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Teachers' and Students' Perceptions on School Based Factors That Affect Education and Completion in the Sekyere South District and Asante Mampong Municipality of Ghana

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Abstract:

This study was to seek the opinion of teachers and students on school-based factors that affect education and completion in Sekyere South District and the Asante Mampong Municipality of Ghana. The population for the study was teachers and students selected from nine circuits in these two-study areas. In all one thousand and eighty teachers and students were sampled to take part in the study. Questionnaire was used for data collection. Data was analysed descriptively using frequencies and percentages, means and standard deviation. The study revealed that school location, inadequate learning materials, lack of well-equipped school libraries were some of the factors affecting students' education and completion in these educational directorates. The study recommends that the district and municipal directorates of education and other stakeholders in education take it upon themselves to educate students on the adverse effects of truancy and reducing large class size in addition to providing learning resources.

Teacher and student motivation are crucial in enhancing optimal performance and quality education. Hence, educational stakeholders in the study area should strategize to reward hard working teachers to enable them give of their best to step up performance in school and ensure school completion.

It is also recommended that periodic workshops should be organized for teachers, to educate them on best practices in education today to improve education and school completion in the study area.

Keywords: *Circuits, perceptions, school-based factors, education and completion, instructional materials*

1. Introduction

Education is generally considered as a tool for development all over the world. It forms the basis for literacy, skill acquisition and technological advancement of all societies. According to Kimani *et al.*, (2013) the purpose of education is to equip the citizenry with values, skills and knowledge to reshape their society and eliminate inequality and to help an individual develop his capabilities, attitudes and behaviour that is acceptable to the society. Students' education and completion plays a pivotal role in producing the best quality of people who will be the leaders of the country today and in future. Education is thus, responsible for the country's economic and social development (Ali *et al.*, 2009). Grades awarded to students at the end of an academic study are important indicators of ability and productivity when those individuals look for their first jobs. A person's education is closely linked to his life chances, income and wellbeing (Battle & Lewis, 2002). As a result of this, students' success in any academic endeavour is of paramount interest to educators, parents and society as a whole (Ajayi, 2006). However, several impediments may affect one's education and completion along the line which is a source of concern to educational stakeholders globally.

In spite of the effort by the government of Ghana to improve students' education and educational delivery at all levels through policy initiatives such as the free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) programme in 1995, the capitation grant, the school feeding programme and recently the free senior high school policy, the education sector continue to face myriads of challenges. According to the Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research (ISSER) (2008), the performance of many children in our schools is failing to meet the minimum learning requirements and to acquire basic skills and competencies. This issue of students' academic performance has been of concern to many people ever since (Carmody, 1999). Silver (1999) acknowledges that a child is an individual and changes at his own pace with differences in needs, abilities, interests, cultural influence, learning patterns and behaviours hence, as children come to school, they come with various traits and in enhancing their education, they should be looked at as individuals with unique abilities and knowledge.

In considering factors that affect students' education and completion, Lockheed and Verspoor (1991) indicated that instructional materials are crucial in providing information, organize the scope of the data presented and provide a

chance for students to use what they have studied. Students' usually perform better when they have books and other study aids to foster their learning. It is clear that students' education and completion requires critical attention, not only looking at it from the generic perspective but looking in detail, the specific school-based factors that affect their education and completion. Therefore, this study sought to discover the very factors in basic schools that affect students' education and completion in the Sekyere South district and Asante Mampong Municipality of Ghana.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

Several factors have been documented to affect quality education and students' education completion. More importantly, those bottlenecks in achieving quality education and how to minimize them. There is no doubt that there are inequalities in terms of resources that positively affects education in our schools. Personal observation and interaction with teachers clearly show gross imbalance among schools in terms of learning resources such as classrooms, well equipped school libraries and suitable textbooks that are needed for excellent academic work. Again, some schools are located in places or environments such that they positively or negatively impact on student education. Etsey (2005) in a study found out that inadequate textbook, less professionally trained teachers and limited teaching and learning materials affects one's education. A study of the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) results of Sekyere South district and Asante Mampong Municipal basic schools from 2015 to 2018 shows a downward trend in achievement in the various subjects. It is against this backdrop that the study sought to find out the perception of teachers' and students on school-based factors that affect education and completion in the Sekyere South district and Asante Mampong Municipality of Ghana.

1.2. Objective of the Study

The main objective of the study was to determine the perception of teachers and students on school-based factors that affect education and completion in the two selected educational directorates (Sekyere South district and Asante Mampong Municipality of Ghana).

1.3. Specific objectives

- To determine the school-based factors that affects education and completion in the Sekyere South district and Asante Mampong Municipality of Ghana.
- Find out the effects of these factors on students' educational performance.
- Suggest ways of improving the educational delivery and completion in these areas.

1.4. Research Questions

- What school-based factors affect education and completion in the Sekyere South district and Asante Mampong Municipality?
- In what ways does these school-based factors affect students' education and completion in these educational directorates?
- What strategies could be employed to improve students' education and completion in the Sekyere South district and Asante Mampong Municipality?

2. Review of related literature

2.1. Factors Influencing Student's Education and Completion

Various factors are known to affects students' education and school completion generally. Rothstein (2000) argues that learning is not only a product of formal schooling but also of communities, families and peers. According to Crosnoe *et al.*, (2004), academic performance is often defined in terms of examination performance. This has to do with how well a student meets standards set out by the learning institution. Undoubtedly, several factors may affect students' education and completion. These may include; teaching and learning materials, school library, truancy and absenteeism on the part of students and teacher tardiness.

Mushtaq & Khan (2012) conducted a study on factors affecting students' educational performance at Rawalpinda and Islamabad private colleges of Pakistan. The study focused on different factors such as class size, home environment and environment of the class. The findings revealed that family stress affects the performance of the students negatively. The study further revealed that communication, learning facilities and proper guidance affect students' education. Fuller (1985) was of the view that various books for readers' consumption in the library is rated among the factors that increase academic performance of both teachers and students. However, outdated books in school libraries will not make it effective and attractive enough for students use. Having said that, a complete absence of a well-equipped school library impacts negatively on student's education since they will hardly get books of reference to broaden their knowledge.

Ali *et al.*, (2009) believes that students' attendance is a significant factor contributing to their education. Absenteeism impact negatively on both the teacher and the student in terms of education delivery. When a student is absent, it affects his academic achievement. On the other hand, when a teacher is absent it slows the rate of instructions.

A study by Malambo (2012) in Zambia on factors affecting students' educational performance in Grant-Aided and Non-Grant Aided secondary schools in Western province revealed that students from non-grant aided schools were under performing in all manner of their education as compared to students from grant-aided schools. The unsatisfactory performance of students from non-grant aided schools were attributed to inadequate learning and teaching resources,

over enrolment, low teacher morale and student indiscipline. On the other hand, good performance in grant-aided secondary schools were as a result of adequate learning and teaching materials, high teacher morale, strong school academic policies and high level of student discipline.

2.2. School Based Factors and How They Affect Students' Education & Completion

School environmental factors have generally been identified to influence education and completion globally and Sekyere South district and Asante Mampong Municipality in particular. These includes availability of instructional materials, school location and quality of the physical facilities, class size (student-teacher ratios), teacher qualification and experience, as well as teacher supervision.

2.3. Availability of Instructional Materials and How They Affect Student's Education & Completion

Instructional materials provide information, organize the scope and sequence of the information presented. It provides an opportunity for students to use what they have learned (Lockheed & Verspoor, 1991). To a large extent, the availability of these resources will improve or impede students' educational outcome and completion. It is believed that Sekyere South district and Asante Mampong Municipality may have it fair share of these instructional material challenge. An informal discussion with teachers in these educational districts seems to suggest that teachers hardly get and use these instructional materials in teaching and learning. Instructional materials include: textbooks, teacher's guides, wall pictures, maps and atlases. Availability and use of these materials affect teacher's lessons and students learning.

2.4. How School Location and Physical Facilities Affect Students' Education & Completion

It is generally believed that the location of a school and quality of the physical facilities such as buildings goes a long way to influence the performance and achievement levels of students. Harbison and Hanushek (2006) stated that the quality of the physical facilities of a school is positively related to student educational performance. Ironically, students in some schools not only in the study area receive instructions in dilapidated buildings and unhygienic environments and undoubtedly, is a threat to quality education. Asikhia (2010) indicates that where the school is located determines to a very large extent the patronage such a school will enjoy. Adepoju (2001) also opined that students in urban schools manifest more brilliant performance than their rural counterparts. These were attributed to quality physical building and location of school.

Ojoawo (1990), however, noted that certain schools are favoured in the allocation of facilities at the expense of others. In many developing countries including Ghana, certain physical facilities are non-existing and instances where they are available, they are of sub-standard.

2.5. Effects of Class Size on Students' Education & Completion.

Class size have been identified as a determining factor of academic performance. Studies have shown that schools with smaller class sizes perform better academically than schools with larger class sizes. Adeyela (2000) found that large class size is not conducive for serious academic work. This means that, a large class size will definitely have an untold consequence on students' education. A study by Salfi and Saeed (2007) showed a significant correlation between school size and students' achievement in Pakistan. The study revealed that small schools performed better than medium and large schools. Class size is inversely related to academic achievement hence, posing a threat to students' education and completion.

2.6. Factors That Contribute to Students' Education and Completion

School's general climate, the existing school norms, class sizes, the resources of the school among other factors affect students' education and completion. Teachers in developing countries such as Ghana, often receive earnings that are insufficient at providing them with a reasonable standard of living. Bennell (2004) remarked that teachers pay and other material benefits were too low for individual and household survival in developing countries. Zemyilas & Papanastasiou (2004) in their study of Cyprus teachers found that salary was one of the issues which dissatisfied teachers. These findings point to the fact that, the issue of teachers' salary must not be underestimated since it is the only source of income to majority of them. Furthermore, teachers remain motivated as long as salaries are paid on time and they are promoted regularly.

School leadership and management style is also important, which can either motivate or lower teacher morale and commitment. Teachers feel highly motivated when they are consulted about decisions regarding their work. Unfortunately, many heads in leadership position in the education service centralize decision making powers. They are autocratic in their dealings with teachers (Ayeni, 2005). The attitude of school inspectors (circuit supervisors) towards teachers in supervising their work is another important work-related motivational factor that may improve education. A responsive supervisor will make his supervisory role more clinical in a learning situation rather than finding fault with the teacher and possibly reprimanding him or her. For these reason, greater attention should be given to improving work-related conditions of teachers to increase the quality of education and completion of students. Sink (2003) recommends the introduction of intensive guidance and counseling techniques for students, teachers, the community and parents as a whole. This should take into account aligning the students' targets with the goals of school reform, use evidence-based best practices and report outcome-based data as a way of ensuring accountability of their work with students and their caregivers. Lapan *et al.*, (2002) believes, by performing a more proactive leadership role in empowering students to

become self-regulated learners. In this sense professional school counselors will motivate young people to fully realize their academic potential bringing about better education and ensuring successful completion.

3. Research Methodology

3.1. Study design

This study used the survey design with the intention of gathering views of participants on school-based factors contributing to education and completion in the Sekyere South district and Asante Mampong Municipality of Ghana, Orodho & Kombo (2002). According to Newman (2007) survey is right for measuring respondents' beliefs and opinions. This is because it gathers information from students and staff (teachers) on the subject of the study.

3.2. Population and Sampling Technique

The study was conducted in Sekyere South district and Asante Mampong Municipality using nine circuits with fifty-five Junior High Schools (JHS) head teachers and teachers as the population. A total of twenty JHS were purposively selected for the study. The schools were chosen based on their location (hard to reach areas), the school's profile reports, (physical facilities availability, teacher quality, enrolment) and Basic Education Certificate Examination results from 2015 to 2018. (Asante Mampong Municipal and Sekyere South Directorates of Education, 2018) Statistics report. In all two hundred and seventy teachers including head teachers and eight hundred and ten students were used in the study. Head teachers and teachers who have been at post for two years and more were made to participate in the study. Again, Junior High one, two and three students were randomly selected to be part of the study. Bringing the total sample to one thousand and eighty.

3.3. Tools for Data Collection

The tool for data collection was questionnaire. The teachers and students answered questionnaire. These questionnaires were in four sections. Part one consisted of background information of participants. The second section comprised school factors that affect students' education and completion. The third part was on effects of school-based factors on students' education and completion.

The last part covered ways of improving students' education and completion in the two selected educational directorates.

3.4. Data Analysis

Data was analysed quantitatively using descriptive statistics. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used. This involves frequencies and percentages, means, standard deviation and skewness. This helped to analyse teachers' and students' views on school-based factors contributing to education and completion and ways of improving education in the educational directorates.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Biographical Data of Participants

	Sex	(f)	(%)	Sex	(f)	(%)
Teachers	Male	221	82	Students Male	407	53
	Female	49	18	Female	403	47
	Total	270	100	Total	810	100

Table 1: Indicates Gender of Participants

Source: Field Survey (2019), F=Frequency: % = Percent

From table 1, majority of the teachers were males 221 (82%) and female 49 (18%). The students' participants were 407 (53%) males and 403 (47%) females respectively.

- Research Question 1: What school-based factors affect students' education and completion in the Sekyere South district and Asante Mampong Municipality of Ghana?

School Factors	Respondents	Agree	Strongly Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean	Standard Deviation	Skewness
School	Students	345(42%)	154(19%)	241(30%)	70 (9%)	2.04	1.034	0.382
Location	Teachers	85(32%)	74(27%)	74(27%)	37(14%)	2.23	1.042	0.254
Students' Enrolment	Students	314(39%)	182(22%)	221(27%)	93(12%)	2.11	1.034	0.362
	Teachers	97 (36%)	51 (19%)	85 (31%)	37(14%)	2.23	1.083	0.186
Language Used	Students	294(36%)	144(18%)	270(33%)	101(13%)	2.22	1.072	0.165
	Teachers	124(46%)	61 (23%)	66 (24%)	19 (7.0%)	1.93	0.992	0.587
Tlm's	Students	319(39%)	197(24%)	233(29%)	61(8%)	2.04	0.991	0.377
	Teachers	120(44%)	99 (37%)	35 (13%)	16 (6%)	1.80	0.881	0.921
Contents (Syllabus)	Students	267(33%)	169(21%)	277(34%)	97(12%)	2.25	1.043	0.118
	Teachers	110(41%)	64 (24%)	54 (20%)	42(15%)	2.10	1.10	0.491
Truancy of Students	Students	294(36%)	161(20%)	274(34%)	81(10%)	2.18	1.035	0.187
	Teachers	103(38%)	76 (28%)	63(23%)	28(11%)	1.90	0.941	0.767
School Library	Students	363(45%)	232(29%)	156(19%)	59 (7%)	1.89	0.960	0.717
	Teachers	121(45%)	83 (31%)	45(17%)	21 (7%)	1.87	0.956	0.795

Table 2: School Based Factors That Affect Students' Education and Completion

Source: Field Survey (2019), F=Frequency: % = Percent

4.2. Location of School

Asikhia (2010) observed that where the school is located determines to a very large extent the patronage such a school will enjoy. Similarly, the entire unattractive physical structure of the school building could demotivate learners to achieve academically success. This is what Isangedigh, (1988) refers to as learners environment mismatch. From the data in table 2, location of school has an effect from the perception of teachers (M=2.23, SD=1.042, Skew=0.254) with a percentage agreement (32%). Students gave high response (M=2.04, SD=1.034, Skew=0.382) with percentage agreement (42%). In addition, the school location and quality of the physical building influence the performance and achievement levels of students. Harbison and Hanushek (1992) stated that the quality of the physical facilities is positively related to student performance. This assertion corroborates that of Danesy (2004, cited in Yinusa & Basil, 2008) who stressed that good sitting arrangement and good buildings produce high academic achievements and performance, while dilapidated buildings that lack mental stimulating facilities coupled with low or no sitting arrangements is destructive.

4.3. Students' Enrolment

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. From the table, the number of students have effect from the perception of teachers (M=2.23, SD=1.083, Skew=0.186) with a percentage agreement of 36%. Students gave high response (M=2.11, SD=1.034, Skew=0.362) with percentage agreement of 39%. Fabunmi *et al.*, (2007), indicated that three class factors (class size, student classroom space and class utilization rate), when taken together, determined significantly students' academic performance in Oyo state, Nigeria. Kraft (1994) in his study of the ideal class size and its effects on teaching and learning in Ghana concluded that class sizes above 40 have negative effects on student's educational achievement.

4.4. Language Used

Persistent use of the mother tongue in communication at all levels in school will affect students' ability to write and communicate in English. This means, students will lack a lot of vocabulary in English needed to understand teachers' lessons and textbooks they read. This ultimately will affect their educational achievement. From table 2, language used has a very high effect from the perception of teachers (M=1.93, SD=0.992, Skew=0.587) with a percentage agreement of 46%. Most of the students gave high response (M=2.22, SD=1.072, Skew=0.165) with percentage agreement of 36%. This position is consistent with Etsey (2005) who found a significant relationship between the language use at school and the student performance in Shama sub metro schools in Ghana.

4.5. Teaching Learning Materials

Teaching learning materials provide information, organize the scope and sequence of the information presented, and provide opportunities for Students to use what they have learned (Lockheed & Verspoor, 1991). These learning materials could be textbooks, teachers' guide, wall pictures, maps, and atlases. The availability and use of teaching and learning materials affects the teachers' lessons. Table 4, shows that, learning materials have effect from the perception of teachers (M=1.80, SD=0.881, Skew=0.921) with a percentage agreement of 44%. Students gave response (M=2.04, SD=0.991, Skew=0.377) with percentage agreement of 39%. This supports the work of Nyandwi (2014) who undertook a study to assess factors that influenced the academic performance of students of selected secondary schools in Sumbawanga District, Tanzania. The study identified some factors rooted from the school environment such as inadequate teaching and learning facilities. Truancy and lack of school library also indicated some remarkable effects on one's education.

- Research question 2: Effects of school-based factors on students' education and completion

Parameter (Students)	Agree	Strongly Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean	Standard Deviation	Skewness
Loss of interest	309(38%)	184(23%)	235(29%)	82(10%)	2.11	1.032	0.331
Fatigue/Tiredness	331(41%)	144(18%)	239(29%)	96(12%)	2.12	1.079	0.321

Table 3: Some Effects of School-Based Factors on Students' Education and Completion

Source: Field Survey (2019), F=Frequency: % = Percent

McLean (1997) investigated the significant role of student attitudes toward learning with regard to their educational achievement. Students' loss of interest brings out attitudes such as absenteeism, truancy and indiscipline which have negative effect on their performance. From the data in table 3, loss of interest has a very high effect from the perception of students (M=2.11, SD=1.032, Skew=0.331) with a percentage agreement of 38%. These findings support the work of Allen-Meares, Washington and Welsh (2000) who found that loss of interest is seen as important in determining students' education. Also, Diaz (2003) found that when a student is strongly motivated, all his effort and attention are directed toward the achievement of a specific goal.

The causes of fatigue are many. It is believed that students who travel from long distance to school get tired and as such they become less effective in class. Also, long hours in class can also cause students to get tired and loss concentration and this affect one's education. From the data in table 3, fatigue/tiredness has a very high effect from the perception of students (M=2.12, SD=1.079, Skew=0.321) with a percentage agreement of 41%.

- Research question 3; Strategies that could improve students' education and completion in the Sekyere South district and Asante Mampong Municipality.

Parameter	Part-icipants	Agree	S A	D	S D	Mean	S D	Skewness
counselling	Students	278(34%)	157(20%)	252(31%)	123(15%)	2.27	1.091	0.151
	Teachers	147(55%)	71(26%)	25(9%)	27(10%)	1.75	0.989	1.151
Roll calls	Students	331(41%)	158(20%)	206(25%)	115(14)	2.13	1.103	0.151
	Teachers	141(52%)	90(33%)	24(9%)	15(6%)	1.68	0.856	1.210
Motivation	Teachers	117(43%)	81(30%)	51(19%)	21(9%)	1.91	0.964	0.706
INSETs	Teachers	138(51%)	88(33%)	25(9%)	19(7%)	1.72	0.901	1.162

Table 4: Strategies to Improve Students' Education and Completion

Source: Field Survey (2019), F=Frequency: % = Percent

Class attendance is a major predictor of academic success and this is done through the use of register, counselling and roll calls. From the data in table 4, school counselling has a very high effect from the perception of students (M=2.27, SD=1.091, Skew=0.151) with a percentage agreement of 34%. Teachers response showed (M=1.75, SD=0.989, Skew=1.151) with a percentage agreement of 55%. Counselling programme helps check absenteeism and truancy of students in class. The effect of absenteeism is that the students will find it difficult to understand the lessons taught.

Data from table 4, indicates that roll calls have a very high effect from the perception of students (M=2.13, SD=1.103, Skew=0.151) with a percentage agreement of 41%. Teachers representing gave high response (M=1.68, SD=0.856, Skew=1.210) with percentage agreement of 52%.

Motivation of teachers put teachers at a higher pedestal in doing their best in class and school generally. Where motivation of teachers is high, students' academic performance is affected positively. From the data in table 4, motivation of teachers has a very high effect from the perception of teachers (M=1.91, SD=0.964, Skew=0.706) with a percentage agreement of (43%). lack of motivation affects the output of teachers in the classroom. Again, in- service education and training (INSET) for teacher also showed a positive response in improving education and completion in the study area.

5. Findings

The study made it clear that location of some schools within the Sekyere South district and the Asante Mampong Municipality makes academic work quite challenging coupled with large class size, affective teaching and learning. In-service education and training and teacher motivation were seen as some of the ways to improve students' education and completion. There is also the issue of truancy on the part of some students. Furthermore, learning resources (TLMs) impact positively on teaching and learning outcomes.

5.1. Conclusions

In an attempt to determine the school-based factors that affect students' education and completion in the Sekyere South district and Asante Mampong Municipality of Ghana, the views of teachers and students on certain predictors were focused on. The study findings from both teachers and students revealed that several factors contribute to education and completion in the study area. These include location of school, enrolment in class, physical structures, school environment and distance covered to school. Other factors mentioned include teaching and learning materials and language used. When these factors are positive, they affect school life and student's education. On the contrary, when there are defects, they adversely impede students' education and consequently completion. Furthermore, the study revealed that, the following

policies exist in all the selected Junior High Schools; the use of school register, counselling sessions and roll calls to ensure efficient school system and better educational outcomes.

5.2. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Sekyere South district and the Asante Mampong municipal directorates of education and other stakeholders in education take it upon themselves to educate students on the adverse effects of truancy and reducing large class size by having additional streams.

Teacher motivation is crucial to enhance optimal performance and quality education. Hence, the study recommends that educational stakeholders in the municipality map out strategies to reward hard working teachers to give off their best in order to step up performance especially in the terminal examinations.

Again, the study recommends that periodic workshops organized for teachers in the study area, to educate them on best practices in education to improve education and school completion.

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