

Home Related Factors and its Influence on learning Among Students in the Awutu-Senya and Effutu Educational Districts

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Abstract

The state of the home environment influences the development and learning of every child in diverse ways. This study sought to investigate how home related factors such as learning resources like television, radio set among others influence students' success in schools. A cross sectional survey and multi-site case study designs were adopted in carrying out this study. The population of the study was made up of teachers, students and parents. A sample size of 520 was used. The sample was selected by using purposive, quota, convenient and random sampling techniques. The data collection instruments were questionnaire, semi-structured interview schedules and focus group discussions. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used in presenting the data. The study found that the learning environment provided by parents at home determines the academic achievements of students. The study revealed that some students did not have basic things such as tables, chairs and a place to study at home. Some students indicated that the learning facilities at home were provided by both parents. Further findings indicated that some students were over-burdened with household chores which adversely affected their learning at home. When the hypothesis was tested, the statistics revealed that the correlation was statistically significant ($p < .001$). The researchers recommend that parents should create an enabling learning environment at home to enhance students' success level in schools.

Keywords: Home related factors, television, radio set, learning environment, learning facilities, household chores

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1. Introduction and Research Problem

Parents usually forget that they play key roles in their children's educational success. The home has the responsibility of grooming children by teaching them the norms and values of society in which they live (Collins, 2007). The home environment is also identified as the single most important environmental factor which enables children to develop the trust, attitude and skills that will help them to learn and interact positively with the world in which they live (Anene, 2005). Emeke (1984) also contends that the environmental condition and the nature of social interaction that occur at home may have some positive or negative influence on the academic achievement of children. The writer notes that the home and the school have common tasks to achieve and that is to train children to become useful citizens of society and that training begins at home through the informal education. This suggests that the family (home) and the school must complement each other to ensure that this is successfully accomplished rather than to play the blame game.

Generally, the home environment refers to all the objects, parents, siblings, peers, forces and conditions in the home which influence the child physically, intellectually and emotionally (Muola, 2010 & Obeta, 2014). The writers noticed that there is a positive relationship between academic achievement motivation and home environment. Apart from the family social climate, socio-economic status (SES) and emotional state of the students, the educational level of the parents, support for children's learning and provision of learning facilities at home to a large extent contribute to students' academic achievement in school. In support of this argument, Anene (2005) also observed that good home learning environment provides love, security, stimulation, encouragement and opportunities that enable children to progress in their education. Muola (2010) argues that there are different factors that may account for students' achievement level in school; however, the child's home environment is often not considered as a critical factor. The writer observes that children's home environment could determine the difference in academic achievement motivation. Muola notes that "value that different families attach to education could affect" (Muola, 2010, p.214) children's attitude to education and subsequent motivation for success.

Udida, Ukwayi and Ogodo (2012, p.128) observed that family financial resources are "associated with parents' occupation and educational attainment" which provide "increased learning opportunities both at home and in school". It is a common knowledge that better-educated and concerned parents contribute to their children's learning through their day-to-day interactions with their children and involving themselves in their children's school work which aims at helping children to attain better grades (Udida, et al., 2012 & Arsalan, 2019). Considering the low SES of parents in the study area, their children are always at a disadvantage and are unable to benefit as their counterparts from high SES. This is so because, Obeta (2014) observed that the type of family

and level of parents' education and their SES influence the choice of school parents place their children. In addition to this, Obeta further noticed that children from low SES are at a greater risk of hunger, homelessness, sickness, physical and mental disabilities, violence, teen parenthood, family stress and educational failure.

Beside these factors, the home environment in the study area is not conducive for learning because there are usually no furniture, learning materials, light and a quiet place for learning (Yelkper, 2016). Arsalan (2019) is of the opinion that parents have to provide the needed elements such as text books, computers, smart phones, peace and reasonable amount of domestic chores at home that are required to facilitate children's learning at home. The 2010 population and housing census of Ghana revealed that "on the average, single room is the dominant sleeping rooms occupied by most households" (GSS, 2014, p.50). It was noted that "irrespective of the size of the household in the municipality", a higher percentage of households share single room. This implies that parents and their children share a common room which creates a lot of inconvenience; as a result, it becomes very difficult for their children to study in the evening in such a crowded room.

The population and housing census further revealed that the "most common source of lighting in the municipality is electricity (82.9%)" (GSS, 2014, p.51). However, higher percentage of the "urban households (84.9%) used electricity as compared with the rural households (53.9%)". This suggests that a good number of people in the rural areas do not enjoy electricity and therefore students in these areas may have to make do with lanterns and other sources that may pose health risk for them in their studies in the evenings. It is also observed that in most homes in the study area because of the low SES of parents, students do not have access to internet, smart phones, televisions and radio sets, and computers which facilitate students' learning. It is however noted that most of the users of computers and internet facilities usually have access to them in the workplace or at the internet café. This means that most students can only have access to these facilities at their schools, otherwise they have to pay to access them at the internet café.

Household chores are another home-related factor that affect students' learning at home. Students are engaged in different ways at home which affects their learning time at home. Agu and Hamad (2000) observed that students in Zanzibar, girls especially, were over burdened with household chores such as cooking, washing, sweeping among other activities at the expense of learning. This scenario is not different from the study area where students are engaged in selling, cooking, and other errands that take more of their learning time. Apart from this, some communities are crowded and noisy and do not provide the serene atmosphere needed for learning.

From the foregoing discussion, it is evidenced that home environment has a profound influence on students' learning effort because if students are prepared to learn but do not have the basic facilities at home that create the enabling learning environment, it becomes difficult for such students. This highlights the situation in which most students from disadvantaged homes find themselves in the Awutu-Senya and Effutu Educational Districts.

1.1 Purpose of the study

The study investigated the enabling learning environment provided by parents at home and how this influences students' academic achievements in schools. The specific objectives are:

1. To establish any effect of home-related factors on students' academic achievement.
2. To ascertain the type of learning materials or facilities parents provide for students at home.

The main research question of the study is:

To what extent does the learning environment provided by parents at home determine the academic achievement of students?

1.2 Hypothesis

H₀: There is no significant effect of learning environment provided by parents at home on students' academic achievement.

2. Methodology

2.1 Design

The researchers used both cross-sectional and multi-site case study designs in carrying out this research. A cross-sectional approach consists of 'series of parallel case studies, not conducted so much to understand the individual case as to discover common factors among particular levels of children' or respondents (Sidhu, 2009, p.230). The cross-sectional survey helps researchers to collect data from different type of respondents and in large numbers to enhance the representativeness of the study (Bryman, 2008 & Sidhu, 2009). The design enabled the researchers to involve 520 participants through the use of structured questionnaire compared to a case study approach that would have used a smaller number. Yin (2003, p.543), notes that a case study design may be considered when:

- (a) the focus of the study is to answer "how and "why" questions: (b) you cannot manipulate the behavior of those involved in the study (c) you want to cover contextual conditions because you believe they are relevant to the phenomenon under study or (d) the boundaries are not clear between the phenomenon and context.

A close examination of the definition shows that researchers place emphasis on the detailed examination of the natural setting of the case under investigation. Researches that use more cases are referred to as multiple case studies while some studies concentrate on a single case of a phenomenon (Yin, 2003; Denscombe, 2003; Punch, 2005; & Bryman, 2008). The present study made use of a multi-site case study to enable the researchers collect data from two categories of schools (advantaged and disadvantaged schools) in order to compare their home-related factors and their influence on academic achievement levels. The multi-site case study also enabled the researchers to do an in-depth study of the selected communities in the study area through gathering of qualitative data with the help of semi-structured interviews.

2.2 Population, Sample and Sampling Techniques

The population of the study was made up of all the teachers, students in Senior High Schools (SHS) and parents in the Awutu-Senya District and Effutu Municipality. The target population was the Form three students of the selected four SHS. The total enrolment of these students was 2,032 students. The total number of teachers (189) in the four schools was selected by census method. Teachers were included because they dealt directly with students and parents. Beside, some of them were parents and were in a better position to present the issues. The researchers chose forms three students because they were more matured (aged between 17 and 20) and could respond to issues on the influence of home-related factors on their educational outcomes. The researchers used proportional representation to determine the 311 students who participated in the study. This was worked out by finding the ratio of the number of students in a particular school to the total number of students of the four selected schools and then multiplied by the students' sample (311). The formulae used is:

$$\frac{N \times \text{Students' Sample}}{\text{Grand Total of Students}}$$

For example, Winneba Senior High School = $\frac{841 \times 311}{2032} = 129$

This formula was used to calculate the other three schools to obtain the number of students who represented the various schools in the study. The breakdown of the participants from the various schools is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents

| Category of Target Population | Teachers | Students Sample |
|-------------------------------|------------|-----------------|
| Winneba Senior High School | 60 | 129 |
| Winneba School of Business | 22 | 35 |
| Insaaniyya Senior High School | 32 | 46 |
| Senya Senior High School | 75 | 101 |
| Total | 189 | 311 |

N= Number

However, the simple random sampling technique was used to select all the students who participated in the study in their various schools. The essence is that each member has an equal chance of being selected (Tuckman, 1994; Best and Kahn, 1995; & Bryman, 2008).

Yes" or "NO" were written on pieces of paper and folded. The number of pieces of paper with "Yes" written on them was equal to the number of students to be sampled from each school. Then, more pieces of paper with "No" written on them were added to equal the number of students who were ready to participate in the exercise. The pieces of paper were put in a box and mixed up thoroughly and students were asked to pick in turns without replacement. After each pick, the researchers shuffled the pieces of paper. This procedure was repeated in all the four schools to select students for the study.

Ten conjugal households were purposively selected from the communities for interviews. Couples' willingness to participate in the study was the criterion used in selecting households. The researchers felt 10 households were adequate for this present study because other respondents like the teachers equally had good knowledge about the issues under study. The researchers included people of all social classes in order to make the study more representative. This was done based on two identified settlements (advantaged and disadvantaged) observed by the researchers. Ten parents were conveniently selected from advantaged communities in the study area which included settlements like new townships, university communities and communities where most public servants lived. In a similar way, 10 parents were selected from disadvantaged communities such as fishing, farming and Zongu communities in the two educational districts.

2.3 Instrument(s)

Structured questionnaires were developed by the researchers to collect data from teachers and students. This was more economical in terms of time and cost of transport if the researchers had used only semi-structured interview schedules. The close ended items took the form of a five point Likert Scale with responses ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The open ended items provided opportunities for the respondents to express their opinions. The main issues that were covered in the questionnaires were parents' provision of enabling learning

environment at home and its influence on students' education.

The semi-structured interview schedules were developed to collect data from parents. This method was useful because the researchers had the opportunity to probe for further information where necessary. The interview questions were based on the same theme as the questionnaire. The verbatim quotations from respondents were identified by codes such as "PR" for parent respondents in the text.

Focus group discussion (FGD) was designed based on enabling learning environment parents provided at home. Two groups of students made up of 4 students in each group in each school were selected to participate. FGD is a collective and not individualistic process of data collection method which has to do with the group's views, experiences, attitudes and beliefs (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2008, & Madriz, 2003). This is more of a group interview which places much emphasis on the questioning on identified topics, in which case more stress is laid on the interaction within the group in order that the opinions of the participants that emerge in a joint construction of meaning (Bryman, 2008, Cohen, et al., 2008). This method was employed to get the story from students who had the experience. In all, 32 students were randomly selected from the students who answered the questionnaires.

In order to establish the face validity of the content, the questionnaires were first given out to colleague Research Fellows for their comments on the items. These comments helped to improve the quality of the items. The questionnaires were pre-tested in Apam SHS. Apam SHS was chosen because of its proximity.

The reliability of the questionnaire was ascertained by using test-retest reliability. Tuckman (1994) argues that one way to measure reliability is to give the same respondents the same test items on more than one occasion and then compare the outcomes of the two different tests. After that the two tests were given out to the respondents, both tests were subjected to Cronbach's coefficient alpha to determine the internal consistency of the items and these yielded high reliability coefficients of .86 in each case. Tuckman (1994, p.180) notes that 'reasonably high coefficients are' indications of high quality. On the part of the semi-structured interview schedules when the questions were administered it was realised that all the interviewees provided similar responses, which signified that the questions were good.

3 Findings and Discussion

The researchers presented the quantitative data and then followed it up with the qualitative data on each theme. The perspectives of teachers, students and parents were presented in turns on each theme. The statistical tools used in presenting the data were descriptive, inferential statistics and graphs.

3.1 Learning environment provided by parents at home and its influence on academic achievement of students

The data in Table 2 show that, teachers agreed that provision of lights; lanterns, text books, and quiet atmosphere helped create an enabling home environment that enhanced achievement of students. This is supported by a weighted mean of 4.36 and a standard deviation of .86. This agrees with a similar study carried out by 'a senior researcher at the Education Testing Service who observed that U.S. has not adequately "recognized the need to eliminate barriers to achievement that arise in the family, and how lack of resources affect achievement" (Ornstein & Levine, 2006, p.323).

Table 2: Teachers' Views on Learning Environment Provided by Parents at Home and how it Determines the Academic Achievements of Students (n = 142)

| Views | WM | Std | I |
|---|------|------|---|
| Provision of learning environment at home such as light, lantern, textbooks, quiet atmosphere helps in academic achievements of students. | 4.36 | 0.86 | A |
| Home environment determines what students know before enrolling at school. | 3.73 | 1.17 | N |
| Parents' interest in their children education affects their academic attainment. | 4.23 | 3.52 | A |
| Parental supervision of children learning activities affects their achievement levels. | 4.06 | 0.92 | A |
| Parents and siblings speech models affect children's academic achievement levels. | 4.21 | 5.58 | A |

Mean of means= 4.12

Standard deviation = 2.41

SD = Strongly disagree, D = Disagree, N = Neither agree nor disagree, A = Agree, SA = Strongly agree, WM = Weighted mean, Std = Standard deviation, I = Interpretations Interpretations: 5 = Strongly agree, 4.0 – 4.9 = Agree, 3.0 – 3.9 = Neither agree nor disagree, 2.0 – 2.9 = Disagree, 1.0 – 1.9 = Strongly disagree

Table 2 further reveals that respondents neither agreed nor disagreed on the assumption that home environment determines what students know before enrolling at school. This is supported by a weighted mean of 3.73 and a standard deviation of 1.17. It is believed that the existing home environment influences the child's acquisition of basic skills in literacy and numeracy at home even before the child enrolls in school. The home is

regarded as a place a child is prepared to take up the challenges of schooling before enrolling in school (Simmons, and Alexander, 1978, & Mbilinyia, 1972) cited in Agu and Hamad (2000).

However, the mean of means of 4.12 and a standard deviation of 2.41 show that teachers agreed that the learning environment provided by parents at home determined the academic achievements of students. This finding is supported by Obeta (2014) when she indicated that the adequacies of the provision of necessary school materials to students have remarkable influence on the students' academic performance. In this regard, the researchers tried to investigate the type of home environment created by parents to ensure effective learning at home. Some of the pieces of information gathered from parents through semi-structured interviews are as follows:

There is light at home. I have tables and chairs at home where they can sit and learn, even though, the environment is not conducive for learning. The reason is that, we live very close to one another in the neighbourhood and as a result there... play and make noise. So the only time they can learn is dawn. (PR15)

My son who is in the SHS usually learns in the church he attends which is very close to the house. His pastor is aware and he is among those who sweep and tidy up the church so that is where he does his studies. (PR20)

I have provided them with light, tables and chairs in their room. I was however, unable to provide their request for a computer because I could not afford it. (PR16)

These are cases of disadvantaged students from low socio-economic backgrounds who live in slums. Parents seem to know their children's needs, however; they are constrained by their financial challenges, even though they make some efforts in providing those they could afford. Again, parents were aware that their community environment does not promote their children's education; because of its crowded nature and the resultant noise children make. However, they have no choice since that is the only place their financial situation can afford. The present finding agrees with Nabuka (1984) who investigated on home background variables on achievements which revealed ..., number of books read, fathers'/guardians' level of education, students' job aspirations, availability of text books,... So, it means that the home related factors affect students' achievements negatively among the disadvantaged students. Another group of parents who have higher socio-economic status presented a different picture from the earlier information from the fishing community. Some of their responses are as follows:

I have bought them all kinds of books that will enable them learn at home. We have a study room where all of us study without any disturbance. Also, I'm making an effort to get them a desktop computer in the house. (PR14)

There is a home library that is well equipped which caters for their learning needs. I try to update it from time to time. My father was an academician and he bequeathed to us a lot of books and the culture of keeping home libraries. (PR19)

We provide light, rechargeable lamps, tables and chairs. They also have radio and TV. sets at their disposal. (PR1)

The data portray that parents of this category of students are people of high SES who know the importance of education and are prepared to pay for it through the purchase of books, dictionaries, T.V., radio sets etc. They tried to create an enabling environment for their children's learning by reserving rooms purposively for studies. The practice of keeping home library is not common among the average Ghanaian. They do this because they know it is their responsibility to provide an enabling environment for their children at home. Students who come from these homes have high potentials of achieving their educational dreams with little efforts. This study is in agreement with a similar one conducted in Kenya by Prewitt which reveals that 'wealthier educated parents who purchase books and educational toys, who speak English in the home...' created the needed congenial atmosphere for children's educational success (Prewitt, 1974, p.206).

From the students' perspective, it is noted that both advantaged and disadvantaged students seem to share a common opinion with their teachers on the first factor. Thus, provision of an enabling learning environment at home such as light, lantern, textbooks, quiet atmosphere helps in academic achievements of students. This finding is based on the data from Table 3 which shows a weighted mean of 4.41 and a standard deviation of .94 and a weighted mean of 4.38 and a standard deviation of 1.33 respectively for both advantaged and disadvantaged students. This is in agreement with Kellet and Dar (2007, p.15) who indicated that children were of the opinion that "ideal homework conditions that might inspire them" include "distraction-free environments" and "having adults around to bounce ideas off".

Table 3: Students' Views on Learning Environment Provided by Parents at Home and its Effects on the Academic Achievements of Students.

| Views | Advantaged SHS | | | Disadvantaged SHS | | |
|---|----------------|------|---|-------------------|------|---|
| | WM | Std | I | WM | Std | I |
| Provision of learning environment at home such as light, lantern, textbooks, quiet atmosphere helps in academic achievements of students. | 4.41 | 0.94 | A | 4.38 | 0.98 | A |
| Home environment determines what students know before enrolling at school | 3.27 | 1.80 | N | 3.25 | 1.41 | N |
| Parents' interest in their students' education affects their academic attainment. | 3.82 | 1.28 | N | 3.48 | 1.41 | N |
| Parental supervision of students' learning activities affects their achievement levels. | 3.68 | 1.46 | N | 3.46 | 1.47 | N |
| Parents and siblings speech models affect students' academic achievement levels. | 3.66 | 1.21 | N | 3.47 | 1.40 | N |
| Mean of means | 3.77 | 1.24 | | 3.61 | 1.33 | |

The data further show that both categories of students neither agreed nor disagreed on the remaining four factors. This implies that students agreed with their teachers on the second factor, which is home environment determines what students know before enrolling in school. The quality of home environment influences children's concept formation, language development, literacy and numeracy even before they start schooling. Woolley, Kol, Bowen (2009, p.65) observed that a "family environment that is actively supportive of education – a central aspect of education – provides foundation for student success". When the issues were discussed from the disadvantaged students' perspective, the picture was not different from their advantaged counterparts. The data further indicate that respondents neither agreed nor disagreed that parental supervision of students' learning activities affects their achievement levels. This is supported by the weighted mean of 3.46 and a standard deviation of 1.47. The culture of parents supervising their children's work is not common in the Ghanaian context. Agu and Hamad (2000) and Arsalan (2019) observed that some parents spend time to help their children in their studies at home, while other parents may not.

Over all, it could be seen from Table 3 that students neither agreed nor disagreed on the issue that learning environment provided by parents at home determines the academic achievements of students in schools. This is premised on the data from advantaged and disadvantaged SHS which show a mean of means of 3.77 and a standard deviation of 1.24 and a mean of means of 3.61 and a standard deviation of 1.33 respectively. The interview extract from the 6-year-old girl from Riverside School shows that, she had the right environment at her disposal and could consult adults for help and could as well consult available books (Kellet & Dar, 2007). This implies parents have a responsibility to provide the right home environment that will enable children to explore and develop their intellectual ability to the fullest.

The researchers asked students to tick from a list of facilities to indicate which were available to them at home. The information provided give an idea about the type of home environment students enjoy in relation to their studies at home. The details of the information are presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Facilities at Home that Promote Learning (n = 311)

| Facilities | Advantaged Schools | | | | Disadvantaged Schools | | | |
|--|--------------------|------|---------------|------|-----------------------|------|---------------|------|
| | Available | | Not Available | | Available | | Not Available | |
| | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| Bedroom/quiet place conducive for Learning | 123 | 70.3 | 52 | 29.7 | 90 | 66.2 | 46 | 33.8 |
| Light/electricity | 172 | 98.3 | 3 | 1.7 | 122 | 89.7 | 14 | 10.3 |
| Lantern | 50 | 28.6 | 125 | 71.4 | 44 | 32.4 | 92 | 67.6 |
| Table & chair | 153 | 87.4 | 22 | 12.6 | 103 | 75.7 | 33 | 24.3 |
| Dictionary | 147 | 84.0 | 28 | 16.0 | 100 | 73.5 | 36 | 26.5 |
| Story books | 134 | 76.6 | 41 | 23.4 | 99 | 72.8 | 36 | 26.5 |
| Textbooks | 154 | 88.0 | 21 | 12.0 | 119 | 87.5 | 17 | 12.5 |
| Newspapers | 88 | 50.3 | 87 | 49.7 | 52 | 38.2 | 84 | 61.8 |
| Radio | 136 | 77.7 | 39 | 22.3 | 93 | 68.4 | 43 | 31.6 |
| T.V. | 151 | 86.3 | 24 | 13.7 | 91 | 66.9 | 45 | 33.1 |
| Internet | 83 | 47.4 | 92 | 52.6 | 47 | 34.6 | 89 | 65.4 |
| Computer | 97 | 55.4 | 78 | 44.6 | 48 | 35.3 | 88 | 64.7 |

The data in Table 4 indicate that 123(70.3%) and 90(66.2%) students from advantaged and disadvantaged SHS respectively had bedrooms or at least a quiet place for studies at home. This implies that a number of students

did not have bedrooms or a quiet place for their studies at home. Parents who were interviewed said that:

We have a study room where all of us study without any disturbance. Also, I'm making an effort to get them a desktop computer in the house. (PR14)

There is a home library that is well equipped which caters for their learning needs. I try to update it from time to time. My father was an academician and he bequeathed to us a lot of books and the culture of keeping home libraries.(PR19)

The interview data reveal that these are people of high SES who could provide study rooms, computer and a library at home for their children's studies. In a related study, the researchers found that "the availability of skilled adult help" as well as "favourable study environments" have been noted to be the two "most critical" factors for "literacy success" (Kellet & Dar, 2007, p.32).

The study further noted that 154(88.0%) of students from advantaged SHS had textbooks just as 119(87.5%) of their counterparts in the disadvantaged SHS. This piece of information indicates that some parents did their best to ensure that they provided the needed textbooks for their students. Another parent also indicated that:

Many of their textbooks, exercise books and their school uniform are provided by the school and are added to the students' bill which I pay during the first week of re-opening. There are other books ... not provided by the school.(PR7)

This implies that even though parents complain of financial hardship, they try to provide some of the basic needs of their wards in school.

Further information reveal that 5(28.6%) and 44(32.4%) students from advantaged and disadvantaged SHS respectively had lanterns for their evening studies. This information may suggest that these groups of students who had lanterns may represent a good number of students who did not have electricity in their homes. This would further mean that the remaining majority of students from both divide were not provided with lanterns by their parents as standby sources of light.

The study sought to identify the providers of these facilities and therefore students were asked to indicate their benefactors. The reason is that some of the students are sponsored by other family members or philanthropists. Fig. 1 presents the details. The data show that 39(22.3%) students from advantaged SHS as against 21(15.4%) of their counterparts indicated that the facilities were provided by their fathers. In an interview session a man indicated that:

I try to buy those things such as textbooks, exercise book etc as and when she asks for them. I do not buy all at a go rather those items are purchased when I have some money.(PR9)

The data show that some fathers try to provide the educational needs of their children whilst other seem to neglect their responsibilities towards their children's education. On fathers' school involvement, Nyarko (2011, p.380), in his study observed that "fathers' school involvement" with respect to students' academic performance was not significant. Meanwhile, the study found that 103(58.9%) and 75(55.1%) students from advantaged and disadvantaged SHS respectively indicated that both parents were the providers of the facilities they had at home. This suggests that a significant percentage of couples team-up to support their children's education.

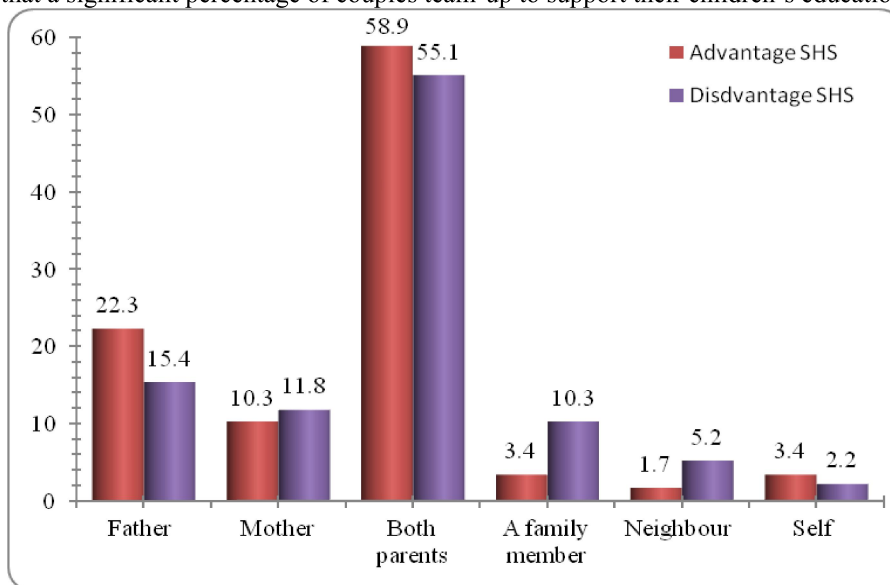


Fig. 1: Provider of the Learning Facilities (n = 311)

Yet, 6 (3.4%) and 3(2.2%) students from advantaged and disadvantaged SHS respectively pointed out that they provided the facilities themselves. This may represent a category of students who care for themselves in school.

In probing further, the study sought to investigate whether parents made any arrangement for extra-teaching at home or vacation classes for their children. This could take the form of parents hiring the services of teachers to engage their children at home in the evenings or during vacations or parents providing some extra-teaching themselves at home. Figure 2 presents the details. The findings reveal that out of the 175 students from advantaged SHS, 78(44.6%) of them had the opportunity of benefiting from extra-teaching. On the other hand, 48(35.3%) out of 136 students from the disadvantaged SHS also had extra-teaching. The data reveal that most parents could not afford to provide extra-teaching for their students. This is further confirmed in the open-ended questionnaire responses provided by students.

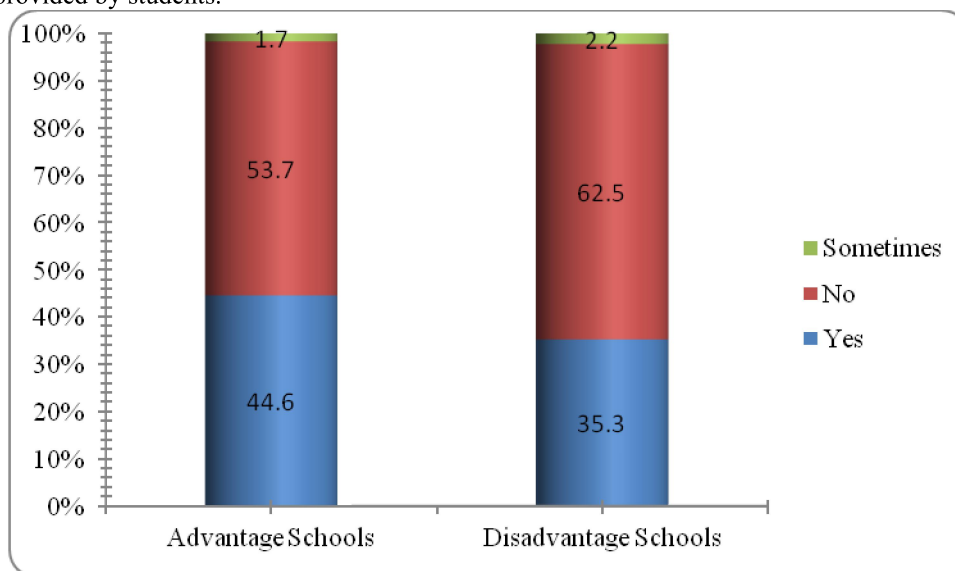


Fig. 2: Parents' Arrangements for Extra-Teaching at Home or Vacation (n = 311)

Many students could not afford it and those who could afford it may not need it because they are academically good students. Other students who need the extra-classes do not get it either because their parents could not afford it. In a similar study, Agu and Hamad, (2000, p.81) found that some parents were "more willing to pay for the boys than for the girls to participate in extra classes organised in the evenings".

The researchers engaged students in a focus group discussion to enable him identify the challenges at home. The data reveal that one of the challenges of students at home is their engagement in household chores which takes much of the learning time. A study carried out by Agu and Hamad (2000, p.74) observed that household chores performed by girls before school hours included "cleaning the house and surroundings, preparation of breakfast and washing of all the utensils used for supper" in the morning before leaving for school. Students who engage in such activities before going to school get to school late and tired and therefore are unable to concentrate in class.

Another challenge, that students face is attraction to electronic gadgets such as television, computer games, videos etc. These devices and their accompanying entertainments are irresistible to some youth and therefore if parents do not regulate their children's attachment to these devices, they become problems to their education. The present finding agrees with Kellet and Dar's (2007, p.34) observation that "large groups of Valley Primary children watch TV programmes that were shown 'after the watershed', especially "Big Brother".

The data indicate that misunderstanding and tension between parents at home is one of the challenges students encounter which affect their state of mind and concentration at home. Whenever there is tension between parents, the children suffer because out of anger one of the parents may shirk his or her responsibility of providing the needed support for the children at home.

3.2 Treatment of hypothesis

H_0 : There is no significant effect of learning environment provided by parents at home on students' academic achievement.

Provision of an enabling learning environment at home, home environment, parental supervision of students' learning activities and parents and siblings' speech models were used in a standard regression analysis to predict parents' interest in their students' education. The correlations of the variables are shown in Table 5. As can be seen, all correlations were statistically significant.

The prediction model was statistically significant, $F(4, 136) = 30.463, p < .001$, and accounted for approximately 46% of the variance of parents' interest in their students' education ($R^2 = .473$, Adjusted $R^2 = .457$). Parents' interest in their students' education was primarily predicted by lower levels of parents and siblings' speech models, and by higher levels of parental supervision of students' learning activities and provision of enabling

learning environment at home.

Table 5: Correlations of the Variables in the Analysis (N = 141)

| Variable | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|--|------|------|------|------|
| 1. parents' interest in their students' education | .455 | .396 | .590 | .382 |
| 2. provision of an enabling learning environment at home | -- | .223 | .366 | .165 |
| 3. home environment | | -- | .257 | .483 |
| 4. parental supervision of students' learning activities | | | -- | .323 |
| 5. parents and siblings' speech models | | | | -- |

Note: All correlations were statistically significant ($p < .001$).

The raw and standardized regression coefficients of the predictors together with their correlations with parents' interest in their students' education, their squared semi-partial correlations and their structure coefficients, are shown in Table 5. In a similar study, it was revealed that some educated parents show interest in their children's academic performance and by so doing "choose subjects, meet and collaborate with administrators of higher institutions" in order to ensure that the children are serious in their studies (Good & Brophy, 1997) cited in (Muruwei, 2011, p.303).

Parental supervision of students' learning activities received the strongest weight in the model followed by provision of an enabling learning environment at home. With the sizeable correlations between the predictors, the unique variance explained by each of the variables indexed by the squared semi-partial correlations was quite low. Examination of the structure coefficients suggests that, with the possible exception of home environment whose correlation is still moderately substantial, the other significant predictors were strong indicators of the latent variable described by the model, which can be interpreted as the effect of learning environment provided by parents at home on students' academic achievement. Other scholars share the opinion that parents who are well educated and are professionals with good salaries are able to provide their children with good learning environment to enable them excel in their education (Muruwei 2011; Michieka, 2011; Antwi, 1992; Agyeman, 1993; Prewitt, 1974, Nguyen, 2006, & Jerrim and Micklewright, 2009). Anene (2005) also agree with the view that families should provide their children with adequate educational resources as well as make time to supervise or look into their academic work when they come back from school. The standard regression results of respondents are shown in Table 6.

TABLE 6: STANDARD REGRESSION RESULTS

| Model | B | SE-b | Beta | Pearson <i>r</i> | <i>sr</i> ² | Structure Coefficient |
|--|--------|-------|-------|------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|
| Constant | -0.304 | 0.407 | | | | |
| Provision of learning environment at home* | 0.303 | 0.084 | 0.243 | 0.455 | 0.050 | 0.662 |
| Home environment* | 0.157 | 0.065 | 0.175 | 0.396 | 0.023 | 0.576 |
| Parental supervision of student learning activities* | 0.475 | 0.080 | 0.416 | 0.590 | 0.137 | 0.859 |
| Parents and siblings' speech models | 0.117 | 0.069 | 0.123 | 0.382 | 0.011 | 0.556 |

Note: The dependent variable was parents' interest in their students' education affects their academic attainment. $R^2 = .473$, Adjusted $R^2 = .457$. sr^2 is the squared semi-partial correlation. * $p < .05$

In testing the hypothesis, the researchers considered the following variables: parents' vocational/professional qualifications influence students' level of achievements, parents' academic qualifications influence children's educational achievements in school, parents' educational qualifications determine the kind of assistance children receive at home, parents' educational attainments enhance home environment for students' learning activities, parents' educational attainments provide inspirations for students, parents' educational qualifications determine the kind of supervision given to students at home, parents' educational qualifications influence the interest they attach to their children's education and type of school parents attended influences students' achievement levels. In respect of this finding Obeta (2014) found that home environmental factors such as provisions of adequate educational materials to the students, teaching them at home, supervising them at home, enrolment of students in good schools, existence of cordial relationship, academic level of students' parents among others contribute immensely to the students' academic success.

4 CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Respondents were of the opinion that learning environment at home influences the academic achievements of students. Learning environment provided by parents at home included availability of story books, newspapers, dictionaries, light, quiet place for learning, tables and chairs, among other things. Apart from these, providing time for students to learn at home, educational levels of parents and siblings or availability of people who can provide assistance to students when the need arises, parents' interest in their students' education and ability to have quality

time with them on their educational issues at home, all constitute the learning environment at home that could influence students' ability and readiness to learn at home. This suggests that parents should make conscious efforts to ensure that they create home environment that will support their children's learning at home.

The study also found that tension and misunderstanding between parents affects students' learning at home. This disturbs children psychologically and academically and drives them away from home. Parents should try to ensure that home is free of unnecessary tension so that children can have peace of mind to stay home and study. In addition, parents should try as much as possible to establish a good relationships with their children so that children can feel free all the time to approach them with their problems. This will prevent the situation whereby they brood on their educational problems which end up affecting their general performance in school.

The study also found that parental supervision at home contribute greatly to the academic achievement of students. Parents' effort in supervising their children's learning at home shows the interest they attach to their children's education which in turn motivates children to work harder at school and at home.

The study further revealed that one of students' challenges at home was that of their engagement in household chores which usually takes much of their learning time. Students' engagement in household chores should be minimized so as to enable them have enough time to revise whatever they were taught in the evening. Reducing their chores at home will also provide more rest time for them so that they go back to school the following more refreshed and mentally alert.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study the following recommendations are made:

1. The study found that some parents did not have time to discuss with their children the progress and challenges they encounter in their studies. Therefore the researchers recommend that parents must discuss with their students the progress and challenges they have in their studies at least once in every term. This will demonstrate the interest parents have in their children's education.
2. The study found that, poor home environment of students from disadvantaged backgrounds affects their desire to study at home. Parents must accept the challenge of providing and creating a congenial atmosphere at home that will promote their children's learning. For example, tables and chairs, dictionaries, story books, newspapers, television and radio sets and a quiet place for learning at home.
3. It came to light that some students work before and after school to assist their parents to raise income for the family. The idea of assisting in the household chores and other family duties is not bad but students should not be made to work at the expense of their education. Parents should ensure students are not made to engage in works that are strenuous such as fishing, mining among others which could have health implications for them.

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