UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HOME CHARACTERISTICS AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF STUDENTS' OF PUBLIC JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOLS IN MOREE, CENTRAL REGION, GHANA

OPHELIA AFFREH

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BY

OPHELIA AFFREH

Thesis submitted to the Institute for Educational Planning and Administration of the Faculty of Education, University of Cape Coast, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for award of Master of Philosophy Degree in Educational Planning

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DECLARATION

Candidate's Declaration

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

Candidate's Signature: …… Date: …….

Name: Ophelia Affreh

Supervisors' Declaration

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

Principal Supervisor's Signature: …… Date: ……

Name: Dr. Albert L. Dare

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

Name: Prof. George K. T. Oduro

ABSTRACT

This study investigated the relationship between home characteristics and students' academic performance among public junior high school (JHS) students in Moree. Home characteristics of this study focused on parental involvement in school activities (PI), parents' absence from home (PA), parental educational background (PE), and the major economic activity of parents (PO). The sample consisted of 200 students selected by the simple random sampling technique and census with parents of these sampled students' responding to a questionnaire with a reliability coefficient of .719.

Spearman's Rank Correlation Coefficient (ρ) was used to measure the strength of the relationship. The key findings of the study suggested that the relationships between PI and SAP was positive and very weak, p (198) = .128, p = .072; PA and SAP was positive and very weak, p (198) = .058, p = .414; PE and SAP was also positive and very weak, p (198) = .022, p = .754; however, PO and SAP was negative but very weak, p (198) = -.113, p = .110. Meanwhile, the correlations involved in these relationships were not statistically significant.

The study thus concluded that, home characteristics were not associated with students' academic performance; that these home characteristics were not likely to improve students' academic performance; there could be other factors relating to the student, teacher, or the community posing as main predictors of students' academic performance. It is recommended that stakeholders and implementers of educational policies sensitize parents on the need to get genuinely involved in wards' education. Past students from the community should be made to serve the same purpose.

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DEDICATION

To My Siblings and My Mum.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ADP	-	Accelerated Development Plan
BECE	-	Basic Education Certificate Examination
D/A	-	District Assembly
DASSE	-	Department of Arts & Social Sciences Education
DCE	-	District Chief Executive
GES	-	Ghana Education Service
IEPA	-	Institute for Educational Planning and Administration
JHS	-	Junior High School
JSS	-	Junior Secondary School
PA	-	Parental Absence from Home
PE	-	Parental Educational Background
PI	-	Parental Involvement in School Activities
PO	-	Major Economic Activity of Parents/Occupation
PISA	-	Programme for International Student Assessment
PTA	-	Parents' Teachers Association
R/C	-	Roman Catholic
SAP	-	Students' Academic Performance
SES	-	Socioeconomic Status
TIMSS	-	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study
WAEC	-	West African Examination Council
WASCE	-	West African School Certificate Examination

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

In recent times, previous studies have shown that learning outcomes (academic achievement or academic performance) have been determined by such variables as; family, school, society, and motivation factors (Aremu & Sokan, 2003; Aremu & Oluwole, 2001; Aremu, 2000). In the same vein (Parker, Creques, Harris, Majeski, Wood & Hogan, 2003) noted, in addition, that most of the previous studies have focused on the impact of demographic and socio-psychological variables on academic achievement.

More recently, another emerging dimension of the determinants of academic achievement is the government factor (Aremu & Sokan, 2003; Aremu, 2004). In spite of the apparently voluminous literature on the determinants of academic performance of learners, there seems to be more areas of interest to be investigated. This is discernible from the continuing interest shown by researchers and educational psychologists as well as government and policy makers and planners on issues relating to variables that explain academic performance.

Academic performance of students in the public schools (most especially performance of junior high school students) has become a thing of great concern

to all stakeholders of education such as parents, teachers, and the Government of Ghana. For instance, Mr. Robert Bakah Wavei, the District Chief Executive (DCE) of Sissala West in the Upper West Region of Ghana is purported to have expressed regret at the poor performance of JHS students at the Basic Education Certificate Examination (i.e., BECE, 2010/2011) and had called for efforts by all stakeholders of education within the district to forestall the situation (www.allghanadata.com). The DCE of Abura Asebu Kwamankese District Assembly also admitted the abysmal performance of students at the BECE in the same year. Statistics show that the district scored 35% in the 2010/2011 BECE. The Assembly therefore, has evolved measures to improve the quality of teaching and learning. These measures include: packages to sponsor untrained teachers to receive professional training, accommodation for teachers, bicycles to transport teachers in deprived areas as well as the District Education Directorate and the Assembly embarking on a sensitization programme to encourage parents to put more efforts in their wards' education (vibeghana.com).

From the foregoing discussion, it can be deduced that most students of the junior high schools (i.e., JHSs) in Ghana especially, in rural settings, are daily confronted with challenges of coping with their academic work under serious emotional strains occasioned by long walk to school, poor school environment, and being taught by unmotivated teachers. Coupled with this is an uncooperative attitude of parents who more often do not support their wards' education (Ankomah, 1990).

Examinations which have always been used as the main basis for judging a student's ability and also as a means of selection for educational advancement and employment show that every year, thousands of Ghanaian pupils/students sit for internal examinations and the external Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE). Discrepancies always have been observed in the performance of pupils in these two types of examinations. Although pupils may be of comparable abilities, learn in the same environment, and follow the same syllabus, yet their academic performance still vary. Bright students who fail to excel due to other factors miss the opportunity to advance in education and get employment. At the same time, there are students who may be bright but perform poorly despite the good learning facilities in their school. The question is, "What might be accounting for this?" It is, therefore, imperative to have a clear understanding of what really determines the school performance of students. In particular, it is important to identify the factors which are related to students' academic performance. Towards this end, researchers have tackled the problem from various angles.

Adams and Ryan (2000), for example saw reason to find out about the factors that can be influenced by educational or social policy in their study. Although there has been some research on the determinants of students' academic performance, the research is far from complete as there remain many unresolved issues. In the Ghanaian situation, there is not enough research on this topic.

However, researchers like Boateng (2003) studied factors affecting academic performance of selected senior secondary students' in the Kumasi Metropolis,

Ghana. The study was aimed at finding out the existing factors in the selected schools that affect the academic performance of students. Four hundred and eleven heads and assistant heads, teachers, final year and past students, and inspectors of the senior secondary schools at the Metro Office constituted the sample for the study. The sample was selected by the systematic sampling technique. The statistical tools used to analyse the data were frequencies and percentages, means, and correlations.

The findings of the study revealed that combinations of human and material resources were found to be associated with students' academic performance in the selected senior secondary schools of the Kumasi Metropolis. Specifically, teachers' professionalism, supervision, students' indiscipline and their patronage of the library were some variables identified by the human resources and found to be associated with students' performance.

Also, teaching learning materials and the entry grades of students constituted the material resources correlating with academic performance. Boateng continued that these indicators accounted for the differences in students' academic performance of the selected schools. It can therefore be indicated that adequate and quality provision of both human and material resources could possibly opt for a direct relationship with students' academic performance.

Etsey (2005) also studied causes of low academic performance of primary schools in the Shama Sub–Metro of the Shama Ahanta East Metro in Ghana. The study identified the differences between the Shama Ahanta East Metro high achieving schools and low achieving schools in terms of school, teacher, pupil

and parental factors. In the study which involved 1,171 head teachers, teachers, pupils, and parents, some significant differences were revealed between the two groups of schools. The significant differences were found within the school, teacher, pupil, and parental factors that influenced academic performance of primary school pupils.

Specifically, the school factor identified limited teaching materials, inadequate textbooks, and less professionally trained teachers to be having adverse effects on pupils' academic performance. Incidence of lateness to school and absenteeism, use of local language, and inability to complete syllabi were some of the teacher factors found to have been related to pupils' performance. Some pupil characteristics also found to be adversely affecting performance were in the areas of absenteeism and regularity in school and truancy. Parental support with regard to the inability in providing breakfast, textbooks, basic school needs, and less involvement in school activities also affected pupils' performance. Etsey, further indicated that the differences might have accounted for the low academic performance of the pupils in the sub – metro.

Bour (2010), in a study of factors associated with pupil's performance in junior high schools in the Suhum Kraboa Coaltar District of Ghana, identified significant positive relationship between school-related factors and teacher factors and pupil's performance. The study also showed that pupils' attitude towards the library was a significant predictor of their performance while the quality of teachers, as measured by qualification and experience, also correlated with pupils' academic performance. It can be inferred, therefore, that if adequate

educational facilities like those of the school library are provided, there is a high tendency of students' academic performance to improve significantly.

Asikhia (2010) studying students and teachers' perception of the causes of poor academic performance in Ogun State, Nigeria, opined that, teachers perceived that, teachers' qualification and students' environment do not influence poor academic performance but students on the other hand were of the view that while teachers' qualification and students' environment influenced students' poor performance, teachers method of teaching and learning materials do not. A common link of Bour, Etsey, and Asikhia studies can thus be established. The revelation is that teacher attitude, students' characteristics, and school characteristics were found to be accounting for either high or low academic performance of students.

As the Government of Ghana is committed to the provision of quality basic education especially in the public schools and since none of the studies to date can be considered definitive, there is the need for a study into the quality of education as delivered at the classroom level and the expected learning outcomes in Ghanaian basic schools in general and the Moree Township in particular.

Statement of the Problem

Various works associated with factors like the home, teachers, school, and students' characteristics have been conducted in Ghana and worldwide to find out how these factors can affect students' academic performance. Results from such studies have indicated that these factors have far reaching effects on students'

academic performance. From these, various recommendations have been made on how to improve students' academic performance.

In spite of how these studies have added to existing knowledge informing stakeholders of education as to what must be done, academic performances of students particularly seem not to have improved in the public junior high schools (i.e., JHSs) in the Central Region of Ghana. For instance, the level of academic achievement at the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) of students' in the public JHSs in Moree over the past three years is worth looking at. This is well illustrated in the table following. However, it should be noted that the schools that had been studied were labelled A, B, and C for purposes of anonymity.

Table 1: BECE Pass Rates of Three Public Junior High Schools in Moree (2009 – 2011)

School	% Passed		
	2009	2010	2011
School A	46	40	11
School B	15	20	14
School C	50	60	45

Source: GES, (2009 – 2011). Comparative Analysis of Basic Education Certificate Examination of the Abura-Asebu-Kwamankese District.

This information and the results in internal examinations show that the public JHS students of Moree perform less well. This low performance of the schools as seen from Table 1 has been of much concern for teachers and all stakeholders in education within the Abura-Asebu-Kwamankese District as well as the municipal

assembly. The indication is that, there are several other factors affecting students' performance in general. However, little attention has been given to the influence of home factors on children's academic performance. It is that aspect that this study sought to address.

The study was therefore, conducted to identify the specific home characteristics that are related to students' academic performance in the public JHSs in the Moree Township which is within the district referred to earlier. This study focused on the home characteristics because the home is the 'first school' of the child and that the child begins his/her education from the home. Also, sociologists have noted, the society is made up of individual homes which implies that the society is a true reflection of what the individual homes are (Agyemang, 2004).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between home characteristics and students' academic performance. In particular, the study sought to:

1. establish whether there is a relationship between parental involvement in school activities and students' academic performance in the public JHSs in Moree;
2. ascertain if there is a relationship between parents' absence from home and students' academic performance;

3. examine if there is a relationship between parents' educational background and students' academic performances; and
4. establish whether there is a relationship between the major economic activity of parents' and students' academic performance in the public JHS in Moree.

Hypotheses

In pursuit of the research problem and to realize the objective of this study, the following null hypotheses were formulated and tested:

1. There is no significant relationship between parental involvement in school's activities and students' academic performance
2. There is no significant relationship between parental absence from home and the academic performance of students
3. There is no significant relationship between parents' educational background and students' academic performance
4. There is no significant relationship between the major economic activity of parents' and the academic performance of students.

Significance of the Study

A knowledge of the specific home characteristics related to students' academic performance in the public JHSs in Moree would contribute to the better understanding of the existing situation and inform stakeholders on what can be

done to improve on these home characteristics that should be considered to enhance academic performance.

It is hoped that the identification of characteristics that contribute to academic performance of students from the public JHSs in Moree, would inform educational planners as well as school leaders and other stakeholders of education on pertaining issues in the Moree Township so that appropriate measures could be outlined to help curb these conditions and, thus, enhance students' academic performance.

In addition, the study may serve as a source of reference, generate hypothesis or provide a basis for further study and, thus, add to the existing knowledge on the home characteristics that are linked with academic performance. The study therefore, would be offered as a contribution to the limited empirical data relating home characteristics to students' academic achievements.

Delimitations of the Study

Factors affecting academic performance of public JHS students especially the home factors (i.e., characteristics) are not peculiar to Moree alone; most students in some other fishing, mining, and commercial towns in Ghana experience similar problems. However, how each of these factors affects the academic performance of the student, has not been extensively studied by researchers.

This study was, therefore, delimited to only the 'home characteristics' as a factor affecting student's academic performance. This was so because home characteristics as a measure of academic performance has been less studied. The

home in this context refers to the nuclear and the extended environment in which the child develops.

Although the study could have been done in any other town, it was delimited to Moree Township because Moree is the only interior fishing town along the central coast, remote from the highway, where most of the fishermen are resident, as compared with a town such as Komenda where most fishermen are not resident. Again, I chose this town because although, enrolment of pupils and students was encouraging and teachers were doing their best, yet this was not commensurate with students' academic performance. Moreover, the study was delimited to only the second and third year students because of their longer stay in school and for the fact that they had previous academic records for internal assessment as compared to the first year students.

Limitations of the Study

Most parents were illiterates. Consequently, they were not able to fill out the questionnaire themselves. The questions were read and interpreted in the local language to them. Parents' responses then had to be translated back to the English Language. Due to this, some vital information might have been lost. Again, some of the respondents were a bit skeptical of the reason behind the conduct of this study; they were, thus, reluctant in giving out some vital information which might have provided greater insights to enrich the study.

Organization of the Rest of the Study

The study report is organized into five chapters. Chapter One, provides a general introduction into the study. It focuses on the background, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, significance, and hypotheses. The rest are the significance of the study, delimitations, and limitations of the study.

Chapter Two reviews relevant literature on home characteristics, and students' academic performance. This chapter also examines the views of authors on issues like factors affecting academic performance.

Chapter Three, describes the methodology embracing the research design, population, sample, research instruments, pilot testing of the research instruments, and the administration of the instruments. It ends with data collection, procedure, and analysis. Chapter Four, deals with the analysis of results and discussions of findings. Chapter Five provides a summary of the major findings of the study, draws conclusions, and makes recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

This chapter is devoted to the review of literature on what ideas there are about the general factors affecting academic performance and the home characteristics related to students' academic performance. The conceptual framework which constitutes the basis for the study is discussed. It ends with review of a number of theoretical and empirical studies. Emerging from the conceptual framework are the following sub-divisions:

1. Conceptualizing Education
2. Theoretical Framework of Academic Performance
3. The concept of 'Academic Performance'
4. Factors affecting Academic Performance
5. The 'Home'
6. Home characteristics and Students' Academic Performance (Conceptual Framework and literature)
7. Summary of Literature Review

Conceptualizing Education

Over recent decades, there has been a massive effort by all countries especially developing countries, sometimes with assistance from international donor agencies, to put children in school. Educational attainment, especially primary education, is perceived as one of the main vehicles to improve living standards in developing countries and to spur on nation-wide economic growth (World Bank, 2003). It will therefore not be out of place to say that, given the vast resources invested in education, understanding what factors and investments that most efficiently improve students' learning, is of crucial importance to various governments of the world.

Education can be referred to as a discipline that is concerned with methods of teaching and learning in schools or school-like environments as opposed to various non-formal and informal means of socialization; example, rural development projects and education through parent-child relationships. It is also an act or process of imparting or acquiring general knowledge, developing the powers of reasoning and judgment, and generally of preparing oneself or others intellectually for mature life (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2008).

Education also refers to the process of learning and acquiring information. It can be divided into two main types: formal learning through an institution such as a school, and self-taught learning or what is often termed 'life experience'. Generally, education is important for learning basic life skills, as well as learning advanced skills that can make a person more attractive in the job market (http://www.wisegeek.com/what-is-education.htm). All of these definitions help

bring to fore the importance of education. For instance, in the bid of re-emphasizing education as a profitable venture, Hijazi and Raza Naqvi (2006) reiterated that, education in Pakistan, for instance, is growing as a profitable industry with the prime objective of maximizing profit by delivering high quality education that produces well-educated, skilled, mannered students according to needs and requirements of the dynamically growing market from the last 20 years. Ghana in this same vein is trying all that it can to deliver quality education to her people.

Meanwhile, three things mark out education: the intention to foster learning, a concern with environment, and certain values. Education is future-oriented; it is about development and growth even when we are studying the past. Education takes us into the conscious world. It involves activities that are intended to stimulate thinking and to foster learning.

In the view of educators earlier on indicated, for something to be called 'education', whether it takes place in the classroom or the canteen, it must be informed by certain values. Meanwhile, there is a dividing line between education and indoctrination. Education, unlike the latter, embraces a commitment to: respect for persons, promotion of well-being, truth, democracy, fairness, and equality. These values should inform the content of conversations and encounters as well as our behaviour and relationships as a people. In relation to all that have been said, one could easily agree with Dr. Julius Nyerere, the first president of Tanzania when talking about the purpose of education, as being the liberation of humans from the restraints and limitations of ignorance and dependency. It is true

that ‘nothing else can be properly called education, he said. Teaching which induces a slave mentality or a sense of impotence is not education at all - it is an attack on the minds of men’.

Ghana also, being a developing country, is no exception of recognizing the importance of education as this is depicted in her educational innovations and trying to deliver quality education to the people. Since 1951, Ghana has made a number of strides in her education system; an example of these, are the Accelerated Development Plan (ADP) launched in 1951 and the 1961 Education Act, which made education fee-free and compulsory at the basic level as well as the Educational Strategic Plan initiated in 2003. Between 1967 and 2007, a number of educational committees were set up to review education in Ghana with the view to making education more relevant to the needs and aspirations of the people.

For instance, the Education Reform of 1987 which brought to the fore the idea of the Junior Secondary School (JSS) now JHS has been very significant. Among its objectives were:

1. Changing the structure of the education system by reducing the duration of pre-university education from 17 to 12 years. This is made up of 6–year primary, 3-year junior secondary school and 3-year senior secondary school education
2. Increasing access to education
3. Introducing new methods of assessment

4. Increasing the length of pre-university education academic year from 35 to 40 weeks and
5. Reducing government's expenditure (Ministry of Education: Evans-Anfom Report, 1986). These objectives were laudable and many Ghanaians and communities embraced the reforms with enthusiasm.

On the issue of increasing access to education, many secondary schools both senior and junior, were established in both rural and urban areas. The proliferation of these schools has made students' intake to shoot up; however, this increase has not been matched by an appreciable increase in educational resources and materials. This implies that, the non-availability or under supply of these resources to the various schools would hinder the progress of students' academic performance. Various arguments as to whether these reforms have been successful or not in terms of students' academic achievements, should take cognisance of comments being passed on by governmental officials and other identifiable groups or bodies which appear always in the dailies and periodicals. Such statements although may have their own biases, yet can still hold water as far as the education system in Ghana is concerned (Boateng, 2003).

Theoretical Framework of Academic Performance

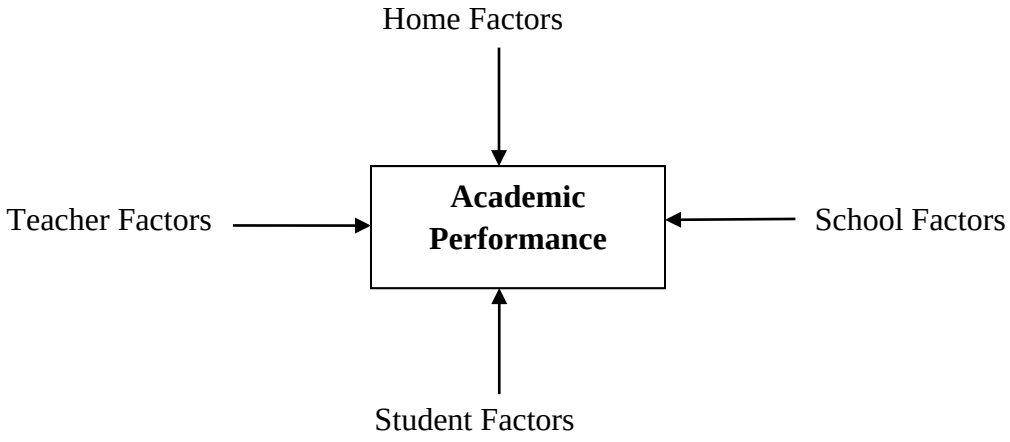

Figure 1: Factors associated with students' academic performance - A theoreticalframework

Source: Adapted from the Model of Intervening Variables (MacKinnon, 2008)

All things being equal, schooling should result in the academic performance of students. This implies that, the school factor plays a predominant role in determining the academic performance of students. However, there are other factors which also affect students' academic performance; these factors can be said to be intervening or mediating (i.e., Intervening Variables) as illustrated in Figure 1.

Mediation is a hypothesized causal chain in which one variable affects a second variable that, in turn, affects a third variable. The intervening variable, M, is the mediator. It mediates between the relationship between a predictor, X, and an outcome. Graphically, mediation can be depicted in the following way:

a b

X ⟶ M ⟶ Y. Paths *a* and *b* are called direct effects.

The mediational effect, in which X leads to Y through M, is called the *indirect effect*. The indirect effect represents the portion of the relationship between X and Y that is mediated by M.

An intervening variable also referred to as a "mediating variable" or "intermediary variable" explains a relation or provides a causal link between other variables. A mediating variable therefore facilitates a better understanding of the relationship between the independent and dependent variables when the variables appear not to have a definite connection. It links between the independent and the dependent variable; it is part of a causal chain: independent variable → intervening variable → dependent variable. Example: The statistical association between schooling and academic performance needs to be explained because just schooling does not make a student perform better academically. Other variables as *the home, the student him/herself, teacher performance, among others* also intervene between schooling and academic performance (MacKinnon, 2008).

Tests of the intervening variable effect are useful because they examine processes by which variables are related. For instance, A Daily Sketch Publication in Nigeria on "Causes and Cures of Poor Performance at West African School Certificate Examination (WASCE)" in 2006 identified and categorized factors responsible for students' poor performance to: problems of teachers, problems of inadequate facilities in the schools, problem traceable to students, problems caused by parents and society at large and problems of

government policies, and low funding of the education sector (Ajila & Olutola, 2007).

Other researchers like Morakinyo (2003) also believe that the falling level of academic achievement is attributable to teacher's non-use of verbal reinforcement strategy. Others found out that the attitude of some teachers to their job is reflected in their poor attendance to lessons, lateness to school, unsavoury comments about student's performance that could damage their ego, poor method of teaching and others affect pupils' academic performance.

Again, several studies have shown that the presence of educational resources in the home, including computers, is a strong predictor of academic success especially in subjects like Mathematics and Science (National Centre for Educational Statistics, 2000). Hoy and Miskel (2001) while researching on "Academic Achievement" stressed the correlation between Socio Economic Status and Student Achievement:

No matter how they are measured differences in socioeconomic background of the family lead to significant differences in student achievement. A reasonable interpretation is that, measures of socioeconomic status are proxies for the quality of the learning environment in the home- nutrition, physical surroundings, parental attitudes, education, and so forth (p. 299).

Thus, the revelations of these studies really support the idea that, other factors such as the 'home' intervene between schooling and the academic performance of students'. This implies that, apart from schooling, other factors also influence students' academic performance - in this wise, the *home* can influence the

academic performance of a student. The discussions made so far, has justified the study into one of such intervening variables (i.e., the home factor) undertaken by this research and how this factor affect students' academic performance. This study therefore, sought solely to identify the 'home characteristics' affecting the academic performance of students' in the Public JHSs in Moree, Central Region of Ghana.

The Concept of 'Academic Performance'

Academic performance is undoubtedly a research after the heart of many educational psychologists. That is, educational psychologists consider studies relating to academic performance very important. However, measuring academic performance of students is challenging since students' performance is a product of socio-economic, psychological, and environmental factors. In their attempt (i.e., educational psychologists) to investigate what determines academic outcomes of learners, they have come with more questions than answers. For instance, the differential academic achievement of students in the public schools in Ghana has been and is still a source of concern and research interest to educators, government and parents as it has been largely associated with many factors. This is so because of the great importance that education has on the national development of the country. Parents and government are in total agreement that their huge investment on education is not yielding the desired dividend. Considering governments' huge investment in public education for instance, the output in terms of quality of students have been observed to be

unequal with government expenditure. Consequent upon the observed deterioration in the academic achievement, attitude and values of high school students in public secondary schools, one wonders if the high failure rates and the poor quality of the students is not a reflection of the instructional quality in the schools. Teachers also complain of students' low academic performance at both internal and external examination. The annual releases of the Basic Certificate Examination results (BECE) conducted by West African Examination Council (WAEC) justifies the problematic nature and generalization of poor secondary school students' performance in different school subjects.

A Nigerian writer who also shared this view, related the issue to his home country and asserted that, all over the country (Nigeria) there is a consensus of opinion about the fallen standard of education (Adebule, 2004).

Academic Performance in a definition, refers to how students' deal with their studies and how they cope with or accomplish different tasks given to them by their teachers. Also it is the ability to study and remember facts and being able to communicate your knowledge verbally or down on paper (http://wiki.answers.com/Q/What_is_meant_by_academic-performance). In a statement of paraphrase, Imogie (2002) indicated that over the years, investigations of the factors that influence academic performance of students have attracted the interest and concern of teachers, counsellors, psychologists, researchers and school administrators. This is because of the public outcries concerning the low standard of education.

Also, there is a very large literature which deals with the determination of educational attainments. Social scientists have also been interested in academic performance. The two (educational attainments and academic performance) are related because how well the individual does in primary and secondary school largely determines the individual's final post-secondary educational destination. In fact, from a theoretical point of view, attainments and performance are outcomes of the same household process in which parents try to influence the activities which relate to their children's schooling performance, make investments of time and money in their children, serve as their role models, and set objectives and priorities for them to follow.

As career competition grows ever more fiercing in the working world, the importance of students doing well in school has caught the attention of parents, legislators and government education departments alike. Although education is not the only road to success in the working world; much effort is made to identify, evaluate, track, and encourage the progress of students in schools. Parents care about their children's academic performance because they believe good academic results will provide more career choices and job security. Schools, although invested in fostering good academic habits for the same reason, are also often influenced by concerns about the school's reputation and the possibility of monetary aid from government institutions, which can hinge on the overall academic performance of the school. State and federal departments of education are charged with improving schools, and so devise methods of measuring success in order to create plans for improvement. The tracking of academic performance

accomplishes a number of purposes. There is also the need to evaluate areas of achievement and failure in a student's academic career in order to foster improvement and make full use of the learning process. Results provide a framework for talking about how students fare in school, and a constant standard to which all students are held. Performance results also allow students to be ranked and sorted on a scale that is numerically obvious, minimizing complaints by holding teachers and schools accountable for the components of each and every grade (http://www.ehow.com/about_4740750_defineacademicperformance.html).

Again, it is an undeniable fact that, the role of secondary education is to lay the foundation for further education and if a good foundation is laid at this level, there are likely to be no problem at subsequent levels. However, different people at different times have passed the blame of poor performance especially in secondary school to students because of their low retention, parental factors, association with wrong peers, low achievement, low retention, low achievement motivation, and the likes (Aremu & Sokan, 2003; Aremu & Oluwole, 2001; Aremu, 2000).

On the other note, poor academic performance according to Aremu (2000, 2003) is a performance that is adjudged by the examinee/testee and some other significant stakeholders of education as falling below an expected standard. The interpretation of this expected or desired standard is better appreciated from the perpetual cognitive ability of the evaluator of the performance. The evaluator or assessor can therefore give different interpretations depending on some factors.

The question therefore is ‘what is the cause of this fallen standard and poor academic performance of students’? Is the fault entirely that of teachers or students or both of them? Is it that students of today are non-achievers because they have low intelligent quotient and a good neutral mechanism to be able to act purposefully, think rationally and deal effectively with academic tasks? Or is it because teachers are no longer putting in much commitment as before? Or is it in teachers’ method of teaching and interaction with pupils? Or is the poor performance of students caused by parents’ neglect, separation, and poverty?

Although the importance of academic achievement is rarely questioned, reaching consensus regarding its measurement has been elusive. In educational institutions, success is measured by academic performance, or how well a student meets standards set out by local government and the institution itself. Measuring academic performance can occur at multiple levels and serve multiple purposes. For example, classroom teachers often conduct formative and summative tests to evaluate students’ progress in course content and provide grades for students and parents. State tests are designed to measure progress and to ensure accountability for results at the school or school district level. Other standardized tests are also used in decision making processes to determine eligibility for special services. Each of these uses encompasses topics of debate and significant questions related to test design, types of assessments, types of decisions supported by the results, alternative assessments, and accommodations (Minnema, Thurlow, Bielinski, & Scott, 2001)

Factors Affecting Academic Performance

Several factors have generally been identified to be affecting academic performance. Agyemang (1993) reported that a teacher who does not have both the academic and the professional teacher qualification would undoubtedly have a negative influence on the teaching and learning of his/her subject. However, he further stated that a teacher who is academically and professionally qualified, but works under unfavourable conditions of service would be less dedicated to his work and thus be less productive than a teacher who is unqualified but works under favourable conditions of service which either way affects the academic performance of students.

Drummond and Stipek (2004) while discussing their "Low-income Parents' beliefs about parents role in their children's academic learning" mentioned that a few of these parents indicated that their responsibilities were limited to meeting children's basic and social emotional needs, such as providing clothing, emotional support, and socializing manners. Thus, these parents' short-sightedness toward their responsibilities in the educational processes of their children and scarcity of fund to intensify such processes could be a challenge to their children's success.

Also, a considerable number of researches repeatedly have shown that failure to witness the realization of good academic performance has been blamed on a number of factors, among which low-Socio Economic Status (SES) of the parents has been deemed primary. This is in line with the discovery made by Hoy and Miskel (2001), while researching on "Academic Achievement" as already

mentioned. In their study, they stressed the correlation between SES and Student Achievement and summed it as follows:

> No matter how they are measured differences in socioeconomic background of the family lead to significant differences in student achievement. A reasonable interpretation is that measures of socioeconomic status are proxies for the quality of the learning environment as in the home- nutrition, physical surroundings, parental attitudes, education, and so forth (p. 299).

Other writers have also postulated that academic achievement is a function of ability, personal characteristics and family resources, home characteristics, and many other factors. Adding to the discussions made so far concerning other factors affecting students' academic performance, Etsey, Amedahe and Edjah (2004) in a study of 60 schools from peri-urban (29 schools) and rural (31 schools) areas in Ghana found that academic performance was better in private schools than public schools because of more effective supervision of work. Class sizes have also been identified as determinants of academic performance. Studies have indicated that schools with smaller class sizes perform better academically than schools with larger class sizes. Kraft (1994) in his study of the ideal class size and its effects on effective teaching and learning in Ghana concluded that class sizes above 40 have negative effects on students' achievement.

Butler (1987) has also found homework to be a correlate of academic performance. He stated that homework bore a positive relationship with learning outcomes when it is relevant to learning objectives, assigned regularly in reasonable amounts, well explained, collected and reviewed during class time, and used as an occasion for feedback to students.

The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA; Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2004) also showed that the differentiation among social classes also has a great impact on educational output. Through regression analysis, PISA's results proved that there exists a positive correlation between the rich and the poor, or the upper and the lower, and differences in student academic performance within one country: the higher the social status of the student's family, the better his or her academic performance.

Woessmann (2003) adopted Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) data to research the effects of family background on children's academic performance in five countries and regions of East Asia (Hong Kong, China, South Korea, Japan, Singapore, and Thailand). Research results indicated that in these five countries and regions, the parents' educational background had a significant positive impact on children's academic performance. This positive impact was especially significant in Singapore. It can therefore be deduced from the discussions made so far that many factors are associated with the academic performance of students' generally other than schooling alone not leaving out the public JHS students of Moree, in the Central Region of Ghana. This study therefore models academic performance as a function of home characteristics of

the students' in the public JHSs in Moree. It is thus imperative to note that the issue of poor academic performance of students in general has been of much concern to all and sundry. The problem is so much that it has led to the widely acclaimed fallen standard of education in the Abura-Asebu Kwamankese District in the Central Region and Ghana at large.

The Home

Several studies in the past have focused on the factors associated with students' academic achievement. However, very few of those have considered the influence of the home indicators on students' achievement. Whether the shortfalls in students' academic performance at various levels of schooling could be attributed to school related factors like poor quality of learning environment and long distances to school by students,' is worth investigating. A major assumption however is that, besides the school environment and resources, the 'home environment' plays a very significant role in students' academic performance.

The home has been viewed as a place where the child is prepared to take up the challenges of schooling (Simmons & Alexander, 1978). Many studies on education performance indicate that learning which occurs in the home is much more important than that which occurs in school (Epstein, 1988).

The term "home environment" refers to all the objects, forces and conditions in the home which influence the child physically, intellectually and emotionally.

Different home environments vary in many aspects such as the parents' level of education, economic status, occupational status, religious background, attitudes, values, interests, parents' expectation for their children, and family size among others. Children coming from different home environments are affected differently by such variations. Out of the many effects that the home environment may have on the child, academic performance motivation was singled out for study in this research. The home environment comprises a set of variables that constitute the emotional climate of the family provided by the interaction process between the adult members and children. This process mediated by levels of education, income, type of job, involvement in children's school activities, and the size of the family constitutes a large chunk of the form and substance of the family life dynamics. Also, literatures reveal that the home background variables have a great influence on the students' psychological, emotional, social and economic state (Onocha, 1985; Rani, 1998; Dubey, 1999; Musgrave, 2000; Grissmer, 2003; Teese, 2004; Sharma, 2004). This means the family background and context of a child affect his/her reaction to life situations and level of performance. Research also shows that a home environment that encourages learning is even more important than parents' income, education level, or cultural background. By actively participating in their child's education at home and in school, parents send some critical messages to their children; they're demonstrating their interest in children's activities and reinforcing the idea that school is important.

Gesinde (2000) argues that the urge to achieve varies from one individual to the other. For some, the need for achievement is very high while, for others it is very low. He adds that achievement motivation is learnt through the socialization process. Those who have high achievers as their role models in their early life experience would develop a high need for achievement, while those who have low achievers as their role models will hardly develop the need for achievement. The home in this wise is obviously, a major socializing agent and therefore important in determining the child's motivation to achieve success in various areas.

While, these factors have been identified as possible factors that contribute to the variations in academic performance not much has been done in Ghana to show the role played by students' home environment on his/her academic achievement motivation (the need or desire to excel in academic work).

This implies that, little attention has been paid to the home environment as a possible factor affecting a student's motivation to perform well in school because among the factors that are blamed for students' poor academic performance and low motivation, the home environment is hardly mentioned. This study therefore assumed that students' come from varied home environments that may influence their motivation to excel in school differently as there are students who may be bright but perform poorly despite the good learning facilities in their schools. This study thus focuses on one possible factor, that is, the student's home environment and its characteristics. This study attempted to find out whether the differences in academic performance among students' can be attributed to

differences in their home environments based on the assumption that students' home environments could be a possible determinant of their variations in academic performance.

Furthermore, the value that different families attach to education could affect the child's attitude to school and eventually affect his motivation for success in school work. As already mentioned, many homes differ on factors such as family size, availability of learning materials, the parents' level of education, parents' occupation, income, parental encouragement and involvement, among others. The discussions made so far have been supported in a study by Gottfried, Fleming, and Gotfried (1998), in which home environment was found to have a statistically positive and significant effect on academic intrinsic motivation. Children whose homes had greater emphasis on learning opportunities and activities were more academically intrinsically motivated.

A study also by Bansal, Thind and Jaswal (2006) based on 100 eleventh grade students drawn from 10 senior secondary schools in which the following home environmental factors were considered: (a) Parental encouragement

(b) Parents' occupation (c) Parents' education (d) Family size

(e) Learning facilities at home; in Ludhiana City of India showed that good quality of home environment had significant positive correlation with 'high' level ($P < 0.001$) of achievement motivation among high achievers. It was found that as the quality of home environment deteriorates, the level of achievement motivation also deteriorates.

Meanwhile, effects of home environment on students' academic performance can be explained in two ways: first, at the early stage of development a child is born to a family and grows up within the scope and characteristics of his/her environment. The child at this stage acquires the initial social behaviour and manners. It is argued that, the child's intellectual potentiality for success in school education depends on the initial effects of the parents in cultivating this potentiality and thereby establishing a good functional relationship with teachers (Durojaiye, 1976). Secondly, after school hours children spend the rest of the time in their homes. Some parents may show interest in helping their children in their studies when at home, while others may not. In the elementary years to come later, parental contributions to school achievement may be most efficiently mediated through parents support at home. From a grounded perspective, parental assistance and or non-assistance may affect boys and girls differently.

Home Characteristics and Students' Academic Performance

(Conceptual Framework and Literature)

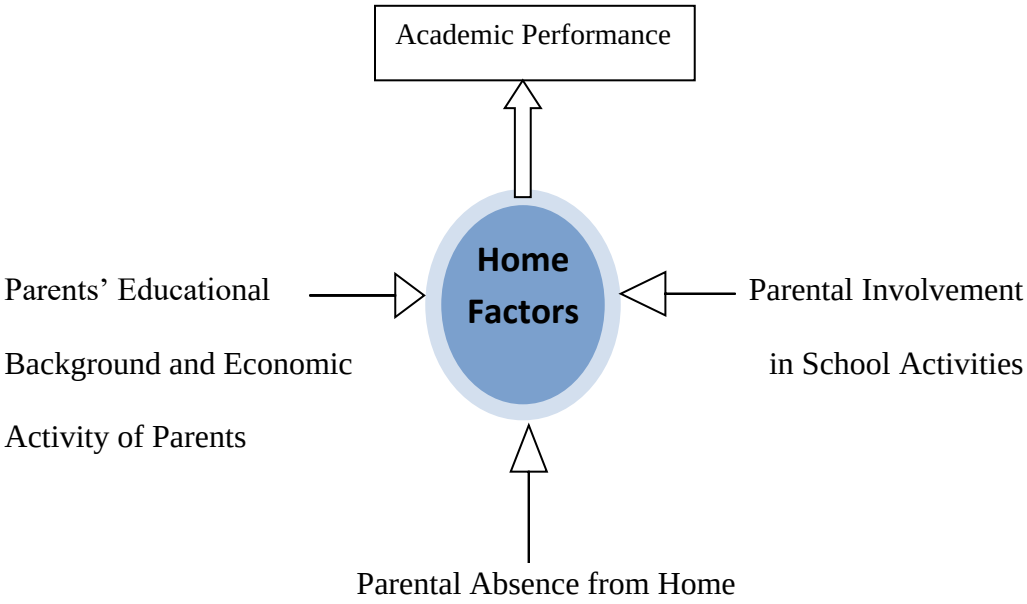

Figure 2: Home factors associated with students' academic performance

Source: Adapted from the Model of Intervening Variables (Mackinnon, 2008)

This study proposes to investigate if parents' level of education, parents' involvement in school activities, parental absence from home, and the major economic activity of the parents (making up some home characteristics), has a significant effect on the academic performance of students in the public JHSs in Moree, Central Region of Ghana as illustrated in Figure 2.

Parental Involvement in School Activities

The major large-scale studies of the determinants of educational achievement that have been conducted during the past two decades have incorporated a number of measures of parental practices at home or parental involvement in school.

Researchers have begun to focus on how parental involvement (PI) affect students, why parents do and do not get involved in their children's education, and what role schools and teachers can play in creating parental involvement.

More broadly, parental involvement in education has been defined as "parents' interactions with schools and with their children to promote academic success" (Hill et al., 2004). Such interactions extend beyond the engagement with schools, to the home life and the expectations and values for education that are communicated directly and indirectly to children. These conceptualizations focus on individual students and their families. Fitzgerald (2004) propounds that parental involvement is "empowerment which brings about its complications as it brings in non-professional personalities to the school set up". All that is needed perhaps is the meticulous adoption of models of PI with adaptations to ensure that education managers do not view such interventions as meddlesome, a threat to their professional autonomy and integrity and an intrusion in their professional domain and sovereign institution (Heystek, 2003).

Gordon and Browne (1989) also in an earlier study opined that, parental involvement in children's education seems to be one of the most important on-going discussions in the field of education. They further said, in the journey of life, a child has the same needs and rights. To ensure this, parents' role and responsibility are extremely important to fulfil the development of a child. To be more specific, a child benefits when parents show a great involvement in his or her education; and when the parents have every confidence in helping their child to be successful in school (Eliason & Jenkins, 2003). Solid research evidence has

also revealed that children achieve more when schools and parents work together and parents understand what the school is trying to achieve and how they can help (Glanz, 2006).

Some frameworks for exploring the precursors to and effects of parental involvement have been the foundation of a majority of the research on 'parental involvement'. For instance, in their framework Hawes and Plourde (2005) argued that parental involvement is an essential, not only within the world of education, but by lawmakers as well. Again, Kohl, Lengua, and McMahaon (2000) were of the view that policymakers began to recognize the importance of involving parents in school and in turn enacted *Goals 2000 Education American Act*. This 'Act' emphasized that parents are an untapped resource in students' achievement and began looking at ways schools should utilize parents since many schools shunned the idea of parental involvement. In relation to that, within the last fifteen years, schools have spent sufficient amount of time and money on programmes geared towards educating parents and providing parents with tools to work with their children at home. Peressini (1998) asserted that parents have been portrayed as both friends and foes in the course of educational reform.

Also, in recent years the development in the field of sociology of education especially, has heightened the need for parental involvement since it plays an important role to cognitive and social development of a child (Weis et al., 2006); the involvement is much appreciated in enhancing children's education excellence at school (Chrispeels & Rivero, 2001). Again, most educators have come to realize the importance of parental involvement as integral to successful

student academic performance (Comer & Haynes, 1991). However, the cost associated with developing parental involvement appears to be the culprit. Comer and Haynes characterized schools as instruments capable of providing children with opportunities for positive interactions with adults and other school children that would transfer to the children's home life and other learning environments.

The findings of Alldred and Edwards (2000) are also significant to this study as they argued that, increased participation from parents can only enhance a child's ability to succeed. They opined again that, regardless of socioeconomic status or race, many studies have showed a direct correlation between parental involvement and a child's academic achievement. Along with family background, studies have indicated that parents' socioeconomic status (SES) is associated with parental involvement and student achievement **(**Okpala, Okpala, & Smith, 2001). Educators agree children do better in school when parents attend parent-teacher conferences; volunteer at school; attend school events; help with homework, or simply encourage student achievement.

Furthermore, parental involvement has been conceptualized as 'collective parental pressure" on schools or the impact of collective utilization of school policies such as school choice, exiting public schools and district assignments in favour of private, charter, and magnet schools (Epple & Romano, 1998; McMillan, 2000). Collective parental pressure can also occur through organized parent-teacher associations or simply through concerned parents monitoring the schools. This can impact school quality and climate and, in turn, school performance.

Lareau (1987) described three conceptual approaches that researchers have used to explain the variation in parental involvement along social-class lines: the culture of poverty, the institutional approach, and the cultural-capital approach. According to the culture of poverty thesis, parental involvement varies because parents of different social classes have different values: Working class parents place less emphasis on the importance of schooling and maintain a greater separation between their roles and those of school staff than do middle class parents. In the institutional approach, institutions are the source of variation, either because school staff differs in their ability to involve working class parents or because of subtle discriminatory practices that discourage these parents' participation. The third approach, also favoured by Lareau incorporates Bourdieu's (1977) concept of cultural capital. According to that thesis, schools are largely middle-class institutions with middle-class values, organizational patterns, and forms of communication. Children who are raised in middle-class environments have a form of cultural capital that enables them to adapt more readily to and to benefit from school life. Similarly, middle-class parents are more likely to feel comfortable relating to teachers and being involved in school activities. The cultural capital thesis is not inconsistent with the first two approaches and, in some respects, integrates them in that it emphasizes the roles of both schools and parents. However, in this approach working class parents are not faulted for low aspirations, nor are teachers berated for discriminatory practices; rather, the approach emphasizes the class structures embedded in home

and school life and the process by which parents with different dispositions (what Bourdieu called “habitus”) realize success in the schooling system.

In examining the effects of involvement on schooling outcomes, researchers have not adequately distinguished between these two general types of involvement. The analysis identified two types of home involvement; one associated with discussing school activities and the other with monitoring a child’s out-of-school activities-and two types of school involvement; one pertaining to contact between parents and school personnel and the other to volunteering in school and attending parent-teacher conferences and open house meetings. Secondly, it estimated the extent to which each dimension of parental involvement varies among students within and between schools. If variation in parental involvement stems largely from school practices and policies, one would expect to find considerable variation among schools in levels of parental involvement. For elementary and middle school-age children, interactive homework assignments that bring parents and children together are quite valuable. One of the leading examples is an initiative designed by Epstein and her Johns Hopkins colleagues called TIPS (Teachers Involving Parents in Schoolwork). In a study of TIPS for writing in two Baltimore middle schools, Epstein found that parent involvement boosted sixth- and eighth-grade writing scores of nearly 700 sixth- and eighth-grade students. In addition, the extent of TIPS homework completed affected student scores, with those doing more TIPS homework showing better language arts grades (Epstein, Simon, & Salinas, 1997).

However, documented evidence in the negative reveals that PI evokes "unsolicited interventions" which can be detrimental to the education manager although he or she may desire it (Lareau, 2000). Van Wyk (2000), also agreed with Lareau that there are celebrated cases of parents either as individuals or the juridical boards becoming too powerful for education managers/administrators to the extent of them trying to influence the staffing at school and the re-assigning of non-performing teachers. Lareau further stated that in some extreme cases, parents go to the extent of dictating concepts and the type of curricula to be taught to their children even if they are not academically, socially, physically, and emotionally ready to do so. On the other hand, other parents place pressure on their children through this intervention so as to satisfy their own egos and expectations regardless of what the child is capable of doing. Such controversies which emanate from the management of PI programmes are major concerns. Despite the above contradictions, contemporary research on PI by Patrikakou, Weissberg, Redding and Walberg (2005) has proved that:

> Children benefit when school and families work closely and such benefits include higher grades and test scores, as well as better attendance improved behaviour at home and at school, better interpersonal skills and more responsible decision making (p. 15)

This view is also in line with Berger's (2007) finding that parental attitudes and the home environment makes the child's experiences influence his or her academic success. Patrikakou et al. further elaborated that in order for children to

succeed in a school there needs to be a synergy of many factors and a collaboration of all people and systems involved in a child's education. This symbiotic relationship between the parents and the school is based on the premise of **(**Glanz, 2006) that:

> Schools cannot do it alone and cannot be all things to students. The community school approach makes it possible for teachers, administrators, parents and community partners to work together and support each other as a strong coalition (p. 36)

Such an alliance of all stakeholders in the provision of education is corroborated by Epstein's (2001, p.2) argument which claims that "school, family and community are important 'spheres of influence' on children's development and that a child's development is enhanced when these three environments work collaboratively towards shared goals." Epstein encouraged schools to create greater overlap between the school, home, and community through the implementation of activities across six types of involvement: parenting, communication, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making, and collaboration with the community. By implementing activities across these can help improve student achievement and experiences in school. It would be therefore widely recognized that if students are to maximize their potentials from schooling, they will need the full support of their parents.

In sum, research has shown that parents do want to get along with their children's education knowing well that such involvement could promote better

achievement. However, parents need a better little direction as to how they can effectively do this. Suggestions brought to the fore are some types of programmes which could be utilized by schools to build strong parental skills and these are:

1. Schools can assist families with parenting and child-rearing skills;
2. Schools can communicate with families about school programmes and students progress and needs
3. Schools can work to improve families as volunteers in school activities
4. Schools can encourage families to be involved in learning activities at home
5. Schools can include parents as participants in important schools decisions, and
6. Schools can coordinate with business and agencies to provide resources and services for families, student, and the community.

Also, parent participation is the ingredient that makes the difference. Parents' active involvement with their child's education at home and in school brings great rewards and thus can have a significant impact on their children's/wards lives. According to research studies, the children of involved parents are absent less frequently, behave better, do better academically from pre-school through high school, go farther in school, and go to better schools. The importance of these programmes further attest to the fact that student's academic performance is dependent upon the parent-school bond. Thus the importance of parental involvement on academic performance cannot be overemphasised. The stronger the relationship especially between the parents and their wards'

education, the higher the academic achievement. Adeyemo (2005) saw reason in this by stressing that there is the need to foster home school partnership.

Moreover, parental involvement pays off when parents contribute effort and time they have the opportunity to interact with teachers, administrators, and other parents. By so doing, they can learn first-hand about the daily activities and the social culture of the school, both of which help them understand what their child's life is like. The child and the school both benefit, and parents serve as role models as they demonstrate the importance of community participation. In addition to improving academic progress, parental involvement pays off in other significant ways. It is also believed that parents' involvement is a protective factor against adolescent tobacco use, depression, eating disorders, academic struggles, and other problems. By staying involved with their child and/or teenager, parents can be a source of support, create a climate for discussing tough issues and serve as role models for responsible and empathic behaviour.

Parents' Absence from Home

Academic achievement and educational expectations as a function of parental absence were examined among 268 newly immigrant elementary, middle, and high-school students from Spanish-speaking countries. Data collected as part of a longitudinal study of adaptation and achievement in newly immigrant students' was analyzed. Participants had varying experiences with parental absence, in terms of length of absence, gender of absent parent, and reason for absence.

Reasons for parental absence included parental divorce, parental death, and serial migration, a cause unique to immigrant children.

From the study, students who experienced parental absence reported lower educational expectations. Students who experienced the death of a parent had lower achievement scores and lower expectations than students who did not experience parental death. Prolonged absence was also important, with students who experienced parental absence for more than one year performing worse than students who had minimal parental separation. In addition, boys who experienced parental absence because of serial migration performed worse academically than boys who did not have this occurrence. Educational expectations were reduced among students who experienced parental absence as a result of the migratory process, especially for younger students. The extent to which parental absence related to achievement and expectations through potential mediating factors, such as economic hardship, perceived school support, and parental school involvement was assessed with structural equation modelling. Overall, the model was able to explain some of the relationship between parental absence and the academic achievement and educational expectations of immigrant students from Spanish-speaking countries (Wright, 2010).

Han (2008) describes the family environment as the most important factor in learning and development for children. Research suggests that children from ‘two-parent homes’ experience psychological and developmental advantages that are not present in ‘single or absent parents’ homes. Children raised in dual-parent homes have better psychosocial adjustment (e.g., less internalizing and

externalizing behaviours), better achievement in school, higher educational achievement, and less involvement in antisocial and delinquent behaviour (Astone & McLanahan, 1991; Coley, 1998; Hernandez, 2004; Lamb, 1999; Suarez-Orozco et al., 2009). It was also stressed that multiple caretakers also are better able to facilitate academic engagement and performance. Further, Gibson-Davis (2008) in support with Suarez-Orozco et al., said two-parent homes have greater resources, time, and attention to offer their children.

Although growing up in a single-parent family is frequently viewed as a risk factor for a child, single-parent families are now fairly common. Many people have questions about the influence of single-parent families on a child's academic achievement and the ways single parents can help their children succeed in school. Children in single or absent parent homes are particularly at a disadvantage because they most often experience a reduction in the number of adult role models who are available to them. The reduction of adult role models, in turn, may result in the child missing out on resources that could have been invested by the absent parent (Heard, 2007).

Again, single parents may not have the resources necessary for children to attend a suitable learning environment (Valencia, 2000) in order to promote better academic performance. Thus, the findings of the writers above can also be related to the case of students' in the public JHSs in Moree. More often than not, single-parent families include a mother and children whose original father no longer lives in the home. Similar to income and parent education, father absence is also a risk factor that makes it more difficult for children to succeed in school. When

parents separate or divorce, children often lose both the financial and emotional support of their fathers, which can have a negative impact on academic performance. Although child support does not resolve all of these issues, it does make a significant difference.

Another dimension of the discussion is the residence of parents which is in line with the presence or absence of parents. Parents' place of residence has a great influence on children's education. For instance, in the urban areas, information is readily made available to the child unlike the rural areas where access to information is limited. Normally, urban parents are more likely to take their children to school. Rugh (2000) shared the same view and asserted that certain background characteristics of parents have been identified to be correlated with children's participation in education. He continued to say that, parents' decisions about their children's schooling may be largely based on finance.

When parents are financially handicapped, they find it difficult to supply their wards the necessary materials for their wards schooling. This lack eventually affects children's academic performance in school because psychologically, children from such parental backgrounds feel unhappy at school, they lack motivation, they are unable to concentrate on their academic work. In general, several studies suggest that the direct costs or financial constraints hold back more children in their academic performance or achievement (Kinyanjie, 1993; Palme, 1993; Namudu, 1993; Cammish & Brock, 1994). Problems emanating as a result of these financial constraints always move parents elsewhere to ply a trade

and this can account for their absence from home. It is nevertheless to review the various costs and benefits as parents may perceive them.

Parents' Educational Background

Parental educational background is one of the elements of the socio-economic status of parents and this is also believed to be associated with academic performance. As evidence Grissmer (2003) opined that parents' level of education is the most important factor affecting students' academic achievement. Musgrave (2000) also states that a child that comes from an educated home would like to follow the steps of his/her family and by this, work actively in his/her studies. Onocha (1985) concludes that a child from a well educated family with high socio-economic status is more likely to perform better than a child from an illiterate family. Similar results were found by Teese (2004), in his analysis of the students' performance where he found clear and consistent trends for children from lower socio-economic background. These findings really show that parents' education affects students' academic achievement.

In an earlier study, Hanushek's (1986) research showed that the parents' educational background has a significant impact on the academic performance of children and that the higher the parents' educational background, the better the academic performance of the children. According to Flick & Lederman (2005), students' level of educational attainment is strongly linked to the level of schooling their parents expect them to attain and the level of education reached by their parents. Parents with higher levels of education have higher encouragement

for college; discuss with their children about school and higher education, and promote students' college aspirations and preparation. This has also been supported by Marjoribanks (2003) that the high achievers had a high socio-economic status and they hailed from highly educated families.

The parents' level of education, parents' enthusiasm for school and attitudes toward education, and learning are directly related with parental aspirations for their children's achievements (Kreider et al., 2007). Parents with higher levels of education verbally encourage their children to "do well in school" and give them rewards or punishment based on grades. Even, when parents with low levels of education are involved in their children's school activities, students are more successful even if the parents do not speak English.

Reay's study (2004) also found that most middle class mothers have a good educational background and this is invested in their children's educational success in the form of self-confidence and participation. A high level of education among the parents' also allows the children to have more opportunity to develop motivation and educational aspirations to involve in various educational activities (Tudge, et al., 2006; Sewell & Hauser, 1980). In addition, the high level of education of parents which most often goes with high occupational status means that the parents will be able to provide the necessary learning facilities and to assist the child with schoolwork. This parental involvement which could be lacking in parents whose education and occupation are low may have a motivating effect on the child.

In another study, Kaplan, et al., (2001) prove that parents who have low level of education and high negative self-feeling may not have high expectations on their children in education achievement. McEwan (2003) adopted the survey data of eighth-grade students' academic performance in Chile in 1997. His research showed that parents' educational background, especially the mother's, has a significant positive impact on students' academic performance. Some research findings strongly indicate that parents with higher educational level are more engaged in working directly with their children on learning activities at home, supporting their work on homework assignments (Mapp, 2004). On the other hand, when students perceive that their parents have high educational expectations and goals, they have more interest in school, greater academic self-regulation, and higher goals pursuit. Parents' educational aspirations and expectations affect their children's aspirations and expectations of themselves and this in turn, affects their children's achievement. For example, when students perceive that their parents value education, they are also more likely to feel competent and motivated in their schoolwork (Kreider, Caspe, Kennedy, & Weiss, 2007). The fact could be attested that parents who have a high level of education have a high level of commitment to their children, set high standards, monitor their student's progress continuously, support achievement and become upset when grades are low (Kreider et al., 2007). This shows that parents educational level plays a significant role in their wards education as in their academic performance.

Interestingly, there seem to be a link between parents' educational background and parental involvement. While many researchers emphasized on social class and socioeconomic status of the parents' as the indicator to parental involvement, a few researchers have been able to draw on research specifically into parents' education level and the involvement in their children's education. However, all their findings were significant enough to support the association between parents' education and their involvement. These studies justified that parents' level of education has a great influence on the involvement of parents in their children's education. For example, Baker and Stevenson's study (1986) found that well-educated mothers have higher knowledge of their children's schooling, more contact and communication with the school, aware of their children's achievement, monitor their children's progress, and even lead them to pursue higher education.

This shows that parents with more education are more concerned about their children's schooling and academic performance. Simply put, they give high importance on the education of their children/wards through various practice of involvement.

The Major Economic Activity of Parents

Socio-economic status like parents' education, occupation, income and standard of living have shown to be related to students' outcomes, such that students from middle to upper class families tend to outperform those from less advantaged background (Rani, 1998; Simon, 2004). However, the most important

effect of socio-economic pressure is that it generally makes parents less available to support and encourage their children in their schooling (Baker & Sodem, 1997). Parents' occupation is one of the socio-economic factors. Mainly, while fathers are mostly subsistence farmers in forest/semi-forest or arable lands, and fishermen along the coast and major rivers, mostly their women counterparts are found to be petty-traders.

Precise knowledge about how parental employment affects children's long-term outcomes such as educational attainments or labour market success is crucial for the evaluation of many policy programs. For example, US welfare reforms in the 1990s pushed welfare recipients and in particular welfare dependent single mothers to find employment (Blank, 2002). Reforms were motivated by the belief that parental work is the best way out of poverty for parents and children.

If, however, having working parents' hurts the educational and labour market prospects of children such reforms may be counterproductive in the long run. This really makes it imperative to consider the economic activities of certain towns including Moree in the Central Region of Ghana and how they are associated with parents' employment and academic achievement of school children.

In addition, the economic activities of certain towns really affect people and their families as a whole. For instance, the main economic activity of Moree town is fishing and is the sole livelihood source for most of the town folks who do not have skills transferable to other professions, lacking education, and technical training. Fishing communities often face educational disadvantage due to geographical and social marginalization; they are often remote, lack infrastructure

and are marginalized from governmental development initiatives (Allison, 2003). Children growing up in such places, in common with other rural areas of developing countries are often educationally disadvantaged, in terms of their access to formal education, compared to their urban counterparts (Meinert, 2003). As far as fishing communities (e.g., Moree) are concerned, the women are found to be fishmongers. In such cases, because of low incomes, sending children to school becomes a problem (Okojie, Chiegwe & Okpokumu, 1996). The demands of the fishing industry, the strong occupational identities and incentives to remain in fishing are thought to negatively affect the educational outcomes of formal schooling in these contexts (Maddox, 2006).

Another dimension to the discussion is the categorization of these activities. For instance, a study investigated the causal effects of parents' education, occupation, and real mother's age as predictors of students' achievement in mathematics in some selected secondary schools in Ogun State, Nigeria. Two thousand four hundred students from 60 selected schools in nine local government areas within the Ogun State were involved in the study. The sample was selected using the multi-stage sampling technique and the study employed ex-post facto type of research. It was revealed that the major economic activity or occupation of parents predicts academic achievement of students.

The evidence is that students whose parents belong to the high ranking occupational status might get a better grade in mathematics or their subjects of study than their counterparts whose parents belong to the low ranking occupational status. This is because parents with high ranking occupational status

might have enough income which can be used to provide the needed educational materials and support for their children in order to arouse their interest in studies than their counterparts in low ranking occupation whose major obligation is to provide shelter and food for the family. This finding was supported by that of Rani (1998), Simon (2004), Teese (2004), Sharma (2004), and Dubey (1999). In that same study, House (2002) was cited to have been contended that students learn better if they are from above average or average income family, with well educated parents who participate in the school's education process and encourage their children/wards to learn. He established that the socio-economic status of students affected their achievement.

Summary of Literature Review

From the review of related literature, it is clear that the role played by education in a nation's socio-economic development is very important. The fact that the quality of education as delivered by a country is an essential tool to the realisation of the country's aims and goals is undeniable.

The literature reviewed revealed empirical evidence on the home characteristics that are associated with students' academic performance. The focus of the present study was therefore to find out whether there existed evidence of a relationship between home characteristics and the academic performance of students of public JHSs in Moree Township in the Central Region of Ghana.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the methods used in gathering the information for the study. These include the research design, population and sample, the research instruments, as well as the pilot testing of the instruments. Also, the procedures that were followed in administering the instruments and methods of data analysis are described in this chapter.

Research Design

The research design used in this study is the ex-post facto correlation design. This design reveals the relationship between two events and tries to ascertain the existence of such relationships, their strength, and their direction. The present study sought to determine whether there was a relationship between home characteristics (i.e., parental involvement in school activities, parental absenteeism, parents' educational background, the economic activity of parents) and academic performances of public JHSs students in the Moree Township.

In the ex-post facto design, the researcher does not have direct control over independent variables because their manifestations have already occurred or

because they cannot be inherently manipulated. Therefore, I examined the association of these home characteristics (independent variable) on academic performance (dependent variable) after the effects had been experienced by relating these factors to some selected subject results of the selected students over the last academic year (2010/2011). Each of the students' parents' responses to the questionnaire were matched to that of the student's total examination score (i.e., the students' academic performance). This indicated how parents were faring in educating their children/wards.

Measures of correlation were employed to explore three points, namely:

1. Presence or absence of correlation – that is whether or not there was a correlation between the parental involvement in school activities, parental absence from home, parents' educational background as well as the major economic activity of parents' and the academic performance of students' (existence of correlation)
2. If there was a correlation, whether it was negative or positive (direction of correlation)
3. Whether an existing correlation was strong or weak (strength of a correlation).

Population

The population for the study consisted of the parents of all JHS Form 2 and Form 3 students in the public JHSs in Moree. There were three public JHSs in Moree (the Roman Catholic- R/C JHS, Methodist JHS, and D/A JHS) with two

schools – R/C and D/A running two streams (i.e., Streams A & B). In all the students numbered about 300 made up of 84 in Form 3 and 216 in Form 2 but parents that constituted the population for the study were 280. The reason was that some parents had more than one ward in the schools.

Sample and Sampling Procedure

The sample consisted of 200 parents and 200 students, made up of 116 in JHS 2 and 84 in JHS 3. Of the 116 JHS 2 students, 48 were selected from the Roman Catholic school which had a Form 2 population of 98; 37 were from Methodist JHS also with a Form 2 population of 58; and 31 chosen from the D/A JHS whose population was 57. Meanwhile, all the 84 JHS 3 students were included in the study because of their longer stay in school and their numerical strength. The simple random sampling method of probability sampling technique using a table of random numbers was used in selecting the JHS 2 students. This method was used to ensure that every Form 2 student was included in the selection procedure and had a chance of being selected (Nsowah-Nuamah, 2005). Hence, there was no way of predicting which student would be selected for inclusion in the sample. However, JHS 3 students were selected by census. The above information is illustrated well in Table 2.

Table 2: Distribution of Population and Sample by School and Form

School	Form 2		Form 3		Total Sample
	N	N	N	n	n
Catholic	98	48	32	32	80
Methodist	58	37	23	23	60
D/A	57	31	29	29	60
Total		**116**		**84**	**200**

N: Population of Form 2 and Form 3 n: Sample

In the case of parents, every student selected also had the parent/guardian automatically selected. Altogether, there were 200 parents selected out of the 280 parents in the population; by coincidence that, no two or more children in the sample had the same parent. According to Krejcie and Morgan (1970), a sample of 200 out of a population of 280, is adequate enough.

Research Instruments

A self designed questionnaire was used as research instrument for the data collection. As Nwadinigwe (2002) pointed out, questionnaires are the most popular and commonest means of data collection instrument and that its popularity lies in the fact that it is simple to construct. These characteristics of a questionnaire enabled me to design and construct a questionnaire for parents to solicit their views on the relationship between parental involvement in students'

school activities, parental absenteeism, parents' educational background, and the major economic activity of the town that are associated with students' academic performance.

The questionnaire for parents was meant to elicit information on their personal information, their involvement in their wards' school activities, their absence from home, educational background, and the major economic activity of parents and how these characteristics were perceived to be associated with their wards' academic performance at the three public JHSs in Moree, in the Central Region of Ghana. The multidimensional questionnaire had two parts. The first part sought information about the respondents' characteristics (biographic data) and the second part had four subsections that elicited information on parents perception of the home related factors associated with students' academic performance. Most of the items were closed-ended questions. Closed-ended questions are framed in such a way that, they provide a number of possible answers for the respondent to select from. Such questions are easy to handle and quick to analyze. They are suitable for the type of issues where the categories are clear-cut and can be identified for the respondent to make his/ own choice. There were very few open-ended items that allowed the respondents to also express their views on the issues under discussion. The number was few because of the illiteracy level of the respondents.

Open-ended questions are necessary because sometimes, there is difficulty in assessing exactly how respondents feel about a problem, an issue, a project, or what the main issues are. In this case, the respondent is given an opportunity to

express him/herself on an issue and give a basis for his answers (Kumekpor, 2002).

Documentary data consisted of the raw scores of the sampled students (whose parents participated in the study) made up of continuous assessment and examination results relating to four core subjects namely (English, Mathematics, Integrated Science, and Social Studies) in the previous academic year (2010 – 2011). These data were recorded to match with students' parents' responses. The reason for this was to compare students' academic performance with the extent of parental involvement. The documentation in the form of a Student Achievement Record Form was used to record the total marks of Mathematics, English, Integrated Science, and Social Studies for the selected students' whose parents' participated in the study. This enabled me to match parents' performance in education related issues as specified by the items in the questionnaire to that of their wards academic performance.

Pilot - Testing of the Research Instruments

The questionnaire and documentary data - in the form of the Students' Achievement Record Form, were pilot-tested in Biriwa, another fishing community along the coast in the Central Region of Ghana. Biriwa was used for the pilot test because the town has similar characteristics as Moree, the main study area of this research. The instruments were pilot-tested in order to ascertain their reliability and validity of the items they carry.

Cronbach Alpha Reliability Coefficient helped to find out how reliable the instruments were. The Reliability Coefficient obtained from pilot-testing the instruments was .719. This coefficient suggested that the instruments were reliable (Kline, 1999). That is, the probability of the instrument's reliability was high and therefore could be used for the main study. For validity, the instruments were vetted by experts. It was also necessary to find out if the instructions accompanying the items were clear enough and would therefore aid the respondents to complete the questionnaire for instance, as accurately as possible.

The trial testing helped me to sharpen the instruments. For instance, it enabled me to reduce the number of the open-ended questions because there was a high tendency of losing some vital information. Also, some sentences on the questionnaire item were restructured in relation to clarity of expression and overloaded questions to remove ambiguity. Generally, the number of items on the questionnaire was reduced.

Data Collection Procedure

This study looked at the relationship between the home characteristics and the academic performance of public JHS students' of Moree in the Central Region of Ghana. The sample included 200 JHS students' whose parents responded to the questionnaire. The 200 students were made up of the second and third years. A letter of introduction from the Institute for Educational Planning and Administration (IEPA) in the University of Cape Coast (See Appendix C) was obtained by the researcher. The schools were then visited for familiarization, to

create rapport to facilitate the research, and permission sought from the various head teachers of the Public Junior High Schools in Moree and schedule of visits arranged. The researcher was also introduced to the assistant heads and other teachers to solicit their help.

The questionnaires (See Appendix A) were personally administered on each of the scheduled days to the parents. The various heads helped to organize a chunk of parents/guardians in their schools and respondents, briefed on the essence and importance of the study and also their support and co-operation were sought for. Parents/guardians of selected students' who could not make it to the school premises were visited in their homes in order to respond to their questionnaires. Where there was the need, issues were explained much clearer to their understanding and completed questionnaires were collected on same day. In the case of non-literate parents, the questionnaire items were read by myself to the respondents whose response was appropriately indicated on the questionnaire. This was done in the local dialect (i.e., Fanti) after which parents' responses was interpreted back to English.

For documentary analysis, the total marks (making up of the continuous assessment and internal examination results) of Mathematics, English, Integrated Science, and Social Studies of students' whose parents' participated in the study, were recorded. This was used to design the Students' Achievement Record Form. The marks were extracted from the students' report cards in relation to the previous academic year. That means, the marks recorded were those of the first,

second, and third terms for the four subjects indicated earlier on. The report cards were made available by the assistant head teachers.

Data Analysis Procedure

Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to run the analysis of the data collected. Completed questionnaires were sorted, coded and entered on a computer assisted programme for analysis. Various responses on the questionnaire were coded with different scoring keys. Closed-ended item responses were assigned codes 1, 2, 3 following the very order in which such closed-ended responses were arranged on the instruments. Although coding of open-ended responses to different instruments is rather tedious and time-consuming, the open-ended items on the questionnaire of the present study were coded. Table 3 is a matrix showing how data were analysed to test each hypothesis.

Table 3: Data Analysis Procedure Matrix

Hypotheses	Data Type & Source	Analytical Method
1. There is no significant relationship between parental involvement and students' academic performance	Questions 3 – 9 on Questionnaire and Students' academic performance based on their Achievement Record in the previous three terms	PI was measured by summing the scores on the Likert-type scales. Spearman's rho was computed for the scores and SAP with the help of SPSS. Significance of rho was tested by running a t-test at .05 level.
2. There is no significant relationship between parental absence from home and students' academic performance	Questions 10 – 13 on Questionnaire and Students' academic performance based on their Achievement Record in the previous three terms	PA was the sum of scores on the Likert-type scales. They were correlated with SAP by computing Spearman's rho with the help of SPSS. Significance of rho was tested as in (1).
3. There is no significant relationship between parents' educational background and students' academic performance	Question 14 on Questionnaire and Students' academic performance based on their Achievement Record in the previous three terms	Sum of PE on the Likert-type scale was correlated with SAP by computing Spearman's rho with the help of SPSS. A t-test was run as in (1).
4. There is no significant relationship between the major economic activity of parents and students' academic performance	Questions 15 - 17 on Questionnaire and Students' academic performance based on their Achievement Record in the previous three terms	PO was the sum of scores on the Likert-type scales. They were also correlated with SAP by computing Spearman's rho with the help of SPSS. Also a t-test was run as in (1).

Descriptive analysis based on frequencies and percentages of the various items on the questionnaire of parents' responses was to determine striking issues, number of parents responding to each item, and how their wards performed academically in the year under review. Students' academic performance was categorised into low, average, and high performance according to the approved ratings of the Ghana Education Service - GES

(i.e., 70 - 100 = High; 55 - 69 = Average; 40 - 54 = Low).

Using SPSS, the mean scores and standard deviations were computed for items under each variable of the home characteristics (parental involvement in school activities, parents' absence from school, parental educational background, and parents' major economic activity) and their relationship with students' academic performance. Reasons given as responses to open-ended questions were collated manually, ranked, and coded. Analysis was then done using SPSS. Results of parents' and students' surveys were compared with the students' class accomplishments in order to find out if the parents' influences mentioned above have a direct relationship with their children's performance and also the children's desire to study for an advanced degree.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents and discusses the results of this present study. It consists of two main sections. The first section looks at the descriptive analysis of the background/characteristics of the respondents and the cases under each variable summarized in appropriate tables. The second section presents the main results of both the descriptive data and the statistical analysis used. It also discusses the results of the hypotheses underpinning this study, followed by a summary.

A random sample of 200 parents of selected students provided data by responding to a questionnaire. The return rate of the questionnaire was 100%.

Characteristics of Respondents

In this study, two main characteristics of the respondents are presented. These are gender and age. With respect to gender, out of the 200 parents who responded to the questionnaire, 83 were males while 117 were females, which implies that, in terms of proportion, the females were more than the males. With regard to this study, it suggests that most male parents were not present in their homes at the time of data collection. The gender and age distribution of the parents (respondents) of the sampled 200 students is presented in Table 4 given a detailed description.

Table 4: Distribution of Respondents by Gender and Age

	Gender				Total	
	Male		Female		Male & Female	
Age	N	%	N	%	N	%
Less than 24 years	7	8.4	3	2.6	10	5.0
25 – 30 years	12	14.5	11	9.4	23	11.5
31 – 35 years	10	12.0	11	9.4	21	10.5
36 - 40 years	17	20.5	21	17.9	38	19.0
41 – 45 years	16	19.3	22	18.8	38	19.0
More than 45 years	21	25.3	49	41.9	70	35.0
Total	**83**	**100.0**	**117**	**100.0**	**200**	**100.0**

Table 3 indicates that, of the total number of parents (respondents) who responded to the questionnaire, 83 were males while 117 were females making up the total number of 200. This implies that, the female respondents were more accessible than the males. The data also show that, of the 200 respondents only a few (5%) were below the ages of 24. Meanwhile, the modal age group is the 45 years plus group. The rest of the respondents numbering about 130 were between the ages of 25 and 45 years.

A striking issue of relevance to this study was the frequency at which parents attend wards PTA meetings and academic performance. Item three on the questionnaire (See Appendix A) was used to elicit parents' views on the issue.

The students academic performance extracted from school records were also categorized as high, average, or low and cross-tabulated with frequency of parents' attendance at PTA Meetings. Details of this are presented in Table 5.

Table 5: Cross - Tabulation of Frequency of Parents' Attendance at PTA Meetings and Students' Academic Performance

SAP	Not at all		Once a year		Two times a year		Three times/ More		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
High	0	.0	1	4.3	5	6.9	4	4.3	10	5.0
Av.	6	46.2	7	30.4	34	47.2	41	44.6	88	44.0
Low	7	53.8	15	65.2	33	45.8	47	51.1	102	51.0
Total	**13**	**100.0**	**23**	**100.0**	**72**	**100.0**	**92**	**100.0**	**200**	**100.0**

SAP: Students Academic Performance Av.: Average

Table 5 shows that, out of the 200 respondents (parents), 92 said they attended PTA meetings three or more times in a year. Of the 92, the performance of the wards of 4 (4.3%) parents was high while the performance of the wards of 47 (51.1%) parents was low. Again, the results in Table 5 show that 72 parents attended PTA meetings two times per year. Of the 72, 5 (6.9%) had their wards perform high academically with 33 (45.8%) having their wards performance to be low. On the whole, 13 parents admitted they did not attend wards PTA meetings at all but from the 13, 6 (46.2%) recorded an average performance by their wards. It can also be seen from the same table that, as the number of parents increased

from 13 through 92, students who recorded lower marks in their academic performance also tend to increase from 7 through 47. These results further indicate that the frequency, at which parents attended wards PTA meetings in spite of the appreciable number of times, did not really influence the academic performance of students. This revelation however refutes that of educators such as (Alldred & Edwards, 2000; Eliason & Jenkins, 2003; Glanz, 2006) who agree that children do better in school when parents attend parent-teacher conferences; volunteer at school; attend school events; help with homework, or simply encourage student achievement.

The pattern described in the preceding paragraph suggests that parents' attendance at PTA meetings does not appear to have a direct correlation with students' academic performance which also indicates that such meetings do not necessarily deal with how to improve teaching and learning yielding better academic performance. Personal experience and interactions with parents have shown that in many cases, these meetings are organized to either give parents information about school levies, teachers' motivation, among others or that the illiteracy level of some parents' do not allow them to understand properly proceedings of such meetings. This disparity from the deviation of literature may be attributed to the high proportion of illiteracy among parents which discourages them from contributing adequately towards wards' school work.

One other important issue investigated was parents' visiting schools and interacting with wards and teachers and whether this was related to academic performance. Parents were therefore asked to indicate how often they paid such

visits and interacted with wards and teachers in the academic year under review (2010/2011). Results concerning this issue are presented in Table 6.

Table 6: Cross - Tabulation of Frequency of Visiting Students and Interacting with Teachers and Students' Academic Performance

SAP	Not at all		Once a year		Two times a year		Three times/ More		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
High	5	4.2	2	6.3	2	7.7	1	4.5	10	5.0
Av.	47	39.2	15	46.9	13	50.0	13	59.1	88	44.0
Low	68	56.7	15	46.9	11	42.3	8	36.4	102	51.0
Total	**120**	**100.0**	**32**	**100.0**	**26**	**100.0**	**22**	**100.0**	**200**	**100.0**

SAP: Students Academic Performance Av.: Average

Table 6 shows that out of the total respondents, 22 reported that they visited their wards schools three or more times in a year to interact with wards teachers. Out of this 22, only one (4.5%) parent had his/her ward performing high academically with most parents (102 in number) recording a lower academic performance by their wards.

Also, of the 200 respondents, 120 admitted that they did not visit their wards schools to interact with their teachers at all. Out of the 120, 68 (56.7%) although had their wards academic performance to be low, 5 (4.2%) recorded higher marks in wards performance. This contrasts with just the one parent recording higher marks in ward's performance out of the 22 who visited students and interacted

with teachers three/more times. Thus, of the total 200 parents who responded to the questionnaire concerning the frequency at which they visited their wards schools to interact with teachers, only 10 (5.0%) had their wards' academic performance to be high. This indicates that very few parents had wards' performance to be high even as their frequency of visit increased. An indication that, parents frequency of visiting wards and interacting wards' teachers did not seemed to have a direct relationship with students' academic performance.

The provision of basic educational materials to wards' and students' academic performance was also of interest to this study. Therefore, parents were requested to indicate the frequency at which they provided their wards with educational materials. Again, students' academic performance extracted from school records was categorized as High, Average, or Low and cross-tabulated with frequency of parent's provision of educational materials. Table 7 summarizes the respondents' responses and students' academic performance.

Table 7: Cross - Tabulation of Frequency of Providing Basic Educational Materials and Students' Academic Performance

SAP	Not at all		Once a year		Two times a year		Three times/ More		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
High	0	.0	1	6.3	1	4.0	8	5.1	10	5.0
Av.	0	.0	6	37.5	18	72.0	64	40.5	88	44.0
Low	1	100.0	9	56.3	6	24.0	86	54.4	102	51.0
Total	**1**	**100.0**	**16**	**100.0**	**25**	**100.0**	**158**	**100.0**	**200**	**100.0**

SAP: Students Academic Performance Av.: Average

Of the 200 parents who responded to the questionnaire, 158 reported that they provided their wards with basic educational materials three times or more in a year. Only 8 (5.1%) of this 158 parents' wards' performance was high while 86 (54.4%) parents' wards academic performance was low.

Again, out of the total respondents, 25 said they provided their wards with basic educational materials two times in a year. Only one from this category of respondents, had his ward's academic performance to be high with 18 (72.0%) having their wards' academic performance to be average. The results however showed that only one parent out of the 200 respondents indicated that he/she did not provide at all any educational material to the ward and the ward's performance was found to be low. In spite with this revelation about the latter parent and his/her ward, relatively a greater number of parents who indicated they

often provide their wards with educational materials (i.e., 2/3/ times or more than that) did not record higher marks in wards' academic performance in the year under review. The suggestion thus is parents' frequent provision of wards' educational materials tended not to have strong association with students' academic performance. The data from Tables 5 - 7 constituting the information about parental involvement in school activities do not strongly agree with research evidence revealing that children achieve more when schools and parents work together and parents understand what the school is trying to achieve and how they can help (Glanz, 2006).

The issue of parents encouraging wards to study at home and how that related to students' academic performance was also worth to be investigated. Parents were therefore asked to indicate how often they encourage their wards to study at home. Table 8 shows their responses.

Table 8: Cross - Tabulation of Frequency of Encouraging Wards' to Study at Home and Students' Academic Performance

SAP	Occasionally		Once a week		Twice a week		Everyday		Total	
	No.	**%**	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	**%**
High	1	2.4	1	5.6	4	9.1	4	4.2	10	5.0
Av.	18	42.9	5	27.8	15	34.1	50	52.1	88	44.0
Low	23	54.8	12	66.7	25	56.8	42	43.8	102	51.0
Total	**42**	**100.0**	**18**	**100.0**	**44**	**100.0**	**96**	**100.0**	**200**	**100.0**

SAP: Students Academic Performance Av.: Average

The results from Table 8 show that out of the 200 total respondents, 96 of them reported that they encourage their wards to study at home every day. Of the 96, only 4 (4.2%) had their wards academic performance to be high while 42 (43.8%) reported a low performance in their wards academic achievement. Table 8 also shows that, of the total respondents 42 occasionally encourage their wards to study at home. With this number, only a parent had his/her ward's academic performance to be high while 23 (54.8%) reported a low performance of their wards academic achievement in the academic year under review. It can therefore be seen that, most parents who encouraged their wards to study at home everyday recorded average/lower marks in their wards performance. This is in comparison to the number of students who had low/average performance and were only occasionally encouraged to study at home.

Another issue of how often parents offer help to their wards to do homework was investigated. Parents therefore provided responses on Item eight of the questionnaire to elicit their views to that effect. This information was cross-tabulated with students' academic performance extracted from school records and categorized as High, Average, or Low. Table 9 shows the results.

Table 9: Cross - Tabulation of Frequency of Wards' Getting Help to do Homework at Home and Students' Academic Performance

SAP	Never		Sometimes		Always		Total	
	No.	**%**	No.	%	No.	%	No.	**%**
High	4	4.2	2	4.7	4	6.7	10	5.0
Av.	38	39.6	20	46.5	29	48.3	88	44.0
Low	54	56.3	21	48.8	27	45.0	102	51.0
Total	**96**	**100.0**	**43**	**100.0**	**60**	**100.0**	**200**	**100.0**

SAP: Students Academic Performance Av.: Average

The results show that out of the total respondents, 96 admitted their wards do not get help in doing their homework at home either from parents, siblings, or friends. This clearly suggests that such wards do their homework themselves. Of the 200 respondents, 60 indicated their wards get help at home to do their homework and only 4 (6.7%) out of the 60 had their wards academic performance to be high (above average) while 27 (45.0%) had their wards academic performance to be low (below average). This shows that most students, who do not receive any assistance as far as doing homework is concerned, either had an average or very low academic performance with the academic year in review.

The conclusion can then be drawn that there is the tendency of students performing averagely or below if they do not get any assistance from parents when doing their homework. Voorhis (2001) found similar results in the achievement of science when comparing students who had interactive homework

and those who had no such interactive work. Among a diverse population of 253 students, students who started TIPS activities in 6th grade earned significantly better science grades during middle school than the comparison group. This trend was evident even after controlling for prior grades, family background, and amount of homework completed. In addition, some TIPS students moved up from lower-level classes in 6th grade to average or honours classes by 8th grade.

Thus, the descriptive analysis made so far on the items of the questionnaire about how parents get involved in wards school activities necessitated a critical look at the first hypothesis of this study; which states that "there is no significant relationship between parental involvement in school's activities and students' academic performance". This hypothesis has been tested (see p. 86).

Wards' living arrangements and their academic performance was also of interest to this study. Therefore, parents were asked to indicate who their wards were staying with. Their responses were cross-tabulated with students' academic performance. Table 10 shows their views.

Table 10: Cross - Tabulation of Wards Living Arrangements and their Academic Performance

SAP	A relative		A brother/ Sister		One of Parents		Both parents		Total	
	No.	**%**	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
High	3	8.3	1	4.3	2	3.1	4	5.3	10	5.0
Av.	12	33.3	9	39.1	31	48.4	36	47.4	88	44.0
Low	21	58.3	13	56.5	31	48.4	36	47.4	102	51.0
Total	**36**	**100.0**	**23**	**100.0**	**64**	**100.0**	**76**	**100.0**	**200**	**100.0**

SAP: Students Academic Performance Av.: Average

Table 10 thus shows that of 200 parents (respondents), 76 reported that their wards stayed with both parents and only 4 (5.3%) out of the 76 had wards whose performance was high. On the whole, 102 (51%) indicated that the academic performance of their wards was low while 10 (5.0%) reported high performance in respect of their wards. Meanwhile, a parent revealed the ward stays with a friend and that ward performed low academically. Notwithstanding this latter revelation, wards staying with both parents do not necessarily mean that their academic performance would be high.

Another important issue looked at concerned how often parents stayed at home. Item 13 on the questionnaire (See Appendix A) was used to elicit parents' response on this. Again, parents' response was cross-tabulated with their students' academic performance which had been extracted from school records. This is presented in Table 11.

Table 11: Cross - Tabulation of Frequency of Parents Staying at Home and Students' Academic Performance

SAP	Not Often		Sometimes		Often		Very Often		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
High	1	6.3	3	4.5	4	4.5	2	6.7	10	5.0
Av.	7	43.8	31	47.0	36	40.9	14	46.7	88	44.0
Low	8	50.0	32	48.5	48	54.5	14	46.7	102	51.0
Total	**16**	**100.0**	**66**	**100.0**	**88**	**100.0**	**30**	**100.0**	**200**	**100.0**

SAP: Students Academic Performance Av.: Average

The results in Table 11 show that, out of the 200 respondents, only 30 parents stayed at home very often. The academic performance of the wards of the 30 parents was predominantly average and low. Also, 66 of the total respondents indicated they sometimes stayed at home. Only 3 (4.5%) out of the 66 recorded high performances in respect of their wards. Meanwhile, the academic performance of the wards of 32 (48.5%) of the 66 parents was low. Only 16 out of the 200 respondents revealed that they did not stay at home very often. Eight (50.0%) from this number recorded low academic performance in their wards studies with one parent recording high performance in ward's studies.

Again, 88 out of the total respondents said they often stayed at home. Similarly, the academic performance of the wards of 48 (54.5%) of the 88 was low. The wards of only 4 (4.5%) parents had high performance. This suggests that a higher performance was recorded in spite of parents not being often at home. In

contrast, lower performances were recorded in spite of parents staying at home often; an indication that parents staying at home does not seems to be associated with either low or high performance.

Other Findings

Of the 200 parents who responded to the questionnaire, 165 indicated that they lived and worked in Moree suggesting that most parents were present at home. The results also showed that most parents' level of education was up to the middle school. Fishing was also found to be the major economic activity of most parents with only a few engaging in other jobs like driving, tailoring, dressmaking, baking, trading, and carpentry. No wonder the town under study is a fishing community.

As an answer to how the major economic activity (i.e., fishing) affects wards' studies, parents cited reasons such as: students using instructional hours to fish during July and August (i.e., fishing season), money accrued from the fishing activities when in possession of children promotes truancy and deviance among students, and fatigue on the part of students as they have to help parents either to sell or smoke fish, with excessive smoke affecting the eyes of students.

Results of Hypotheses Tests and Discussion

This section presents the main results of the analysis of the data collected and discusses them. Also presented in, are the four main hypotheses which sought to:

1. Establish the relationship between parental involvement in school activities and students' academic performance
2. Ascertain the relationship between parental absence from home and students' academic performance
3. Examine the relationship between parents' educational background and students' academic performance as well as
4. Establish the relationship between the major economic activity of parents and students' academic performance.

For each hypothesis, the main intention for stating it and the main variables are highlighted. Then, there is an analysis of how the various variables (i.e., parental involvement, parents' absence, parents' education, and major economic activity of parents correlate with students' academic performance. The section concludes with a summary of the chapter.

Table 11 shows the means of the various home characteristics, namely parental involvement, parents' absence, parental educational background, and their major economic activity associated with the mean of students' academic performance. For the sake of this study, the following interpretations are given to the weighted means:

4.00 = (At least three times/year)

3.00 – 3.99 = (Two times/ year)

2.00 – 2.99 = (Once a year)

1.00 – 1.99 = (Not at all).

Table 12: Descriptive Statistics of Means of Home Characteristics

	Mean	SD	N
Mean parental involvement in school activities	2.72	.48	200
Mean parents' presence at home	2.99	.59	200
Mean parental educational background	1.93	1.32	200
Mean parental main economic activity	1.93	.26	200
Mean child/ward's academic performance	53.84	8.41	200

SD : Standard Deviation N : Total number of respondents

From Table 12, the mean for parental involvement (PI) in school activities was 2.72 with a standard deviation of .48 measured on a 4 - point scale and this lies in the 'option 3' mean range. This suggests that the probability that parents get themselves involved in children/wards school activities in terms of attending PTA meetings, visiting school and interacting with wards teachers, providing wards with basic educational materials, as well as paying wards school levies once a year was high. In relation to the same PI mean with regard to parental support, there was a high tendency for parents to be encouraging their wards to study at home twice every week. Also, there was a high likelihood that wards were getting help in doing their homework at home and their siblings were actually found to be helping.

Table 12 again shows that, the mean for parents' presence at home (PP) which also means parents' absence from home was 2.99 and this also lies in the option 3 mean range (i.e., 2.00 – 2.99) indicating that wards were staying with friends but there was the tendency for students/wards to be staying with their relatives other than their biological parents. Some reasons given were that either both parents had travelled out of the town (Moree) to work elsewhere, both parents were dead, parents were divorced, parents were living in separate houses, or wards were caring for their aged grand-parents. In addition the 'PA mean' indicates that parents often stayed at home and most of them worked in Moree. The standard deviation for this mean was .59.

Furthermore, the mean parental educational background (PE) from Table 12 was 1.93 with a standard deviation of 1.32. This shows that most parents' education was below Middle School. Last but not least, the mean for major economic activity of parents/occupation from Table 12 was 1.93 and a standard deviation of .26. This shows that most parents tended to be in fishing activities with only a few being in other jobs like carpentry, tailoring, dressmaking, driving, and baking. Moreover, the mean child/ward's academic performance according to Table 12 indicates that students' academic performance in relation to Mathematics, English, Integrated Science, and Social Studies was average when associated with all the four home characteristics already indicated (M = 53.84, SD = 8.41).

The Correlations Among Home Characteristics and Students' Academic Performance

Correlation tests are used to determine how strongly the scores of two variables are associated or correlated with each other. In this study for instance, the coefficients of correlation of some four home characteristics - namely: parental involvement in school activities, parents' absence from home, parental educational background, or the major economic activity of parents - with the academic performance of students were computed for the total sample (N = 200) of parents. A correlation coefficient lies between +1.0 and –1.0. Correlations close to zero indicate little or no relationship between two variables while correlations close to +1.0 (or -1.0) indicate strong positive (or negative) relationships (Hayes, et al., 1992).

Correlation denotes positive or negative association between variables in a study. Two variables are positively associated when larger values of one tend to be accompanied by larger values of the other. The variables are negatively associated when larger values of one tend to be accompanied by smaller values of the other (Moore, 1979). Specifically, this study made use of the Spearman's Rank Correlation Coefficient (Sometimes called 'rho' - ρ). The rho has the range $-1 \leq \rho \leq 1$. This study sought to find out how well measures of home characteristics being emphasized predict overall perceived academic performance of students in the three public JHSs in Moree. Table 13 presents the correlation matrix.

Table 13: Correlations Among PI, PA, PE, PO, and SAP

Variable	N	PI	PA	PE	PO	SAP
PI	200	1	.229**	.198**	-.153*	.128
PA	200	.229**	1	-.112	-.133	.058
PE	200	.198**	-.112	1	-.133	.022
PO	200	-.153*	-.133	-.133	1	-.113
SAP	200	.128	.058	.022	-.113	1

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Source: Computed from Field Survey Data, 2011

SAP: Students' Academic Performance

PI : Parental Involvement in School Activities

PA : Parents' Absence from Home

PE : Parents' Educational Background

PO : The Major Economic Activity of Parents

The correlation Table 13 presents the Spearman correlation coefficients, asterisks (*/**) indicating whether significant at the .05 level (*) or the .01 level (**), and the sample size (N). Furthermore, the number in parentheses represents the degrees of freedom associated with the significant test which is equal to the number of cases/respondents minus 2 (i.e., N – 2). In this study, the number of cases for this correlation was 200 and therefore the degree of freedom is 200 – 2 =

198. The p - values associated with the significant test is found in Table 14 (see p. 85) which was carved out from Table 13.

The correlation coefficients were computed among scales measuring home characteristics with students' academic performance. Using the Bonferroni approach to control for Type 1 error across 25 correlations, p – values of less than .005 was required for significance. Thus, by the Bonferroni approach correlations between PI and PA was significant, ρ (198) = .229, $p < .01$; correlation between PI and PE was also significant, ρ (198) = .198, $p < .01$. So was the correlation between PI and PO, ρ (198) = - .153, $p < .05$. Correlations among other variables were not significant. This general correlation matrix was just an exploration of the data. The focus of the study was on correlation between SAP and the variables PI, PA, PE, and PO. This is captured by Hypothesis 1 through Hypothesis 4.

Table 14 is an excerpt from Table 13 showing the correlations between SAP and PI, SAP and PA, SAP and PE, and SAP and PO along with the associated p – values.

Table 14: Relationship Between Home Characteristics and Students' Academic Performance

	PI	PP	PE	PO
SAP	.128	.058	.022	-.113
p - value	.072	.414	.754	.110

Source: Computed from Field Survey Data, 2011

Relationship Between Parental Involvement in School Activities and Students' Academic Performance

The key point of interest here was to ascertain the association between parental involvement (PI) and students' academic performance (SAP). One of the assumptions of this study about this association was that the academic performance of students depends on parental involvement in school activities. Therefore, it was hypothesized that "There is no significant relationship between parental involvement in school's activities and students' academic performance". In other words, does the academic performance of students tend to move in the same direction when their parents get involved in their school activities? The data on parental involvement in school's activities and students' academic performance were ordinal. So the Spearman's rank correlation coefficient analysis was used. Therefore, these two variables were investigated using Spearman's rank correlation after ensuring that the assumptions of correlation (normality and monotony) were not violated.

The mean results of items 3 to 9 of Parents' Questionnaire (See Appendix A) and mean results of the students' achievement record form (See Appendix B) were used to provide the data for testing this hypothesis. From the correlation matrix, (see Table 14) the relationship between parental involvement in school activities and students academic performance was established by determining the correlation coefficient between the two variables. The Spearman's rank correlation coefficient ρ of .128 indicated a weak but positive relationship as suggested by (Cohen, 1988). This relationship, however, was not significant

implying that the coefficient obtained can be statistically interpreted as being good as zero. Therefore, the null hypothesis which stated that "there is no significant relationship between parental involvement and students' academic performance" cannot be rejected.

This finding suggests that parents' involvement in their wards' school activities does not, *ipso facto*, raise or lower students' academic performance; there could be other factors. This relationship established, however, is at variance with studies conducted by others elsewhere. For instance, educational sociologists as stated in the literature have heightened the need for parental involvement since it plays an important role to cognitive and social development of a child (Weis, et al., 2006). Also, Comer and Haynes, (1991) asserted that most educators have realized the importance of parental involvement as integral to successful student academic performance. Furthermore, the findings of Alldred and Edwards (2000) are also not in line with the results of the current finding.

The previous studies cited above argued that, increased participation from parents can only enhance a child's ability to succeed. Those researchers further stated that, regardless of socioeconomic status and race, most studies showed a direct correlation between parental involvement and a child's academic achievement. However, the finding of this study in relation to hypothesis one did not show such direct correlation between PI and a child's academic performance. Thus, the present study did not corroborate with the studies cited above.

Relationship Between Parents' Absence from Home and Students' Academic Performance

This study was also designed to find the relationship between parents' absence from home and students' academic performance. In view of this, it was then hypothesized that "there is no significant relationship between parents' absence from home (PA) and students' academic performance (SAP)". That is to say, is the academic performance of students associated with the presence or absence of parents from home? The data on parents' absence from home and students' academic performance were also ordinal. Therefore, relationship between these two variables was also examined using the Spearman's rank correlation coefficient.

Again, the mean results of items 10 to 13 of Parents' Questionnaire (See Appendix A) and mean results of the students' achievement record form (See Appendix B) were used to provide data to test this hypothesis. From the results of the correlation matrix, Table 14 again shows the relationship between parents' absence from home and students' academic performance.

The Spearman's rank correlation coefficient, ρ, of .058 indicated a weak, positive relationship which was not significant. This suggests that parents' absence from home is unlikely to adversely affect the academic performance of their wards more than when they are present. The insignificance of the coefficient obtained can also be statistically interpreted as being good as zero. This means that, there was no relationship. Based on this interpretation, the null hypothesis

which states that “there is no significant relationship between parents’ absence from home and students’ academic performance” cannot be rejected.

This relationship between performance of the public JHSs students of Moree in the Central Region of Ghana and their parents’ absence from home did not support previous studies by Wright (2010) who strongly believed that students who experienced parental absence reported lower educational expectations. Wright further reported that students who experienced the death of a parent had lower achievement scores and lower expectations than students who did not experience parental death. Other researchers also revealed that two-parent homes have greater resources, time, and attention to offer their children in order to perform well academically (Gibson-Davis, 2008; Suarez-Orozco et al., 2009).

Relationship Between Parents’ Educational Background and Students’ Academic Performance

The study also investigated the relationship between parents’ educational background (PE) and their wards’ academic performance (SAP). To this effect, the null hypothesis was then stated that “There is no significant relationship between parental educational background and students’ academic performance”. Simply put, does academic performance of students tend to be associated with the educational background of parents? The Spearman’s rank correlation coefficient was found to be appropriate to establish the relationship between these two variables since the data were ordinal. The mean results of item 14 on Parents’

Questionnaire (See Appendix A) and mean results of the students achievement record form (See Appendix B) were used as data to test this hypothesis.

As can be seen from the results of the correlation matrix, (see Table 14), the relationship between parental educational background (PE) and students' academic performance (SAP) was negligible. The Spearman's rank correlation coefficient (ρ) of .022 indicated a weak, positive relationship which was not significant. This suggests that the educational levels attained by parents' was not associated with wards' academic performance. This suggests that there are other more important factors affecting students' academic performance other than parents' educational background. Statistically, the insignificant coefficient obtained means that the data do not warrant a rejection of the null hypothesis. Hence, by the finding of this hypothesis which states that "there is no significant relationship between parental educational background and students' academic performance" cannot be rejected.

This finding, however, did not support the claim of Hanushek (1986) in an earlier study in which he reported that parents' educational background had a significant impact on the academic performance of children and that the higher the parents' educational background, the better the academic performance of their children. The finding of this study is also not in support of Kreider et al. (2007) who asserted that parents who have a high level of education have a high level of commitment to their children, set high standards, monitor their student's progress continuously, support achievement and become upset when grades are low. They further stated that parents' educational level play a significant role in their wards'

education as in their academic performance. For in my study, parents' educational level was predominantly low and therefore was plausible to conclude that the performance of students whose parents had lower educational level was low other than those of whose parents had attained higher educational level.

Relationship Between the Major Economic Activity of Parents and Students' Academic Performance

Another area of interest to this study was to ascertain the relationship between the major economic activity of parents (PO) and students' academic performance (SAP). In other words, this study sought to find out whether parents occupation was associated with their wards academic performance. This necessitated the formulation of the null hypothesis four which states that 'there is no significant relationship between the major economic activity of parents and students academic performance'. In response to this, parents were asked to respond to items 15-17 on the questionnaire (See Appendix A) and the mean results were therefore matched with the results shown on the students achievement record (See Appendix B).

The Spearman's rank correlation coefficient was used to determine the relationship between these two variables and the results are also presented in the correlation matrix (See Table 14). The analysis showed a Spearman's coefficient ρ of -.113 which indicated a weak but negative relationship which was not significant. This coefficient obtained can also be statistically interpreted as good as zero therefore the null hypothesis which stated that "There is no significant

relationship between the major economic activities of parents and students' academic performance" cannot be rejected. From the results, there is a relationship but it is weak. The relationship is also negative which suggests that the academic performance of students' was not associated with the type of occupation done by parents. In relation to this study, fishing which was found to be the major economic activity of parents was not strongly associated with the academic performance of students. The negative, weak relationship points to the demands of the fishing industry such as: night work at sea and other out-of-home activities which tend to prevent parents from having quality time with their wards. As Maddox (2006) indicated, strong occupational identities and incentives to remain in an industry negatively affect educational outcomes.

Summary

Parents of some sampled 200 students from the public junior high schools in the Moree Township participated in this study to examine the relationship between the home characteristics and the academic performance of students. The home characteristics measured with students academic performance involved parental involvement in ward's school activities, parents' absence from home, parental educational background, and the major economic activity of parents.

The findings of this study show that contrary to popular opinion and researches, the home characteristics identified as indicated earlier are not potent predictors of students' academic performance of the three public JHSs in Moree in the Central Region of Ghana. This suggests that each dimension of these home

characteristics explains very little of the academic performance of students. This research thus suggests that, other factors such as the student characteristics, the location and conditions of schools, the characteristics of the town itself, and the effect of the major economic activity of parents may well better explain students' academic performance.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter contains an overview of the research problem that was investigated. The overview revisits the purpose and objectives of the study and the research hypotheses that directed/guided the study including the methodology used involving the research design and instruments, population and sample, data collection procedure and the analysis of data. Finally, a summary of key findings and recommendations that have been made based on the study's findings is provided.

Overview of the Study

This study examined the relationship between the home characteristics and students' academic performance of the three public junior high schools in Moree, Central Region of Ghana. The purpose of the study was to examine how home characteristics are related to students' academic performance at the three public JHSs, Moree in the Central Region of Ghana. The following null hypotheses were tested:

1. There is no significant relationship between parental involvement in school activities and students' academic performance

2. There is no significant relationship between parents absence from home and the academic performance of students
3. There is no significant relationship between parents' educational background and students' academic performance
4. There is no significant relationship between the major economic activity of parents and the academic performance of students.

The population of the study comprised the parents of all students in the public JHSs in Moree (i.e., N = 300). Using the methodological principle adopted by Krejcie and Morgan, 1970 (as quoted in Sarantakos, 1997, p. 163), a sample of 200 parents by the simple random sampling method of probability sampling technique using a table of random numbers were then selected to respond to the questionnaire with this same number participating as respondents.

The instruments were pilot-tested at Biriwa, a similar fishing community also in the Central Region of Ghana. The pilot-testing helped in modifying the items on the questionnaire. The questionnaires were personally administered over a period of three weeks and the returning rate was 100%. The completed questionnaire and the means of recorded marks of four of the core subjects were then coded and analysed into descriptive statistics using frequencies and percentages. Also, the strength of the relationship between variables was determined by computing Spearman's Rank Correlation Coefficient with the help of SPSS. The results were used to refine the instruments for the main study.

Using the refined survey instrument (i.e., Parent Questionnaire), the main data were collected from parents. Respondents were also asked to indicate their gender

and age to find out about their background. Out of the total 200 parents who responded to the questionnaire, 83 (41.5%) were males with 117 (58.5%) being females. This is an indication that among the total respondents, there were more females than males. In terms of age, 70 (35%) respondents were 45 years or above while only 10 (5%) were below 24 years and these were siblings taking care of their younger ones who were students.

SPSS version 16.0 was used to compute percentages, means, and standard deviations. Again, means of marks of four core subjects (Mathematics, English, Integrated Science, and Social Studies) of 200 students in the 2010/2011 academic year in the form of a 'students' achievement record form' were recorded and used to match the mean responses of their parents to establish their relationship. The SPSS was used to compute Spearman's Rank Correlation Coefficients which were tested at .01 and .05 alpha levels to determine statistical significance.

Summary of Key Findings

Parental involvement in school activities had a mean score of 2.72, parents' absence from (i.e., presence at) home with mean score of 2.99, mean parental educational background of 1.93, and a mean score of 1.93 for the major economic activity of parents on the measure of home characteristics. These mean scores suggested that there was a high tendency for parents to get themselves involved in children/wards school activities in terms of attending PTA meetings, visiting school and interacting with wards teachers, providing wards with basic

educational materials, as well as paying wards school levies once a year. With regard to parental support as a measure of parental involvement, there was a tendency for parents to be encouraging their wards to study at home twice every week and wards' siblings actually found to be helping in doing home work. Also, the mean scores indicated the tendency for students to be staying with their relatives other than their biological parents. The reasons given to this were that either both parents had travelled out of Moree to work elsewhere, or they were dead, or divorced. However, the data showed that parents were more likely to stay at home and most of them were working in Moree. The data again showed that most parents' education was below the Middle School Level and they tended to be highly engaged in fishing activities more than any other job. Lastly, the mean score of 53.84 for students' academic performance suggested that students' performance in relation to Mathematics, English, Integrated Science, and Social Studies when associated with the home characteristics was average.

The following major findings were found based on the four hypotheses tested:

1. There was a weak, positive relationship between parental involvement in school activities and students' academic performance. However, this relationship was not statistically significant.
2. Statistically, a weak, positive non - significant relationship also existed between parents' absence from home and students' academic performance.

3. There was a weak, positive relationship between parents' educational background and their wards' academic performance. The relationship was not significant.
4. A weak, negative insignificant relationship existed between the major economic activity of parents and their wards academic performance.

Conclusions

The findings from this have led to the conclusion that:

1. Home characteristics of the students of the public JHSs in Moree, Central Region of Ghana were not significantly associated with students' academic performance.
2. Home characteristics in terms of parental involvement in school activities, parents' absence from home, parental educational background, and the major economic activity of parents were not likely to improve students' academic performance in Moree.
3. There could be other factors relating to students, teachers, or the community correlating with students' academic performance that the present study did not investigate.

Recommendations

Although parents' activities were not found to be significantly associated with academic performance, yet there was a relationship which means that parents need to know their role in the education of their children so that they do not put the blame entirely on teachers when their children do not perform well academically; therefore, the following recommendations are made to inform policy and practice:

1. Stakeholders and implementers of educational policies need to sensitize parents on the need to get genuinely involved in their wards education through PTA Meetings, Open Days, Durbars, and Oversight Committees.
2. The GES and the Ministry of Women and Children Affair should collaborate with Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) to also sensitize parents to show more interest in their wards' education.
3. Past students from the community who have made progress in their fields of endeavour should be invited regularly by school authorities and chiefs to PTA meetings, Open Days, and Durbars to sensitize parents about the benefits of education especially, the parents' role. Students who are from the community and had made it to the senior high schools could also be used for the same purpose.
4. The Government through the Micro Finance Agencies should help parents by way of granting them loans to boost their businesses in order to raise their socio economic status.

Suggestions for Further Research

1. Given that the present study was limited to students of only the public JHSs in Moree, more schools (private and public) should be involved in subsequent studies and a similar study could be carried out in similar (fishing) communities to affirm or refute the conclusions of the present study.
2. Studies could be conducted to determine the relationship between other factors, believed to be related to students' academic performance, such as teacher characteristics, school characteristics, students' characteristics, head teacher's style of leadership, among others.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

INSTITUTE FOR EDUCATIONAL PLANNING AND ADMINISTRATION

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PARENTS

This questionnaire is designed to elicit information from Parents on the socio-economic challenges that affect students' academic performance in public JHSs in Moree. I will be much grateful if you would respond to all the items honestly. You are assured of the confidentiality of your responses. Thanks for your co-operation.

A. PERSONAL DATA

Please respond to each of the items by ticking (√) the most appropriate response.

1. Indicate your sex
    a. Male ( )
    b. Female ( )
2. Age as at last birthday
    a. Less than 24 years ( )
    b. 25 – 30 years ( )
    c. 31 – 35 years ( )
    d. 36 – 40 years ( )
    e. 41 – 45 years ( )
    f. More than 45 years ( )

B. HOME INDICATORS

Please respond to the following by ticking (√) only one of the responses.

- **Parental involvement in school activities:**

Item	Three times/ more	Two times/yr	Once a yr	Not at all
3. How often do you attend PTA Meetings?				
4. How often do you visit your child's/ward's school to interact with his/her teachers?				
5. How often do you provide the basic educational materials your child/ward need for school?				
1. How often do you pay your child/ward's school levies?				

7. How often do you encourage your child/ward to study at home?

a. Every day ( ) b. Twice a week ( ) c.Once a week ( ) d. Occasionally ( )

8. Does your child/ward get help when he/she is doing his/her homework / at home? a. Always ( ) b. Never ( ) c. Sometimes ( )

9. If **yes**, who helps your child/ward in doing such homework?

a. Yourself/Spouse ( ) b. Siblings ( ) c. Friends ( ) d. Him/Herself ( )

- **Parents' absence from home:**

10. With whom does your child/ward stay?

a. Both parents ( ) b. One of his/her parents ( ) c. A brother/sister ( )

d. A relative ( ) e. A friend ( ) f. Someone not related to the child ( )

11. If not (a) in (10) above, why is your child/ward not staying with both parents?

.....

.....

12. How often do you and your spouse stay at home?

a. Very Often ( ) b. Often ( ) c. Sometimes ( ) d. Not Often ( )

13. Where do you work?

a. Moree ( ) b. Any town in Western Region ( ) c. Ivory Coast ( )

d. Any other place apart from all the three other options ( )

- **Parents' educational background and economic activity of the parents:**

14. Tick (√) appropriately the educational background of you and your spouse.

Educational level attained	Father	Mother	Guardian
a. No school			
b. Primary school			
c. Middle school			
d. JSS/JHS			
e. SSS/SHS			
f. 'O'/ 'A' Level			
g. Diploma/HND			
h. University Degree			

15. What is the main economic activity of your town?

……

16. In what ways does this activity in (15) above, affect your child/ward's studies? State .....

.....

.....

17. In what ways does the economic activity affect your child/ward's attendance to school?

State briefly .....

.....

.....

APPENDIX B

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT RECORD FORM

SCHOOL: …….

ID	Exams Result												Av.
	Term 1				Term 2				Term 3				
	Eng.	Maths	Int. Sc.	Soc. Stds.	Eng.	Maths	Int. Sc.	Soc. Stds.	Eng.	Maths	Int. Sc.	Soc. Stds	
001	80	67	71	73	73	48	78	86	80	55	63	88	72
002	65	70	72	88	56	44	76	75	68	69	69	93	70
003	63	33	54	86	48	41	59	74	60	52	66	88	60
004	61	55	56	63	39	41	58	64	46	53	56	89	57
005	72	66	77	95	63	66	83	89	87	60	75	95	77

006	69	55	71	92	51	54	76	81	83	54	68	84	70
007	54	55	48	71	37	42	64	72	50	52	59	68	56
008	56	50	61	74	34	45	53	72	63	57	59	76	58
009	74	67	59	86	62	59	77	85	78	57	65	89	72
010	53	56	54	70	38	41	51	66	41	47	54	64	53
011	42	57	47	53	64	52	55	45	39	46	42	65	51
012	63	56	63	87	56	59	70	68	68	52	74	81	66
013	53	60	45	68	33	50	55	62	45	52	54	90	56
014	68	49	48	55	34	32	48	48	55	40	47	69	49
015	53	47	40	75	35	28	55	53	56	37	52	84	51
016	59	77	39	53	64	34	23	52	66	44	47	55	51
017	66	73	59	85	58	42	70	76	67	41	64	89	66

018	57	43	56	64	46	43	52	49	61	46	55	65	53
019	49	55	49	74	29	32	47	63	48	55	46	87	53
020	62	47	53	70	36	29	42	57	42	8	49	81	48
021	45	66	53	67	38	44	44	62	47	50	49	77	54
022	50	36	42	63	37	33	64	62	51	44	57	65	50
023	62	41	56	60	35	30	63	77	44	39	45	78	53
024	52	44	48	66	48	34	61	59	45	55	50	70	53
025	72	72	78	97	63	59	76	88	85	57	75	89	76
026	67	69	53	44	41	79	46	54	35	54	53	78	56
027	63	43	58	78	43	46	57	67	63	51	61	86	60
028	56	51	53	60	33	37	51	60	35	53	42	73	50
029	65	69	50	68	47	44	31	72	40	52	44	69	54

030	68	60	57	54	36	56	38	68	45	48	62	67	55
031	64	14	53	56	34	56	26	57	63	45	47	75	49
032	61	76	72	89	41	61	65	88	64	51	73	85	69
033	50	52	49	55	46	52	37	75	33	42	38	68	50
034	64	65	52	61	57	72	56	81	53	53	55	77	62
035	56	64	50	68	39	59	38	75	54	69	52	86	59
036	56	63	53	51	51	72	38	64	34	47	53	62	54
037	54	73	55	68	40	72	43	73	51	71	51	87	62
038	59	22	34	63	52	51	37	70	52	42	43	76	50
039	75	17	58	61	66	52	49	66	38	55	47	76	55
040	49	43	38	46	32	32	55	37	30	32	42	58	41
040	49	43	38	46	32	32	55	37	30	32	42	58	41

041	72	61	51	58	50	44	40	71	59	56	54	89	59
042	48	55	50	57	34	51	42	63	36	52	52	55	50
043	75	63	74	77	49	57	56	80	68	42	72	80	66
044	49	40	50	63	31	34	33	38	31	37	44	69	43
045	60	56	43	53	56	50	26	68	36	58	35	68	51
046	59	56	40	45	45	56	33	57	65	63	45	66	51
047	64	60	56	70	36	51	34	78	55	40	54	77	56
048	65	56	59	59	45	53	41	72	39	54	39	69	54
049	89	67	84	94	70	57	65	91	86	60	80	92	78
050	59	66	50	52	39	48	37	60	37	48	46	61	65
051	66	57	61	66	59	55	41	69	60	46	58	85	60
052	61	61	47	68	48	52	43	61	56	53	48	58	55
053	83	75	54	90	67	73	82	74	65	58	68	86	73

054	50	38	32	41	39	28	26	38	33	37	39	62	39
055	29	28	33	27	21	25	28	38	36	33	39	72	34
056	61	63	50	57	47	48	36	71	36	67	37	62	53
057	59	45	47	58	66	69	55	66	47	42	53	60	56
058	53	56	40	55	39	57	24	52	53	58	49	63	50
059	48	67	41	40	19	56	22	23	51	51	38	47	42
060	46	52	37	50	51	39	60	64	45	51	47	58	50
061	41	37	57	65	43	66	53	55	36	48	56	53	51
062	58	40	78	70	48	67	72	66	48	42	73	70	61
063	49	42	63	60	52	62	74	58	41	45	61	48	55
064	43	45	50	60	32	63	59	55	32	41	53	47	48
065	54	46	55	79	54	56	75	65	51	53	67	58	59

066	44	46	61	90	29	62	56	48	34	64	69	63	56
067	42	62	52	76	31	51	48	82	34	60	47	57	54
068	43	47	64	70	44	55	67	59	34	53	55	61	54
069	45	25	33	52	47	53	52	49	35	53	44	52	44
070	41	33	46	66	32	70	42	54	31	44	41	46	46
071	48	46	61	65	46	50	56	52	39	42	60	56	52
072	52	43	53	82	49	71	40	53	38	49	63	57	54
073	69	45	73	89	61	71	78	66	61	56	78	59	67
074	56	60	61	29	60	61	66	58	40	47	63	55	55
075	45	39	75	76	34	63	71	65	40	55	63	57	60
076	47	41	53	70	42	64	60	61	46	36	59	55	53
077	56	40	55	64	40	56	59	58	42	56	61	59	54

078	57	37	80	92	60	64	76	70	50	72	80	69	67
079	54	44	67	79	56	75	75	68	52	54	81	62	64
080	47	56	73	90	55	74	79	67	50	56	82	65	66
081	52	48	61	79	54	81	72	69	49	60	81	73	65
082	50	49	58	47	62	45	53	66	57	48	67	58	55
083	48	41	66	40	56	46	45	65	47	61	54	50	52
084	45	40	46	44	53	40	50	49	38	56	52	61	48
085	49	45	71	40	53	73	62	53	40	69	46	58	55
086	47	30	56	44	40	34	38	55	38	41	37	44	42
087	42	36	62	42	40	43	47	50	35	43	48	52	44
088	52	30	47	54	53	42	45	49	38	56	46	50	47
089	44	45	47	66	19	48	38	43	35	46	47	51	44

090	42	38	39	54	34	37	39	43	32	45	49	50	42
091	40	35	40	60	31	40	38	45	39	42	41	57	42
092	66	36	69	64	65	42	54	49	46	50	47	52	53
093	52	39	45	76	59	45	53	58	35	59	45	46	49
094	42	41	42	54	30	58	46	50	26	46	35	42	43
095	42	35	53	34	42	53	38	47	30	48	39	42	42
096	52	62	48	52	50	55	60	56	32	68	46	52	53
097	36	51	71	84	48	40	57	66	29	64	39	49	53
098	71	68	59	30	63	61	60	57	45	61	53	57	57
099	52	38	41	74	48	54	46	63	37	44	60	53	51
100	51	41	57	60	50	48	46	54	36	63	39	44	49
101	57	36	62	45	51	46	49	47	45	46	50	55	49

102	32	11	57	22	16	47	29	32	29	49	30	35	32
103	53	37	46	54	59	46	47	52	39	62	48	53	50
104	69	63	72	82	76	73	70	68	66	77	60	58	70
105	60	64	63	70	76	66	56	68	61	64	60	59	64
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199	34	56	50	33	34	46	35	34	38	40	31	55	41
200	56	51	53	60	33	37	51	60	35	53	42	73	50

APPENDIX C

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST
FACULTY OF EDUCATION
INSTITUTE FOR EDUCATIONAL PLANNING AND ADMINISTRATION

Tel. No. : 03321-30571
Fax No. : 03321-30588
E-mail : ucciepa@yahoo.co.uk

University Post Office
Cape Coast
Ghana

Our Ref: EP/144.8/V.2/180

October 6, 2011

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LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

The bearer of this letter, **Ophelia Affreh** is a graduate student of the Institute for Educational Planning and Administration of the University of Cape Coast. She requires some information from your outfit for the purpose of writing a Dissertation as a requirement of M. Phil. degree programme.

We should be grateful if you would kindly allow **Ophelia Affreh** to collect the information from your outfit.

Kindly give the necessary assistance that she requires to collect the information.

While anticipating your co-operation, we thank you for any help that you may be able to give to her.

Mr. Prosper Kwamiga Nyatuame
Asst. Registrar
For Director

FACULTY OF EDUCATION
INSTITUTE FOR EDUCATIONAL
PLANNING & ADMINISTRATION
UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST
CAPE COAST