school activity is summarized into two categories as: (a) agree and (b) disagree.

The following were the results the respondents indicated regarding agreement:

1. Parents encourage them to participate in sporting activities e.g. football
2. Parents encourage them to participate in group studies.
3. Peers encourage them to participate in sporting activities e.g. football, athletics etc.
4. They are encouraged by role model to participate in group studies.
5. They feel satisfied/ fulfilled when I engage in group studies.

But under disagree, respondents indicated the following:

1. Parents allow them to participate in social gathering e.g. street jams or beach party.
2. Parents encourage them to use the phone to browse and chat with friends always.
3. Peers encourage them to trade e.g. sell items
4. Peers influence them to participate in social gathering e.g. street jams and beach parties
5. Peers influence them to use the phone to browse and chat

On the whole, the overall mean for factors influencing participation in an after-school activity was 2.41 and does not fall within the range of factors influencing participation. Therefore, respondents disagreed that they were influenced to participate in after-school activity.

The findings of the study suggest that students are not influenced to participate in after-school activities. The study is at variance with earlier studies by (Jodl, Michael, Malanchuk, Eccles, & Sameroff, 2001). They indicated that researchers in psychology, sociology and education have demonstrated that parental influence does not necessarily decline as children mature, but rather continues to have a substantial impact during adolescence.

The cognitive, affective and behavioural attributes of adolescents are determined and moulded by an assortment of familiar, parental, genetic and environmental factors. These influences contribute to both the stability and variations in the developmental patterns of adolescence (Neiderhiser, Reiss, & Hetherington, 2006). Parents influence their adolescents directly and indirectly, consciously and unconsciously, through modelling (Coleman, 2002), through the provision of guidance, advice, opportunities, constraints and reinforcement, by their parenting practices and through the values and beliefs they hold (Eccles & Harold, 2001).

Robertson (2009) suggested that students who perceive the family as not being interested in sharing leisure time or helping facilitate satisfaction of their leisure needs would seek satisfaction with peers, increasing the likelihood of participation in delinquent types of activities. Shucksmith & Hendry (2008) found that students' behaviour problems and poor adolescent-parent relations were associated with low levels of parental acceptance and control.

The study is also supported by earlier study on socialization by Coleman (2002). The process of socialization not only involves the pupil's interaction with various adults (parents, teachers, youth leaders, coaches), but



also peers, with particular types of relationship patterns coming into focus at different developmental stages. Peer relationships gain primacy during adolescence and are positively implicated in social and psychological adjustment. Through peer networks, students are able to practice the roles and rules implicit in the setting, obtain resources that will help support their functioning, establish a sense of community, receive reassurance of their worth and confirm their identity. Participation in a variety of social environments provides adolescents opportunities to widen their social network and to build connections with different social fields (Rubin, Bukowski & Parker, 2008).

The results of the study further supported other researchers' who investigated what motivated individuals to participate in leisure activities. This resulted in a range of motivational theories such as Deci and Ryan's (1995) self-determination theory and Neulinger's (1981) model examined the interaction between perceived freedom/constraints and intrinsic/extrinsic motivation. Other researchers investigated factors constraining such leisure participation (Hultzman, 2005) and the impact of personality (Eysenck, Nias, & Cox, 2002), self-esteem (Schmidt & Padilla, 2003), self-efficacy (Bandura, 1986) and societal influences (Hendry, 2003) on leisure choices and leisure participation. However, activities individuals freely choose to participate in during their 'free time' are not always regarded positively by the wider community (vandalism, drug use, gambling), and in addition may not be intrinsically satisfying or optimally arousing.

### Research Hypothesis One

H<sub>0</sub>: There is no statistically significant influence of structured activities on students' academic performance.

H<sub>1</sub>: There is a statistically significant influence of structured activities on students' academic performance.

Research hypothesis one sought to find out from respondents whether their engagement in structured activities have bearing on their academic performance. Simple linear regression analysis was conducted as presented in Table 7.

Table 7 – *Regression Analysis of Influence of Structured Activities on Academic Performance of Students*

Model	Unstandardised		Standardised	R square	t	Sig.
	Coefficients		Coefficients			
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
(Constant)	219.573	10.916			20.114	.000
structured	-.981	.363	.141	.020	-2.702	.007

Dependent Variable: Academic scores

From Table 7, the results indicated that structured activities have influence on academic performance of students ( $r = .141$ ,  $P < .05$ ). Also, structured activities account for 2.0% of the variation in the academic performance of students. The findings of the study were in line with earlier studies by Gilman (2001), Bartko and Eccles (2003), Mahoney (2001) and Mahoney and Cairns (2007) that participation in structured extracurricular activities has been associated with increased school satisfaction, high academic performance and lower school 'drop-out' rates. Structured activities

may facilitate academic achievement and school satisfaction by enhancing adolescents' identification with their school and school values, increasing their investment in education and promoting better academic attitudes and habits. However, the positive influence of extracurricular activities may become detrimental if identification with the activity displaces the broader school identity or the time invested in the activity imposes on homework commitments (Cooper, Valentine, Nye, & Lindsay, 1999).

However, this result contradicts that of zero-sum framework which theorized that structured extracurricular activities (ECA) participation has a negative effect on academic performance because students devote more time for their ECA activities at the expense of their academic studies (Coleman, 1961). Many schools in the early 1980s implemented the 2.0 Rule, where students must maintain an overall grade point average of 2.0 before they were allowed to participate in ECA (Joekel, 1985). The motivation behind the 2.0 Rule was that ECA participation resulted in diminishing academic performance (Camp, 2000; Joekel, 1985). Porter (2001) argued that heavy structured extracurricular activities participation interferes with academic work, resulting in students spending less time on their homework. ECA participation requires time commitments from students, and these time requirements are in direct competition with time that otherwise could have been spent on academic pursuits (Camp, 2000; Coleman, 1961; Joekel, 1985; Marsh, 2002; Marsh & Kleitman, 2002; Porter, 2001).

### **Research Hypothesis Two**

H<sub>0</sub>: There is no statistically significant influence of unstructured activities on students' academic performance.

H<sub>1</sub>: There is a statistically significant influence of unstructured activities on students' academic performance.

Research hypothesis two sought to find out from respondents whether their engagement in unstructured activities have bearing on their academic performance. Simple linear regression analysis was conducted as presented in Table 8.

Table 8 – *Regression Analysis of Influence of Unstructured Activities on Academic Performance of Students*

Model	Unstandardised		Standardised	R square	t	Sig.
	Coefficients		Coefficients			
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
(Constant)	214.030	11.966			17.886	.000
Unstructured	-.662	.333	.104	.011	-1.985	.048

Dependent Variable: Academic scores

From Table 8, the results indicated that unstructured activities have influence on academic performance of students ( $r = .104$ ,  $P < .05$ ). Also, unstructured activities account for 1.1% of the variation in the academic performance of students. The study is in line with the threshold framework, which theorized that unstructured extracurricular activities (ECA) participation has a positive effect on academic performance up to a certain point beyond which participation leads to negative academic outcomes (Cooper, Valentine, Nye, & Lindsay, 1999; Fredricks, 2012; Fredricks & Eccles, 2010; Knifsend & Graham, 2012; Randall & Bohnert, 2012). The threshold framework posits that the association between ECA participation and academic outcomes resembles an inverted U-shaped function, in which

academic outcomes increase at low and moderate levels of ECA participation, level off, then decline at the highest participation levels (Fredricks, 2012; Marsh, 2002). The Threshold framework attributes the point of diminishing academic benefits to students' excessive time commitment which leaves students too little time for academic pursuits, similar to the zero-sum framework (Marsh, 2002).

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Introduction

This chapter presents the summary, conclusions and recommendation for the study.

#### Summary

The study was a descriptive survey design which investigated the effects of students' after-school involvement in structured and unstructured activities on their academic performance. Primarily, the study focused on: (a) type of after-school activities Junior High School students participate in, (b) factors that influence students' participation in particular type of after-school activity (structured or unstructured activity), (c) impact of structured and lastly, (d) unstructured activities on students' academic performance respectively.

The study was conducted in the Cape Coast Metropolis in the Central Region of Ghana. The study used first the stratified random sampling technique to select the circuits and used simple random sampling technique to select the schools from the respective circuits for the study. Purposive sampling technique was used to select the respondents from each school which summed up to the 364 for the study.

A 48-item questionnaire was the main instrument for data collection. The data collected were analysed mainly by frequency, percentages, means, standard deviation and simple linear regression.

## **Key Findings**

The following are the main findings from the data analysis.

1. Students in the study participated in varied forms of after-school activities such as reading of text books, engaging in house chores e.g., sweeping, engaging in watching movies etc.
2. Students in the study were not influenced to participate in an after-school activity. This therefore suggests that students participated in after-school activities based on their own merits.
3. There was a significant effect of structured activities on students' academic performance.
4. There was a significant effect of unstructured activities on students' academic performance.

## **Conclusions**

The study concluded that students generally participate in a considerable number of after-school activities. It could therefore, be concluded that students participate in both structured and unstructured after-school activities.

On factors influencing participation, students generally reported that, they are not to a larger extent influenced to participate in after-school activities. It could therefore, be concluded that students are not influenced to participate in activities. The study further revealed that both structured and unstructured activities respectively do influence students' academic performance. It could therefore, be concluded that after-school activities have effect on students' academic performance.

## **Recommendations**

Based on the findings from the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Under frequency of participation in an after-school activity, the results indicated that students participate in after-school activities frequently. The researcher, therefore, recommends that parents and guardians monitor the choices of their wards. It would help parent and guardian to be aware with the kind of activities that their wards engage in. It would further aid parents to acquire the most suitable parental style that would be suitable to influence the after-school activities of their wards. Teachers would also ascertain the requisite information about the actual effects of the adolescent after-school participation in activities and help to formulate appropriate instructions which would facilitate the holistic development of the adolescent and enhance academic performance.
2. Regarding factors influencing participation, the results of the study indicated that students are not influenced to participate in activities. The researcher, therefore, recommends that stakeholders such as the Ministry of Education (MoE), the Ghana Education Service (G.E.S), teachers, parents and other equally relevant individuals educate students about education oriented after-school activities. This would help students to engage in after-school activities which are worth engaging in. This would finally yield good results in their academic performance.



3. The study indicated significant effects of structured activities on academic performance of students. The researcher, therefore, recommends that the Ghana Education Service (G.E.S) as a major stakeholder of education in the country should include programmes and activities that would ensure that policies on adolescents' after-school activities are rightly implemented and monitored. Adolescents could also be talked to about the various activities available and how they would make right and better choices to cushion their academic performance and their total being as a whole.
4. The study indicated significant effects of unstructured activities on academic performance of students. The researcher, therefore, recommends that the Ghana Education Service (G.E.S) as a major stakeholder of education in the country should include programmes and activities that would ensure that policies on adolescents' after-school activities are rightly implemented and monitored. Parent should also encourage their wards to engage in good unstructured activities. This would help students to learn new things thereby cushion their academic performance in school.

### **Suggestions for Further Research**

The following is recommended for future research.

1. The study was exploratory in nature. In order to accept or refute the findings of the study and generalise them for the whole of the country, it is suggested that the study is replicated in other Junior High Schools in the country.

2. The study concentrated on the effects of students' involvement in structured and unstructured activities on their academic performance. It is therefore, suggested that another study should be conducted on the relationship between structured and unstructured activities and academic performance of students in Junior High Schools.

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## APPENDICES

**APPENDIX A**  
**JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOLS AND DISTRIBUTION OF STUDENTS**  
**SAMPLED**

<b>School</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent (%)</b>
Ayifua St. Mary's Ang. School	53	14.6
Iman Khomeini Islamic School	62	17.0
St. Monica's Girls JHS	116	31.9
Church of Christ Basic School	45	12.4
Philip Quaque Boys JHS	47	12.9
Effutu M/A JHS	41	11.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>364</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**APPENDIX B**

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION STUDIES

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATIONS

**QUESTIONNAIRE FOR JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS**

You have been selected to participate in this study to provide information on after-school activities and their effects on academic performance. Please answer the questions as frankly as you can. Whatever you say will be treated as confidential. Your name will not be associated with the responses you will give. Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

**DIRECTIONS:** Please respond to each of the items in this section by ticking (✓) the response that is appropriate to you.

**SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC DATA**

1. School:.....
2. Gender: Male [ ] Female [ ]
3. Age: 12 – 15 years [ ] 16 – 19 years [ ] 20 – 23 years [ ]
4. Class: J.H.S Three [ ]

**SECTION B: FREQUENCY OF PARTICIPATION IN AN AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITY**

Please in one of the boxes, tick (✓) to show how true the item applies to you.

D – Daily, OW – Once a Week, MOW – More than once a Week, M – Monthly, N – Never

S/N	Statement	D	OW	MOW	M	N
5.	I engage in games e.g. football, netball, etc					
6.	I engage in athletics e.g. jogging and running.					
7.	I read story books					
8.	I read text books.					
9.	I engage in writing e.g. poems and stories.					
10	I engage in personal extra-classes (studies).					
11	I engage in house chores e.g. sweeping					
12	I take care of my siblings.					
13	I engage in chatting with friends after school.					
14	I engage in listening to music.					
15	I engage in watching movies.					
16	I engage in watching kid shows e.g. cartoons.					
17	I engage in stage performances e.g. drama and choir.					
18	I engage in group studies.					

19	I participate in keep-fit club.					
20	I participate in social gatherings e.g. street jams or beach parties.					
21	I participate in brigade.					
22	I participate in youth fellowship and meetings.					
23	I engage in part-time paid work e.g. bus boy (mate) or shop attendant.					
24	I trade e.g. sell items (any kind)					

**SECTION C: FACTORS INFLUENCING PARTICIPATION**

Please in one of the boxes, tick (✓) to show how true you agree with the following statements. SD – Strongly Disagree, D – Disagree, A – Agree, SA – Strongly Agree.

	<b>Statement</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>SA</b>
25.	My parents encourage me to participate in sporting activities e.g. football.				
26.	My parents encourage me to participate in group studies.				
27.	My parents allow me to participate in social gatherings e.g. street jams or beach party.				
28.	My parents allow me to use the phone to browse and chat with friends always.				
29.	My peers encourage me to trade e.g. sell				

	items (any kind).				
30.	My peers influence me to participate in sporting activities e.g. football, athletics, etc.				
31.	My peers influence me to participate in social gatherings e.g. street jams and beach parties.				
32.	My peers influence me to use the phone to browse and chat.				
33.	I am encouraged by a role model to participate in group studies.				
34.	I feel satisfied/ fulfilled when I engage in group studies.				

**SECTION D: STRUCTURED ACTIVITIES**

Please in one of the boxes, tick (✓) to show how true you agree with the following statements. SD – Strongly Disagree, D – Disagree, A – Agree, SA – Strongly Agree.

	<b>Statement</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>SA</b>
35.	I get enough time to study my books after participating in sporting activities e.g. football.				
36.	Participation in group studies positively enhances my academic work.				
37.	I get enough time to revise my notes				

	after engaging in personal extra-classes.				
38.	Clubs such as debate or drama improves my academic knowledge.				
39.	I join the athletic team in order to attain scholarship to SHS.				
40.	Going for choir meetings or youth meetings negatively affect my academic work.				
41.	I socialize well with peers when I participate in activities and it enhances my academic work.				

### SECTION E: UNSTRUCTURED ACTIVITIES

Please in one of the boxes, tick (√) to show how true you agree with the following statements. SD – Strongly Disagree, D – Disagree, A – Agree, SA – Strongly Agree.

	Statement	SD	D	A	SA
42.	I study best after watching my favourite TV show.				
43.	I use the internet only for academic purposes.				
44.	Reading story books enhances my vocabulary.				
45.	I only go to the beach or join street jams after studying my notes.				

46.	Watching television takes much of my free time.				
47.	I study best after spending time with my friends.				
48.	I use most of my free time discussing soap operas (telenovelas) with my peers rather than studying.				



**APPENDIX C**

**RELIABILITY OF INSTRUMENT**

**Reliability Statistics**

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.780	48

APPENDIX D

INTRODUCTORY LETTER

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST  
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION STUDIES  
FACULTY OF EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATIONS  
**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND PSYCHOLOGY**

Telephone: 233-3321-32440/4 & 32480/3  
Direct: 033 20 91697  
Fax: 03321-30184  
Telex: 2552, UCC, GH.  
Telegram & Cables: University, Cape Coast  
Email: [edufound@ucc.edu.gh](mailto:edufound@ucc.edu.gh)



UNIVERSITY POST OFFICE  
CAPE COAST, GHANA

Our Ref:

Your Ref:

14<sup>th</sup> December, 2016

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION  
MR. DAVID TURKSON

We confirm that the above-mentioned name is an M.Phil Educational Psychology Student at the Department of Education and Psychology, UCC.

Currently, he is at the theses writing stage writing on the topic "After -school activities and their effects on academic performance of Junior High School students in Cape Coast Metropolis".

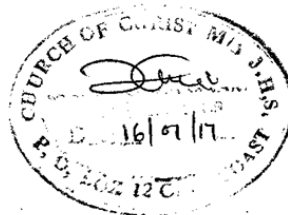
He would like to collect data for his work.

We would be very grateful if you could assist him with any information he may need for his research. All information retrieved would be treated confidentially.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully,

(Georgina Nyantakyiwaa Thompson)  
Principal Administrative Assistant  
For: Head



PHILIP QUAQUE BOYS BASIC SCH  
HEADMASTER  
P.O. BOX 177, CAPE COAST

APPENDIX E

ETHICAL CLEARANCE

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST  
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION STUDIES  
**ETHICAL REVIEW BOARD**



UNIVERSITY POST OFFICE  
CAPE COAST, GHANA

Our Ref: CES/ERB/CR/VOL 2/038

Your Ref: .....

Date: 18.03.2016

Chairman, CES-ERB  
Prof. J. A. Omotosho  
[jomotosho@ucc.edu.gh](mailto:jomotosho@ucc.edu.gh)  
0243784739

Vice-Chairman, CES-ERB  
Prof. K. Edjah  
[kedjah@ucc.edu.gh](mailto:kedjah@ucc.edu.gh)  
0244742357

Secretary, CES-ERB  
Dr. (Mrs.) L. D. Forde  
[lforde@ucc.edu.gh](mailto:lforde@ucc.edu.gh)  
0244786680

Dear Sir/Madam,

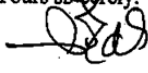
**ETHICAL REQUIREMENTS CLEARANCE FOR RESEARCH  
STUDY**

The bearer, Mr. David Turkson Reg. No. ED/PPE/14/0001 is an M.Phil/Ph.D student in the Department of Education and Psychology, College of Education Studies, University of Cape Coast, Cape Coast, Ghana. He/She wishes to undertake a research study on the topic After-school activities and their influence on the academic performance of grade high school students in the Cape Coast Metropolis of the Central Region of Ghana

The Ethical Review Board (ERB) of the College of Education Studies (CES) has assessed the proposal submitted by the bearer. The said proposal satisfies the College's ethical requirements for the conduct of the study.

In view of the above, the researcher has been cleared and given approval to commence his/her study. The ERB would be grateful if you would give him/her the necessary assistance that may be needed to facilitate the conduct of the said research.

Thank you.  
Yours sincerely,

  
Dr. (Mrs.) Linda Dzama Forde  
(Secretary, CES-ERB)