

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

IMPROVING CLASS ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY THROUGH  
SYSTEMATIC SUPERVISION IN ACHIMOTA  
PREPARATORY AND JUNIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL

BY

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the Faculty of Education, University of Cape Coast, in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Award of Master of Education Degree  
In Educational Administration*

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# DECLARATION

## Candidates Declaration

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

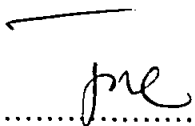
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## Supervisor's Declaration

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## ABSTRACT

The study was conducted with a view to finding out if supervision could be used as an intervention to improve class attendance and punctuality in Achimota Preparatory and Junior Secondary School. The Action Research method was used and this enabled the researcher to compare the effect of supervision on the pupils during the pre-intervention and the post-intervention stages.

The sample was made up of 85 pupils. The research looked at issues such as the causes of lateness to school, as well as class attendance, and the effect of supervision as an intervention, to improve the attendance of pupils to class and their punctuality to school.

After analyzing the data, the conclusion drawn was that supervision can be used as an intervention to improve class attendance and punctuality of pupils in the school.

Based on the findings the researcher made some recommendations, which will help improve on the pupils' attendance and punctuality.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am very grateful to my supervisor, Mrs. Janet Alberta Koomson, for painstakingly reading through the whole work. Her comments and suggestions have helped immensely in bringing this work into fruition. I am also grateful to my dear husband, Rev. Prof. C.J Mba, of the University of Ghana, for his prayers, financial and moral support.

To my dear mum, Mrs. Ruth Baiden-Amisshah, I do owe a lot of gratitude. She took care of my family whilst I was away. I appreciate all the lecturers of the Institute for Educational Planning and Administration also, for their various roles played, in helping me to achieve my aim.

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## **DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated to my entire family, the Mba's.

Remain blessed for your love and care.

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# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### Background to the Study

Effective supervision can improve the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom, as well as improvement of class attendance and punctuality in schools. All human beings in the education process – students, teachers, administrators and supervisors are individuals of worth, endowed with unique talents and capacities. The primary aim of supervision must be to recognize the inherent value of each person, to the end that the full potential of all will be realized.

According to Burton and Brueckner (1955), supervision is an expert technical service primarily aimed at studying and improving co-operatively all factors, which affect child growth and development. Some characteristics of supervision are that it directs attention toward the fundamentals of education and orients learning and its improvement within the general aim of education. Supervision also aims at improving the total teaching-learning process, the total setting for learning, rather than the narrow and limited aim of improving teachers in service.

Wiles (1967) maintains that 'supervision consists of all the activities leading to the improvement of instruction, activities related to morale, improving human relations, in-service education, and curriculum development' (p. 6), whilst

Eye and Netzer (1960) also state that supervision is that phase of school administration which deals primarily with the achievement of the appropriate selected instructional expectations of educational service. (Neagley and Evans, 1970, p2)

In summary, then, school supervision is a positive, democratic action aimed at the improvement of classroom instruction through the continual growth of all concerned – the child, the teacher, the supervisor, the administrator and the parent or other interested lay person. According to Neagley and Evans (1970), supervision of the instructional process began in American schools with the visits of school committee or board members for “inspection” purposes. It is questionable if much assistance in the improvement of instruction resulted from the visits of these laypersons who were mainly concerned that the three ‘R’s were being taught effectively. However, many a teacher was hired or fired on the basis of these inspectorial visits.

It is generally agreed that professional supervision was initiated with the organization of the county superintendent of schools office in the mid-nineteenth century. For the next seventy-five years, the county superintendent in many areas provided notable services to the schools, including direct supervision of the instructional process. In fact, for the teacher beginning work with two years of normal school or less, the county office provided most of the available on-the-top or in-service training. The county institute originated during this era as a means of improving teachers’ skills and keeping them abreast of the latest educational trends.

With the advent of the public high school in America, in the late 1800s and the developments of larger comprehensive school systems, special supervisory personnel were often provided at the district level. Hence, the influence of the county superintendent as a supervisor was diminished. The modern intermediate or large school district assigns supervisory functions to many personnel, who often served in specialized areas such as curriculum development and selection of learning resources. Consequently, the field of supervision grew with the increasing complexity of education in a complex society.

Neagley and Evans (1970) further explained that there has been a gradual evolution of the concept of supervision through the years. Originally authoritarian and sometimes punitive, teachers, who rightly felt that the supervisor was present only to criticize and to admonish, dubbed the process 'snoopervision'. This was due to the fact that the supervisory concept was narrow in scope, focusing mainly on criticism of the teacher in the classroom, followed sometimes by attempts to get him to improve his teaching skills. From this stage evolved the concept of 'improving the teacher' through supervision, with a rather narrow focus on the teacher, to the exclusion of other elements in the teaching learning process. Finally, the modern concept of dynamic, democratic, cooperative supervision emerged – to an extent that almost renders the word 'supervision' obsolete.

Supervision, then, seemed destined to play an essential role in deciding the nature and content of the curriculum, in selecting the school organizational

patterns and learning materials to facilitate teaching, in evaluating the entire educational process, as well as contributing to the improvement of students' attendance and punctuality in schools.

According to Dzinyela (2004), historically, supervision of instructions in schools started in Ghana, the then Gold Coast, in the early part of the 15<sup>th</sup> century with the inception of the castle schools at Elmina and the Christianburg castles. However, this supervision took the form of super ordinate-subordinate relationships and limited itself to the administration of the castle schools. Later, in 1882, when Rowe became governor of Gold Coast, he passed the 1882 Education Ordinance, which sought to promote the advancement of education in the British Colonies – Ghana, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and the Gambia. Among the provisions in the ordinance was the payment of government grants to schools (both government and government-assisted mission schools) on the basis of enrolment of pupils in each class in the school. The minimum enrolment qualifying a school for this grant was 20 pupils in a class.

To enforce this provision, a centralized general school board was set up in Ghana with a mandate to establish local boards in the other colonies. These local boards were to have inspectors of schools responsible for certifying schools for government grants in their respective countries (then colonies). However, due to lack of personnel, Rev. Metcalfe Sunter was appointed the first inspector, (now called supervisor) in the British colonies under the general board to be in charge of supervision of schools in these countries. Due to the large area of coverage, Rev. Sunter's supervision was ineffective. This era marked a dramatic turn from

the castle-centered supervision. However, this supervision placed emphasis on pupil enrolment and attendance to school. Supervision to a greater extent was limited to the schools in Cape Coast. This was as a result of the poor nature of roads that made traveling difficult and impossible.

Dzinyela (2004) further suggests that in 1887, when Griffith was made the governor of Ghana, he passed the 1887 educational ordinance for Ghana alone. This ordinance abolished the payment of grants on the basis of enrolment and rather tied it up to pupil's academic performance in class. This was to ensure that government's investment in education was worthwhile, hence, the inception of the "payment by results" concept. With this concept a board of education was established with the power to appoint inspectors of schools and certificated teachers.

The inspectors were to set and conduct a yearly examination in the affected schools; and the results of such schools were the basis of the payment of government grants to them. For example, an amount of two shillings per head per annum was paid for a pass in reading, writing and arithmetic, and additional amounts ranging from six pence to one shilling for other subjects. That is to say, the teachers' salaries depended on the number of pupils passing the inspector's examination in each class in each school. This marked the conflict between teachers as instructors and inspectors as supervisors.

In 1908, John Roger was appointed governor of the Gold Coast. He quickly set up a committee whose terms of reference was to study the various ordinances passed, and make recommendations for the advancement of education



in the Gold Coast. Among these recommendations were the termination of the "payment by results" and the introduction of payment by general efficiency of schools. To enforce and maintain the implementation of this provision, the concept of school boards were withheld and some inspectors of schools were appointed. These inspectors were assigned the responsibility of inspecting schools to ascertain their general efficiency in classroom instruction, teacher and pupil attendance to school among other environmental factors like cleanliness. Schools, which did not meet the criteria set, did not receive any grant from government.

After the end of the First World War in 1918, Gordon Guggisberg was appointed as governor of the Gold Coast. He showed tremendous interest in the development of education in the Gold Coast. Consequently, he formulated the sixteen principles for the development of education in Ghana. Included in these principles was the abolishing of payment of grants based on general efficiency of teaching. However, to improve the quality of teaching and learning in school, he thought this could be achieved through improvement in teacher training and supervision of instruction, hence, the concept of teacher certification. This concept led to the closure of one hundred and fifty schools, which were not manned by trained certificated teachers, and the establishment of more teacher training colleges, and the upgrading of the existing ones to certificate 'A' and certificate 'B' awarding institutions. The concept of supervision was so dear to Guggisberg's heart that he had to personally inspect schools in the Northern Territories (now Tamale, Bolgatanga and Wa).

This visit resulted in the appointment of Rev. A. H. Candler as head of the Northern Territories education department in 1925. To give legal backing to his principles, the 1925 Education Ordinance was passed. This Ordinance remained in force until the 1961 Education Act came to replace it. It is therefore crystal clear that until the early 1960's these systematic inspections operated at the level of basic education. In 1961, the Inspectorate Division of the GES was formally established as a professional unit distinct from the administrative schedules of the Ministry of Education. It was responsible for school inspection and evaluating administrative standards and maintenance of standards in pre-university education institutions. Inspecting officers and principal teachers, who worked mainly at the district and circuit levels, inspect and visit primary and middle schools. The early inspectors assessed the work of teachers and pupils through inspections and were characterized by force and issuing of orders and commands. The inspectors were regarded as 'tin gods', all knowing and people who had ultimate authority to hire or fire teachers, discipline anybody in the school and to open or close school on their own volition. Inspectors tip-toed to schools without knowledge of teachers, sometimes leaving their cars kilometers away from the school's premises.

Schools were sometimes inspected during weekends when the school was out of session and reports were made and sent to the regional and headquarters offices. In April 1969, the first substantive Chief Inspector of schools with a rank of Deputy Chief Education Officer was appointed to head the inspectorate division. The inspectorate maintained pre-determined basic minimum educational standards in all pre-university institutions to ensure equality of education

opportunity throughout Ghana. They ensured that the work of teachers, pupils and general conditions in the schools conform to the policies and specifications determined by the government through the Ministry of Education. During and after the 1987 Educational Reforms, some National Service Personnel were appointed as Monitoring Assistants to the District Education Officers (DEO's) who reported directly to the then Secretary of Education. They were empowered to enter any school premises to carry out inspection even though they were not professional teachers.

With the coming into force of the District Assembly concept and the implementation of the government's decentralization policy, management of both basic and second cycle institutions came under the District Director of Education. In 1990, the post of circuit supervisors was created, and the first batch of circuit supervisors who received training, replaced the then circuit officers. Before then, to qualify for the post of a circuit officer, a teacher was expected to pass General Certificate of Examination (G.C.E.) Ordinary Level in at least five (5) subjects and be of the rank of a principal superintendent. Presently, circuit supervisors are first-degree holders who give clinical supervision to teachers at the basic level and report to the Assistant Director in charge of supervision.

In addition, the Ghana Education Service Act, 1995 (Act 506) established the District Education Oversight Committee (DEOC) to oversee proper functioning of education at the district level and to work with the School Management Committee (SMC) to promote teaching and learning. Today,

supervision is collaborative, collegial and democratic. It aims at giving professional guidance towards the teaching and learning process.

Class attendance and punctuality of students in Achimota Preparatory School are important issues for public discussion. The School was established in 1957. It is the only Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) School in the Accra Metropolis. The management of the school lies on a board of directors, which is made up of parents who have their wards in the school, and teachers who are working in the school. The school is very dear to the hearts of these people.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Class attendance and punctuality of pupils to Achimota Preparatory and Junior Secondary School have been poor for some time now, and if proper measures are not put in place to arrest the situation, the same condition will continue to prevail. Poor class attendance and lack of punctuality lead to poor academic performance, and wastage of parents' and guardians' financial resources. Additionally, it may lead to school drop-out, and foreclosure of academic pursuit in the case of the pupil. The researcher conducted the study in order to find out some of the factors that affect the pupils' attendance and punctuality to school, and also tried to find a way of addressing those issues.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The main purpose of this study was to examine the effect of supervision on class attendance and punctuality, of pupils of Achimota Preparatory and Junior

Secondary School. The researcher also found out if supervision could be used as an intervention to improve these elements.

### **Research Questions**

On the basis of the foregoing problem statement and purpose of the study the following research questions are in order:

1. What are the background characteristics of the pupils who constitute the sample for this study?
2. To what extent does supervision influence class attendance and punctuality among pupils to school?
3. How does supervision affect student's obtaining permission to absent themselves from school?

### **Significance of the Study**

The findings of this study may provide the Administration of the Achimota Preparatory and Junior Secondary School with relevant information about the effectiveness of supervision on class attendance and punctuality. In particular, the results of the analysis would show if supervision as an intervention would help students to improve on class attendance and punctuality, which will be useful to the school's. Furthermore, the study would contribute to knowledge because the findings of the researcher would be of interest to other 1<sup>st</sup> Cycle institutions in the region and to the country as a whole. Relevant stakeholders,

such as P.T.A and S.M.C, NGO's and philanthropists can use the findings to strengthen their supervisory roles.

### **Limitation**

A study of this nature would have required the researcher to cover a good number of schools, to make generalization possible. However, due to time and financial constraints, the study has been limited to Achimota Preparatory and Junior Secondary School. The researcher's role as a teacher may affect the findings, as her results may be influenced by her personal biases and prejudices. Another limitation is the relatively small sample size, which renders statistical generalization impossible for a wider range of schools. In spite of these limitations, the study is important and useful as it may furnish empirical basis for policy making and decisions for improving class attendance and punctuality at the Achimota Preparatory and Junior Secondary School.

### **Delimitation**

The focus of the study was on improving class attendance and punctuality of pupils to school, through supervision.

### **Organization of the Study**

The study consists of five main chapters. The introductory chapter, Chapter One, deals with the background to the study, the research problem, and purpose of the study, research questions, and significance of the study, limitations and delimitations of the study. Chapter Two presents a review of available

literature relevant to the study, while Chapter Three discusses the methods and techniques that were adopted to collect and analyze the data.

Chapter Four focuses attention on the results and discussion of the findings, while Chapter Five, which is the final chapter, covers the summary, conclusion and recommendations of the study.

## CHAPTER TWO

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The review deliberates on opinions of other authorities or researchers in the area of the study, and it examines issues such as:

1. Characteristics of Supervision
2. Functions of supervision
3. Research work and Supervision
4. Types of Supervision
5. Problems in Supervision
6. Qualities of a Supervisor
7. Major Principles of Supervision.

These sub-headings have been further explained below.

#### **Characteristics of Supervision**

According to Wiles (1960), if the full potentialities of individuals and society are to be realized, and are then to be translated into the most effective learning experiences of students, then supervision must be characterized by some major principles, one of which is the fact that the establishment and maintenance of satisfactory human relations among all staff members must be primary. To Wiles (1960), any supervisory activity will succeed only to the extent that each person involved is considered as a human being with a unique contribution to make in the educative process. Relationships among all personnel must be friendly, open, and informal to a great extent. Mutual trust and respect are



essential, and the person in the supervisory role must set the tone. He further explains that a group's productiveness is affected by the quality of its human relations, and the supervisor must work constantly for the improvement of group cohesiveness.

Wiles further explained that modern supervision is democratic in the most enlightened sense. "Democracy" does not mean 'laissez-faire', with each staff member proceeding as he pleases. Rather, the term implies a dynamic, understanding and sensitive leadership role. Wiles also suggests that a healthy rapport should exist among staff members in a give-and-take atmosphere which is conducive to objective consideration of the educational theories and problems of the day and of the school. Ideally, no personality, including the administrator or supervisor, dominates the group, but the considered judgments of all are felt to be valuable.

Decisions should be made by consensus after thorough research and adequate discussion in the area under study. Individuals should be included in basic policy planning, in studies of instructional program, and in all fundamental changes, which affect them or their position directly, and this does not mean that everyone must or should be involved in every decision. The person in the supervisory position has the responsibility for deciding when individuals should be consulted. When people are involved, then, there must be evidence that their creative participation is eagerly sought and that their contributions to the group decision are significant. Absolutely, there is no place in democratic supervision for autocratic administrative action based on token staff consultation. Democracy

in supervision therefore means active, cooperative involvement of all staff members in aspects of the instructional program which concern them, under the leadership of a well-informed, capable, and discerning administrator or supervisor who believes in the privacy of positive human relationships (Neagley & Evans 1970).

Wiles (1960) is also of the opinion that modern supervision is comprehensive in scope. It embraces the total public school program, kindergarten through to the twelfth or fourteenth years, depending on the organization of the school district. The curriculum is, or should be, a developing, on-going process involving the child from kindergarten enrollment through high school or junior college graduation. Modern supervision is now comprehensive in view of the teacher and the learner. It is directed at improving all factors involved in pupil learning. The modern supervisory role reaches far beyond the traditional 'classroom visitation'.

## **Functions of Supervision**

### **Staffing Function**

According to Dzinyela (2004), one of the most effective means by which instruction can be improved in a school or school system is to obtain better qualified teachers. The staffing function therefore, involves all those activities related to recruitment, selection and placement of staff as well as those related to conditions of employment and retention of qualified teachers. It is also concerned with formal education of teachers for purposes of establishing tenure for promotion, transfer and dismissal.

### **Motivation and Stimulation Function**

Even well qualified and efficient teachers selected for and placed in a system may lose some of their effectiveness through professional frustration, inappropriate assignment on duties or because of inept administration practices. To Dzinyela (2004), since it is a facilitating function, supervision should help to remove the obstacles to good teaching and at the same time provide the stimulus for creative work. Hence the motivation function is concerned with providing a challenging environment with even professional leadership with job satisfaction and morale and with teacher participation in formulating policies, which will affect their own task performance. The motivation function is a subtle one and its performance requires skill and understanding on the part of the supervisor. It must be carried out in such a way that professional capabilities are released and creativity can flourish.

### **Consultative Function**

Dzinyela further explains that another major function of supervision is concerned with providing for continuous professional development of teachers. Broadly conceived, this function includes those activities ordinarily designated as in-service education. Consultation may be carried out as follows:

- (1) Between the individual teacher and consultant in the solution of a specific problem.

(2) It may be conducted with group of teachers, considered to have general problems of interest to all members of the group.

(3) The consultation function is also effected through encouraging teachers to learn privately by professional reading.

Individual or group consultation may involve highly directive or highly non-directive behavior by the consultant. But more usually, it falls between these extremes. The nature of this behavior will vary depending on the nature of the problems, the nature of the individuals or groups and the purpose of the consultant.

### **The Program Development Function**

Other factors being equal, the best teaching will occur when good school programs have been developed. To Dzinyela (2004), even when a curriculum is constructed, and imposed by the central authority, many adaptations for a local school or system are permissible and desirable. Variation in subject content, modification in order and method of presentation, experimentation in teaching techniques and use of audio-visual devices, adaptations of programmed learning and of team approaches to teaching are forms of program development. Even variations in school or classroom organization and routines may be considered as program development. Such modifications may very well stimulate professional excitement and enthusiasms that turn to be stifled by rigidly controlled and routine procedures.

## **The Evaluation Function**

The evaluation function assesses what ever is thought and compares it with what is supposed to be achieved. In this function, Dzinyela (2004) explained that data is collected and analyzed to determine the quality level of teaching and learning and the feedback helps us to improve upon supervision activities.

McDonald (1981) believes that the primary function of effective supervision is to take responsibility for putting more “glue” into the school. Glue is a metaphor for effective, fully functioning school supervision. Glue is not glamorous; neither is supervision. Glue does get attention when the legs of a chair collapse, just as supervision does when a school fragments and fails. With success, both glue and supervision are taken for granted; with a failure, they are both held responsible. This is as it should be: teachers are in the forefront of successful instruction; supervision is in the background, providing the support, knowledge and skills that enable teachers to succeed. When improved instruction and school success do not materialize, supervision should shoulder the responsibility for not permitting teachers to be successful.

McDonald (1981) further explains that effective supervision requires knowledge, interpersonal and technical skills. These are applied through the supervisory tasks of direct assistance to teachers, curriculum development, staff development, group development and action research. This adhesive pulls together organizational goals the teacher needs and provides for improved learning.

## Research Findings and Supervision

Throughout the years, a number of studies have been conducted which report attitudes of teachers toward supervisors and supervision in general. Several of the more pertinent ones will be reported here. Neagley (1962) found that there is a conclusive negative relationship between the extent of confidence held by teachers in their supervisor and the supervisor's conformity with bureaucratic practice. Claye (1963) in a study representing teachers of all levels in the elementary schools in five different states concluded that:

1. Effective supervision is based on sound principles of social change and group dynamics.
2. Teachers want supervision from principals as well as from those persons with titles of supervisor.
3. Principals do not supervise adequately.
4. The kinds of help that teachers want do not change significantly as the length of time in service varies.
5. All teachers need and want supervision.

Campbell (1961) studied the relationships that exist between supervisory leadership and the various situational factors in the social setting where supervision takes place. Her findings revealed that teachers place a high value on those behavior actions of supervisors, which seem to exemplify warmth, mutual trust, friendship and respect.

Grossman (1967), in a study of teachers' evaluation of supervisory practices, found that those practices considered by teachers to be useful were:

helpful attitude, informal conferences, demonstration teaching, assistance with discipline, informal observations, assistance with planning, provision of books and materials, assistance to new teachers and provision of administrative assistance.

At present, several theories have been advanced that may prove useful in the phase of educational administration designated as supervision. Supervisors must therefore, endeavor to be familiar with administrative theory, participate in the construction of new theories, and draw and test hypotheses from these theories. They, likewise, should be conversant with instructional and curriculum theories and be prepared to assist teachers in theory building and use. Supervisors must be of assistance to teachers in the area of research. They must keep up-to-date records on the findings of research that are published in many different sources and to make these findings and sources available to staff members.

### **Types of Supervision**

Glickman and Tamashiro (1980) wrote about three types of supervision. These are directive supervision, collaborative supervision and non-directive supervision. Directive supervision is an approach based on the belief that teaching consists of technical skills with known standards and competencies for all teachers to be effective. The supervisor's role is to inform, direct, model and assess those competencies.

Collaborative supervision is based on the belief that teaching is primarily problem solving, whereby two or more persons jointly pose hypotheses to a problem, experiment and implement those teaching strategies that appear to be

most relevant in their own surroundings. The supervisor's role is to guide the problem-solving process, be an active member of the interaction and keep the teachers focused on their common problems.

Non-directive supervision is also a type of supervision that has its premise that learning is primarily a private experience in which individuals must come up with their own solutions to improve the classroom experience for students. The supervisor's role is to listen, be nonjudgmental, and provide self-awareness and clarification experiences for teachers.

Purkey and Smith (1982) are of the opinion that anyone with direct responsibility for improving classroom and school instruction is referred to as a supervisor. Typical supervisors are school principals, assistant principals, instructional leaders, teachers, departmental heads, master teachers, teachers, program directors, central office consultants and coordinators and associate or assistant superintendents. Supervision is viewed as a process and a function, not a particular position or person. Research on effective schools documents that such schools have in common staff members who attend to the function of improving instruction.

Harris (1975) clarified the supervisor's role further, by stating that supervision is related directly to helping teachers with instruction but only indirectly to instructing students. Supervision is not the act of instructing students – that is, teaching, but rather the actions that enable teachers to improve upon instructing students.



## **Problems in Supervision**

The attitude of teachers to supervision has been one area that has engaged the attention of educationists. Since teachers are the focus of most of this increased supervisory effort, their attitude towards supervision is important. Neagley and Evans (1970) are of the view that although there are undoubtedly many instances of well-received supervisory practice, a common response of teachers to supervision might be expressed as the suspicion that supervision is as ineffectual and at worst a harmful form of interference with the work of the teacher. This view expressed by Neagley and Evans is very common among teachers and has been a strain on the effective co-operation that should exist between the supervisor and the supervisee. If teachers should view supervision as interference in their work, then it means most of the new ideas and innovations, which might be given them at workshops, would not be implemented.

Neagley (1962) points out that there is a conclusive negative relationship between the extent of confidence held by teachers in their supervisor and the supervisor's conformity with bureaucratic practice.

## **Qualities of a Supervisor**

It is so obvious that such a concept of supervision requires a high level of educational leadership for its implementation. According to Neagley and Evans (1970), the supervisor must be equipped personally and professionally to handle the position and responsibility to which he is called. Although research studies in selection of supervisors and administrators are quite limited, certain conclusions seem evident. Dzinyela (2004) outlined some basic qualities that a supervisor

must possess. The supervisor should have positive attitude towards students and teachers. In other words, he should be in touch with his teachers and students and care for them. The supervisor should have a good human relationship, be friendly and tolerant to the supervisee. His presence should not frighten the supervisee. He should give him encouragement. For example, when a supervisor visits a school he should interact briefly with the head of the school and the supervisee to establish a rapport.

The supervisor must command respect, be well behaved and possess a desirable personality so that the supervisee will have confidence in him. His appearance and communication skills should demonstrate that he is a leader. Also, the supervisor should be understanding and know how to communicate his observations to the supervisee so that he can help him or her to improve the current level of achievement. He should be a model to teachers, that is, he should be a living example of how to relate to people and must demonstrate that it is possible to improve. After observing classroom teaching, he should meet the supervisee at a supervisory conference, help him or her identify or classify his or her strengths and weaknesses before giving him or her data gathered through the observation. The supervisor then assists the supervisee to develop solutions to the problems.

Dzinyela (2004) further explains that the supervisor should be a rational decision-maker for teachers to emulate. By this the supervisor should reason with the supervisee when explanations are given to unusual observations such as: why he should be teaching English at a particular time instead of Mathematics. He

should be knowledgeable, that is, he should be able to observe, know what to observe and how to observe to enable him assist the supervisee identify his or her strength or weaknesses and to improve upon them. He should know the different strategies of teaching to be able to help teachers coordinate the teaching approach with their curriculum content. After assessing the supervisee's approach to lesson delivery, the supervisor should be able to suggest new approaches to him or her.

The supervisor should be democratic. His skills in the use of group processes are vital and he needs to show a working understanding of the team concept in democratic supervision. In decision-making Dzinyela (2004) suggests that the supervisor should be a good listener and allow others to express their views on issues or matters affecting teaching and learning. The supervisor must also be fair and firm. He should be able and willing to subjugate his own personal ideas to the combined judgments of the team. However, he should be objective in assessing situations, issues, events that he meets in the school. He should have the courage to point out areas where he differs or disagrees with the supervisee.

Dzinyela (2004) is also of the view that the supervisor should be able to work within frustration and adversity and identify potentials in others and help them to see it. For example, there are times circuit supervisors' meet open confrontations. Defiance or allegations may be leveled against them in their work. He should be able to withstand such situations and carry out his normal duties diligently.

### **Class Attendance and Punctuality**

According to Kwakye (2004), some researchers have explained the effect of poor class attendance on academic work of pupils in a school, and have gone

further to suggest strategies that can be adopted to curb this negative attitude. Some of the factors that lead to poor class attendance are: time for learning, backwardness, punishment, teacher's assessment at school levels, peer group influence, classroom peer interaction and academic achievements, poverty, the school environment, inarticulacy of teachers and truancy.

### **Time for Learning**

Lockheed, Verspoor, and Adracin (1998) state that, research from a variety of countries has shown that the amount of time for teaching and learning academic subjects and how well that time is used by students and teacher is consistently related to how much children learn while they are in school. In general, when teachers devote more time to instructions, students learn more. In India and Thailand, the students learned more science when the amount of time spent on instructions and reading increased. In Nigeria the increase in the instruction time increased the amount of mathematics learned.

Lockheed et al. (1998) are of the view that the number of hours available for children to study a given subject in school is determined by some factors. These are:

1. The hours in the official school year
2. The problem of these hours assigned to the subject. This will determine the contact hours the tutor can have with the students in that subject area.

3. The amount of time lost because of social events, teachers' absence, students' absence and miscellaneous interruptions. Additional time for study can be provided by after school period and homework assignment.

To Kwakye (2004), the situation in Ghana is not different. We now have more national holidays than before 1990. In the 1960s, we knew of Independence Day holiday, Republic Day holiday, Christmas, Boxing Day, Easter holidays and a few others, but additions today include Eid-Al-Adha and Eid-Al-Fitr, Farmers Day, Teachers Day, May day and a few more. Schools are closed during all these holidays.

In Malawi, the school year is 192 days but one-third of these days fall during the rainy season. Instruction is virtually impossible during rainstorm. Teachers cannot be heard above the noise of rain falling on the tin roofs of schools, and roads are impassable, keeping both students and teachers at home. (Lockheed et al., 1998).

### **Backwardness**

In dealing with the causes of backwardness in school children Grant (1960) states that the child may have missed a great deal of school through illness or because his parents did not send him regularly to school. If the child has been ill, it is no one's fault, but if absence from school is the parents' faults, the teacher should talk to them and show parents how they are preventing their child from learning.

He further suggests that parents should give these children some extra help in a group with other backward children or during playtime, or when the teachers have some other spare time. A good headmaster will arrange for these children to have special help. Either he will have them in his room and help them himself or he will take the class while the teacher gives them special help.

Secondly, the child may have missed some schooling two or three years before and may have caught up, or may have had a lazy teacher, or a teacher who had poor discipline and allowed him to play about. Thus he missed his work and did not attend classes and he gradually became more and more backward. Grant (1960) argues that special help is again necessary, and the teacher should go back and explain to the child the very simple beginnings, which he/she never learned. An example is when a child cannot understand sums about yards and feet. The teacher must go right to the beginning and teach the child how to measure and use a yardstick and ruler. He must then explain the first simple sums, and give the child practices until he can do them. Gradually, he will progress to solving more difficult sums.

### **Punishment**

Kwakye (2004) further explains that some children do not go to school because of punishments given to them. Children get scared, whenever they are punished at school, and because of that, they can decide to withdraw from school. Illingworth (1974) argues that punishment is wrong because most of the acts for which punishment is meted out are not the fault of students. Children are not to

get into trouble when there are obvious explanations for their behavior, which are outside the child's control.

Illingworth admits that, there must come a time when a child is to be held responsible for acts, but we should try to understand the reasons for the students' acts and be more understanding and tolerant. If students are punished often, it will affect their contact hours with the tutors. If a student is suspended, it means he will not attend classes and this affects academic work. Students can be punished internally. Some punishments can affect punctuality and regularity of students to classes.

#### **Teacher's Assessment at School Levels**

Amoah (1992) observes that teachers who know they have performed well in various schools will respond to selection for best teacher exercise. The applicant for the best teacher should be required to produce his school time book, his lesson note book, sample exercise books of his best pupil's, cumulative record card of current Basic Education Certificate Examination, (BECE) result sheet and a testimonial from the head of the school.

If the teacher produces the time book it will show that he or she was punctual and regular to school. Number of exercises in the children exercise book depends on the regularity of tutors to school. Teachers are normally assessed by the results of their students. If teachers are late to school and also absent from classes they cannot finish the syllabuses and this can affect the students' final examination. So producing all these documents will help the authorities to know how regular and punctual the teacher was to school.

Amoah (1992) further states that when students get to know that teachers who teach during the first period do not come to school very early, they tend to be late themselves to school. Also, when the children study the timetable, and they realize that the particular subject that they do not like is the first on the timetable, they deliberately come to school late so as to miss that particular subject.

### **Peer Group Influence**

Peer groups are very powerful and can influence a student's academic life. Willis (1977) points out that peer influence can have an effect on a child's schooling since he or she can flout school rules. Willis conducted an observation study on twelve non-academic working class boys from England. The study revealed that the boys absented themselves from classes after registration. The boys were able to use signs, which they communicated to their friends in order to get out of class. Behavior contributed to poor school attendance by the boys. He also stated that in some parts of United States of America, peer influence is a major factor that determines whether pupils will go to school or not. Most adolescents like to do what their friends have been doing. According to him, if friends have been out from school to get work to do which earns them money, they will be persuaded to do likewise. A strong peer group influence can affect pupils; hence pupils acculturated into patterns of life that reject education or have joined a delinquent group that rebels are strongly influenced by the group to be out of school.

Datta (1984) states that the infant largely socialized within the family, but as he grows into a child and matures in to adolescent, he spends some of his time



among friends. Every normal child has close circles of friends – his peer group. A child or an adolescent may be associated with a variety of informal playgroups, gossips groups, whose members study together. Members of these groups number from three to about ten. They are roughly of equal age, social status and pursue same interest in common. Peer groups have been found in widely different societies, a fact which suggests that they must perform certain basic function in the social system.

Datta (1984) is also of the opinion that peer group shelters and protects its members. It gives them psychological sustenance by meeting emotional needs of affection, understanding and acceptance. It comprises a small number of persons with equal rank, and operates as a medium of communication. Its members can interact directly with each other. This status equivalence ensures that members have a common basis of meaning, which adds to the ease of communication. In all these, it is not surprising that a peer group which provides an effective society (in a diluted form) teaches certain roles and social expectations as well as conditions and attitudes of its members.

Illingworth (1974) asserts that the peer teases some children more than others, and some are distressed thereby. It is not easy to state confidently the factors involved. They may be teased because they are fat, weep readily, are clumsy, short tempered, stutter, speak indistinctly, speak with an unusual accent in the school, have an unusual manner of speech, belong to the social class unusual in the school, wear unusual clothes, have prominent teeth, and so on. They are teased if they are timid and coward, failing to stand up themselves. For

instance, he states that a boy was teased unmercifully at school and bullied because he never retaliated and was shy, sensitive and easily rebutted. Another was teased because he wept so easily, the less bright children tend to tease the bright child and particularly the brighter child who is a hard worker and who is not good at sport. A dwarf is likely to be teased significantly, and an unusually tall child is more likely to be teased particularly because his emotional and intellectual maturities lag so far behind his physical growth. Children especially girls may be teased because of the late onset of puberty.

Biehler (1971) intimates that peer groups become powerful and begin to replace adults as the major source of behavior standards and recognition of achievements. During the early school years, parent and teachers set standards of conduct and most children try to live up to them. By the end of the elementary school, however, children may be more eager to impress their friends than to please the teacher. Unfortunately some of the children especially boys, may try to impress their classmates by defying or ignoring the teachers.

#### **Classroom Peer Interaction and Academic Achievements**

Kwakye (2004) is also of the view that psychologists are not the only people who show interest in peer relationships in the school. Sociologists have also offered some insightful points on peer relationships in the classroom and their impact on the teaching-learning process and the academic achievement of the learners. This goes to prove the inter-disciplinary nature of guidance and counseling.

According to Agyeman (1986), the classroom as a social system has a formal structure and an informal structure. The formal structure of the classroom is made up of the pupils and the teachers in the cases of primary schools or students and teachers (who alternate the classrooms according to subjects they teach) in the case of secondary and tertiary school respectively. The teacher is usually aware of the existence of the informal structure in the classroom because he/she is an outsider to it.

Agyeman (1986) further explains that in addition to the formally organized class as a social unit, there exist in every classroom informal groups or peer groups which the learners form spontaneously, and members of these informal groups develop subcultures within the classroom culture. Even though formal organization of the class overshadows these groups, Agyeman is of the view that their existence and their subcultures are a potent force to reckon with, because these various groups have varying effects on the classroom dynamics. Some peer groups may help their members to complement the learning process, thus promoting the achievement of the learner; others may lead members to rebel against the classroom norms and authority and thus disrupts the learning process. He concludes that the teacher's awareness of the informal group is very essential. Once a teacher detects the network of such peer groups, he can either control them within a reasonable limit or use them for positive purposes, or else, some of the negative subcultures can be an impediments to a child's class attendance and punctuality.

The school is a society with its own cultures and norms. Coming to school on time and regularly are some of the norms of the school, and both tutors and students are bound to obey. Students can counsel their classmates and friends who do not come to school on time to change that bad habit. When they are ready they can go and call them. They can even help them in their house duties so that they will all go to school in time. Students can be in a study group to help bring up others who are academically not good and therefore absent themselves from classes.

### **Poverty**

Hasley (1961) states that the transformation on the economic condition of people, and particularly those people among whom a greater number of school children is to be found, has had several effects on education. Parents will still have to incur some expenses if their children are to go to school.

Graham and Brown (1991) report that the poorest countries spend only a tiny amount of time per student. This has an obvious effect on books, materials and laboratories available if cuts or savings have to be made, and the effects are more drastic. Also, when people are in crisis, they tend to focus on life-threatening problems such as hunger and diseases; whereas education seems to be a less urgent priority. However, from a longer-term perspective, ignoring or shelving education development can have serious consequences for future economic and social development. They also observed that in Guatemala, El Salvador and Costa Rica, marginal families survive by working as internal migrants, harvesting commercial crops for big farmers.

This makes it very difficult for children to have any steady schooling. In Guatemala, this pattern of migration is especially common among the Indian population of the highland who came down to the fens in the plains for labor wages. The age at which rural children enter school and how long they stay varies according to a number of factors. First, whether there is a school nearby, and the second consideration is whether child labor is required either in the home or in agriculture work. The difficulties faced by marginal communities have been increased by economic crises and war in the last decade. They face low wages and lack of work exacerbated by the fact that many peasants have lost access to land which has often been sold to big landowners.

Owusu (1987) reveals that in Kumasi, which is the capital of Ashanti Region of Ghana, whilst 44% of juveniles need money to buy textbooks, school uniforms or pay for their fees, 27% are engaged in trading in order to supplement their household budgets. The early employment of young children is due to poverty that their parents face.

Webster (1987) argues that in the third world countries, children's educational performance is unlikely to be dramatically improved since they are subjected to a number of factors, which are beyond their control. He enumerated three major factors that the children encounter. In the first place, poor children who experience chronic malnutrition from birth are educationally at a disadvantage because malnutrition affects the development of the brain tissues. Secondly, the children are a very important source of labor for the rural families. The daughter is also expected to leave school early, at not more than seven or

eight years of age to take care of younger siblings while the mother goes to farm or engage in income generating activities. Finally, although primary schooling had been state funded, where the school fees per term may be up to four times the average monthly wage of male manual workers, the parents find it difficult to keep just a child in school. He concludes that poor health, child labor and poverty work against the ambitions of many third world children and their parents.

Dall (1989) observes that the main reason why a lot of children do not go to school in Mali is economic. Schooling is not free, primary school pupils have to buy desk, chalk, and make some monthly contributions. This cost is very expensive for the average family in Mali. Furthermore, most parents who have limited resources want to invest in boy's education and not in girls'. In some places, girls stay at home either to look after young siblings or to sell goods at a roadside stall. He concluded that when working children do not attend school, they have little time to study and this affects their academic performance. Poor children are also apt to be malnourished, which lowers the achievement level even further. Poverty is one thing that affects some of the children in Ghana. They cannot pay their fees, like examination fees on time and they have to be sent home often for it. All these affect regularity and punctuality to classes.

### **The School Environment**

The school environment is one of the major things that the academic work of the school depends on. The classrooms, furniture, compound, toilet and urinals are some of the things that affect students in a school. If these basic things are lacking, it can affect the attendance of students at the basic schools.

Griffith (1960) reveals that, in remote areas in Sri Lanka and other developing countries, most of the primary schools do not have doors and windows and so the wind blows, and animals enter the classroom unimpeded. He also stresses that ants are able to destroy anything that is specially protected. The roofs of the school buildings go off during the rainy season, and all these affect primary attendance.

Bose, Bannerjee and Mukeherjee (1974) reveal that many primary schools in West Bengal, India are in improvised buildings. Most of the children sit on the floor without tables and chairs. Most of the schools do not have good drinking water, and sanitary arrangements do not exist. Moreover, teaching materials and books do not exist in most schools.

A World Bank report (1998) states that in rural areas in Africa, most schools have dilapidated buildings and chairs, tables and desks are either broken or missing. They do not have good sanitation facilities. It further stresses that poorly maintained facilities affect standard and this condition discourages pupil's attendance. For those who attend school, little can be learned, and during rainy days classes have to be discontinued because of leaking roofs. Some buildings have no roofs at all.

Lockheed and Andracin (1998) report that in developing countries, the basic elements of an orderly school environment are frequently missing. Hence students and teachers are regularly absent. The stocks of teaching materials are limited and the physical surroundings are so chaotic that it seems miraculous that learning occurs in the school. They further say that a student's ability to learn is

heavily influenced by the school environment. Learning can occur more easily if students and teachers attend classes regularly in decent environments and also according to an established timetable. Thus, if school facilities are intact and in good conditions, with teaching materials available, teachers can be encouraged to work very hard.

Caillods, Françoise & Postlewaite (1989) reveal that in developing countries the schools are sometimes in a bad condition and do not possess the minimum sanatoria. Their statistical analysis shows that 44% of the schools in Kilosa District in the United Republic of Tanzania do not have access to drinking water and 10% do not have latrines, which children can use. Furthermore, in Ed Duiem District in Sudan, 20% of the schools do not have access to water and 47% of the schools in Sefi region of Nepal have leaking roofs; only 28% have toilets and 20% of the schools are in a state of collapse. Inadequate facilities contribute to poor school attendance.

Rudyard and Kronenbeng (1961) comment that the major causes for preferring work to school were the lack of interest in schoolwork, inability to learn, discouragement by, and dislike of teachers or subjects. But the need for money to buy clothes was the chief financial reason given.

### **Inarticulacy of Teachers**

According to Kwakye (2004), inarticulacy of teachers refers to conditions in the school system which, due to faulty method of instructions, abrupt changes in discipline, curriculum or faculty administration, will retard the normal progress of pupils or cause failure, discouragement, and loss of interest or elimination.



Any elimination due to inarticulacy is caused by the school, rather than by external factors such as economic conditions, health or lack of ability. The abrupt changes in the curriculum from the eighth grade to the ninth grade had resulted in much elimination because of the pupil's inability to adjust. Teachers are often unsympathetic in their method of discipline causing pupils to become antagonistic. Many pupils have been expelled or suspended for minor offences and their schooling has been terminated.

Fontana (1986) identifies teacher related causes for lateness and absenteeism. The teacher may without realizing it, be himself a factor for encouraging or reinforcing those negative behaviors in his students that he seeks to retain. Other teacher characteristics that affect students behavior include their physical appearance, the way they prepare their lesson and present them in class, the administration of rewards and punishments and the personality type of teachers. Fontana further observes that if a teacher dresses improperly or immodestly to classes, his/her appearance may trigger off indiscipline in the class, generate ridicules or negative comments.

Farrant (1964) dilating on child training, comments on authoritarian school administration which when in its extreme form, makes children become maladjusted and portrays all kinds of misbehavior such as rebellion, extreme timidity and poor standard of education. Provision for school fees or any other demands made by the school and pocket money for food during break time, in-between sessions are difficult to be provided for children by parents and these make children unhappy, especially among their peers. The home is seen as a

source of love, affection and security for its members, particularly children. In this respect, poverty, broken homes and orphanage breed absenteeism and dropout among school children.

Kwakye (2004) contends that there have been many publications on the subject of school phobia. The term *school phobia* means that the child is afraid to go to school. Experts appear to agree however, that the basic problem is not fear of going to school, but fear of leaving him in separation and anxiety. The symptoms cover a wide spectrum, from shedding tears to a complaint of slight headaches, abdominal discomfort on getting ready for school, to vomiting or to absolute refusal to go to the school.

### **Truancy**

Garman (1989) defines truancy, as any student who is absent from school without good reason, or without permission from home or school. The major concern of schools is for those students who are chronic truants (children who frequently stay out of school without permission). These students are potential dropouts who may be failing in school because of absenteeism.

Garman further explains that it is possible to identify a potential dropout as early as possible. Any student, who is constantly late for school, idles away too much time, lingers at tasks and finds excuses to stay home from school is already showing signs of becoming a truant and potential dropout.

To Garman, school attendance is affected when students:

- (i) associate with the wrong kinds of friends

- (ii) use alcohol or drugs
- (iii) have difficulty relating to people
- (iv) feel deep resentment toward authority
- (v) receive little support or help when they need it
- (vi) are bored, unsuccessful, lonely or socially isolated
- (vii) Prefer a job and money to an education or
- (viii) Feel they are not really a part of the school system.

To Garman (1989), students may be involved in a variety of activities when they are absent from school. Activities may differ; depending on how frequently the student is absent. Some absent students go to the movies, shop, walk on the streets, hide out in a park or isolated area or hang out with friends. Many absent students return home as soon as their parents leave for work. At home, they sleep, watch television or entertain friends. Some absent students have jobs and go to work when they are supposed to be in school. Students who are frequently absent from school have a high potential to become involved in sexual misconduct, drugs and alcohol, delinquent or criminal acts.

Garman is also of the opinion that schools are concerned about students who are frequently absent because they tend to become dropouts. Students begin to drop out of school at about age 16. Researchers estimate that over 25% of all 18-year-olds in America are not high school graduates. Students who fail to earn a high school diploma generally have more difficulty in life than graduates do. People who lack a diploma have more trouble getting and keeping jobs, are more likely to become dependent upon public welfare for their existence, have a higher

tendency to get involved in illegal or antisocial behaviors and generally lead less productive and less fulfilling lives than high school graduates.

Kahn and Nurtsen (1968) state that the unwillingness of pupils to go to school is no new problem. Shakespeare's description of the child is that, the child creeps like snail and is not willing to go to school. Teachers feel that a child's truancy or his fear of school has a reflection on them. Everyone is disturbed by the fact that the child seems to be getting away with something. What was going to happen if he does not go to school? What about his future career? Will he be a normal adult? How can the school welfare official enforce attendance on those who really are truants?

Akrofi (1979) states that in big towns and cities in Ghana, children find it very easy to play truancy. Some of them leave their homes on the pretext of going to school but never reach school; others go to school only to vanish after hours. He further argues that some children play these pranks because they do not find the teachers' lessons interesting, or they have some friends who are able to entice them to more exciting activities on their way from school when they have a cause to believe that neither the teacher nor the class accepts them. Hence, pupils who do not respond to the teacher's method of teaching get bored and find outside life more rewarding. Children also play truancy when they realize they are not making satisfactory progress in school attendance. This means that teachers should always entice the child to enjoy learning through mirth, jolly and other activities of the classroom.

Farrant (1988) argues that truancy is a problem in both developing and developed countries. In some cases it occurs without parental knowledge but in others, there are often parental approval and encouragement. The problem is very great in countries where education is compulsory. He enumerated some of the causes of truancy among children as:

- a. Parents' or guardians' withdrawal of the child from school to go to work
- b. Parents having no interest in the child's education
- c. When there is considerable variation between the standard and value being held by the school and the child's home
- d. Personal problems that the pupils encounter either in the school or at home
- e. Boredom
- f. Authoritarian methods in the school
- g. Bullying from other pupils
- h. Dislike of certain school activities
- i. Preference for out of school activities.

### **Punctuality to School**

In every institution (including Achimota Preparatory and Junior Secondary School), attendance and punctuality to school are very critical to academic success. According to Achimota Preparatory and Junior Secondary School Brochure (2004), which is an annual publication given to new entrants, and which also contains the codes and ethics of the school, the school believes that high standards of attendance and punctuality are important and have implications for the academic progress of a child. Children must attend school regularly and they

must arrive on time. Missing school or late at school is both extremely disruptive to the class and deprives students of valuable learning opportunities. The children must report to school as early as 7.15 am. Plots are allocated to the various classes, and the children are supposed to work on their plots each morning.

Garman (1989) also suggested that regular attendance is a necessary part of the learning process and is key to getting a good education and graduating very well. Irregular school attendance limits the learning process and reduces the ability to get either a good education or good results, which will increase a person's opportunity of aspiring to a higher level of education. Frequently absent students put their future in jeopardy. Chronic absenteeism, especially truancy, is a behavior highly associated with dropping out of school. Students are sometimes allowed to miss school for illegal reasons, or quit school because they do not want to attend. Such students may be establishing a pattern of behavior that may follow them throughout life and seriously impair their potential.

### **Lateness**

The Achimota Preparatory and Junior Secondary School Brochure (2004) also frown at lateness. It is important that children are encouraged to be punctual and have a high level of attendance. Registers of attendance are normally taken during the first two periods in the morning. Children who are not in the class as at that time are considered to be late. More so, children who are late miss the beginning of the lesson. This is unfair to the rest of the class, and it disrupts the concentration during lessons. Emphasis is laid at the early stages, on the importance of punctuality because a few minutes of lateness can be very upsetting

for the child concerned. For instance, in primary schools, literacy and numeric lessons are often held at the beginning of the school day. Regular lateness can mean that these important subjects are missed. It is recognized that sometimes there may be a genuine reasons for lateness such as public transport difficulties. If there is a particular reason for a child's lateness, parents should discuss this with the class teacher, who may be able to assist.

### **Absence Procedure**

The School Brochure also stipulates that it is necessary that children who are ill are not sent to school. Reasons for all forms of absenteeism must be made known to the class teacher. When a child will be away from school, parents must write a short note of explanation or call the school office. Parents are also advised to call on the school's phone to report cases of absenteeism about their children to the class teacher. A follow up letter should be sent to the teacher. The school also avoids or discourages booking holidays during the term, as this has an adverse effect on the child's learning, even though it is appreciated that from time to time, parents may wish to keep their children off school for important family reasons. Absence for other circumstances, other than illness is authorized at the Head Teacher's discretion and applications can be made by completing an absence form available at the school office.

### **The Importance of Sleep to Pupils**

Sleep is very vital in the life of school-going children. According to Proske, (2006) children who fail to get the recommended amount of sleep at night are twice as likely to suffer behavior problems at school. Also children who do

get the recommended amount of sleep are more likely to participate in an extra-curricular activity as well, since they have the energy to do so. Sleep deprivation affects not only academic skills, but social skills as well. Lack of sleep is detrimental to a child's development. Proske further explains that it is important to set a routine schedule to help children get sufficient sleep before they return to school. He recommends that, before the first day of school, children should go to bed earlier each night, about 15 to 20 minutes earlier.

Proske continues by explaining further that it is very important to create good bedtime routines. Bedtime routines should include a period of about a half hour of relaxing before bedtime; drawing, reading or doing something else children find interesting. Bedrooms should also be a quiet, comfortable place, which means televisions and computers should be kept in another room.

To Proske, the most common sleep problems in children include difficulty in falling asleep, waking up at midnight, snoring and loud or heavy breathing while sleeping. Sleep problems such as these can cause children to be overtired, sleepy or cranky during the day, which can make for a difficult day at school. Sleep is especially important for children who are growing and learning. Without proper sleep, children are at an increased risk of social, academic and health problems. It is important for adults to act as role models and provide a strict sleep routine for children to follow, to allow them the best nights sleep. This will help children reach their highest potential each day.



## **Education on the Television**

After a personal encounter with some of the pupils, it was realized that most of them went to bed late, due to the long hours that they spend on the television. The researcher thought it wise to come out with some modalities, as to how to manage time with respect to television.

According to Awake (2006), the television is immensely popular throughout the world, and it plays a major role in a people's lives. Time that people devote to the television is alarming. A recent global study shows that on average, people watch TV just over three hours each day. The television is a powerful teaching tool. By means of the television we learn about lands and people we may never visit. We watch news as it happens on the other side of the globe. We gain insight into politics, history, current events and cultures. The television entertains, instructs and inspires.

Awake further remarks that despite the benefits that we derive from watching the television, one must be careful not to spend much time watching it, because it is a thief of time. School children spend a lot of time watching the television. Some wait until the TV closes down in the night before they switch it off and go to bed. When such habits are cultivated for some time, it becomes very difficult to break away from them. Once the TV is turned on, there is the tendency for one to watch the programs one after the other, without thinking about the time one is spending in watching it. Some people cannot keep their eyes off it. Some also may not want to watch it as much as they do but they cannot help it.

Awake (2006) recommends that in order to control the time spent on watching the television, there is the need for one to find out how much we watch the TV and control it. The viewing habits must be analyzed, to see if changes can be made. Parents must make conscious effort to control time the children spend on watching it. They must also try to reduce the viewing time. This they can do, by replacing the TV with more meaningful activities such as browsing on the computer, and encouraging children to read library books. Limits must be set on the time they watch the TV at home. Some children have televisions in their rooms. This makes it difficult for parents to monitor their viewing habits. Children who have TV in their bedrooms spend more time on it. To reduce it, the TV set will have to be moved from the children's bedroom. In extreme cases, parents can decide not to have a TV in the home at all.

When parents do not want to do away with the television, they can device ways and means of scheduling what the children watch. There are many good programs to watch. Parents can check the listings in advance to select the programs they want their wards to watch. They can then turn the TV on when the programs that have been chosen begin, and turn it off when it is over. Programs can also be recorded for later viewing rather than watching it when it is being aired, especially when the airing time is not conducive enough for the children. This will make it possible for the children to watch at a more convenient time, and it will help the children to go to bed early, wake up early and go to school on time.

## Parental Roles in Helping Students Stay in School

According to Garman (1989), truancy, chronic absenteeism and dropping out and irregular school attendance can be the beginning of a pattern that may severely limit a child's lifelong potential. Concerned parents should consider the facts that the more children miss school, the less they learn, and this results in lower grades. This means that there is a greater possibility that they will be placed in slower learning sections or even fail some subjects. The more difficulties children experience with the educational process, the less they want to stay in school and their chances of graduating is very low. One must bear it in mind that dropouts generally have more trouble finding and keeping jobs than graduates do, and they usually earn less money during a lifetime.

To Garman, some parents know their children are not attending school, and they decide to do nothing about it. They may have given up or do not care whether their children attend school. Other parents, such as recent immigrants, may be unaware of school attendance laws and policies. Many culturally deprived families do not understand the necessity and importance of regular school attendance. Working parents may use older brothers and sisters for childcare. Poor families sometimes need the extra money earned by an employed child.

Parents are legally responsible for their child's lack of attendance, and therefore, have a duty and a right to keep track of their children. Checking on a child's school attendance is a function of being a responsible parent. When parents suspect that their child is a truant, it is important to check directly with the

school. By this way, both the child and the school know of the parents' concern, thereby reducing the likelihood of future truancy. Parents who suspect that their child is not in school can phone the school to ask whether the child is in class, since a truant child will find ways to outwit a single phone call. They can also ask a teacher or school administrator to inform them when their child is absent, or personally go to the school to check on their child's attendance.

Although schools use many methods to encourage school attendance, the legal and moral responsibility belongs to parents. They should begin early in a child's life to encourage learning, to explain the value of education. They should also know the compulsory attendance laws and policies, seek help if they cannot control their child's school attendance and work closely with the school to resolve the attendance problem. Garman (1989) further explains that school attendance is one of the important issues facing schools in America. Student absenteeism costs taxpayers billions of dollars each year in lost revenues, and greater loss in human potential. However, school attendance is not an impossible issue to resolve. Its resolution, at least in part, is a natural function of education.

Students must be taught to understand the value of education. Parents must learn about their roles and responsibilities in promoting regular attendance. Educators must develop policies and programs designed to keep students in school. The more people know about the importance of regular school attendance, and the better they understand their roles in promoting it, the greater will be the educational experience for every student.

To Garman (1989), regular school attendance needs parents' involvement. When parents are concerned about the educational experience, and take an active interest in the educational process, their children are less likely to have attendance problems and are more likely to graduate. Parents must make education a family priority, and build the child's self-confidence as a student by recognizing when he or she does well in school. They must also help the children develop good study and work habits, and develop a system of praise and rewards for good study habits, good grades and other good school-related behaviors. There must be a daily schedule for home study period, and the children must be helped with regards to their school assignments. Also, parents must meet the child's teachers and other school personnel. These educational professionals can provide important insights about the child's school performance and suggest ways for improvement.

Garman explains that it is also the responsibility of the parents to get to know the child's friends and classmates. They can influence the child's school performance, as well as attendance and punctuality. Lack of friends or problems with classmates also can affect school performance. There must be ways and means to discuss issues, subjects and course materials the child is learning in school and the parents must help children to develop interest in extra-curricular activities such as sports, bands, clubs, etc. They must also take note of the fact that dropouts have more trouble getting and keeping jobs and make less money than graduates do. A school or community program must be developed and

designed to educate parents, taxpayers and students about the topic of school attendance.

### **How Educators can Help Students Stay in School**

Garman (1989) stresses the need for educators to realize that truancy and other forms of chronic school absenteeism are often symptomatic of other problems. Students who are frequently absent from school for unexcused reasons are usually having trouble in other areas of life. These life difficulties are often the root cause of chronic absenteeism. Determining these root causes can provide the knowledge necessary to promote regular school attendance. Alternative schools and other special programs such as personal instruction, tutoring or counseling may prove fruitful. Educating parents and students about the problems related to school non-attendance helps to promote regular school attendance.

### **Formulation and Implementation of Compulsory Attendance Laws and Policies**

Garman is also of the view that the Ministry in charge of Education must set uniform attendance laws and policies for the country's educational institutions to follow. In some private schools, the school gates are closed by 8.00 a.m., and parents who bring their wards after this time will have to send them back. Such policies do not exist in the public schools. There must be specific school attendance policies, which all children of school going age must follow, and it must be formulated in such a way that, the parents of the children in question will be held responsible, when the children fail to abide by the precepts of the policies.

These policies may be handed over to the district educational offices in the regions, who will later translate them into rules and regulations in the various schools. It must stress on the need for children to come to school early, and regularly. Parents, whose children absent themselves must come into the school personally, and fill absence forms, giving detailed reasons why the children will be absent from school. This will go a long way to enhance school attendance, and in a way, help to eliminate unnecessary absenteeism in schools.

Garman (1989) further remarks that parents whose children come to school regularly, but always late, should be made aware that if that habit continues, the children will be expelled from the schools. Such parents should also be served with intermittent warning letters, which will serve as reminders. Parents who suspect that their children are playing truancy should monitor them closely, with the help of some of the educators in the school, such as the form master or form mistresses, who have direct contact with the children in the schools. Educators such as principals, teachers, counselors, school nurses and other school personnel who are responsible professionals must be trained and employed into the educational institutions to bring this into real terms.

When students are absent for three or more days, the records must be carefully monitored. When such students return to the school, they should be able to present a legal excuse for their absence. When such excuses are lawful, the school does nothing, but when they are unlawful the school must inform the parents. A school official may telephone the parents or schedule a meeting to discuss the unofficial absence from school.

To Garman (1989), certified letters must be sent to the parents, informing them of their child's illegitimate absence, and the letter must further explain the attendance rules, warning parents that continued illegal absence of their child will result in their having to appear before a district judge for prosecution, or better still, it can lead to the suspension or the child can be totally expelled from the school. Parents of students who continue to be absent from school, or coming to school late can be sentenced to a fine, plus court costs. If the parents refuse to pay the fines, then further steps should be taken. Habitual latecomers must be made to follow these same procedures.



## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGY

This chapter deals with the methodology, which was used for the research. It discusses the various sections of methodology, such as the research design, the population, the sample, the instruments that were used, and the data collection procedure and data analysis.

#### Research Design

The researcher used the action research method. This design was chosen because the researcher identified a problem, and then she tried to find out whether some interventions could be put in place to tackle those problems. Also, this design is reliable and valid because the design chosen has already been used by other researchers with similar settings. An example is a research work conducted by Derry (2003) on the topic: *Using Supervision to Improve the Performance of Students in Bolgatanga Girls' Secondary School*.

According to Derry, action research deals with a small-scale intervention in the functions of the real world and a close examination of the effects of the intervention. The concept of action research whipped up great interest in social psychologists and educationists in the late 1930s. Derry further explains that action research has had as its goal, the involvement of both the research specialist and the classroom teacher in the study and application of research to educational problems in a particular classroom setting or school situation. The concept begins with the diagnosis of a problem. A treatment is sought for the problem and applied to the situation.

Action research deals with three main phases – pre-intervention stage (baseline) during which the problem is diagnosed, the intervention stage during which the treatment is given, and the post-intervention stage which looks at the consequences or the results of the intervention. A comparison is then made of the pre-intervention and the post-intervention stages to see if there has been a change or not. The rationale behind choosing the action research method was that it enabled the researcher to use supervision as an intervention to improve class attendance and punctuality of the students in the school. It also made it possible for the researcher to take a critical look at the situation at close range, since she is a member of staff of the school.

### **Population**

The population comprises all the JSS 1 and JSS 2 classes. There are 3 classes in each stream: JSS 1A, 1B, 1C; and JSS 2A, 2B, and 2C, giving a total of six classes in all. The pupils in JSS 1 and 2 have been put into ability groupings, with 2A being the best class, followed by 2B and finally 2C. The JSS 1 class is made up of about 40 pupils, whilst the JSS 2A class is made up of 45 pupils. The worst class in JSS 1 is JSS 1A. The researcher chose JSS 1A and 2C because the problem of class attendance and absenteeism is so pronounced in those two classes. She also included some of the teachers who handle these two classes in some of the subjects.

## **Sample**

In choosing the study sample, the researcher adhered to the opinion made by Onivehu and Awoyemi (2002) that:

“The worthwhile of any educational research finding is the extent to which the sample reflects the entire population. The authenticity of any research activity depends on how the sample has been selected. Thus, sampling procedure provides generalizations on the basis of a relatively small percentage of the entire population”. ( p. 29).

The entire sample was made up of 85 respondents.

### **Data Producing Sample**

The people from whom the researcher generated her sample are the entire pupils in JSS 1A and JSS 2C. Two teachers were also given an orientation to help in the intervention stage with the punishments. This was done in order to make the supervision more effective and also give a fair assessment of the impact of supervision on class attendance and punctuality of pupils in the school.

The Data Producing Sample was made up of 85 pupils.

### **Instrument for Data Collection**

The researcher used two types of data collection instruments, which are observation and the questionnaire. In both stages, the following factors were observed and recorded:

- (1) Pupils' punctuality to classes

(2) Pupils' attendance to classes

The researcher administered questionnaire to the pupils. It was done at the pre-intervention and the post intervention stages. This instrument was unique in the sense that, all the respondents could read and write and also, it is an ideal way of collecting data on a very large scale.

The researcher was aware of certain intervening variables, which could affect or jeopardize the research results. These included history, testing, maturation, instrumentation, selection and others. History did not affect the research because the researcher used the second term to collect her data. There were no sportive activities in the second term, as most of the activities were carried out in the first term. Also, the researcher used both the observation and questionnaire method to collect her data. The same questionnaire was administered to both teacher and pupils, even though they all contain the same items for both the pre-intervention and the post-intervention stages, the questionnaire for the pre-intervention stage was labeled "A", whilst that of the post-intervention stage was labeled "B". Thus, the problem of testing was eliminated.

The time for the data collection was immediately after break, when all the pupils have taken their breakfast. It was also done in their classroom, which was spacious enough. Each pupil at his or her own place, thus physiological, environmental and psychological factors were absent. Maturation therefore did not affect the respondents in any way. School fees defaulters and some few pupils who were not feeling well were also exempted from the sample.

In order to prevent instrumentation from jeopardizing the results of the data, the researcher made sure that the items in the questionnaire were devoid of any form of ambiguity. The researcher used very simple English, and also, took pains to explain all the items to the pupils. She also explained how the questions must be answered on the questionnaire. More so, the items on the questionnaire were also scrutinized by her supervisor and other friends. The respondents were given an opportunity to ask questions, and they were all given satisfactory answers accordingly.

The classes selected were a true representative of the JSS department of the school. The JSS 1A and 2C were selected as the data-producing sample. All the questionnaires administered were collected back, thus, experimental mortality was also eliminated. Of the two reactive effects – Halo and Hawthorne, the former had no effect on the research but the latter did. This is because as soon as the students realized that they were being observed, they did their best in all the activities that were carried out.

### **Data Collection Procedure**

The questionnaire was made of up 17 items, including the bio-data and other characteristics of the pupils under study. Questions bordering on absenteeism were also asked. This was done because the research is on class attendance and punctuality. The items seek to find out why the pupils absent themselves sometimes from school, whether they inform the school authorities of

their absence, and also, whether their parents are aware of their absence from school.

The data collection exercise was done during the 2<sup>nd</sup> term of the academic year. The 2<sup>nd</sup> term started from the 2<sup>nd</sup> of May 2006, and ended in the 27<sup>th</sup> of July 2006. There were 14 weeks in all. The first and second terms were not used because there were a lot of sports activities such as inter-zonal athletic competition, inter-schools competition and inter-houses competition. The administration of the first questionnaire, labeled "A", was done in the third week of the third term, and that was the pre-intervention stage. During that period, pupils' attendance to classes was checked and recorded daily. The researcher collected registers from the class teachers at the end of each week.

Prior to that, the researcher explained the contents of the questionnaire to the pupils. Some of the pupils asked questions pertaining to the items of the questionnaire, and the researcher answered them accordingly. A total number of 85 questionnaires were given out on that day, and they were all collected back.

During the intervention period, (4<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> week), latecomers were caught and punished. One pupil from each class was made to write down names of pupils who came in after 7.30 am. This was done privately without the knowledge of the latecomers. The punishment for the first week was picking around the compound. The researcher went round during break time to inspect the children whilst they did their work. The number of latecomers reduced by the end of the first week. The punishment for the second week was writing of lines. The children were asked to write Psalm 23, 20 times, and were given a specific

time to present it. Failure to present it at the said time meant double punishment, that is, writing Psalm 23 up to 40 times. Another type of punishment was kneeling down. At the end of the third week, those who were still coming to school late were called to a meeting during one break time. The researcher interviewed them individually, and from their responses, it was realized that most of them slept very late in the night because they liked watching most of the soap operas on the television, and some of the local movies.

Children who were absenting themselves unnecessarily were cautioned to inform the school authorities about their absence. They were also warned to let their parents be aware whenever they were absent from school. This was because some of the parents left the house very early in the morning, even before their children woke up from bed, and came back late in the night when they were fast asleep. Such parents might never know whether the child really went to school or not. Parents were also encouraged to pay their wards' fees in full, so as to avoid the embarrassing situation of their children being sacked from school.

The post intervention questionnaires were collected at the end of the 8th week. The results obtained, after the various interventions have been put in place, showed an improvement in class attendance and punctuality of the respondents under study. This means that the interventions put in place were very effective.

#### **Data Analysis**

The data analysis was based on descriptive statistical method. The frequencies and percentages of the various aspects of the questionnaire were computed. The attendance books were collected from the prefects and they were

analyzed. These were the class attendance registers of JSS 1A and 2C classes, which form the data producing sample, the records book, and the recordings done during the observation period, which were kept by the researcher. Also, some teachers made comments on the supervision procedures, and all these were recorded and analyzed.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the results of the study in a way that helps to answer the research questions. The chapter thus embraces the analysis of data and discussion of the findings. Instruments used to elicit information for the study were questionnaire and interview.

The same questionnaire was used for both the pre-intervention and the post-intervention stages. The questionnaire for the pre-intervention stage was coded 'A', whilst the questionnaire for the post-intervention stage was coded 'B'. The pupils were asked to indicate the number of siblings that they had. This information would help the researcher to determine whether they shared the duties in the house, or they did all the household chores alone at home. The result is indicated in Table 1.

**Table 1**  
**The Number of Siblings that Each Pupil has**

Number of siblings	Frequency	Percentage
0	4	4.7
1	10	11.8
2	23	27
3	17	20
4	14	16.5
5	4	7
6	4	4.7
7+	7	8.2
Total	85	100

Table 1 shows the number of siblings that the pupils have. Some of them, about 4, do not have any sibling at all, and this is just 4.7%. Ten have a sibling, whilst 23 have 2 siblings, with a total percentage of 27. This is the highest on the table. Seventeen pupils have 3 siblings (20%) and 14 have 4 siblings (16.5%). The table further shows that 7% of the pupils have 5 siblings, and 8.2% have 7 siblings.

The children were asked to indicate the relations they were staying with. It is believed that the kind of relation that they stay with has an effect on how they are treated. Children who are staying with their own parents are normally given very good treatment, whilst those staying with other relations are given different types of treatment. Table 2 illustrates this.

**Table 2**

**The Relations That Pupils Are Staying With**

Relations	Frequency	Percentage
Mother	12	14.1
Father	2	2.4
Both Parents	52	61.1
Others	19	22.4
Total	85	100

Table 2 reveals that, 12 of the pupils (14.1%) stay with their mothers alone. This could be due to the fact that some of the parents are divorced, or that their fathers are late. Some do not even know their fathers at all. Others also

claim their parents are still together, but are not staying together under the same roof. A few of them, 2 (2.4%) stay with their father. Most of them stay with both parents and this has the highest percentage on the table (6.1%). About 19 (22.4%) are staying with other relatives such as uncles, aunties and their grandparents.

The pupils were also asked to indicate the type of jobs that their parents are doing. This information is necessary because occupation of parents can also affect class attendance and punctuality of the pupils. Some of the parents are traders, and they will like their children to assist them in their shops before going to school in the morning. Sometimes, some ask their children not to go to school because they want them to run their business errands for them. Also, most of them come to school with their parents, on their way to their various offices.

This has an impact on the arrival time at school. In extreme cases where children cannot come to school on their own, whenever parents decide not to go to work, the children have to absent themselves from school. When parents leave the house late to work, they are not able to drop their children at school on time.

Table 3 gives records of the occupation of the respondents' parents.

**Table 3****Occupations of Parents**

Occupation	Frequency	Percentage
Traders	19	22.4
Teachers	4	4.7
Medical Practitioners	19	22.4
Clergy	4	4.7
Others	39	46
Total	85	100

Table 3 throws light on the occupation of the parents. The pupils were asked to indicate the occupation of their fathers alone, those whose mothers are taking care of them should also indicate the jobs their mothers are doing, and the table reveals that 19 (22.4%) of their fathers are traders whereas 4 (4.7%) of them are teachers. Also, the clergy and medical practitioners constitute 22.4% and 4.7% respectively. Those whose parents' occupation does not fall within this classification were ticked 'others', and this represented 46% (39) on the table.

The next item on the questionnaire was about the place of residence of the pupils. This information will give the researcher a fair idea about the proximity of the pupils' homes from the school. Some of the children stay within the vicinity, and yet, they arrive at the school late, whilst others stay very far from the school, but manage to get to the school on time. This will help her to know how best to encourage the children to come to school early. Table 4 presents the

pupils by their place of residence. The children are admitted into the school, irrespective of where they live. This is the reason why they come from different places, with some coming from outside the Accra metropolis.

**Table 4**

**Place of Residence of the Pupils in the Study**

Area	Frequency	Percentage
Achimota	28	33
Dome	17	20
Legon	15	18
Others	25	29
Total	85	100

According to Table 4, the pupils were given three areas to choose from, and all other locations which were not included in the options given were labeled 'others'. This is because they come from different places. Nevertheless, 28 of the pupils come from Achimota. Pupils who chose Achimota were those who stay at Achimota plus those whose areas are very close to Achimota. Such areas include Taifa, Abofu, Akweteman, Apenkwa, St. Johns' and others.

Those who stay at Dome are 17. Some of such pupils stay at Pillar 2, Tantra Hill and other places nearby. Those who stay around Legon are 15. Such areas include Airways, Sober, GIMPA, University of Ghana, West lands and other nearby locations.

The remaining 25 pupils have their places of residence scattered. Some of them stay at Alajo, Madina, Adenta, Kwabenya, Nii Boye Town, Tema, Pokuase, Nsawam and other places. A greater number of them stay around Achimota, where the school is located.

The children were also asked to indicate the time that they sleep each night, as this has an impact on the time they get up from bed in the morning in line with the adage: 'early to bed, early to rise'. Sleep is very important in the life of a pupil. When the children go to bed early enough, they tend to have enough rest, and get up with enough strength in the morning. On the contrary, when they do not go to bed early enough, they tend to get up late, and they even sleep in the class when lessons are going on. This is in agreement with Proske's opinion on the importance of sleep to the pupil. To Proske, children are at an increased risk of sleep deprivation. Table 5 indicates the sleeping time of the pupils.

**Table 5**

**Sleeping Time of the Pupils**

Time (pm)	Pre-intervention	%	Post-intervention	%
7.30 – 8.00	11	13	15	17.6
8.00 – 8.30	10	12	20	23.5
8.30 – 9.00	26	31	21	24.7
9.00 – 9.30	14	16	31	36
9.30 – 10.00	12	14	6	7
After 10.00	12	14	2	2.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 5 shows a distinction between the sleeping time of the pupils, before and after the study. The number of pupils who slept between 7.30 and 8.00 increased from 11 to 15, and those who slept between 8.00 and 8.30 increased from 10 to 20. On the other hand, those who slept between 8.30 pm and 9.00 pm decreased by 5. This could be due to the fact that they were encouraged to do most of their household chores in the evening, before going to bed. Pupils who slept between 9.00 and 9.30 pm had their number increased from 14 to 31, whilst 8 pupils slept after 9.30 pm. Majority of them slept earlier than they did, during the pre-intervention period.

When children do not get the exact amount of sleep that they need, they tend to sleep in class during lessons, and this is to the detriment of the child. Because of this, children must have enough sleep, so as to keep them awake, during class hours. The pupils were to indicate whether they occasionally studied late in the nights. When children sleep early, but wake up in the wee hours of the night to study, they are not able to get the exact amount of sleep that they need, and this also adversely affects the time that they wake up in the morning. This information is presented in Table 6.

**Table 6**  
**Late Night Studies**

Night Studies	Frequency	Percentage
Those who study at Night	14	16.4
Those who do not study at Night	45	53.1
Those who study at night sometimes	26	30.5
Total	85	100

Table 6 describes the studying pattern of the pupils during the night. A greater percentage (53.1%) did not wake up in the night to study whereas 16.4% studied at night. Occasionally, some of the pupils studied at nights, when they had class tests, and this is made up of 26 pupils, which is 30.5%.

Bedtime has an impact on the time that one gets up from bed. When one goes to bed early, the chances of the person getting up early the next morning is very high. The children were to indicate the time they get up in the morning because this will guide the researcher to give them the exact advice that they need. Also, if they are able to get up from bed early in the morning, they will be able to finish their household chores in time and get to the school early. Table 7 shows the time that the children get up from bed in the morning before the intervention, and after the intervention stages.

**Table 7**

**Rising Time**

Time (am)	Pre-intervention	%	Post-intervention	%
4.00 – 4.30	15	18	10	12
4.30 – 5.00	17	20	21	25
5.00 – 5.30	33	39	36	42
5.30 – 6.00	20	23	18	21
Total	85	100	85	100



According to Table 7, before the interventions were put in place, 15 pupils woke up between 4.00 – 4.30 am but after the intervention, the number decreased to 10. Also, those who woke up between 4.30 – 5.00 am increased from 17 to 21. Thirty-three of the children rose up between the hours of 5.00 and 5.30 am, but later on, it increased to 36, whereas the number of pupils who got up at 5.30 – 6.00 am was 20 at the initial stages, but it later decreased to 18.

School children may go to school late, if they have so much household chores to do in the morning, especially if they are not able to finish these chores on time. The children were given a lot of choices to make with regards to household chores. This would help the researcher to know what they do in the morning before coming to school. This is shown in Table 8.

**Table 8**

**Number of Household Chores Done in the Morning**

Number	Pre-intervention	%	Post-intervention	%
1	29	34	44	52
2	21	25	13	15
3	9	10.5	5	6
4	3	3.5	-	-
Nothing	23	27	23	27
Total	85	100	85	100

Table 8 reveals some of such household chores which include sweeping, washing bowls, fetching water and others. From the table, 29 pupils did just a single work. Pupils within this category did a lone chore such as sweeping, fetching water and other simple housework. Twenty-one of them did two types of chores such as sweeping and fetching water, washing bowls and taking care of younger siblings, and others. Some did three different chores (9 of them) and others also did 4 different chores. Many of them did nothing in the morning. They only got up, probably had their baths and ate, after which they came to school. Those within this category were 23 pupils (27%).

After the interventions have been put in place, there was a slight change in the number of work done in the morning before coming to school, and after coming to school. The table shows the difference between the number of work done before the intervention period, and after the intervention period. Prior to the intervention, 29 of the children were doing just a single household chore, but after, the number increased to 44. Those who did 2 chores decreased from 21 to 13, whilst those who did 3 different household chores dropped from 9 to 5. Only 3 pupils did 3 different types of jobs, and the number of pupils who did nothing in the morning still remained at 23.

A comparison was made between their departure time from home before the pre-intervention stage, and that of the post intervention stage as depicted in Table 9.

**Table 9****Departure time from Home**

Time (am)	Pre-intervention	%	Post - intervention	%
5.30 – 6.00	11	13	11	13
6.00 – 6.30	27	32	38	45
6.30 – 7.00	47	55	36	42
After 7.00	-	-	-	-
Total	85	100	85	100

Table, 9 shows a significant change in their departure time. Before the intervention period, 11 people left home by 5.30 – 6.00 am. The number remained constant after the intervention. Twenty-seven pupils left by 6.00 – 6.30, but after, it increased to 38. The number of pupils who left at 6.30 – 7.00 am rather decreased from 47 to 36, and no one left home at 7.00 am. These changes were due to the effectiveness of the interventions put in place.

The respondents had various means of coming to school each day. Some came with their parents on their way to work. Others came by public transport such as taxis and *Trotros*, whilst those who stayed around the vicinity walked directly to the school. As part of the items on the questionnaire, the respondents were to indicate their means of transportation to school. This is because if proper arrangements are not put in place to ensure that they are transported to the school on time, it will affect their class attendance and punctuality. Table 10 shows their means of transportation to school.

**Table 10****Means of Transportation to School**

Means	Frequency	Percentage
Walking	13	15.2
By Trotro	41	48.2
By Taxi	15	17.6
By Parents	16	19
Total	85	100

Table 10 indicates that those who stayed around and therefore walked to school were 13 (15.2%). Those who came by Trotro were 41. This is because it is the most affordable means of transportation, and a large number of pupils use this means, almost half the total number of pupils. Another group of children, 15 of them, came by Taxi. This could be by means of dropping every morning, and it is quite expensive. The disadvantage of this means of transport is that, sometimes the driver may come late, and this will affect the time that the children will report at the school in the morning. Also, the taxi may be faulty, and the driver may forget to report this to the parents before the next morning. When this happens, the children become stranded when it is time for them to go to school.

The parents dropped about 16 of the children every morning before they went to work. Some of the children, when late, complained that their parents did not leave the house early enough, hence, their lateness. Table 11 shows the arrival time of the children.

**Table 11**

**Arrival Time at School**

Time (am)	Pre-intervention	%	Post-intervention	%
6.00 – 6.30	7	8.2	14	16.4
6.30 – 7.00	17	20	24	28.2
7.00 – 7.30	22	26	33	39
7.30 – 8.00	32	37.6	14	16.4
After 8.00	7	8.2	-	-
Total	85	100	85	100

Table 11 is an illustration of the effectiveness of the interventions put in place. Before, 7 pupils arrived by 6.00 – 6.30 am, but it rose up to twice the number, 14, after the intervention. Those who came by 6.30 – 7.00 am, which was formerly 17, increased to 24. The number of those who came by 7.00 – 7.30 am increased from 22 to 33, whilst there was a very big difference in the number of those who came by 7.00 – 8.00 am. It fell from 32 to 14. Nobody came at 8.00 am after this period.

The researcher requested that the respondents explain some of the causes of their lateness, and their responses are shown in Table 12.

**Table 12****Reasons for Lateness**

Reasons	Frequency	Percentage
Too much work in the morning	10	11.8
Long queue at the station	37	43.5
Walking a long distance	13	15.3
Sickness (going to hospital before coming to school)	2	2.4
Parents leaving the house late	19	22.3
Taxi coming late sometimes	4	4.7
Total	85	100

Table 12 gives us detailed reasons why the children arrived late at school. Ten of them did too much work in the morning, and this affected their punctuality to school. Some came late because they met a long queue at the station, and this happened when they did not leave the house early enough. Thirteen of the respondents walked a long distance to school, and this is a problem. Two pupils said they have to go to the hospital sometimes before coming to school. About 19 pupils complained that their parents did not leave the house early enough and thus met a long traffic jam on the road. The adverse result of this was that the children arrived at school late. Those who came with taxis had their own problems. Four pupils complained that the taxis sometimes came late to pick them, hence their lateness.

An item on the questionnaire demanded that the respondents give some reasons why they absented themselves from school. Some of the reasons might seem reasonable and would therefore help the researcher to know whether their reasons for absenteeism were really genuine. This information is shown in Table 13.

**Table 13**

**Absenteeism (Reasons for Absenteeism)**

Reasons	Frequency	Percentage
Sickness	33	39
Lateness	6	7
Non payment of fees	21	24.7
Suspension	0	0
Helping at home	1	1.1
Never absent	24	28.2
Total	85	100

The respondents were asked to give reasons why they absented themselves from school sometimes. Thirty-three pupils attributed it to sickness. These were pupils who fell sick occasionally, and therefore could not go to school until the sickness was over. Six of them attributed it to lateness. Sometimes when children realize they are too late, they do not come to school at all. Some thought they would be punished, or by the time they came, some of the morning periods might have been over.

When children are sent home to bring their school fees, this affects their being regular at school. Twenty-one children claimed they were sometimes absent due to non-payment of school fees. None of the respondent was absent due to suspension, and 1 of them was absent because of running errands at home. As usual, 24 were never absent, and therefore this particular item did not necessarily concern them.

Obtaining permission is very important in every institution, and the school abides by this rule. Table 14 gives detailed information on obtaining permission for absenteeism, before and after the interventions have been put in place.

**Table 14**

**Obtaining Permission for Absenteeism**

Obtaining Permission	Pre-intervention	Percentage	Post-intervention	Percentage
Yes	20	23.5	61	72
No	38	45	-	-
Sometimes	3	3.5	-	-
Never absent	24	28	24	28
Total	85	100	85	100

Some of the pupils, 38 of them, did not obtain permission at all when they were absent from school. They ought to seek permission from either their head or Assistant Head Master. There is the need to educate pupils on obtaining permission from school, so that the school authorities will know the whereabouts



of the children. Some of them, about 20 were courteous enough to obtain permission, and 3 of them sometimes remembered to obtain permission. After the interventions have been put in place, 61 respondents obtained permission before absenting themselves, which means that no one became a defaulter to this rule.

### **Information on Class Attendance**

Class attendance in the school was very poor. Class attendance refers to the number of pupils that are present in a school within a day. Some of the children absented themselves occasionally, but on days that they were sent home massively due to non-payment of school fees, class attendance was greatly affected, and the situation became very disturbing. This was because the teachers did not really know whether they should mark them present or absent. The class attendance for the 2 classes is shown in Tables 15 and 16.

**Table 15**

#### **Class Attendance for JSS 1**

Days	Pre-intervention		Post-intervention	
	Present	Absent	Present	Absent
Monday	38	2	40	-
Tuesday	35	5	39	1
Wednesday	37	3	40	-
Thursday	39	1	40	-
Friday	32	8	40	-

Table 15 presents the class attendance of pupils in JSS 1 in a particular week, before the intervention was implemented. In that week, 19 pupils absented themselves from school. A great number of pupils, 8 of them, absented themselves on Friday; probably this might be because it was very close to the weekend. After the intervention had been put in place, only one pupil absented himself, and he obtained permission prior to that.

**Table 16**

**Class Attendance for JSS 2**

Days	Pre-intervention		Post-Intervention	
	Present	Absent	Present	Absent
Monday	44	1	45	-
Tuesday	43	2	45	-
Wednesday	45	-	45	-
Thursday	40	5	45	-
Friday	38	7	45	-

Table 16 reveals that class attendance for JSS 2 was also not very regular during the pre-intervention stage. About 15 of them absented themselves initially, but during the post-intervention period, nobody absented himself during that week. This shows that the intervention was very efficient and effective.

## Findings

After analyzing the data collected the study revealed the following

findings:

1. Supervision to an extent had a significant effect on the attendance of pupils to classes. The pupils absented themselves massively sometimes, due to non-payment of school fees, and this was due to circumstances beyond their control. Also, some absented themselves due to ill health. Such pupils had to see their doctors sometimes, before coming to school. At the pre-intervention stage, some of these children carelessly went to hospital without any prior notice to their form masters, but after the intervention period, they realized that there was the need to ask permission from the school authorities before absenting themselves from school.
2. Supervision greatly influenced the punctuality of pupils to classes. The children started coming to school early, and after the intervention period, nobody came to school late. This is due to the fact that the researcher tried to find out the real causes of their lateness to school, and addressed them accordingly. Before the interventions were put in place, some of the children came to school after 8.00 am, but later, they all got to the school before 7.45am. This shows that, punctuality to school has greatly improved.
3. Most of the children were doing a lot of work in the morning before coming to school. Such children were encouraged to do most of their

household chores in the evening before going to bed. Such activities included fetching water, washing of dishes and other chores. Before the intervention was put in place, 29 of them were doing just a single job, but after they had been encouraged to do most of their chores in the evening before going to bed, the number increased from 29 to 44. Again, 3 children were doing 4 different types of chores in the morning, but after the intervention, no one did 4 chores in the morning before going to school. They were able to get to school early enough to avoid being punished.

4. Most of them started getting up early after the intervention has been put in place. Before the intervention period, a greater number of them, about 17, got up at 4.30 am, but after the intervention, the number of pupils that got up around that same time increased to 21. Also, those who were getting up around 6.00 am rather decreased from 20 to 18 pupils. This shows that the intervention was very effective in having an impact on the lives of the respondents.
5. Due to the fact that the children were able to do most of the work in the evening, and therefore had less work to do in the morning, they were able to leave house early enough. Before the intervention period, 27 of them left home between 6.00 and 6.30 am, but after the intervention, the number increased to 38. Those who left home between 6.30 am and 7.00 am were 47 initially, but later on, the

number decreased to 36. This means that they all started leaving the house earlier than before. This improved their arrival time at school.

6. The arrival time at school was greatly improved in the morning. The number of those who got to school by 6.30 am increased from 7 to 14. Those who arrived by 7.00 am also increased from 17 to 24. Before the intervention, 7 people came to school after 8.00 am, but after the intervention period nobody came after 8.00 am. These findings prove that supervision was a very powerful intervention for improving punctuality in the school.
7. Also, after the exercise, the pupils learnt to obtain permission from their authorities before they absented themselves from school, and they were also told to make sure that their parents were aware of their absence from school.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Summary

The study, which was an action research, was conducted to improve class attendance and punctuality of pupils at the Achimota Preparatory and Junior Secondary School.. Supervision was used as an intervention, and the action research method was used. Out of population of 240 pupils from the 6 classes, a sample of 85 respondents, made up of pupils from JSS 2C and JSS 1A, was used.

Questionnaires were used, and the same questionnaire was used for both the pre-intervention and the post-intervention stages, and they were coded "A" and "B" respectively. Other relevant information was obtained from the class attendance book, which was the register, and also, a note book which also kept attendance and punctuality records of pupils.

The data were analyzed, using the descriptive statistics method and the respective frequencies and percentages of the various aspects of the questionnaire, concerning class attendance and punctuality were used.

## Conclusions

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that class attendance is an issue in the school which deserves urgent attention. Some of the pupils sometimes absented themselves from school not because they wanted to, but they often did so with tangible reasons, some of which included medical appointments with their doctors. Others also went home to collect school fees, whilst some also absented themselves because they ran errands at home for their parents, and were therefore asked not to come to school sometimes. Some of the pupils also complained that they would have to do a little work at their parents' shops, and hence their lateness. These notwithstanding, there were others who sometimes absented themselves without any tangible reason.

The research also brought out the fact that pupils came to school late because they did not go to bed early enough, and therefore found it difficult to get up from bed early. Also, most of them did a lot of work in the morning and therefore did not finish in good time, whilst others came to school late because late comers were not sanctioned.

Not much has been done about these issues in the school, and this boils down to the fact that generally, supervisory procedures are in a very bad state in the school, and pupils have taken this weakness as an opportunity to come to school late, and also to absent themselves without prior notice to neither the class teacher nor the headmaster.

After supervision has been put in place as an intervention, the pupils developed a habit of coming to school early, and those who absented themselves,

did so by obtaining permission from their respective form masters and mistresses. This means that teachers and the school authority should be committed to supervision, by putting in measures that will check offenders in the school and a good attitude must be developed towards its effectiveness. That is the only way by which discipline will be instilled in the pupils.

### **Recommendations**

The researcher therefore makes the following recommendations for the school:

1. Since the Achimota Preparatory and Junior Secondary School is a private school, parents must be encouraged to come for PTA meetings. The school should be able to draw the academic calendar for the term, indicating dates, times and venues of meetings with the parents. All activities within the term should be made known to the parents. This will help the parents to program themselves, so that they can attend meetings. Open days must be made compulsory. Parents who refuse to come for open days should be called upon to pay a fine.
2. The geographical location of the school demands that a wall is built around the school. If the cost of building a wall around the school will be too much, it can be fenced. This will make it easier for latecomers to be identified.
3. The school authorities must have documented rules and regulations, as well as code of conduct. Parents who agree to send their children to the school must themselves and on behalf of their children be prepared to abide by the ethics of the school . Proper measures must be put in place to



collect the fees. Parents must be allowed to pay the fees of their children by installments during holidays, so that by the time school reopens, they have finished paying. Since it is a private institution, and the money raised from the collection of school fees is what is used in running the school, parents must also be encouraged to pay the fees. Parents with more than three children in the school should be given a discount and those who pay in full, and on time, if necessary, should be given a little token in the form of a discount.

4. Children must not be allowed to take the laws into their own hands by absenting themselves unnecessarily. If a child should be absent from school, a prior notice must be given to the class teacher, and the headmaster must also be informed. Parents whose children absent themselves for some reasons must come to the school themselves and obtain permission for their wards.
5. Parents must ensure that they pay their wards' fees in full before reopening of school. School fees defaulters must not be allowed to enter the school premises at all. Those who have paid may be asked to enter, whilst those who have not paid must be sent back home.
6. During Speech and Prize giving days, children who come to school regularly, and are very punctual, should be given prizes. This will encourage others to come to school early. Items such as books, stationery and other items can be given to them by the school, with the headmasters'

signature on it. Parents of such children can be appointed as members of the PTA executives.

7. The school should ensure that all activities carried out in the school by the pupils are carried out efficiently and punctually. If Assembly time is 7.45 in the morning, the school authorities must ensure that it will not be after that particular time. This will make the children to know that authorities do not joke with their time. Also, before and after break, pupils should be made to obey and respond to the bell as promptly as possible. In addition to this, authorities should make sure that they themselves are disciplined and set good examples as role models for the pupils to emulate. A teacher who regularly comes to school late is not qualified to punish a pupil who is a habitual latecomer.
8. Since pupils need to be supervised in order to be punctual and regular at school, teachers should, on the other hand, adopt a positive attitude towards supervision, and this goal will not be achieved if they develop a lukewarm attitude towards supervision. There should be a total commitment to this, and all must be involved.
9. The school must provide a school bus for the children for a fee. Children staying within the same neighborhood can converge at a point, and the bus will pick them to the school. After school, the bus will send them back to their destination. This will help ease the problem of punctuality to school.

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APPENDIX  
QUESTIONNAIRE

QUESTIONNAIRE CODE:

JSS \_\_\_\_\_

This research seeks to find out if pupil's class attendance can be improved through systematic supervision, in Achimota Preparatory and junior Secondary School. Your sincere responses to the questionnaire will be very beneficial. Please tick ( ) the responses that best represent your opinion on each of the following questions.

1. Age: \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Sex \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Number of Siblings \_\_\_\_\_
4. Who are you staying with?  
a. Mother b. Father c. Both parents d. Other relations (indicate)  
\_\_\_\_\_.
5. Occupation of Guardian \_\_\_\_\_.
6. Where do you stay? \_\_\_\_\_.
7. At what time do you go to bed in the evening?  
a. 7.30 – 8.00 b. 8.00 – 8.30 c. 8.30 – 9.00 d. 9.00 – 9.30  
e. 9.30 – 10.00 f. After 10.00 pm.
8. Do you wake up to study at night? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_.
9. At what time do you wake up in the morning?  
a. 4.00 – 4.30 b. 4.30 – 5.00 c. 5.00 – 5.30 d. 5.30 – 6.00 am.
10. What work do you do in the morning before going to school?



- a. Sweeping b. Fetching water c. Washing bowls
  - d. Cooking e. Taking care of younger siblings f. Nothing.
11. At what time do you leave home to school in the morning?
- a. 5.00 – 5.30 b. 5.30 – 6.00 c. 6.00 – 6.30 d. 6.30 – 7.00 am.
12. How do you go to school in the morning?
- a. Walking b. Trotro c. Taxi d. By parents e. dropping.
13. When do you normally reach the school in the morning?
- a. 6.00 – 6.30 b. 6.30 – 7.00 c. 7.00 – 7.30
  - d. 7.30 – 8.00 e. After 8.00 am.
14. Why are you sometimes late to school?
- a. Too much work in the morning b. Long queue at the station
  - c. Walking a long distance d. Sickness (going to hospital before coming to school. e. Parents leaving the house very late.

### ABSENTEEISM

15. What are some of the reasons why you absent yourself from school sometimes?
- a. Sickness b. Lateness c. Non payment of School fees
  - d. Suspension e. Helping parents at home f. None of these.
16. Do you inform your form masters about your absence?
- Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ N/A \_\_\_\_\_.
17. Are your parents always aware of your absence from school?
- Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ N/A \_\_\_\_\_.