

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

IMPACT OF ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT ON SCHOOL
ATTENDANCE IN KWABRE DISTRICT OF ASHANTI REGION

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ATTENDANCE IN KWABRE DISTRICT OF ASHANTI REGION

BY

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Dissertation submitted to the Institute for Educational Planning and Administration of the Faculty of Education, University of Cape Coast, in partial fulfillment of the requirement for award of Master of Education Degree in Educational Administration

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DECLARAITON

Candidate's Declaration

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

Candidate's Signature: Date:

Name: Sabina Ankomah

Supervisor's Declaration

I hereby declare that preparation and presentation of the dissertation was supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of dissertation laid down by the University of Cape Coast.

Supervisors Signature:Date:

Name: Dr Y. A. Ankomah

ABSTRACT

The study was undertaken to find out the effects of the economic environment in Kwabre District of Ashanti Region and its impact on school attendance and the possible mechanisms that could be put in place to improve regular school attendance. The sample of the study consisted of students who obtained less than 30% of attendance, parents of such children and teachers and head teachers in the selected school.

Two principal research instruments were used. These were interview schedule for students and their parents, and questionnaire for the teachers and head teachers.

The study brought to light these major findings: Children who engaged in the economic activities especially the craft activities recorded low school attendance. Surprisingly, the study revealed that a substantial proportion of children stayed with their mothers only, hence the ease with which they play truant at school.

It was also noticed that, boys outnumbered the girls in the case of absenteeism, because most of the economic activities they engage in are the crafts which in most cases are the preserve of men or boys. Poverty was also a hindrance to regular school attendance, as most of the children use the money they got from their engagement in the economic activities to supplement their family income.

To improve attendance the under listed strategies could adopt: Adaption of craft activities as an integral part of the curriculum counselors to move round and talk to parents on the importance of formal education.

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DEDICATION

To my dear Mum (Araba Duku), my Princess Dzidzom Ewurasi, Adippa

Borbi.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
DECLARATION	ii
ABSTRACT	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iv
DEDICATION	v
LIST OF TABLES	vii
CHAPTER	
ONE INTRODUCTION	1
Background to the Study	1
Statement of the problem	10
Purpose of the Study	12
Research Questions	12
Significance of the study	12
Delimitation	13
Limitation	14
Organization of the study	14
TWO REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE	16
Absenteeism	16
Concept of School Absenteeism	17
Patterns of Absence	19
Truancy	20
Peer Group influence	23
Child labour	25
Low Regard for the Usefulness of Education	33
Poverty	34

The Environment	38
Family size	44
Parental Attitude to Education	48
Home and Community Influence	49
Effects on Students Educational and Social Progress	50
THREE METHODOLOGY	57
Research Design	57
Population	58
Sample and Sampling Technique	62
Research Instrument	63
Pilot-Testing of Instrument	65
Data Collection Procedure	66
Data Analysis	67
FOUR RESULTS AND DISCUSSION	68
Demographic Data of Accessible Population	69
Analysis of Research Questions	80
FIVE SUMMARY, CONCLUTION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	97
Summary	97
Summary of Key Findings	96
Conclusions	98
Recommendations	99
Suggestion for Future Research	103
REFERENCES	106
APENDICES	
A. Interview schedule for students	114
B. Interview schedule for Parents/Guardians	119

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1. Distribution of Respondents by School, Parents, & Heads / Teachers	60
2. Gender Distribution of Teacher Respondents in the selected Schools for 2009 – 2010 Academic Year	70
3. Response of Teachers on Number of Years Spent in the School Selected	71
4. Total Enrollment in the selected schools	72
5. Gender Distribution of Parent/Guardian	73
6. Gender Distribution of Pupil Respondents	73
7. Age Distribution of Students Respondents	75
8. Distribution of Parents/Guardians with whom students stayed and were Responsible for their Education	75
9. Distribution of Marital Status of Parents/Guardians	76
10. Parents/Guardians Respondents Occupation	77
11. Level of Education of Parent /Guardians	79
12. Types of economic activity students engaged in	80
13. Responses of students whether they on their own volition engage in Economic activities	80
14. Responses of pupils on whether their parents stop them from attending school in order to engage in any economic activities for them	81
15. Responses of parents / Guardians showing that children on their own volition engage in craft activities	82
16. Responses of teachers on the view that students who on	

their own violation Engage in craft Activities Record low school attendance	83
17. Reasons why students engage in Economic Activities	83
18. Parents/Guardians Assertion that Children who are left to engage in craft activities to care for themselves record low school attendance	84
19. Teachers Assertion that Children whose parents have left them to care for themselves Record low school attendance	85
20. Responses of students on the Assertion that their parents or guardians do not worry whenever they fail to attend school	86
21. Responses of students and friends indicating when they engaged in the craft activities	87
22. Responses of Pupils on how often their parents/ guardians engaged them in work instead of allowing them to attend school	89
23. Responses of parents/guardians on whether they feel that keeping their wards in an economic activity is more rewarding than being in school	90
24. Parents / guardians responses on whether they sometimes keep their wards from school to help them in their economic activities	91
25. Responses of students on how many friends they have	92
26. Responses of students on the jobs that their friends engage in	92
27. Ways through which absentee children can be made to develop interest in regular school attendance (views of teachers)	94

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

Generally, education plays a major role in the socio-economic advancement of developing countries. There is considerable evidence that education has direct impact on various aspects of social, economic and political well being of a country.

It basically improves the quality of life of the people to ensure a sound healthy environment. It is really the pivot on which the nation, society or community revolves. It is the key to national development in the sense that everywhere in the world, education is expected to fulfill national aspirations and goals. (Farrant, 1989)

According to Peters (1965) education is central to the development of better life and a better world. He goes on further to say that one cannot properly be called educated unless one develops the capacity to see one's knowledge, skills, attitude and activities in relation to a co-herent pattern of life.

Education seeks to equip the individual with knowledge, skills and attitudes to make him useful to himself, his immediate community and the country as a whole. Kneller as cited in Owuolabi (1987) defines education as the process by which society, through schools, colleges, universities and other institutions deliberately transmit its cultural heritage from one generation to

another. Farrant, (1989) also suggests that education is the social mechanism designed to bring about in the persons submitted to it certain skills and attitudes that are judged to be useful and desirable in his society. We may infer from the definition above that, education is a process which intentionally transmits what is considered by society to be valuable in an intelligent and voluntary manner.

The process of education transmitting culture, customs, beliefs and values of the society is called enculturation or socialization. In this wise education is designed to guide the child born without any culture to learn the culture of his society so as to enable him or her play meaningful role in the society. Asiedu-Akrofi (1978) supports this assertion by stating that education seeks to teach; inform; train; nurture; mould; equip; and guide the child to be a useful and responsible citizen of the society in which he or she lives.

In Ghana, there are two structures of education. These are formal/structured and the unstructured/informal. Prior to the introduction and influx of Western form of education, traditional form of education existed in all societies. It was termed informal because it lacked formal curricula, formal settings such as school facilities and formal teachers. Teaching was done by parents, siblings, family members and elders who were all considered as teachers. Most of the learning experiences were learnt unconsciously and basically through observation and imitation methods. The entire environment and all activities constitute the 'school'. (Twumasi, & Assimeng, 1989).

As population grew, society became more complex; the transmission of culture, knowledge, beliefs and values also became more complex. Various mechanisms which were more selective and efficient means of socialization

were adopted. Formal education which was introduced by the missionaries was adopted. This form can be described simply as institutionalization of the mode of transmitting culture. In this form of education there was formal curriculum which is drawn based on the cultural needs and aspirations of the society, a transmitting agent who is trained or a specialist called a “teacher” and the recipient of this knowledge is known as the “student”. The specified structures or place of learning in this wise is the “school”.

Upon attainment of independence, the government of Ghana in its accelerated development plan introduced mass education to equip indigenous Ghanaian with knowledge and skills. Various schools sprang up in almost every corner of the country. However, much has not been done about the education in the Kwabre district of Ashanti Region of Ghana.

Kwabre district is one of the twenty-one (21) districts in Ashanti Region. It covers a land surface of 246.8 square kilometers, representing 1.01% of the total surface area of Ashanti Region. Currently, its population estimate is 164,688 with 2.4% growth rate and a population density of 444.8 persons per square kilometer (2000 National population census). Under the concept of decentralization, Kwabre was carved out of the Kwabre Sekyere District which is located at the central part of Ashanti Region. It however shares a common boundary with Afigya Sekyere District to the North and Kumasi Metropolitan Authority to the South, Ejisu-Jaben to the South East Atwima District to the West and Offinso to the Northwest. The District Capital Mampong is approximately 14.5 kilometers from Kumasi. Kwabre is mostly known as the cradle of indigenous craft of the Ashanti Region. It is from this area that Kente weaving specially spread to other parts of Ashanti.

A search of literature on Kente cloth reveals that it originated from Bonwire-Ashanti one of the towns in Kwabre District (Safo-Kantanka; 1998 citing Asamoah-Yaw 1996).

The varied indigenous craft in Kwabre district include Kente weaving, woodcarving, Adinkra cloth and dyeing of funeral cloth/Kuntunkuni just to mention but a few. All aspects of the various crafts is domestic, the various materials, tools and accessories are owned by individuals and is passed on from generation to generation and not the factory type of machines and tools in the complex industrial setting. There is no division of labour, hence no specialization. The craftsman virtually does everything from the production stage to the distribution and sometimes even marketing the product himself.

Training the child to acquire knowledge and skills about the craft is also a domestic affair. There are no specified structured institution set up for these purposes. According to McWilliam and Kwawena-Poh; (1975). The child normally learns his trade through the traditional nurturing process in the family by observation, participation and imitation. Gender was also considered, as some of the craft were for males while others were for females. It was a taboo for females to be seen engaged in Kente weaving, woodcarving, the making of Adinkra symbols, and all other forms of weaving. However, this trend seems to have changed, during the recent Kente festival in October 2008 at Bonwire girls were however seen engaged in Kente weaving. Most of the girls proudly exhibited their skills and products at the exhibition grounds which were patronized by highly ranked officials including H.E. President Kuffour. The whole process of learning these craft is through apprenticeship training. In these processes, the boys are made to put up with craftsmen who in

turn teach the boys the craft. They learn how to use the various tools and material to produce the craft through apprenticeship or observation, its major aim was to ensure that the trainees become socialized as well.

According to Agyemang (1986) socialization is the process where the individual learns his or her culture. The writer goes on further to explain that culture is the totality of the society's accumulated knowledge, art, laws, morals and ways of behaviour. The acquisition of which brings individuals to the perfection of their culture (p.5). The process of socialization of an individual is very necessary so as ensure that the individual does not become an alien in his or her society, knowledge of ones culture makes one accepted in his or her society.

Busia (1964) lamented for being trained outside his hometown and hence, for not being able to understand his people much. He writes that "I understood our community far less than the boys of my own age who have never been to school" (p.7) .He was not sorry for being educated in the formal school but because he was not socialized with his people. However the case of the children in Kwabre is just the opposite. They have been socialized in their culture but lag behind when it comes to formal education.

Dr. Aggrey pointed out that, the striking of the black and white keys on the piano gives harmonious tune. This suggests that the acquisition of formal education in addition to the skills in the crafts will make children in Kwabre well balanced educated citizens. Most of the craft centers in the Kwabre district of Ashanti have grown to become tourist centers which are mostly patronized by foreigners. It therefore behooves on the children in these village to acquire communication skills to enable them interact with these foreigners.

When they receive formal education they would be properly poised to record transactions and do proper accounting so as to make adequate profit from the craft trade. (Quigrain, 1988)

The government and stakeholders content to the view of the Commonwealth Secretariat Reports (1993) that there is a direct correlation of Gross National Product (growth) and Human Resources endowments of every society. The acquisition of the necessary manpower for the development of their countries has been the preoccupation of governments all over the world. This had made various governments in succession contribute a lot of state funds to the development of education. They have tried in spite of the constraints of limited resources, to ensure that their citizens gain control of the productive capacity of the environment as a guarantee to improved quality of life.

In Ghana various government since independence have recognized the importance of education. Various Acts such as Accelerated Development Plan (A. D. P.) Education Act of 1961, and recently the Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) have all been introduced to make education equitable and accessible for all citizens. However, the level of participation and retention especially in the semi-urban and rural areas is still of concern to the public and all stakeholders in education.

A Commonwealth Secretariat Reports (1993) says that the school is expected to be in the fullest sense in breathing part of the community. A normal school is expected to be at the service of the children in the community. However, one may ask if this is happening in reality. Do children in our semi-urban and rural areas choose to be in school during the normal

school hours? Do they really find the school that attractive so as to participate effectively and be retained there? Are there other factors from the environment that also inhibit effective school attendance?

Galloway (1985) points out that the economic activity of a place has an influence on school attendance; this is very worrying to school administrators, government and stakeholders in education. An observation made in 1999 by some researchers in some major commercial and industrial towns like Accra, Tema, Kumasi, Tamale, Takoradi, Akatsi and Techiman revealed that, children of school going age are involved in some form of work to support themselves as well as their parents and siblings. The situation is not different from what pertains in craft producing area like Kwabre where children of school going age abandon school and engage in the craft activities. (Osei, 2000)

Dall (1989) observes that the main reason why a lot of children do not go to school in Mali is as a result of economic hardship. He further writes that most parents who have limited resources always make use of their boys on the farm keeping the herds while the girls stay at home to look after their young siblings or to sell at the roadside.

King (1981) and Twumasi, & Assimeng, (1989) shared similar sentiments on poor school attendance of children. They hold the view that child labour is very necessary for the survival of poor families. In Kwabre, children who participate in craft are considered more of a benefit to their parent than those who attend school.

Baker (1988) observes that in Sir Lanka, especially in the rural areas children are often kept at home to work in the field instead of attending

school. Most parents have difficulty in providing their children with exercise books and other school materials. This statement suggests that due to poverty or the inability of parents to secure the needs of children while they attend school, the children decided to make them stay away or absent themselves from school.

Cain (2000) in his study conducted on school attendance in Bangladesh writes that children are engaged at the age of six years at task that do not require maturity such as gathering fuel, fetching water and caring for the younger children. He goes on to state that, boys whose ages range between eight and ten years assume the responsibility for herding cattle and fishing. At the age of eleven they begin agricultural work and by the age of fourteen they are capable of doing adult work. Cain generally concludes that the parents do that to sustain economic life but it makes the children experience low school attendance. The assertion of Baker (1988) and Cain (2000) is almost similar. They all hold the view that children are made to work due to the economic situation of their families. And once they start working the school becomes unattractive to them while those who enroll also have problems with regular attendance.

The Daily Graphic of December 21, 1988 reported that girls in the Upper primary classes in Chokor, a fishing community in Greater Accra Region dropped out from school to help their mothers to smoke fish or they get married at a very early age. Mining activities in places like Farua in the Western Region, Dunkwa-Offin in the Central Region, Konongo – Odumasi and Obuasi both in the Ashanti Region popularly known as “galamsey” have succeeded in taking a number of pupils out of school. Kwabre, which abounds

in indigenous craft, has its biggest share of the canker of poor school attendance. Children of school going age stay away from school and engage in these activities or hang around for tourist who patronizes their craft for a fee.

Another notable factor that encourages absenteeism has been outlined by Asiedu Akrofi (1978). He holds the view that in the big towns and cities in Ghana children find it very easy to play truancy. He writes that some of them leave their homes under the pretext of going to school but would never reach the school while others go to school only to vanish after some few hours stay. He further says that some of these children play pranks because they do not find the teacher's lesson interesting or they have some friends who are able to entice them to more interesting activities on their way to school. He writes further that some children stay away from school when they have cause to believe that neither the teacher nor the class accepts them; hence pupils who do not respond to the teacher's methods of teaching easily get bored and find alternative rewarding life outside school. He concludes that persistent truancy can affect school attendance.

Farrant (1993) shares a similar opinion with that of Asiedu Akrofi, he argues that boredom at school, as well as authoritarian practices in the school, bullying from older pupils and dislike of certain school activities causes phobia amongst the children which do affect school attendance of children.

A World Bank Report (1988) states that in rural areas in Africa most schools have dilapidated buildings, chairs, tables and desk are either broken or missing. Most schools do not have good sanitation facilities. It further stresses that poorly maintained facilities affect standard and this influences

pupil's attendance. For those who attend school little can be learnt and during running days classes have to be discontinued because of leaky roofs, some buildings have no roofs at all, in developing countries the basic elements of an orderly school environment are frequently missing.

Statement of the Problem

Education equips the individual with the necessary knowledge, skills, competencies and abilities that increase their capacity to meaningfully contribute to their society. The benefits of education are quite enormous to the individual and his society as a whole. In today's world the ability to read and write a simple sentence has become essential in everyday life.

However a recent statistics presented by the United Nations (2002) suggest that there are over one billion illiterate adults in the world. In view of this, government all over the world and especially in developing countries like Ghana has challenged themselves to encourage its citizenry to be educated. They have ensured through various Acts and policies like making basic education free to make education (schools) accessible to all school going children by advocating the FCUBE in less developed countries worldwide especially in Africa.

In spite of all this, a casual survey conducted in Kwabre district points out that a lot of children of school-going age are not in school for various reasons. During school hours they engage themselves in activities such as Kente weaving, cloth dyeing, printing, wood carving, pottery, farming and the selling of second hand products in Kumasi. They engage in these activities because of economic reasons. The need to either cater for themselves or supplement their family income has become apparent because most parents are

poor. Absenteeism is detrimental to student's achievement, promotion, graduation, self-esteem and employment potential. Clearly, students who miss school fall behind their peers in the classroom. This in turn leads to low self-esteem and increases the likelihood of students drop out in schools. Persistent absenteeism affects their educational attainment and their learning abilities in the areas of literacy (reading and writing), numeracy, and (mathematics), and problem solving (Integrated Science), which are considered as the firm foundation for education. Such frequent absenteeism would therefore make a child become handicapped in the performance of these activities.

The current process of basic education in Ghana is on the basis that one moves from the primary level to junior high school level till completion. However it is believed that if each phase is made a complete education on its own, so that if even students decide to drop out after the basic level that is the Junior High School the knowledge, skills and attitude acquired would help them allocate resources effectively for high productivity. On the other hand it would also enhance their academic attainment in the subsequent years.

The economic activity of a place can have an adverse influence on school attendance of the pupils. In the Kwabre district where various craft activities abound, pupil's absenteeism from school has become a major challenge and this is of grave concern to policy makers, politicians, school authorities and the society. The main concern therefore is to know the current status of school attendance in Kwabre District and the extent to which the economic activities especially the local craft activities affect pupils school attendance in the area. It is to address this concerns that the study is being carried out.

Purpose of the study

The main purpose of this study was to identify the factors that affect primary school attendance in Kwabre a major craft village in the Ashanti Region of Ghana. Specifically, the study sought to find the effect of the economic activity in the area on school attendance, how parents attitude towards education affect school attendance and the extent to which pupils engagement in craft activities interferes with school attendance.

Research Questions

The investigation sought to answer the following questions:

1. What are the types of economic activities in which students often engage in the Kwabre District of the Ashanti Region of Ghana?
2. What are the factors that encourage students to engage in these economic activities?
3. In what ways does their engagement in these economic activities interfere with school attendance?
4. How can students' attendance at school be improved?

Significance of the Study

The government of Ghana upon recognizing the importance of education since her independence in 1957 (Education act of 1961 and FCUBE) have made considerable efforts at providing education for all its citizens. However the level of participation and retention especially in semi-urban and the urban rural areas is of great concern to the government, stakeholders and society as a whole.

The findings from the study can be one of the many ways of indentifying some of the problems of absenteeism. It would also bring out the causes of absenteeism so as to help policy makers, stakeholders or other bodies concerned with education would bring out policy to curb it growth.

The findings of the study will also help educational administrators, politicians, stake holders, policy makers and the like to adopt efficient and effective measures which would encourage students' attendance in school rather than their engagement in the craft activities. It would also enable Government to allocate adequate funds to create an enabling environment such as buildings, furniture etc. This would make schools attractive for children.

Teachers will also vary their teaching methods to make classrooms pupil friendly so as to encourage regular attendance. Community members and parents/guardians, in knowing the problems of their wards in education, will come together with the educational authorities to draw Participatory learning and Action Plans (SPIPs) to address the situation.

The study will also sensitize and educate students to re-prioritize their goals in life so as to value education and not waste state resources. Lastly, findings of the research could be used as bases in solving and curbing irregular school attendance of pupils by implementing the recommendations in other parts of the district.

Delimitation

The study had in focus the economic in Kwabre district of Ashanti Region. This area abounds in indigenous craft activities in the Ashanti Region than any other area.

The selection of Kwabre area for the study has been influenced by the interest of the researcher. Findings and recommendations could be applicable to other areas where similar economic activities have a great impact on school attendance. This study was also confined to the basic schools in Kwabre. Hence the generalization of these findings should be done with caution.

Limitation

The study was stalled to some extent because most guardians or parents were mostly not available due to the nature of their jobs. They were petty traders, businessmen and drivers, the women who were also available were reluctant to grant audience to the researcher because their husbands were not around.

Indeed, some of the respondents could also not be reached at all. These could affect the accuracy of the data. It was also difficult to convince parents of irregular students to respond to the questionnaire. They gave flimsy excuses such as going to farm, or asking the researcher to come another time. However, these could not seriously affect the accuracy of the information given as I was able to provide them satisfactory explanations for the purpose of the interview.

Again, some teachers were reluctant to respond to my questionnaire as they expected financial rewards from me. This attitude could affect the responses they offered.

Organization of the Study

Chapter One covers the introduction, statement of the problem, purpose of the research and research questions. It also entails the significance

of the study, limitation of the study, the delimitation of the study and the organization of the work.

Chapter Two reviews related literature under the following sub-headings concept of school absenteeism, some critical issues that tends to encourage low school attendance such as truancy; peer group influence; family size;; parents attitude towards schooling; child labour; punishment, and environment.

Chapter Three discusses the methods used, the sampling technique, data collection and procedure used in analyzing the data of the entire study. Chapter Four discusses the results of the data obtained. Finally, Chapter Five draws conclusions from the result and provides some recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The main purpose of the study was to make out the factors that affect primary school attendance in Kwabre District. This chapter review related and relevant literature on the topic under study. The literature is related to varied studies connected to absenteeism in schools, which is experience more than necessary.

Absenteeism

Absenteeism is inevitable when it comes to life situations such as death, accidents and illness. However, when it occurs more than necessary it becomes a problem which needs rapt attention. Children of school going age are sometimes forced by their parents or guardians to engage in a lot of economic activities in order to, make money to supplement their family's income. This tends to let the pupils become truants and also develop negative attitudes towards schooling.

Galloway (1985) writes that absenteeism is always a problem to parents or guardians, educational administrators, politicians and the society in general. The review would therefore attempt to explain the concept of school absenteeism. Due to the enormity of the problem a lot of terms have been generated from the concept. Such terms include "truancy", school phobia", child delinquency" etc. However, all these terms are used to describe a child

who is seen out of the class or school without permission due to pathological reasons or under the ethos of the family or community.

Some critical issues or factors that tend to encourage absenteeism such as “truancy,” peer group influence; child labour, the environment, family structure, parental attitude, family size, poverty, poor teacher-pupil relationship, and punishment would all be discussed under the literature review.

Concept of School Absenteeism

According to the Webster Third New International Dictionary of English Language (1961) the term “Absenteeism” means protracted or permanent absence or continual interruption of attendance in school or place of work. The Heinemann English Dictionary (1979) defines absenteeism as the practice of staying away from one’s place of work, study, property etc. habitually and without permission or good excuse.

The Heinemann English Dictionary (1979) also states that absenteeism is the fact or habit of frequently being away from work or school without a good reason. A comparison of the three definitions suggest that absenteeism is the practice of being absent from school or place of work frequently without any good reason or permission.

Rood (1989) a principal of St. Clair Michigan High School says that absenteeism is a constant interruption of the learning processes. Dall, (1989) sees absenteeism from the medical point of view that physicians think school refusal is a reactive behaviour due to underlying physical illness. Eastwood (1989), a renowned educationist, in his contribution to the knowledge on

truancy, has observed that poor school attendance is an old problem which has become more acute after the enactment of compulsory education status.

Galloway (1985) writes that the 1944 Education Act in Britain made it a legal requirement for parents to send their children to school. He stresses that even after this act, irregular school attendance continues to be a problem. He explained his point further by saying that with the enactment of the education statutes making it compulsory it was felt that children would take advantage to be in school; however this seems to be a mirage as the problem of absenteeism still pertains.

A comparison of the two statements by Galloway (1985) and Eastwood (1989) suggest that absenteeism is a problem of old has been of great concern to parents, teachers, educational administrators, politicians, the society and the pupils themselves.

Causes of Absenteeism

Hersov (1977) for example noted 3 broad categories of absenteeism:

- (i) truants
- (ii) school refuses or school phobia
- (iii) children whose parents withhold them from school.

Galloway (1985) identifies the following as causes of absenteeism:

- (i) Child who is unwell
- (ii) Parent's withdrawal of a child
- (iii) A child kept away from the school by the parents for their own reason.

A search on goggle reveals that the causes of absenteeism can be put under four main groups.

- (i) Students

- (ii) Parents
- (iv) Environment
- (v) School

Some of the causes outlined as being under the student factor include the following Rebelliousness, poor sleeping habit, learning disabilities and physical maladies. Parents also have their own attitude that increases absenteeism. Such causes include the following. Lack of responsibilities, inability to discipline, unusual working hours, absence from home, poor education and mental illness

In the case of environment the following was outlined as the cause of absenteeism: Neighborhood, Poverty, and Poor Nutrition. The school contributing factors include the curriculum, poor teacher-student relationship and the school size.

Patterns of Absence

According to Galloway (1985) studies have shown that there is a pattern in pupils' absenteeism. He contends that absenteeism is high at certain times of the day, week, term and the year. He points out that looking at these patterns of absenteeism there is the possibility of students having problems with particular teachers or with certain areas of the curriculum. He also says that pupils absent themselves after the register has been completed marked.

Rutter (1979) noted that because schools are becoming more complex and bigger, specialization is also gaining grounds, pupils or students have to move from one classroom to another and from teacher to teacher for different lessons. During this period, he observes that pupils take advantage and run away from the school to engage themselves in various activities. He suggests

that the solution to this problem is to call the roll during each lesson, or the register should be marked in the morning and also in the afternoon.

Collins (1998), citing Spooner (1979) stated that absenteeism increased on Fridays and also towards the end of the term. Collins (1998), citing Rutter, writes that there was a relationship between school and age group. Twelve schools were selected for a survey, the results showed that absence rates rise as the school leaving age approaches Collins (1998), citing Spooner (1979), says absence rate increased, as the pupils grew older.

Truancy

According to Rutter (1979) the term truancy refers to children who are unlawfully absent from school on their own without the parents permission. The Oxford dictionary (1998) on the other hand considers truancy as a child who absents himself from school without permission. Eastwood (1989), sees truancy as a failure of a youngster for one reason or another to attend school.

Graham (1997) also indicated that truancy is any intentional unauthorized absence from compulsory schooling. He goes on further to explain that the term typically describes absences caused by students of their own free will, and usually does not refer to legitimate excused absences, such as one related to medical conditions. He suggests that it may also refer to students who attend school but do not go to classes and is commonly associated with juvenile delinquency.

By these definitions, truancy generally refers to the staying away from school without permission. Some behavior of truants that has been observed is that they rightly refuse to attend school but make plans to do something else. According to Blair, (1975), they may go fishing, attend movies, visit the

circus, take a trip or work on something that interests them in a friend's house. Agreeing to earlier statement made by Blair (1975). Agezo (2000) writes that children stay away from school and engage in activities such as hawking of goods, pushing of carts, loading and unloading of goods at lorry stations.

The truant child may not have any serious problems of personal adjustment. The child may absent himself from school because he or she has a job to bring money to supplement the family income. According to Siann and Ugwuegbou, (1989) a child may go collecting old bottles and returning them to a bottle depot or helping men at the beach to pull nets so that he or she can get fish for the home (Quaigrain, 1989).

Farrant (1989) also asserts that truancy can occur without parental knowledge while in some cases there is often parental approval and encouragement. In most cases parents withdraw the child from school from time to time to perform some other job. In a study conducted by Owusu (1987) it was observed that parents in the fishing areas along the coast, such as Elmina, sometimes prevent the older daughters from going to school and keep them at home to look after their young siblings or perform some household chores. This really confirms Farrant's assertion that truancy can occur with parental encouragement

Another notable observation made is that, a child might refuse to attend school or decide not to be in school simply because the school does not offer as much as he or she wants to know or do. As a result of this he or she may prefer to stay out of school, however due to parental pressure, the child washes down and get prepared to go to school only to be found midway engaging in other activities which interest him or her. An Education Service

District survey report (1992) as cited by Davidson (1997) suggest that the causes of truant behavior may vary from individual to individual. It goes on further to write that in one survey students or peoples cited boredom and loss of interest in school, irrelevant courses, suspensions, and bad relationships with teachers as the major factors in their decision to skip school. On the other hand, most of the school staff believed truancy to be related primarily to student's problems with the family and peers.

Asiedu Akrofi (1978) writes to support the assertion of Davidson (1997). He says that some children play the pranks because they do not find the lessons of the teacher interesting, when they realize that they are not making satisfactory progress at school and lastly when they have problems with the teacher. He suggested that teachers should always entice the children to enjoy learning through mirth, jollity and activities of the classroom. Commenting on the earlier statements the researcher can confidently say that all hands needs to come on board to help stop this canker from greening deep into our educational system

Absenteeism is detrimental to student's achievement, promotion, graduation, self-esteem and employment potential. As a child continuously absents himself, he loses much classroom work and may not be able to perform well as expected. Rood (1989) writes that truancy has been earmarked as the most persistent problem that administrators face. Davidson (1997) backs this saying by writing that truancy is a complex problem requiring a comprehensive response. He further says that educators, law enforcement agencies, courts, communities and families should all play a part in truancy prevention. Davidson (1997) writes that in the United States, many

States provide local truancy officers who have the power to arrest habitual truant youths and bring them to their parents or to the school where there are supposed to attend classes. He also cited another example that in the United Kingdom, a police officer who suspects a child who is of school going age deliberately missing school for no legitimate reason has the power to take that child to the school where he or she is supposed to attend. He emphasized that failure to secure regular school attendance of a registered pupil is a criminal offence for parents.

Rutter (1979) also suggest that solutions to truancy could be divided into four categories; strict laws and regulations, in-school programs, computer technology, and community solutions. Having considered all the statements made by the individual writers, it is apparent that the problem of absenteeism does not only occur in Kwabre District alone but the world all over. The researcher therefore agrees with Davidson (1997) and Rutter (1979) that a number of programmes and policies need to be put in place to help curb the problem to its minimal even, though it cannot disappear entirely. Peoples should be educated on the fact that truancy creates a difference between lifetime accomplishments and lifetime burdens.

Peer Group Influence

An extensive search on literature on absenteeism suggests that peer group influence has a devastating effect on school attendance. Peer groups are very powerful and can influence a child's life.

According to Agezo (2000) a study conducted on school absenteeism revealed that peer group influence is another key factor affecting school attendance. He goes on further to write that eighty-eight (88%) of pupils held

the view that apart from their parents asking them to stay out of school on certain days, the behavior of their colleagues also inhibits them from attending school regularly. He says that some of the children confirmed that their peers who stay away from school tell them how much they earn a day by engaging in various activities and this naturally attracts them to do the same.

Akrofi (1978) supports the statement of Agezo (2000) and writes that children play truant when their friends are able to entice them to exciting activities even on their way to school. Willis (1997) points out that peer influence can have effect on a child's schooling since he or she can flout school rules, Jones (1976) asserted that peer group influence can have an effect on the child's schooling; it can let one act against the school as an enemy likewise.

According to Agyemang (1986) peer group consists of children of almost the same age and with common interest. He further states that they have their own norms and regulations and anyone who goes contrary to their rules and regulations is sanctioned.

Willis (1997) mentions that in some part of United State of America peer influence is a major factor that determines whether pupils will go to school or not. He further writes that most adolescents like to do what their friends have been doing. According to him, if friends have been out of school to get work to do which earns them money, they will be persuaded to do. This statement of Willis (1977) agrees to earlier statement made by Agezo (2000) and Akrofi (1978). These points to the fact that a strong peer group influence can affect pupil's school attendance.

Researchers of the subject have established that most children especially adolescents imitate what their friends do so that if a friend has dropped out of school because of some reasons, he or she may be compelled to join. Here the pull factor is the children in the group who have already developed dislike for the school and convince others to join. (Rice, 1981)

A study carried out by Willis (1997) suggests that truant pupils develop their own code of communication such that after registration, they were able to signal each other in order to leave the class and engage in other activities. Although peer influence has been observed as a factor that militates against regular school attendance, it is very difficult to control. Datta (1984), states that, the infant largely socialized within the family, but as he grows into a child and matures into adolescent, he spends some of his time among friends.

In the school setting, peers play significant role and influences the behavior, attendance and academic work of pupils. Peer groups are therefore important and cannot be ignored. Administrators and teachers should therefore map up some strategies to curtail its negative effects. In the school peer group could be used to help improve attendance of defaulters.

Child Labour

According to Ascher (1998) child labour is the employment of children at regular and sustained labour. He writes further that this practice is considered exploitative by many countries and international organizations. A UNICEF report (1998) describes child labour as work that exceeds a minimum number of hours, depending on the age of a child and on the type of work, such work is considered harmful to the child and should be eliminated.

A critical study of the term child labour suggests that it was utilized to varying extents throughout history but entered public dispute with the beginning of universal schooling, with changes in working conditions during industrialization and with the emergence of the concepts of workers and children's right. The above revelation supported by Ascher (1998) who writes that child labour became an issue for human right advocates, stakeholders, government etc with the introduction of universal schooling.

According to UNICEF, there are estimated 250 million children aged 2 to 17 in child labour worldwide, excluding child domestic labour. It also states emphatically that International Labour Organization considers child labour exploitative with the United Nations stipulating, in article 32 of the convention on the Rights of the child that: States parties recognize the right of the child to be protected from economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the child's education or to be harmful physical, mental, spiritual moral or social development.

In many developed countries, it is considered inappropriate or exploitative if a child below a certain age works, for financial gain. An employer is often not allowed to hire a child below a certain age. This minimum age to work in an establishment without parent's consent and restrictions is at age 16. Based on this understanding on the use of children as labourers, it is now considered by wealthy and developed countries to be a human rights violation and is vehemently outlawed, however in poorer or developing countries like Ghana child labour is rampant and tolerated by society. Poor families often rely on the labours of their children for survival, and sometimes it is their only source of income.

Pioneer of June 27, 1972, reiterates that in Ghana the frequency of reports of sending children to the bush during farming seasons is becoming alarming in the country. Owusu (1987) reveals that in Kumasi the capital of Ashanti Region of Ghana 44% of juveniles go to early employment just to get money for books, textbooks, school uniforms or to pay their fees. He further says that 27% are engaged in trade to supplement their household budgets.

A critical study of the statements made by Pioneer of June 2, 1972 and Owusu (1987) suggest that child labour is really happening in Ghana and there is the urgent need for stakeholders to tackle this menace. However statistics from other studies also reveals that not only is it happening in Ghana but the world over. A study conducted in Latin America on children point that a lot of children take on to the street at a very young age as vendors. In Bangladesh working children are essential for survival in many families.

In southern Europe a large number of school children are found in unpaid labour especially in seasonal activities such as farming and in small shops. In recent times child labour has increased in Central and Eastern Europe following the transition from communism to capitalism. In the U.S.A. official number of child labourers is 5.5 billion. However, it does not include the many children under age 12 who are illegally employed in sweet shops or as seasonal migrant workers on large farms.

All these findings and figures above suggest that child labour is a global problem Dubow (1997) also writes that an estimated 158 million children age 5- 14 are engaged in child labour. Millions of children are engaged in hazardous situations or conditions such as working in mines working with chemicals and pesticides in agriculture or working with

dangerous machinery. He further stresses that child labours are everywhere but invisible toiling as domestic servants in homes laboring behind the walls of workshops, hidden from view in plantations. All these activities have adverse effects on the Childs Schools attendance and it behoves especially on parents to help put a stop to this menace. Dubow (1997) in his study reported that in Sub-Saharan African around one in three Children are engaged in child labour, representing 69 million children. In South-Asia, another 44 million are engaged in Child labour. He further reveals that: Children living in the poorest households and rural areas are most likely to be engaged in child labour. Those burdened with house hold chores are overwhelmingly girls. Millions of girls who work as domestic servants are especially vulnerable to exploitation and abuse. The above statement by Dubow (1997), suggest that not only does child labour affect their school attendance but sometimes children are abused through some of the activities or work they do. Some of these include prostitution and being employed as domestic workers etc.

A notable literature Awake Magazine May 22, 1999 issue heading “Pay the sweat of the children”. The Magazine states that under International labour organization (I.L.O.) convention, 15 years is set as the minimum age allowing children to work provided that 15 years is not less than the completion of compulsory schooling. It goes on further to say that according to International Labour Organization (I.L.O.) the number of working children between 5 and 14 years of age in developing countries is estimated to be 250 million. The magazines suggest that work on the other hand is also an essential part of a child’s education and a means of socialization. Parents and the society at large could make use of this process to transmit vital skills to their

younger generation. It argues that children when involved in some form of work, whether at workshops, small scale industries and studies gradually become full-fledged workers with requisite skills and technical know how in later life.

According to the Awake, Magazine the United Nations Children's Fund maintains that such work is beneficial, promoting or enhancing a child's physical, mental, spiritual moral and social development without interfering with schooling, recreation and rest. However, child labour most of times take children away from the classroom, make them work for long hours and such work are exploitative and destructive to them. In Kwabre where these studies is being conducted children engage in a lot of activities such as

- (i) farming
- (ii) carving
- (iii) hawking
- (iv) weaving which interferes with their schooling

Child labour no matter what form it takes always interferes with children's education. It therefore suggest that stakeholders, government, parents and the society as a whole should ensure that all children go school because the key to developing the individual and the nation as a whole is education.

Forms of Child Labour

Domestic Servant

This is by and large most popular form of child labour. "Awake" magazine describes this as "the world's most forgotten children". Under normal circumstance domestic service needs not be hazardous but is often the

case. Most children engaged in domestic servitude are poorly paid or in some cases not paid at all. Most of their masters and mistresses set the terms and conditions of their work entirely at their whim. One notable thing is that are deprived of affection, schooling, play and sometimes social activity. They are also vulnerable to physical and sexual abuse.

Forced and Bonded Labourers:

Parents of children often of ages 8 or 9 years pledged these children to factory owners or rich men and women in exchange for small loans. This type of child labour may involve virtual enslavement of children to repay debts incurred by their parents or grandparents e.g. the trokosi system among the Anlo people in Ghana. In this system a girl is given to the high priest in atonement for a sin committed by the girls parents. This girl goes into perpetual servitude.

Commercial and Sexual Exploitation

It has been estimated that every year about one million girls worldwide are lured into the sex trade. Boys too are sometimes exploited sexually. This type of abuse normally damages the physical and emotional state of the child not to mention the possibility of contracting sexual transmitted disease like (H.I.V.), etc.

Industrial Plantation Labour:

According to Hine (2006) a lot of children can't read, and don't know their A.B.C.'s. Most of them are engaged in mining plantations and other forms of work. Many children toil in mining operations that would be considered too risky for adults. Many of such children suffer from

tuberculosis, bronchitis and asthma. Child labourers who work in plantations are exposed to pesticides, snakebites and insect stings. Some of the children became mutilated while cutting cane with machetes.

Traditional Expectations

In our African society there is the general belief that the more hazardous and harder jobs should always be left for ethnic minorities, the lower classes, the disadvantaged and the poor. The United Nations children's fund notes that the view that some people are born to rule and to work with their minds while others, the vast majority, is born to work with their bodies." In the Western countries situations are not much better. The dominant and well to do groups may not wish their own children to hazardous work, but they will not be disturbed if young people from racial, ethnic or economic minorities do such work. In Northern Europe for instance, majority of labourers are likely to be Turkish or Africans and in the United States they may be Asian or Latin Americans.

The incidence of child labour has been greatly exacerbated by modern society that is preoccupied with consumerism as there is high demand for low priced products. A study of various literatures on child labour revealed the following as being the cause of child labour.

1. Exploitation of Poverty

According to the "article the sweat of the children" which is found in Awake Magazine May 22, 1999 issue, the most powerful force that drives children into hazardous and debilitating labour is poverty. The statement goes on to say that for poor families the small contribution of a child's income or

assistant at home that allows the parents to work can make the difference between hunger and bare sufficiency. A critical study on child labour suggests that both employers and parents are guilty to this crime. It is an advantage to employers because they pay them less for their services rendered and more so, they are more docile and malleable that is many do whatever they are told to do, without questioning authority and also less likely to organize resistance against oppression of any sort.

2. **Socializing the Children**

Children in most societies work in one way or the another. According to Awake Magazine ‘work is an essential part of children education and a means of socializing them. It is a means of transmitting vital skills from the parents to the offspring. Children are often involved in workshops, small scale service etc. In the case of Kwabre they are engage in Kente weaving, Wood curving, Beads making, printing etc. Through this process they learn the method, materials and all the skills involved. This basically helps them to become full fledged workers in later life.

According to United Nations, children’s fund such work is beneficial, promoting or enhancing a child’s physical, mental, moral or social development without interfering with schooling recreation and rest.

Twumasi and Assimeng (1989) writes that in Ghana child labour exists in both rural and urban areas. Children as early as six years and above are engaged in fetching water and carrying farm produce for household use. The children normally help in performing domestic task such as farming, fishing, carpentry, woodcarving, kente weaving instead of attending school. These

activities are part of the process of socializing child to play adult roles and responsibilities.

Low regard for the usefulness of education

Robinson (1984) asserts that most parent doubt the benefits of education as useful tool for preparing children for future life the tend to encourage their children to enter into working rather than being in school. Supporting Agyemang (1986), Twumasi and Assimeng (1989) says that it has been observed that many parents in Africa especially those in the rural areas say that it is economic burden to send their children to school. It is the feeling of the parents that if children should stop attending school and rather help perform some other job that could bring income to the home the better. In lure of those children are engaged in domestic work or made to go to work instead of being in school.

A study conducted by Quagrain (1988) showed that fishmongers and fishermen encourage their children to stay away from school and involve themselves in fishing activities. The above findings by Quagrain clearly suggest that some parents do not see the benefits to be derived from schooling and as such do not encourage their children to attend school regularly.

Data (1984) adding to the above shares the view that in Ghana it has been observed that the son of a University graduate has eight times more chance of attaining secondary education. Most of the parents of these children are in the dominant class who can provide learning materials such as TV sets, radio, computers, a home library and so on. Children from such homes are at an advantage over those who may not come from such families. Inferring from the above statement the researcher sees the relationship between parental

background, values and one's educational attainment. This basically means that the graduate who value education will ensure that his child's goes through education and progress no matter what. On the other hand, the farmer, fisherman and Kente weaver would also value a child who is intrigued with the skills involved in their various trades.

From the review on child labour it is a clear that it is problem that hinders regular school attendance. The various authors are unanimous in seeing the existence and growth of child labour. The researcher also shares this view. It is therefore necessary for all stakeholders, government, society, parents and educational administrators to help in the struggle to end child labour.

Poverty

Macmillan English Dictionary describes poverty as a situation in which someone does not have enough money to pay for their basic needs. A look up at poverty from wiktionary the free dictionary points out that poverty also called 'penury' is deprivation of common necessities that determines that quality of life, including food, clothing, shelter and safe drinking water and may also include the deprivation of opportunities to learn to obtain better employment to escape poverty, and / or to enjoy the respect of fellow citizens. Inferring from the seemingly clear definition put forward by the wiktionary, one could clearly establish a relationship between poverty and ones ability to learn or to be educated. Mollie (1989), further suggest that to be poor is to be deprived of those goods and services and pleasures such as health, education, clothing and shelter which others around you take for granted. This could also be the case at Kwabre in Ashanti Region of Ghana. Whiles others are enjoying

access to education, they are deprived because they need to work to support themselves and their families.

Poverty may affect individuals or groups and is not confined to developing nations. Poverty in developed countries is manifest in a set of social problems including, homelessness and the persistence of “ghetto” housing clusters.

A critical study on poverty by various authors reveals that there are various aspects of poverty, these include economic and social. According to Moore (1976), economic aspects of poverty focus on material needs typically including the necessities of daily living, such as food, clothing, shelter or safe drinking water. He goes on further to write that poverty in this sense may be understood as a condition in which a person or community is lacking in the basic needs for a minimum standard of well-being and life, particularly as a result of a persistent lack of income.

On the social aspects of poverty he makes a link between conditions of scarcity to aspects of the distribution of resources and power in the society and recognizes that poverty may be a function of diminished capability of people to live the kinds of lives they value.

Moore (1976), outlines that the social aspects of poverty may include lack of access to information, education, healthcare or political power. By the above, we can conclude that poverty generally is a deprivation of one to basic amenities in life and also a global menace. Poverty is an issue that more and more of our nation’s children are coming face to face with. The price that children of poverty must pay is unbelievably high. It really has an effect on both academic failure and extreme delinquency. Moore (1976), had this to say “He writes that the rise in the number of children in poverty has contributed to

making classrooms more diverse than ever before”. This, indeed, makes teaching and learning more challenging. He stresses further that poverty still remains a challenge for teachers, as well as students. The effects which rise due to these conditions are, school attendance is often irregular.

The above assertion by Moore (1976), is backed by Reyes et al (1991) who contend that pupils who are economically disadvantaged tend to stay away from school. Christian (1997), reveals that a large proportion of parents or guardians in Elmina in the central Region of Ghana are unable to pay for their children’s school fees and provide them with school materials. The main reason according to Christian is that most parents or guardians face financial problems and they fail to remit these children regularly. Consequently, children engage in fishing activities rather than attending school. Anderson (1994), states that children who come from poor families both in developed and the developing countries do not enroll in school. He goes on further to say that those who attend school normally drop out as compared to children who come from better off families. For Dall (1989) children in Mali do not go to school due to economic reasons. School is not free in Mali. Basic school pupils have to buy desks, chalk, chairs and make a monthly contribution. The average family in Mali finds it too costly.

A look at the statements made by the various writers goes to confirm the assertion that poverty affects regular school attendance. Poverty always tends to have negative effects on whoever is concerned. Dolphyne (1996) are of the view that negative effects on parents due to poverty factors in turn have a negative effect on the development of the child. Children rely on their parents to mediate their environment, respond to their needs and provide emotional

stimulation and support. However, on the contrary if because of poverty related stresses, parents can not do this, the child's development could be delayed or be otherwise negatively affected. We may note that when this happens children turn to have physical disabilities, grade repetition and learning disabilities.

Dolphyne (1996) share the view that children of such parents have reduced IQ, low cognitive functioning, increased rates of learning disabilities, and high school dropout rate. There is no doubt that poor children often have a feeling of helplessness, low self esteem and may be fatigued. Caine (2000), reveals that children from poor homes downshift brains as they are always addressing survival needs, new information and experiences will be shut out. Their attention is affected, cortisol, a stress hormone, is always in abundance, and result in emotional volatility.

Webster (1987) reports that in the third world countries children's educational performances is unlikely to be improved since they are subjected to a number of factors which are beyond their control. The three major factors that the children encounter according to Webster are:

- a. Poor children who experience chronic malnutrition from birth. They are educationally at a disadvantage because malnutrition affects the development of their brain tissues.
- b. Children as an important source of labour for the rural families. He explains that the daughters are also expected to leave school at not more than seven or eight years of age.
- c. Exorbitant school fees. He stresses that although basic schooling has 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 fast a child in school.

He concluded that poor health, child labour and poverty militate against the ambitions of many third world children and their parents. This can lead to either low (irregular) school attendance or early dropping by the children. Analysis of the statement made by Moore, Anderson and others reveal that poverty really puts children at a disadvantage in life not to mention education. It virtually leads to low school attendance and sometimes dropout.

In Kwabre, where this research was conducted, poverty rate is high. Children found in this community seem to engage in craft activities rather than being in school to be educated. Poverty should not be an excuse for us to allow student go away-ward, it behoves on parents to be supportive and consistent in their parenting, and be more responsive to the needs of the children. Government should also set up scholarships schemes and other means of funding the education of the less privileged. When this is done community task forces could be used to ensure that during school hours pupils are really in the classroom. In the case of the teacher, Colclough (1998), suggest that they should adopt co-operative learning to help build a sense of responsibility and connectedness. A lot of learning experience should also be provided to the child in a congenial atmosphere.

The Environment

This refers to the social, psychological and physical milieu in which the child finds himself or herself may contribute to low school attendance especially in the rural areas. UNESCO (Report 1995), World Bank report (1988) on rural schools in some African countries show that the schools

physical environments were causes for infectious and communicable diseases. The report points out that many children come to school chronically ill with parasitic, respiratory, skin and eye infections. It further explains that the physical conditions of many of the classrooms are stressful. Most of the schools have dilapidated buildings. The schools compounds are hazardous to the health and safety of the children due to poor sanitation and poorly maintained structures.

During the rainy days classes have to come to an end because of leaking roof or roofless buildings. Many of the buildings lack ventilation and light to brighten the classroom. Chairs, tables or desks in the schools are broken. In some schools tables and chairs are non-existent. The lack of these physical amenities makes the school unattractive to both teachers and students. The report emphatically outlines improper planning and negligence on the part of the educational sector as the cause.

Reports from other individuals and organizations also stress that teaching and learning materials are inadequate. The world Bank reports (1988), UNESCO (1995) and Lockheed, et al reaffirms the above statement by writing that there is lack of teaching and learning materials such as books, chalk etc. they point out that there are always limited stock of teaching and learning materials. As a result of this regular attendance on the part of teachers and children are not achieved.

Boateng (1998), the Ghana Government statistician, writing on the core welfare indicator questionnaires (C.W.I.Q) a survey carried out in some rural areas in Ghana indicated that there is poor quality education in the rural areas in Ghana. The reports attribute this situation to lack of teachers, shortage of

textbooks, overcrowding and poor physical facilities, especially in poorer communities. The presence of such conditions does not encourage regular school attendance. Many problems confront children when they go to school. This may be due to the fact that they may be having problems with some subjects or a particular teacher or students. Their not attending classes may be a way of expressing their resentment at the fact that school has failed to meet their needs (Galloway, 1985). Siann and Ugwuebu (1989), say that a child may not attend school for different reasons. They go on further to explain that a child may be someone who does not do well in academic work and feels that attending school may not benefit him. On the contrary it could also be due to the fact that a bully in the class terrifies him; or might lack a sympathetic teacher or parent in whom he may confide. Such children therefore give excuses of feeling ill and therefore not attend school or may ward around the streets pretending that he is attending school. A comparison of the statement made by all the writers suggests that children who stay away from school do so because of varied reasons. The same could be cited about children who play truant in Kwabre where this research was conducted.

Gibson and Mitchell (1990) express the opinion that many children absent themselves from school because the curriculum does not meet their needs so they regard school attendance as a waste of time. Some of the students who play truant believe that the school is not providing them with marketable skills. Others feel that school delays their ability to earn an income. He continues to say that some people see poor attendance as a legitimate response to an impersonal and inappropriate education system. Siann and Ugwuebu (1989) supports Gibson et al by reporting that a study conducted on two girls,

revealed that one was emotionally adjusted, had adequate self esteem but she felt that the school offered nothing she really cared for, and that she felt that to staying at home and moving into the market was better. She perceived the school as being irrelevant to her own interest and so she withdraws from school. The researchers therefore advised that schoolwork must be tailored to meet the further needs of the children. A critical analysis of what pertains in Kwabre suggest that children value the acquisition of skills in the various craft activities rather than what they would acquire in school. The curriculum of such an area should be revised so that an aspect of the craft could be introduced into the school activities. This would make them acquire formal knowledge as well as the skills in the craft activities which would provide them marketable skills.

Collins (1998) citing stools in a summary of Okeeffe's findings says that reasons for truancy are diverse but the one on top of the list is dissatisfaction with the curriculum, he therefore suggest that an alternative curriculum approaches may encourage regular school attendance. An interview with dropouts indicated that half decided to leave schools because they did not get along with teachers and other students.

Black (2002) records that in their study of dropouts, Northwestern University researcher's Stefance Deluca and James Rosenbaum found that students who were socially isolated, especially those were constantly subjected to peer threats and who lacked friends often became the brunt of teacher's disparagement. Rather than counteraction student – to – students bullying, isolation and threats, the researchers found teachers tend to reinforce these behaviors. Teachers who scorned isolated students further increase their

susceptibility to peer threats, added to their alienation and ultimately contributed to their decision to drop out.

Siann and Ugwuebu (1989) reports shameful stores of teacher disparagement which happens every day. Teachers who focused all their attention on student's problem behaviors played a part in causing many to drop out. They further states that many students feel unacceptable inferior and find it difficult to adjust to their environment this can also make them play truant. Several studies and researches have revealed that truants are less successful in tests of attainment and general intelligence than regular attendees. He concludes that a student who likes school is unlikely to be a truant. Gibson et al. (1990) contends that some students absent themselves from school because they may be afraid of a teacher or some children in school. He continues that some children may stay out of school because of punishment such as caning or because they are shouted at and bullied by some students. Collins (1998) reports that a committee of enquiry into discipline in schools set up in 1998 identifies that attitude and motivation of head teachers and teachers were decisive influence on the atmosphere in the school. The different management styles, different classroom styles used by teachers, different discipline codes and timetables affect the atmosphere in school. He goes on further to say that, research showed differences in the way schools are run, are linked with different standards of work, behaviour and attendance among their pupils. The committee suggested that good quality management leadership styles exhibited by the headmaster / mistress affects the tone of school positively and promotes success and good behaviour. They did not fail to recognise the fact that quality

atmosphere and relevant curriculum in a school is necessary when it comes to promoting regular school attendance.

An Elton committee report states that there is an association between the appearance of the school and the behaviour of the pupils including attendance. It states emphatically that the building should be well decorated with the equipment and the compound well maintained since this shows care and concern for pupils. Lee and Burkham reported in what they call their most important finding that students or children from poor, disadvantaged families and neighborhoods are likely to stay in school when they perceive their interactions with teachers and administrators as positive. Their interviews with drop out indicated that half decided to leave schools because they did not get along with teacher and other students. Many said their teachers did not care about them, were not interested in whether they succeeded or failed in school, and were not willing to provide extra help when asked.

Johnson (2002), stresses that despite a hundred years of compulsory attendance laws and decades of programme and legal efforts to get school kids to go to school, attendance remains high on every school administrators agenda for school improvement. He goes on further to write that with the advent of school report cards and prominent high- stakes accountability systems in most schools, regular attendance has been linked to higher achievement stronger bonds to school community and lower rates of delinquent. Johnson (2002) suggests that schools should design and implement attendance policies and programmes that monitor, encourage and reward student attendance using available resources. To be more successful attendance policies and procedures

must be part of a comprehensive plan to create and maintain student-centered, achievement focused learning communities.

Family Size

This basically refers to the total number of sisters and brothers including half or step and adopted siblings. The size of the family basically accounts for what is termed to as the dilution effect. This dilution effects seeks to establish the fact that as the family increases the resources that are available for each individual child in the family also decreases.

Blake (1989) refers to resources as parental time, attention, emotional, and financial asserts. A research conducted by Polit (1982) and Blake (1989) revealed that family size has a negative effect on children school attendance and attainment in the United State and other developed countries where the study was conducted. in a bid to study the relationship between the number of sibling and education achievement of children in a home. Data from the National center of Education statistics was used for the study. The final analysis of the data pointed out that there was a linear relationship between sibling size and interpersonal resources measured at individual level. It was evident that resources become les available as the family size increased and children did not benefit much.

The investigation of Blake goes on further to indicate that as the number of siblings increased the availability of parental resources as well as educational outcomes of the children decreased. As a result of the large siblings size parents many not be in the position to provide the needs of the children at school, and this eventually leads to truancy. Children from such

families may have to engage in various activities to earn some monies to fend for themselves. This could also be the case in Ghana. Where children found in major towns such as Techiman, Obuasi, Konongo, Elmina, Cape Coast, Aseewa and so on, involve themselves in hawking, pushing carts, fishing, net pulling loading and off-loading goods to earn money for themselves and their families at large. All these lead to the neglect of school or total drop out.

A research conducted by Shavit and Pierce (1991) on three groups of families in Israel; the Ashkahazi Jews, oriental Jews and Muslim Arabs sought to study the relationship between sibling size and educational attainment in nuclear and extended families of the three groups in Israel. The sample consisted of 2,144 Jewish men who were born in 1954 and were interviewed in 1980/81. Another sample was taken from the Arabmen who born in 1954 and 1960 and were also interviewed in 1987/88. It was found out that some of the characteristics of Jewish groups had effect on their educational attainment. The Ashkanazi Jews had good socio-economic background and had much smaller sibling size of 2.14 in the average. The Oriental Jews had the average of 5.64 and the Muslims 8.95. Since the Ashkanazi Jews had a nuclear family structure and few children they have the advantage of acquiring and using cultural capital such as TV set, Magazine, Radio and so on (Agyeman,1986) and effective parental care that might help smooth academic work and presence in school over the two other groups. The research revealed that between the Ashkanazi and oriental Jews, those with smaller siblings attained significantly more schooling than members of large families. With regard to the Muslim Arabs it was found that the socio-economic characteristic of the nuclear family was less strongly related to educational attainment.

The research revealed that the Muslims were supported by the wider network of the extended family such a support network helped large families cope with the burden of raising many children and increased the resource base in the same linear fashion as in the nuclear based societies. This showed that the educational attainment of the family whether nuclear or extended depends on the parents resources. Thus from the study the size of the nuclear family has no effect on the Muslim children.

However in Kwabre where this investigation was carried out, the larger families with large number of children, had problems providing the basic needs of these children. It was thus necessary for the children to work to help supplement the families income or to provide their needs while in school. This eventually leads to low school attendance and virtually drop out from school.

Family Structure

The issue of family structure affecting regular school attendance many be looked at from the perspective of living with either of the natural parents, both natural and biological parent's one biological and step parent and no one of them at all. The effects of living with any one group of the parent are essential, and account for both the child's pattern of school attendance and attainment.

Mulkey, Crain and Harrington (1992) carried out a research to find out the variability of test scores and grades between students from "one parent" home and those of "two parent" homes the researcher used parent and student's behavior and family economic status as competing variable to explain the effects. The sample used in the research consisted of 15,000

second year college students in the United States of America, using the high school and beyond data of 1980 and 1982. The results of the standard test scores showed that children from single parent homes had grades about a tenth lower. Children from single parent homes had lower grades than those from two family natural homes. The outcome of the study suggested that children from one-parent homes were less closely supervised. In most of the homes where father is absent it was found that the children absented themselves from school, went to school late, or never did their homework

Another study conducted by Astone and McLanahan (1991) revealed that children who lived in two parent homes where either of the parents is a stepparent, face low financial commitments. This makes it difficult for the child to meet his or her personal needs such as good school uniform, writing and reading materials and even food to eat. On the other hand, another study also sought to find out the effect of divorce on children school attendance and achievements. The study covered student's attendance rate and school achievements before and after divorce. In all about 7,099 students who lived with both biological were covered in 1980. In 1982 a second study was carried on this same number of students and it was found that 4.8% of the parents had divorced. The study revealed that marital disruption led to the education in the amount of time that parent spent in monitoring schoolwork. It was also found that marital disruption reduces parent-child communication. The researcher made a conclusion that broken home could be a hindrance to a child's motivation to be in school and succeed academically. Broken home could lead to psychological and emotional disequilibrium. The child may suffer from loss of parental encouragement and guidance. When such a situation arises the

child may seek security outside the home such as from the peer group who have dropped out of school and may encourage him or her also to drop out of school and indulge in the activities of their peer.

Parental Attitude to Education

Parental attitude towards education has effect on the Children School attendance. In any home where parents encourage children to develop interest in learning, where they tell the benefits of education to the children, they may take to learning seriously and also be in school always. It has always been said that parents who doubt the relevance and usefulness of school as a means of preparing children for future life do not encourage their children to be in school. According to Siann and Ugwuegbu (1989) some parents do not see education as “high fliers” for their children they therefore do not see the need to educate their children. Most parent feel that their children do not loss anything if they are not educated (Daily Graphic December 21, 1988) reports that in Chorkor a fishing community in Greater Accra Region of Ghana, girls in upper primary classes are made to stop schooling to help their mother smoke and also sell fish.

Agyemang (1986) writing on the above points out the fact that most African parents of today and parents of pre-industrial societies such as fisher folk, farmers and even petty traders do not derive any pleasure in having their children in school. The same could be cited at Kwabre where parents who are engaged in the crafts activities, farming etc find it more beneficial to engage their children in these activities than to send them to school most of these parents complain that they face the problem of buying books, uniform and painting fees. They believe that these children could help with menial Jobs

that could bring money to supplement the family income. Parents therefore resort to keeping their children in the house thus causing absenteeism or perpetual drop out. Wiseman (1967), argues that the socio-economic status of parents does not matter so much but rather the sort of attitude they have towards schooling is the crux of the matter.

Home and Community Influence

FAWE Ghana (1996). has observed that many inquiries have shown that in about one-third to a half of cases of truancy, the child is always living with one parent mostly the mother. He goes on further to outline that a growing child learns from his playmates, his school, home, his neighbourhood and the community in general. These influences may create contradictions in the child's life. FAWE Ghana (1996). says that influence from home can be powerful enough so if the positive overshadow the others it will help the child make the right choices.

Galloway (1985) states that most of the parents of truant were most times unemployed. He adds that inconsistent disciplinary measures at home by parents also make children truants. According to Galloway (1985) single parenthood has an influence on the children's social adjustment and attitude to school. This affects their standard of work at school. He states that irresponsible attitude towards education by parents also affect the child as well. FAWE Ghana (1996). observes that most persistent truants are children who are unhappy at home. He states further that if such a child realizes that he can successfully absent himself from school without being caught, this may virtually lead to delinquency.

FAWE Ghana (1996). write that if a child's family and friends have no regard for education; this can affects the child's interest in school. A child from a home where parents do not give much attention to education, can absent himself from school without anybody showing concern. Lack of affection and interest in the child on the part of the parents affects the child's progress at school. Many truants come from broken homes where parents are either separated or divorced or one parent is dead. Sometimes the child may be a stepchild or the unrecognized child in the family. The child is psychologically affected by problems at home and this unsatisfactory relation between parent and child create insecurity in the child and may lead to the child being a truant. Where parents are unduly harsh or neglectful, the child may be hostile, unfriendly and afraid and this may affect his attitude to life in general and to school in particular.

Mensah (1992) states that lack of parental guidance and supervision, drug and alcohol abuse of family members contribute to child delinquency. Also, parents' lack of awareness of attendance laws and different views about education also negatively affects children's school attendance. In many cases, the community also has a positive role to play.

Effects on Students Educational and Social Progress

It has been identified that student absenteeism is associated with poorer achievements in school among other outcomes. For example, absenteeism is one of five personal and family background factors that accounted for ninety-one percent of the variation in United States mathematics scores. Again it has been established that when students are absent, they interfere with other students' opportunities to learn (U.S Department of

Education Schools staffing survey (1990-91). Mensah (1992) also writes that non-attendance is a problem that extends much further than the school. He says it affects students' achievement, promotion, graduation, self-esteem and employment potential, According to him students who miss school always lag behind their mates in the classroom. This in turn leads to low self-esteem. Absenteeism increases the likelihood that at risk students will drop out of school. He recalled that an investigation of sixty-six thousand four hundred and forty truant complaints in Detroit's public Elementary and High School 1994 – 95 School revealed that seventy percent failed to graduate. Failure to graduate is associated with diminished earning potential in adulthood and other poor outcomes. He concludes that absenteeism affects the student, the family and community and that the country office of education identifies truancy as the most powerful predictor of delinquency.

He writes, that the U S Police department, report that many of the students who are not in school during regular hours are often committing crimes such as vandalism, shoplifting drug abuse. Etc. Inferring from what has been written above, one can confidentially say that irregular school attendance have a negative effect on the student, community and the nation as a whole. This is because; most of these children would grow up to form the human resource base of the nation. Collins (1998) points out that truancy leads to juvenile crime and unemployment and that is why schools have been encouraged by governments to contribute to the reduction of truancy which in the end reduce crime and unemployment. In the face of this a Government white paper, which resulted in the Education Act of 1993, gave considerable control to both schools and parents. Schools were given the mandate to

publish their rate of truancy so as to guide parents in the selection of schools for their wards.

Collins (1998) continues to stress that student's absenteeism is also seen as a predictor of trouble in the future. He considers both absence and truancy as leading to loss of educational opportunity. In the face of the above it is imperative for the school, parents, community and all stake holders to motivate students to be regular and stay in school. Collins (1998) presented a study of secondary schools in London to establish the effects different schools have on their pupils. Observation was also made on issues such as absconding, truancy, violence, lateness, fights, missing of lessons and disruption of classes. The report revealed that in the case of boys there was a substantial amount of correlation between delinquency rates and attendance. The report also established that schools with high rates of delinquency also had high rates of absenteeism. Schools, which were able to control the behaviour of their students also performed better in examination.

The U.S Department of Education (1996) reports that students who became truant and eventually drop out of school put themselves at a disadvantage of becoming productive citizens. Students who drop out of school are two and a half times more likely to be on welfare than high school graduates and also twice as likely to be unemployed. High school drop-outs who are employed earn much lower salaries and subsequently set themselves up for a life of struggle. It further states that truancy is a gateway to crime since most truants are linked to high day time burglary rates and vandalism. The Los Angeles county office of Education points out that truancy is the most powerful predictor of juvenile delinquent behaviour.

Mensah (1992) noted that, most truant children indulge in substance abuse, gang involvement, criminal activities and these often lead to more serious problems in adult life. Students with the highest truancy rates are at higher risk of dropping out of school. From the National Center for School Engagement (2001) perspective, truancy is a serious issue because it is often the beginning of problems and the causes of other problems as well. They suggest that truancy is a result of deep-seated problems and the cause of other. Truancy is said to be the result of deep-seated problems with substance abuse physical abuse, mental and physical illness or poverty. These are all serious enough to impair a child's ability to attend school regularly. With excess time on their hands many truants fall foul with the law and develop substance abuse, problems that further affect their ability to attend schools.

The National Center for School Engagement (2001) has further established that truant behaviour is extremely costly to society since crime carries with it a cost to the victim and to the community in terms of law enforcement and connections cost.

Inferring from the above statement's made by the various authorities, one can confidentially say that truancy has a detrimental effect on everybody. So in the case of children at Kwabre, there should be various interventions and collaborative effort to bring it to its minimal level.

In summary, there appears to be a growing body of empirical evidences on absenteeism and its related attendant causes. Inferring from the various statement made by the various researchers on the topic, it was evident that no single definition could be settled on what truancy is, the general consensus is that persistent absences from school could be referred to as truancy.

Secondly there is no doubt that absenteeism is a global menace which needs the effort of everyone to curb its growth. Various causes of truancy were discovered during the review. One of the causes was found to be the environment. This includes both the home and the school. The environment is explained further by the various writers as the physical and social/psychological milieu in which the child finds himself or herself. A school environment which lacks good furniture, building, teachers, textbooks, water, and teaching learning materials is likely to record low school attendance or even high dropout rate on part of the children. A UNESCO report (1995), World Bank (1988) affirms this by writing that most physical conditions of the classrooms are stressful and does not encourage regular attendance.

The home environment may also discourage school regularly. The various authors are unanimated in accepting the fact that the home environment can inhibit regular attendance. The high rate of poverty experience by most parents makes it difficult to provide the basic needs of children such as school uniform, textbooks, tables, pens and so on; this in the end puts such children in unhappy mood and the brains not ready to assimilate what the teacher teaches them. Where the child stays with the step parent, the basic parental love and support is mostly missing such children are sometimes over burdened with household chores and most times go to school on empty stomach. This eventually makes them reluctant to be in school. The review also unveiled punishment meted out to children in the school as one of the notable causes of truancy. Bullying from other children could also lead to truancy. Colclough (1998) stated that, if a child family and friends have no

regard for education then this affects the child's interest in school. A child from a home where parents do not regard the benefits of education does not also see the importance of attending school regularly.

Colclough (1998) observes that most persistent truants are children who are unhappy at home. Galloway (1985) point out that single parenthood has an influence on the child attitude to school. Where the parents perceive that keeping the child in school is waste of time, they do not encourage their children to be in school. They rather resort to the use of these children to perform some jobs that may bring immediate returns to their home. Here the researcher can relate this perfectly to the problem under investigation where parent feel that it worthwhile to keep their children in the house and engage them in the craft activities rather than sending them to school.

Child labour has been found to be a cause of low school attendance. It has been found out that hildren less than 15years of age are made to engage in various types of work. These children work to raises money to support their families.

The review suggested that child labour exists in almost every part of the world. However it is more prominent in underdeveloped world where children are made to work long hours to support their families. In Ghana for instance children found in fishing, mining, woodcarving, Kente weaving and business centers may be encouraged by their parent to absent themselves from school. In the urban centers one finds a lot of children selling dog chains ice creams, ice water, pushing trucks, loading and off loading goods at lorry stations and road sides all in the bid to raise money. Further reading suggested that child labour in the world takes various forms such as domestic service,

force and bonded labour commercial and sexual exploitation and so on, peers have undeniable influence on the decision of students to be truant. He goes on to suggest that a study on truant revealed that they had friends who also skipped school. Peer groups membership has effect on children's school attendance. Most writers brought to bear the fact that most adolescents copy what their friends do without weighing the consequences of their action.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

The basic purpose of the study was to identify the factors that affect primary school attendance in Kwabre District. This chapter discusses general procedures and research methodology adopted for the study. According to Best (1997) methodologies utilized in the conduct of educational research are based in most instances on research methods used in the behavioral and social sciences, which rely most heavily on psychology, sociology and anthropology. Areas addressed include the research design, the population, sample and sampling procedure, research instruments,

Research Design

The descriptive survey of research was employed in addressing the researcher's problems. Descriptive survey research according to Cohen (1989) involves the collection of data or information in order to test the hypothesis or a question concerning the current status of a person, a group of persons, event, objects, institutions or organization. Such studies determine and report on the way things are, what is there or what will happen. Generally speaking, descriptive research is concerned with the present status of phenomena. It deals with what exists, such as determining the nature of prevailing conditions, practices and attitudes (Cohen 1934). The concern of this research is to find out the extent to which craft activities in Kwabre of Ashanti Region affect school attendance. Descriptive research relies on observation as a means of

collecting data. It attempts to examine situation in order to establish the norm; is and responses.

The relevance of the descriptive approach in the field of education has been addressed by many scholars such as Cohen and Monion (1989), Kane (1995); Best and Kahn (1997).these scholars agree that descriptive research provides opportunity for researchers to gain valuable insight into the current status of a phenomenon with respect to variable or conditions in a situation. The descriptive research approach therefore offered the best means of describing the problems outlined for the study.

Population

A population refers to any collection of specified group of human being or of non-human entities such as objects, educational institutions, times units, geographical areas, Prices of salaries drawn by individuals, Lockheed (1997, p. 87) Population is” any set of persons or objects that possessed at least one common characteristic”. Population in research is regarded as a group or target group. Within this context, the population is the large group of people who show concern to facilitate the research work. For this study the target populations were students in four circuits in kwabre district education directorate, teachers and parents of such students in the area under review. The population was the target for data collection.

The accessible population for the study was made up of all the children of Junior High Schools in the Kwabre District, teachers and parents of the students under study. According to Ary, et al (1985) accessible population is a group from which the researcher takes the sample for the study (p.139). Since the researcher has a limited period of time to submit findings, using a large

population could take more than the scheduled period to submit the findings. In addition, were inadequate resources both human and materials. The large population would require more personal and materials which would in the end have a big cost-effect on the researcher.

Finally, inaccessibility of some places during rainy seasons and the long distances between the district office and some of schools, were some of the perceived constraints. In view of that the researcher decided to make use of sample population for the study.

The following groups formed the accessible population:

- a. all 1,435 J.S.S students in Kwabre District
- b. all 76 Head teachers of the various J.S.S in the Kwabre District
- c. all 300 teachers in JHS in the District.

Lockheed (1997) defines sampling as the process by which a relatively small number of individuals or events is selected and analyzed in order to find out something about the entire population from which it was selected (p. 83). The sample selected for the study was drawn from 10 selected Junior High School in the district; by means of the stratified random sampling technique. The Table 1 present the details of categories of distribution of respondents for the study.

**Table 1: Distribution of Respondents by School, Parents, & Heads /
Teachers**

School	Students	Head /teachers	Parents	Total
Wonoo- Ahadwo L/A	7	9	7	23
Safo L/A JSS	5	5	5	15
Ntonso L/AJSS	18	11	18	47
Kasaam L/A JSS	9	5	9	23
Bamang L/A JSS	5	5	5	15
Asonomanso Presby JSS	8	10	8	26
Ahwiaa L/A JSS	8	10	8	26
Ahwiaa Islamic JSS	8	5	8	21
Adanwomase L/A JSS	7	5	7	19
Abira RC JSS	8	10	8	28

The target populations consist of students, teachers and parent/guardians in the Kwabre district. In all, ten (10) schools were selected and within these schools, eighty three (83) students were used as respondents. In the same vein, eighty three (83) guardians of the students were selected and be finally, seventy-five (75) teachers/head teachers were involved.

Sample and Sampling Technique

The need for selecting some respondents as a sample cannot be overemphasized. Sampling is always necessary because in dealing with a large number of respondents there is the need to get a fair representation of the people because not everybody in the population can be studied. Sampling is one of the important decisions to be taken during the design of a research

project. (Nwana, 1992), Sample is basically a part or section of population.

For this investigation, 10 schools were selected through simple random sampling. The schools used for the study were chosen from communities that are predominantly producers of indigenous crafts, since that is the major economic activity students engage in. The selected schools were as follows:

1. Abira R/C Junior High School
2. Adanwomase L/A Junior High School
3. Ahwiaa L/A Junior High school
4. Ahwiaa Islamic Institute Junior high school
5. Asonomaso Presbyterian Junior High school
- 6 Bamang L/A Junior High School
7. Kasaam L/A Junior High School
8. Ntonso L/A Junior High School
9. Safo L/A Junior High School
10. Wonoo-Ahodwo L/A Junior High School

The selection of the students was done purposively in the sense that the researcher would specifically use students with low school attendance rate. The class register for the various classes notably (JHS1-JHS3) was examined. With the help of the head teachers and teachers, students who recorded attendance of 30% and below were classified into the low school attendance group. Altogether, 83 pupils were found in the 10 schools to fall into the low school attendance category.

A parent each of the selected pupils was also involved in the study. Parents in this study would be mother/stepmother, father/stepfather or

guardian. The researcher realized that it was necessary for parents or guardians of the children used to also respond to some questions so as to authenticate the responses supplied by the student. The number of parents in the sample size was 83. Hence the total number of both children and parents in the sample were thus 166. In situations where both parents, example mother and father, were present, they were all interviewed. The selection of the parents was purposive. In cases where two children in the home fall in the accessible sample, the two parents were interviewed. This helped the researcher to authenticate information given.

All the teachers and head teachers of the selected school who had been in the school for a year and over, were included in the study. All such teachers and head teachers were made to respond to the questionnaire. In all the schools a total of 75 teachers and head teachers were selected.

Research Instruments

The main research instrument used was the questionnaire. There were three category of questionnaires for teachers, students and parents/guardians. As Kerlinger (1973) observes questionnaire is widely used for collecting data in educational research because it is very effective for securing factual information about practices and conditions for enquiring into opinions and attitudes of the subjects.

The questionnaires were administered to student's parent or guardians, teachers and head teachers who were found at the craft centers. Different questionnaire for parent was used as an interview schedule for those parents who could not read and write. The interview was conducted by the researcher herself with support from of the teachers.

The questionnaire was made up of five components. These are

- (i) Background information
- (ii) The type of economic activities they engaged in
- (iii) Reasons for engaging in the economic activities
- (iv) The frequency at which the economic activities are engaged in
- (v) The specific times when these economic activities are performed.

The questionnaire for the students basically sought to find out the various occupations of the parents/guardians and how often children engage in the craft activities. Answers would either be ticked from the varied alternatives or written down where necessary.

The questionnaire/interview schedule for the parent was designed to elicit from the parents their occupations and how often their children selected for the study engage in the economic activities. While some questions would demand just a tick of the right answers, others would have spaces provided beneath them for the needed data to be written down by researcher.

The questionnaire for the teachers and headteachers had some of the questions in open-ended form while others were closed-ended. Response options to the closed-ended questions were arranged in descending order from four to one (4 to 1).

The value of the figure 4 represented strongly agree or very true while 1 on the other hand would also represent strongly disagree or very untrue. This suggests that the Likert Scale model was to form the list of possible answers the respondents were asked to tick. The responses that reflect their opinions were ticked.

Pilot Testing

To test the validity and reliability of the instrument a pilot testing was carried out. For the pilot test, Wadie Adwumakaasekese (Kente weaving) Ahwiaa Experimental (wood carving), Ntonso Seventh Day Adventist Junior High School (kite weaving, printing batik, cloth dyeing) were selected. The selection here involved purposive sampling because the researcher wanted to know the extent to which a particular economic activity in an area was engaged in by the children.

The selection was based on the fact that each town has its own unique economic activity such as Kente weaving, printing of cloth (Kuntunkuni), dyeing of funeral cloth whereas Ahwiaa also engages exclusively in wood carving where varied artifacts are made out of wood. Wadie Adwumakaasekese also engages in Kente Weaving.

After the selection of the schools the researcher proceeded to the various institutions for the testing to start. With the co-operation of the head teachers, and the teachers the sample were selected based on the criterion for selection which was based on those who recorded 30% and regarded as low school attendants. In all thirty students were obtained. In addition to this fifteen (15) teachers were able to respond to the questionnaires. It took the investigator 10 days to complete the pilot study. Study parents of the selected children were also contacted.

After the pilot study some few adjustments were done. The questionnaire and the interview schedule were also revised and edited to enable the investigator gain in depth information pertaining to some of the towns selected, precisely, Wadie Adumakaase. In the case of Adwumakaase,

the road network leading to the village was so bad that a lot of taxi drivers were reluctant to ply that route. The pilot study also brought to bear the fact that the researcher alone could not do the work due to the time frame. It became imperative that research assistant would be needed to administer the questionnaire, interview sessions and also collect data. Such assistant would be literate in the locality and would be paid a fee after the data collection.

Data Collection Procedure

After the brief discussion, a day was fixed between the researcher and the school for the data to be collected. The various class register was made available. Attendance for first term calculated and those who failed to obtain 30% attendance were considered as low school attendants. Their names were written down for them to be engaged in an interview. The local language was used as the medium of exchange. The investigator explained the questionnaire items to the teachers. All the respondents were assured of confidentiality and anonymity. Four weeks was used as the time frame for collection of the data.

Data Analysis

The various responses obtained from the three main groups of respondents namely students teachers and parents were all collated. They were all coded according to the various grouping for analysis. The collated data were statistically analyses using statistical package for the social sciences (SPSS) software. Tables were drawn under each section showing both frequencies and percentages and discussions made on each.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter of the investigation discusses findings from the various data collected for the study. The findings are basically discussed around the parameters set for the research. The research is a case study on the effect of economic activities on school attendance. Ary et al (1985) describes case studies in general as descriptive research techniques. In a case study, the investigator undertakes an intensive study of one individual, a single small social unit such as a family, a school, a school, a club or a teenage gang. In the case of descriptive research, Cohen (1989) points out that it involves the collection of data or information in order to test the hypothesis or a question concerning the current status of a person, a group of persons, events, objects, institutions or organizations. Such studies determine and report on the way things are, what is there or what will happen. Broadly speaking, descriptive research is concerned with the present status of the phenomena at the time of study.

Best and Kahn (1997) points out that it provides an opportunity for the investigator to gain valuable insights into the current states of a phenomenon with respect to variables or conditions in a situation. The concern of this research was to find out the economic activities that exist in Kwabre District of Ashanti Region and how it affects regular school attendance of pupils.

The research was carried out based on the following assumptions.

1. The students in the various Junior High Schools in Kwabre District engage in varied economic activities.
2. The students in the Junior High school in Kwabre District do not attend school regularly, probably because they feel that engaging in the various economic activities are more lucrative than being in school.
3. The students in the area under investigation spend more hours engaging on economic activities rather than being in school.
4. The students in the area engage in these economic activities at any point in time without considering its effects on instructional hours.

The descriptive survey provided the platform for the researcher to have an in-depth insight into real problems facing school pupils in the Kwabre District. It would enable the researcher obtain a complete picture of what goes on in Kwabre. The intensive probing nature of descriptive survey lead to the confirmation of previous phenomena suspected to be causes of irregular school attendance.

Demographic Data of Respondents

The respondents of teachers, students, and parents/guardians from the selected area. All pupils who had recorded an average attendance below 30% were included in the sample. Guardians or parents of all such students were also included in the investigation. Teachers in all the ten selected schools also responded to questionnaires set for the study.

In totality 83 students, 83 parents/guardians, and 75 teachers were selected. The researcher was only interested in those students who were

involved in some form of economic activities which virtually affects their regular school attendance.

In other to ensure that views obtained for the data are balanced, the investigator sought to obtain responses from both sexes that is female and male teachers. The gender distribution of the respondents is presented in table below.

Table 2: Gender Distribution of Teacher Respondents in the selected Schools for 2009 – 2010 Academic Year

School	Male		Female		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Wonoo-Ahodwo L/A	10	15.63	1	4.35	11	12.64
Safo L/A JHS	3	4.69	2	8.69	5	5.75
Ntonso L/A JHS	12	18.75	4	17.39	16	18.39
Kasaam L/A JHS	5	57.81	0	0	5	5.75
Bamang L/A JHS	4	56.25	1	4.35	5	5.75
Asonomaso Presby JHS	7	10.94	4	17.39	11	12.64
Ahwiaa L/A JHS	9	14.06	3	13.04	12	13.79
Ahwiaa Islamic JHS	4	6.25	1	4.35	5	5.75
Adanwomase L/A JHS	4	6.25	1	4.35	5	5.75
Abira R/C JHS	6	9.37	6	26.09	12	13.79
Total	64	100	23	100	87	100

As indicated in Table 2, 73.5% of the teachers were males while 26.5% of them were females. This clearly suggests that there were more male teachers than female teachers. Although 64 male teachers were given questionnaire to respond to, only 58 or 90% responses was received at the time

of collating the data. In the case of the female, 17 or 73.9% teachers responded to the questionnaire.

In totally there were 87 teachers consisting of 23 females and 64 males in the 10 schools selected for the investigation.

Table 3 shows the number of teachers who qualify to be respondents based on the criteria cited in chapter 3.

Table 3: Response of Teachers on Number of Years Spent in the School

Selected		
Years spent in the School	No.	%
1 - 3 years	13	17.3
3 - 5 years	47	62.7
More than 5 year	15	20.0
Total	75	100

Table 3 brings to light that majority of the teachers have spent over 3 years in their respective school and could therefore be in a better position to assess students attendance to school. Table 4 seeks to portray the total enrollment of each of the selected schools, as well as the number of irregular attendants. A quick glance of the table suggests that absenteeism is recurrent and a lot of the students were victims. The table also expresses the percentage of irregular attendants over the whole school's enrollment.

Table 4: Sample of Pupil with irregular Attendance from total**Enrollment**

Name of School	Enrolment	Number with Irregular Attendance	Percentage with Irregular Attendance
Wonoo-Ahodwo L/A JHS	130	7	5.4
Safo L/A JHS	106	8	7.5
Ntonso L/A JHS	200	15	12.5
Kasaam L/A JHS	130	7	9.2
Bamang L/A JHS	86	6	6.9
Asonomaso Presby JHS	144	12	8.3
Ahwiaa L/A JHS	280	6	3.9
Ahwiaa Islamic JHS	99	5	4.6
Adanwomase L/A JHS	92	10	10.8
Abira R/C JHS	169	10	3.9
Total	1,435	83	8.7

The total enrollment in the ten selected schools for the study was 435. It also showed that 120 of the students were perpetual truants. It further indicates that Ntonso L/A JHS had the largest number of irregular school attendants. This suggests that there were a lot more students in that locality who were not attending school regularly. This might be so because it is the only village in the study where a lot of economic activities (craft) such as kente weaving, Adinkra printing, and dyeing of funeral cloth commonly known as kuntunkuni is done. This particular village serves as a tourist centre and there is always the influx of tourist almost everyday who patronize the

artifacts and other products. On the other hand, the remaining villages in the study engage in only one economic activity. Safo, Bamang, Kasaam, Abira, Adanwomase, Asonomaso and wonoo-ahodwo engage in basically the weaving of kente cloth where as Ahwiaa also engages in woodcarving. Twumasi's et al. (1989) writes to support the above analysis by saying that children normally help in performing domestic tasks such as farming, fishing, carpentry, wood carving, kente weaving, etc instead of attending school.

Table 5 gives a clear view in numerical terms the extent to which each sex responded to the interview.

Table 5: Gender Distribution of Parents/Guardian

Gender	No.	%
Female	39	48.0
Male	44	52.0
Total	83	100.0

The gender distribution illustrated in Table 5 shows that there was a fair representation of both sexes in responding to the interview. The female respondents were 48% whereas the male respondents were 52%. The total parents/Guardians population was 83.

Table 6: Gender Distribution of Pupil Respondents

Gender	No.	%
Boys	71	75.0
Girls	12	25.0
Total	83	100

From the distribution in Table 6, the total pupil respondents are 83. The numbers of boys' respondents were 71 representing 75% whereas the

numbers of girls' respondents were 12 also representing 25%. The analysis above suggest that boys tend to be truant more than girls, this is so because in African art most of the craft are for men and in some instances a taboo for girls.

The above supports McWilliams and Kwamena investigation carried out in (1975) which brings to light the fact that the boys normally learn their trade through traditional nurturing process in the family. It goes on further to suggest that it is carried on by observation, participation and imitation. Weaving, pottery, kente cloth weaving, sculpture (wood carving) and the printing of adinkra symbols have primarily been the preserve of males. This could basically be the reason why boys tend to fall more in the truants range than girls.

Table 7 tries to show the age distribution of the pupil respondents. It clearly gives a vivid picture of the age group that was found more to be truants. The international labour organization convention states that 15 years is the minimum age for allowing children to work-provided that the years of completion of compulsory schooling is around that age (Awake May, 1999). The study tried to find out the age distribution of the truants. This would help in establishing the fact that students were engaged in child labour or not.

Table 7: Age Distribution of Students Respondents

Age group	No.	%
11 - 15 years	34	41.6
15 - 17 years	39	45.8
17 years and above	10	12.5
Total	83	100

A critical analysis of Table 7 brought to light a stunning revelation. The table suggested that a lot of the students who were truants were over the stipulated age for the completion of compulsory education which is 15 years. Their ages being over the set age for the completion of the Junior High School could also be the reason behind their engagement in the craft activities.

Table 8: Distribution of Parents/Guardians

Parent/guardian	No.	%
Guardians	30	37.3
Natural Parents	19	16.1
Father only	10	8.3
Mother only	24	38.3
Total	83	100

Mulkey, et al (1992) in their study of behavioural expression of children found out that children from single parent homes had lower grades than those from two family natural homes. As portrayed in Table 8, about 80% of the students respondents lived in broken homes with only 20% living in intact homes. According to Matanahan (1991) children who lived in two parent homes where either of the parents is a step parent, face low financial

commitments. He goes on further to say that when it happens like that it is difficult for the child to meet his or her personal needs such as school uniform, writing and reading materials and even food to eat. Since a high percentage of the respondents fell into the category of single parents home, the assumption could be made that they engage in the craft activities just to fend for themselves and also supplement the family income which in time result in truancy.

Table 9 shows the distribution of the marital status of parents' guardians of the respondents.

Table 9: Marital Status of Parents/Guardians

Marital status	No.	%
Unmarried	2	1.6
Widow	11	9.1
Widower	2	1.6
Divorced	17	28.3
Married	51	59.1
Total	83	100.0

The effect of living with any one group of the above is very essential and account for both the child's pattern of school attendance and attainment. A research conducted by Astone and Mctanahan (1991) showed that marital disruption or the death of any parent could be a hindrance to the pupils academic work. He goes on further to say that broken homes could be a hindrance to a child's motivation to be in school and succeed academically. It could also lead to psychological and emotional disequilibrium. The child may then suffer from loss of parental guidance and encouragement. When such a

situation arises they turn to friends or peers who have drop out of school. These virtually turn to make them truant.

Item 4 on parents interview guide was used to gather information about the occupation of parents. Their occupation would give a clear picture of their income and their ability to provide the basic necessities of their wards whiles they are in school. Agyeman (1986) writing on the economic function of education states that most African parents of today and parents of pre-industrial society such as the fisher folk, farmers and even the market women do not derive any pleasure in having their children in school, these parents complain that they face problems of buying books and uniform and above all lose the services of their children during school hours. Parents in rural areas believe that they need the help of these children to supplement the families' income.

The information gathered from the parents/guardian respondents are presented in Table 10.

Table 10: Occupational Distribution of Parents/Guardians Respondents

Occupation	No.	%
Herbalist	1	0.8
Warders	1	0.8
Labourer	2	1.7
Licensed Chemical Seller	3	2.5
Mason	3	2.5
Teaching	4	3.3
Unemployed	5	4.2
Driving	5	4.2

Table 10 Continued

Wood Carving	3	2.5
Batik/Cloth dyeing /Printing	3	2.5
Kente Selling	9	7.5
Kente Weaving	17	26.6
Farming	19	22.5
Petty Trading	12	18.5
Total	83	100.0

The data in Table 10 indicates that about 26.6% of the parent who responded to the questions were engaged in the craft activity with the remaining engaged in other miscellaneous occupation,. Trading however occupied the next highest position.

Datta (1984) writes that in Ghana it has been observed that the son of a University graduate has eight times more chance of attaining secondary education. He points out that the higher the level of the parents in forms of education, the more they value the education of their wards.

A study conducted by Quagrain (1988) showed that fishmongers and fishermen encourage their children to stay away from school and involve themselves in fishing activities. The above suggest that they do not see the benefits of schooling and hence do not see the need to encourage their wards. The fact still remains that the higher the level of education of the parents, the more they encourage their wards to be in school.

Table 11 shows the level of education of the parents/guardians of pupils.

Table 11: Level of Education of Parents/Guardians

Response	No.	%
Graduate	-	-
Certificate Teacher	3	3.6
Middle School Leavers	30	36.1
Illiterates	40	48.1
S. H. S. Leavers	5	6.0
J. H. S. Leavers	3	3.6
Up to P6	2	2.4
Total	83	100

As indicated in Table 11, majority of the parents were illiterate. The analysis, suggest that majority of the parents have not received formal education up to the secondary level they add up to 96%. Their general education was basically low. A study conducted by Quagrain (1988) showed that fishmongers and fishermen encourage their children to stay away from school and involved themselves in fishing activities.

Data (1984) adding to the view above writes that in Ghana there is a study that has established the fact that the son of a university graduate has eight times more chance of attaining secondary school education. He goes on further, to say that most of these parents are able to provide learning materilas such as computers, radio, television a home library and so on. An analysis of the educational level of the parents who were selected as respondents suggested that they could not be in the position to mentor these children to attend school regularly.

Types of Economic Activities Students Often Engage In

Research question 1: What are the types of economic activities students often engage in the Kwabre District of the Ashanti Region of Ghana?

Table 12 gives a clear picture of the economic activities engaged in the Kwabre District.

Table 12: Types of economic activity students engaged in

Types of economic activity	No.	%
Kenke weaving activities	73	87.9
Wood carving and related activities	6	7.2
Batik making / tie dying/adinkra/cloth dyeing	4	4.8
Others	-	-
Total	83	100

As shown in Table 12, the prominent activity that students engage in is kente weaving and its allied activities such as spinning of yarns, setting up the looms with the yarns and others. Close to 90% of the respondents engaged in kente weaving. The remaining 10% also engaged in other art related activities. The study also brought to light the fact that most of the students voluntarily engaged in these activities. This is portrayed in Table 13.

Table 13: Responses of students on whether they on their own volition engage in Economic activities

Responses	No.	%
Yes	60	72.3
No	23	27.3
Total	83	100.0

Table 13 shows that 72% of the respondents engaged in the economic activities on their own. This basically means that parents do not force their wards to engage in any of the economic activities. On the other hand 28% of the respondents also said that they engage in the various economic activities on their own volition. This could possibly be due to financial problems experienced by the parents.

Table 14: Whether parents stop pupils from attending school in order to engage in economic activities

Responses	No.	%
Yes	20	24.1
No	63	75.9
Total	83	100.0

As portrayed in Table 14, majority of the students engage in the activities with less influence from their parents or guardians. This refutes findings of Agyemang (1986) and Twumasi (1989) who says that it has been observed that in Africa especially rural areas that is economic burden to send their children to school. It is the feeling of the parents that if children should stop attending school and rather help perform some other job that could bring income to the home the better. In the face of this children engage in domestic work or made to go to work instead of being in school.

Seventy six percent 76% of the respondents also said they engage in these economic activities on their own volition. In Table 15 below, there is a confirmation from parents respondents on the facts that students on their own volition engage in the economic activities. However, 36% of the parents

accepted that they virtually make the students engage in the craft activities. This could be as a result of large family size, poverty or low regard for the usefulness of education.

Table 15: Responses of Parents/Guardians showing whether children on their own volition engage in craft activities

Responses	No.	%
Yes	53	63.8
No	30	36.2
Total	83	100.0

Low regard for the usefulness of education could be a factor Robinson et al. (1984) asserts that most parents doubt the benefits of education as useful tool for preparing children for future life. They tend to encourage their children to enter into working rather than being in school.

Moore (1976), is backed by Reyes at al (1991) also contend that pupils who are economically disadvantaged tend to stay away from school. Another notable cause of this is family size. The dilution effects seek to say that as the number of children in the family increases the familiar resources that are available to each individual child decreases.

Table 16 tried to portray the responses received on whether students who engaged in the economic activities record low school attendance. The table presents responses obtained from teachers on the issue:

Table 16: Responses of teachers on whether students who Engage in craft Activities Record low school attendance

Responses	No.	%
Strongly Agree	27	36
Agree	30	40
Disagree	9	12
Strongly disagree	9	12
Total	75	100

As shown in Table 15, the teacher made the observation that those students who engaged in the economic activities on their own normally record low school attendance as 36% and 40% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectfully to the statements. The teachers reiterated that most of these students engage in the activities on their own without being compelled to do so. Such students attend school when they feel like

Reasons for Students Engaging in Economic Activities

Research Question 2: What are the factors that encourage students to engage in these economic activities?

There is a general perception that children who engage in the economic activities do so because of poverty and neglect from parents, Table 17 sought to find out actual reason why students engage in economic activities.

Table 17: Reasons why Students Engage in Economic Activities

Responses	Very True		True		Somehow True		Not True	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
	I engage in the economic activity to support my parents.	7	9	5	6	–	–	–
I engage in the economic activity to provide for some of my basic needs	18	22	–	–	2	3	–	–
I engage in economic activity because my parents have left me to care for myself.	–	–	27	33	–	–	4	5
I engage in economic activity because my friend engages in the economic activities.	9	11	–	–	1	1.5	–	–
I engage in economic activity because I do not find school interesting.	4	5	–	–	1	1.5	2	3

Table 17 indicates that about 33% of the students respondents pointed out that their parents have left them to take care of themselves. On the contrary, 22% attested to the assertion that they have been left to take care of themselves. Moore (1976) backed by Reyes et al (1991) contend that pupils who are economically disadvantaged tend to stay away from school.

The study also brought to light the fact that, monies given to most of these children are insufficient and cannot meet their basic needs; hence their engagement in the various economic activities to supplement what their parents gave them. Christian (1997) in a similar study conducted in Elmina revealed that most parents or guardians who face financial problems fail to remit their children regularly and hence these children resort to engaging in fishing activities rather than being in school

Table 18 requested the views of parents and guardians on whether Children engage in craft activities to care for themselves record

Table 18: Parents/Guardians’ views on whether Children engage in craft activities to care for themselves record

Responses	Frequency	Percentage %
Very true	13	15.7
True	14	16.9
Somehow true	19	22.9
Untrue	20	24.0
Very untrue	16	20.5
Total	83	100.0

Most parents attested to the fact that, their wards engagement in the economic activities relieved them financially. Owusu (1987) reveals that in Kumasi the capital of Ashanti Region of Ghana 44% of juveniles got to early employment just to get money for books, textbooks, school uniforms or to pay their fees.

The study revealed that most parents sometimes stop their children from going to school in order to help them in their various activities they engage in surprisingly most parents were not aware of the long-term effects, this could have on their children’s educational development.

On the contrary, 24% and 20.5% respectively of parents or guardians also noted that they had not left their wards to engage in any economic activities to fend for themselves. Some of the parents indicated that they were not happy with their wards engagement in any form of economic activity. However, they were quick to say that especially with the craft activities it has become an

integral part of the socio-economic and cultural life of the community. They however added that most of these children are virtually truants. The views of teachers on whether Children engage in craft activities to care for themselves record have been summarized in Table 19.

Table 19: Teachers views on whether Children left to care for themselves

Record low school attendance

Responses	No.	%
Very true	11	14.7
True	10	13.2
Some what true	36	48.0
Not true	11	13.3
Not at all true	8	10.8
Total	83	100.0

Almost 76% of the teacher respondents indicated very true, true and somehow true in attestation to the fact that low student's attendance is due to the fact that parents leave their wards to care for themselves. Putting together the responses gained from the three categories of respondents (students, teachers and parents) it was obvious that student who recorded low school attendance is as a result of their engagement in the various economic activities. Another notable factor which the investigation discovered was that most of these parents do not seem bothered by their wards truants' behaviour. The responses solicited from children on whether their parents or Guardians were worried whenever they fail attend school are presented in Table 20.

Table 20: Responses of students on whether their parents or guardians are not worried whenever they fail to attend school

Responses	No.	%
Very true	4	4.8
True	20	24.1
Some how true	14	16.9
Not true	15	18.1
Not at all true	30	36.1
Total	83	100.0

The responses obtained suggested that only 46% of the respondents were of the view that their parents got worried when they find out they stayed out from school. Others also indicated that their parents were indifferent at their school attendance. To find out why parents were not really bothered when their children miss classes, it came to light that most of these children lived with their mothers or some other relatives. However, any day they did not attend school they worked to bring in money to supplement the family income. Owusu (1987), writing on child labour suggests that 47% of children engage in various activities to supplement their household budgets. This affirms whatever pertains in Kwabre District of Ashanti Region. Awake (May 22, 1999), edition also writes that children less than 15 years of age are made to enter into the labour force by their parents. These children basically work and give the monies to their parents.

Ways in which their engagement in the economic activities interfere with school attendance

Research Question 3: In what ways does their engagement in these economic activities interfere with school attendance?

The research question 3 sought information on ways that student's engagement in these economic activities interferes with school attendance. The question aimed at finding out the specific time students engaged in the various activities. Table 20 is used to represent the answers obtained.

Table 21: Responses of students indicating when they engaged in the craft activities

Responses	No.	%
Before school hours only	27	32.5
After school hours only	36	43.3
Before and after school hours	20	24.1
Total	83	100.0

The investigation suggested that about 32% of the students respondents, as indicated in the Table 21 engaged in the economic activities before school hours, and this basically had adverse effect on punctuality and regular attendance at school. These groups of students get tired and virtually absent themselves from school. On the contrary, others also engage in their economic activities after school.

Another notable thing discovered by the study was that absenteeism was on the increase usually at the end of the month when a lot of tourists visit the centres Even though some also indicated that they engage in the economic activities after school, I feel it would still have adverse affect on their

academic performance as they would not have ample time to do their homework and this would relatively affect their academic development.

According to Agezo (2000) a study conducted on school absenteeism revealed that peer group influence is another key factor affecting school attendance. He goes on further to write that eighty-eight (88%) of pupils held the view that apart from their parents asking them to stay out of school on certain days, the behaviour of their colleagues also influenced them from attending school regularly.

On the contrary, some students' respondents said that some of their parents sometimes prevent them from going to school but rather engage in the economic activities. The researcher found it prudent to find out how often the students were asked to do that. A question was posed and the responses presented in Table 22.

Table 22: Responses of Pupils on how often parents/ guardians engaged them in work

Responses	No.	%
Very often	1	1.2
Quite often	10	12.0
Often	9	10.8
Not quite often	63	75.9
Total	83	100

The research also confirmed a statement made by Siann and Ugwuegbu (1989) who writes that some parents do not see education as high fliers for their children and therefore do not see the need to educate their

children; most parents feel that their children do not loss anything if they are not taken through education. The Daily Graphic December 21, 1988 reports that in Chorkor a fishing community in Greater Accra Region of Ghana, girls in upper primary classes are made to stop schooling and help their mother's smoke and also sell fish.

However, in Kwabre district where this study was conducted about 75.9% of parents / guardians do not engage their wards in economic activities rather than attending school. Parents / guardians were also made to respond to a question to enable the researcher determine whether keeping the children away from school to engage in the economic activities was more rewarding than allowing them to attend school. The responses gathered are presented in Table 22.

The information on the table suggested that a substantial proportion of the parents, 31.3% sometimes kept their children from school in order to engage them in varied economic activities. The remaining did not. This rightly suggests that such parent do not support the opinion that engaging school children in economic activities yielded better returns than schooling.

Table 23: Responses of parents/guardians on whether they feel keeping their wards in an economic activity is more rewarding

Responses	No.	%
Very true	8	9.6
True	10	12.0
Some what true	15	18.0
Not true	24	28.0
Not at all true	26	31.3
Total	83	100.0

A question was posed to ascertain whether parents/guardians deliberately encouraged their wards to engage in economic activities rather than being in school. The question sought to ask parents whether they sometimes asked their wards to stay away from school to help them in their various economic activities.

From the responses gathered it was obvious that most parents did not keep their children away from school. However about 32% of the parents respondents also agreed to the fact that they withheld their children from school to help them in their various economic activities

Table 24: Whether Parents/guardians sometimes keep wards from school to help in economic activities

Responses	No.	%
Yes	27	32.5
No	56	67.5
Total	83	100.0

Another notable factor which was also discovered to have influence on regular school attendance is peer group. A question was posed to ascertain the extent to which peer group influence affect regular school attendance. There is a common Akan proverb which when translated says that “show me your friend and I will show you your character.

According to Agezo et al (2000) a study conducted on school absenteeism revealed that peer group influence has a devastating effect on school attendance. He goes on further to write that eighty eight (88%) of peoples held the view that apart from their parents asking them to stay out of school on certain days, the behaviour of their colleagues also influenced them from attending school regularly. Table 25 gives details of the responses provided.

Table 25: Responses of students on number of friends they have

Responses	No.	%
One	25	30.1
Two	33	39.6
Three	17	20.5
More than 3	8	9.6
Total	83	100.0

From Table 25, all the 83 students’ respondents indicated that they had friends. The number of friends they had ranged from one to more than three. This simply suggests that most of the students’ respondents had more than one friend. (Rice, 1981) writes that most children especially adolescents copy what their friends do so that if a friend dropped out of school because of some reasons he or she may be compelled to join. In view of this, a question was

posed to know the economic activities their friends engage in so as to ascertain if it influences the respondents. The responses is presented below

Table 26: Responses of students on jobs their friends engage in

Responses	No.	%
Kente weaving and its related activities	63	75.9
Wood carving and related activities	14	16.7
Batik/dyeing, printing and others	6	7.2
Total	83	100.0

A glance at Table 26, suggest that 75.9% of the students friends are kente weavers, 16.7 are wood carvers and the rest, 7.2% do printing, batik and other activities. The above suggest that most of the students engage in kente weaving which is the most popular economic activity in Kwabre District of Ashanti Region. About 68% of the students indicated that most of their friends were in school. But the remaining indicated that their friends were not attending school.

An item was used to find out whether they join their friends in the various economic activities during normal school hours. This affirmed the assertion by Rice (1981) that peer influence can cause students to play truant. On the part of teachers a question was posed to find out whether they agreed to the assertion that peer group has an influence on regular school attendance. Around 60% of teacher's rightly agreed that students absenteeism could be as a result of peer influence on regular school attendance. About 60% of teacher's rightly agreed that students absenteeism could be as a result of peer influence or peers not being regular at school.

Suggestions to Improve Students' School Attendance

Research Question 4: How can students' attendance at school be improved?

This research question was basically concerned about how students attendance could be improved so as to reflect on their academic performance. As has been indicated in the study there is a direct correlation between regular school attendance and their engagement in economic activities, it was therefore imperative for the study to explore ways through which school attendance by students could be improved. Responses received from the respondents are given in Table 27 below.

Varied suggestions were received however the notable one was that: the craft which is the most prominent economic, activity must be introduced into the school curriculum. Also a reward system must also be put in place so that those who record remarkable school attendance would be given citations, or other forms of reward.

Counseling team made up of dedicated teachers should be assigned the role of visiting on regular basis parents and absentee students to educate them on the importance of formal education and the need for them to be regular at school so as to academics to reap the maximum benefits of formal education.

On the other hand some teachers respondents also said that counseling, symposia, lectures just to mention a few can be used to educate the populace on the importance and benefits education.

Table 27: Ways absentee children can to develop interest in regular school attendance

Responses	No.	%
Let children know the importance of education through counseling, use of resource personnel, lectures and symposia	10	13.3
Talking to parents to be interested in their children's education	6	8.3
Teachers/parents develop interest in knowing the peer group of children and advise them	10	13.3
The use of excursions and film shows	5	6.6
Introducing the craft in the schools	16	21.3
Rewarding children who record high school attendance with gifts, citation etc	14	18.6
Introducing scholarships to needy students	2	2.6
Regular visit of teachers to absentee children to find out their problems and then refer cases to counselors	12	16.3
Total	75	100.0

Others also felt that if teachers would take issues of children to heart, it would also go a long way to encourage them to attend school regularly. An interview with drop outs indicates that half decided to drop out of school because they do not get along with the teacher. Siann and Ugwuebu (1989) write that a child may not attend school for different reasons. They go on

further to explain that a child may be someone who does not do well in academic work and feels that attending school may not benefit him.

On the contrary it could also be due to the fact that a bully in the class terrifies him, or might lack a sympathetic teacher or parents in whom they may confide.

Others may also be absent because the curriculum does not meet their needs so they regard school attendance as waste of time. In affirming what the writers above have said the curriculum should seek to empower the children by given them marketable skills. And this could be done by introducing the craft in the schools curriculum.

Collins (1998) citing stools in a summary of Okeeffe's findings says that truancy are diverse but the one on top of the list is dissatisfaction with the curriculum he therefore suggest that an alternative curriculum approaches may encourage regular school attendance. The schools environment should be made to attract these absentee children. This could be achieved by introducing the school feeding programme where children would be feed in school and made to feel at home. Not all, guidance and counseling co-coordinators should be posted the district to help improve attendance and prevent other vices.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In the preceding chapter, the data collected for the study was analyzed and discussed. This chapter gives a summary of the whole research, list out the findings as well as the researcher's conclusion and recommendation that were arrived at on the basis of the findings.

Summary

The purpose of the study was to find out the effect of the economic environment on regular school attendance in Kwabre District of Ashanti. The study sought to find out whether the following factors had influence on school attendance in Kwabre District of Ashanti; peer group, child labour, and low regard for the usefulness of education, poverty, the environment, family size, family structure and parental attitude to education. Since the work was directed towards children who recorded low school attendance, purposive sampling method was used. This was also employed in the selection of parents. In the case of the school simple random sampling method was used. In all, 166 students as well as 166 parents/guardians were also selected.

The accessible sample was made up of 83 students and 83 parents / guardians. Teacher respondents were 75. In eliciting information from respondents two different instruments were used. The questionnaire was used for the literate whiles the illiterate respondents were interviewed. The questionnaire was pre-tested to assess the suitability of its design for the study.

A rapport was established before the researcher began the interview and also avoided sensitive comments that would inhibit responses from subjects. The questionnaires were sent personally to the respondents. The completed questionnaire was collected two weeks after distributing them to the respondents. The research results were presented in the form of frequency tables showing the frequency of responses to the research question.

Summary of Key Findings

A number of key findings emerged from the study. They are presented as follows:

- 1) It was found that children who on their own violation engage in craft activities record low attendance.
 - 2) Most parents who engage their children in the craft did not over rule the importance of education.
 - 3) About 57% of parents / guardians agree that their children are made to engage in the economic activities to care for themselves. Their intention for allowing them to do so is to bring in money to supplement family income.
 - 4) About 55% of parents/guardians attested that they get worried whenever their children fail to attend school.
 - 5) The use of child labour also contributes negatively to regular school attendance.
 - 6) Peer group also had a role to play in regular school attendance.
- other interesting findings made by this study was that,
- a) A large percentage of these truant children did not live in intact homes. Most of them lived with their divorced mothers.

b) Majority of JHS leavers in the District were not able to continue their studies and ended up in one or two of the economic activities. The respondents said that whether an individual goes through formal education or not they finally settled in the craft business. They therefore suggested that it was therefore not very necessary to attend school.

It was evidenced in the study that children who on their own violation engage in craft activities record low school attendance. The role of parents is relevant here.

It was substantiated in the study that marital disruption led to reduction in the amount of time that parents spent in monitoring school work. It was also found that marital disruption reduces parent child communication. The researcher made a conclusion that broken home could be a hindrance to a child's motivation to be in school and ability to succeed academically. The research revealed that children become truant when their fathers are absent. The research showed that substantial percentage of children. Stayed with their mothers only, this means that they did not come from intact homes. A large number of the student respondents were boys, staying with their mothers. This rightly suggests that the mothers cannot control these children.

There was an indication that divorce rated the second highest on the marital statues table. The effect of divorce can be very devastating on a child and can push them into a lot of things.

They were, also asked to indicate their agreement or disagreement to the notion that formal education was a waste of time since most of their Junior High School graduate return to their various craft activities. To them

socializing the child and making them learn their culture was of paramount interest to them. Their view affirms an analysis by Agyemang (1986). He writes that the process of socializing an individual is very necessary so as to ensure that the individual does not become an alien in his or her society, knowledge of ones culture makes one accepted in his or her society.

On the contrary, some also felt formal education was really necessary. This could be due to the fact that the areas always see an influx of tourist who patronise most of their artifacts. Language always serves as a barrier. They believed when children go through formal education they would be in the position to help them out in their trade.

Most of pupils respondents when asked to express their opinion on formal education eighty five (85) of them were of the opinion that most of their folks who have completed the Junior High School (JHS) are in the village engaged in various economic activities. In their view, it is better to stay out of school and engage in the economic activities rather than wasting their time in school. Others also said that they feel it is necessary for them to go to school to learn how to read and write so that they would be able to communicate with the foreigners who are the people who patronize their artifacts.

Conclusions

In conclusion, the impact of economic environments on school attendance cannot be over looked. From the study in Kwabre District, it was obvious from the views gathered that when they attend school and at the end of the day not able to enter an employment, where they are paid salaries they feel that they have wasted their time being in school. It could be concluded

based on these facts that most of both parents and children do not give much importance to school attendance and are more concentrated on the benefits of the economic environments.

Recommendations

The research has revealed a number of findings which hinder pupil's regular attendance in basic school in Kwabre district of Ashanti. In view of the findings, the following recommendations are made.

Recommendations for Practice

(A) For Parent

- 1) Parents should endeavour to provide the basic needs of the wards, namely school fees, uniforms, P.E kits, exercise books, pens and adequate pocket money.
- 2) Parents and guardians must show interest in the pupils education and activities of the school. This could be done through regular attendance of parent / teacher association meetings, open days, fun-fairs, exhibitions, speech and prize giving and other related activities organised by the school.
- 3) Role models in the community should be invited during festive occasions to educate parents on the importance and benefits of education. This will enable them (parents) take interest in the education of their children and give them the maximum support so as to motivate the children to stay in school.

- 4) Parents in conjunction with the traditional rulers should enact – bye-laws which prohibit children of school going to engage in any form of economic activity during school hours.
- 5) Parents should keep an eye on their wards and prevent them from making friends with peers with questionable characters. As the adage goes ‘show me your friend and I will show you your character.’
- 6) Parents should desist from the habit of withdrawing children from school to help them in any form of economic activity. An oversight committee comprising of parents should be instituted to arrest and prosecute offending parents so as to serve as a deterrent to others.

(B) By Government

- 1) The curriculum planners should endeavour to look at the peculiar situation of Kwabre and introduce the craft into the school curriculum. It therefore means that there should be a time allocated for these craft in the school. This would really bridge the gap between the school and the community.
- 2) The Mampong local council should enact by-laws banning school children from participating in any form of economic activity whether before, during and after school hours. To ensure that they gain maximum benefits from the school.
- 3) The free compulsory and universal basic education should be strengthened, The “free” component should be implemented by the government so that all children of school-going age in Kwabre will attend basic school free of charge. It should not just be a paper work.

- 4) Five percent of the district common fund should be allocated to education. This could be used to offer scholarships to needy children in the district.
- 5) Poverty alleviation fund should be made available to poor parents, so that they can provide their children with their basic educational needs.
- 6) The law on child labour should be enforced to stop parents from withdrawing their children to be engaged in any form of economic activities.
- 7) The Municipal Directorate of Education (MDE), through the Municipal Education Oversight Committee (MEOC) and the school management committee should counsel and sensitize parents on regular basis on the benefit and importance of education

(C) By the School

There are various ways of improving school attendance. The school can do the following to improve school attendance. The school should encourage home-based visit by teachers to irregular school attendants.

- 1) Absentee children or pupils in the various classes should be referred to counselors, administrators or social workers to diagnose the problem of the child and recommend solution to alleviate the circumstances that contribute to the truancy.
- 2) Names of perfect attendances in the school could be posted at a highly visible place to encourage others.
- 3) The school could seek funding small or large financial incentives from the PTA to be awarded to the class with the best attendance record,

here the teachers must be allowed to spend financial rewards for any purpose selected by the class members or the teacher. This would encourage teachers to go all out to ensure they have maximum attendance.

- 4) The school could also initiate make-up classes for truant. This would ensure that they do not lag behind and also make them aware of the fact that when they even miss the normal class, they would be made to attend the make-up classes for truant.
- 5) The school could set up student's success team (SST) comprising of students with good records in terms of attendance and character. They would take it upon themselves and talk to other peers who are truants to desist from such behaviours.
- 6) A school attendance review team (SART) which would include teacher, administrators, counselors and a school psychologist could also be set up. The group would invite student and parent / guardians of irregular school attendants to find solution to help curb that behaviour.
- 7) The school environment, the teachers and everything concerning the school should be organised in such a way that it would be able to attract and retain the pupils.

Corporal punishments and other forms of punishments should not be used frequently as this may discourage students from attending school regularly. It is impossible to ensure educational success for a child when he or she is not attending school consistently. Attending school regularly would prevent student from getting involved in anti social behaviours. It is therefore

imperative for all stakeholders in education. The Ministry of Education, (MOE), the Ghana Education service (GES), Parent/Teacher Associations (PTAs,) Opinion leaders, and the entire community to come on board to eradicate this canker and encourage regular school attendance.

Suggestion for Further Research

Since this research was only limited to schools in Kwabre District of Ashanti region the findings cannot be well generalized to cover all basic schools in Ghana.

It is suggested that a further research is conducted to cover more districts, Municipalities and metropolis in the country where absenteeism is occurring due to the presence of one form of economic activities or another.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR STUDENTS

IMPACT OF ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT ON SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE IN KWABRE DISTRICT OF ASHANTI REGION

INTRODUCTION

The interview schedule has been compiled to gather your opinion on the impact of the economic environment on school attendance in Kwabre District of Ashanti Region. It would be appreciated if you would help by sparing some of your time to respond to this questionnaire. Be assured that all information volunteered for this exercise would be treated as confidential and utilized only for research purpose.

A. BIODATA

Please fill in the spaces provided below information requested, or where response choices are provided place an 'X' in the box next to the appropriate answer.

1. Your age (in full) years at the time of answering this questionnaire.

() 11 - 15 years

() 15 - 17 years

2. Gender: () Male () Female

3. Indicate the name of your school

4. Whom are you staying with?

a. () Natural parents (father & mother)

b. () Father only

c. () Mother only

d. Other specify.....

B TYPE OF ECONOMIC ACTIVITY STUDENTS ENGAGE IN

5. The following are some economic activities students engage in. For each economic activity listed below, please indicate the ones you engage in by placing an “X” in the appropriate box.

Scale Notation is:

- 1 - VERY TRUE
- 2 - TRUE
- 3 - SOME HOW TRUE
- 4 - NOT TRUE

TYPES OF ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES	VT	T	SHT	NT
a) Kente weaving and it’s allied activities				
b) Wood carving and its allied activities				
c) Batik ,dyeing of cloth and its allied activities				
d) Printing				
e) Farming				
f) Selling/hawking				
g) Other (please specify)				

C: FACTORS THAT ENCOURAGE PU PILS TO ENGAGE IN THE ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES

The following statements relate to factors which might play a role in encouraging students to engage in various economic activities. For each factor listed below, please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree by placing an 'X' in the appropriate box

FACTORS	VT	T	SHT	NT
a) I engage in the economic activity to support your parents.				
b) I engage in the economic activity to provide for some of my basic needs				
c) I engage in the economic activity because my parents/guardians have left me to care for myself.				
d) I engage in the economic activity because my peers/friend also engages in the economic activities.				
e) I engage in the economic activity because I do not find school interesting.				

**D WAYS IN WHICH THEIR ENGAGEMENT IN THESE
ACTIVITIES AFFECT SCHOOL ATTENDANCE**

The following statement relate to ways through which students engagements in these activities interfere with school attendance. Indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree to the following statement.

STATEMENT	SA	A	DA	SDA
a) I engage in the economic activities during school hours				
b) My friend also engage in economic activities during school hours				
c) Do you record low school attendance through your engagement in these economic activities				
d) Do you record low academic performance through your engagement in the economic activities				
e) Do you find the economic activities more rewarding and interesting than being in school				
If any other, Specify				

E HOW CAN STUDENTS ATTENDANCE BE IMPROVED

Indicate the extent to which you agree that the following factors can improve your attendance in school.

HOW STUDENTS ATTENDANCE CAN BE IMPROVED	SA	A	DA	SDA
<p>a) Craft activities should be an integral part of the schools curriculum.</p> <p>b) The district assembly and other philanthropist should sponsor needy student.</p> <p>c) The timetable of the school should be structured so that the school can close early.</p> <p>d) PTA meetings should be used as a platform to educate the parents on the importance of attending school regularly.</p> <p>e) Guidance and counseling of both the student and the parents on the importance of education should be done</p> <p>If any other, please Specify</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>				

APPENDIX B

THE IMPACT OF THE ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT ON SCHOOL ATTENDANCE IN KWABRE DISTRICT OF ASHANTI REGION

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR PARENTS/ GUARDIANS

INTRODUCTION

A research is being conducted into the effect of the economic environment on school attendance in Kwabre District of Ashanti Region of Ghana. It would be appreciated if you would help by sharing some of your time to respond to this questionnaire.

Be assured that all information volunteered for this exercise would be treated as confidential and utilized only for research purposes.

A BIO DATA

Please fill the spaces provided below the information requested, or where response choice

Are provided, Place an (x) in the box next to the appropriate answer

1. Your age (in full years) at the time of answering these questionnaires.

20-30 years 31-40 years

41-50 years above 50 years

2. Gender: Male Female

3. Please indicate your highest level of formal Education completed

Graduate / certified Teachers

Middle school leavers

Illiterates

S.H.S

J.H.S

Up to P.6 ()

PART II

THE TYPES OF ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES PARENTS ENGAGE IN.

The following are some economic activities parents engage in.

1. For each economic activity listed below, please indicate the ones you engage in by placing an x in the appropriate box.

Scale notation

Very True ——— 1

True ——— 2

Untrue ——— 3

Very Untrue——— 4

Types of economic activities	1	2	3	4
a.Kente weaving and its allied activities				
b.Wood carving and its allied activities				
c.Batik, dyeing of cloth and its allied activities				
d.Printing				
e.Farming				
f.Selling / Hawking				

g.others (please specify).....

.....

B. What economic activity do your child / ward engage in . Please check all the options and indicate others where not provided.

Types of economic activities students engage in	1	2	3	4
a.Kente weaving and its allied activities				
b.wood carving and its allied activities				
c.Batik / cloth dyeing and its allied activities.				
d.Printing				
e.Farming				
f.Selling/ Hawking				

g.Others, (Please specify).....

C. WHAT ARE THE FACTORS THAT ENCOURAGE STUDENTS TO ENGAGE IN THE ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES

The following statements relate to factors which might play a role in encouraging students to engage in various economic activities. For each factor listed below, please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree by placing an X in the appropriate box.

SCALE NOTATION.

- Very true ----- 4
- True -----3
- Untrue -----2
- Very untrue -----1

5 for Select only one response for each statement

Statements	1	2	3	4
a.Children engage in the economic activity to support parents.				
a.Children engage in the economic activities to take care of themselves				
c.Children engage in the economic activity because they do not find school interesting.				
D.children engage in the economic activities because they are compelled to do so.				
e.children engage in the economic activities because their friends also do them.				
f.Do you feel their engagement in this activity is more rewarding than being in school.				
If any other, specify.				

C. In what ways DOES THEIR ENGAGEMENT IN THESE ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES INTERFERE WITH SCHOOL ATTENDANCE.

The following statement relates to ways through which students engagements in these economic interference with school attendance. Indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree to the following statement.

NOTATION

Strongly agree _____ 1

Agree _____ 2

Disagree _____ 3

Strongly disagree _____ 4

Statement	Very true	True	Untrue	Very untrue
a.Children normally engage in these economic activities during school hours.				
b.Friends of your children also engage in these activities during school hours.				
c.Does your child through engagement in these activities record low schoolattendance.				
d.Children who engage in these record low academic performance.				
e.Children engage in these activities because they find it more rewarding than being in school.				

Please write briefly below giving your opinion on how school attendance can be improved.

A. HOW CAN STUDENT’S ATTENDANCE BE IMPROVED

Indicate the extent to which you agree that the following factors can improve children’s school attendance.

FACTOR	S.A	A	DA	SDA
A.Craft activities should be an intergral part of the schools curriculum				
b.The district assembling should sponsor needy				

student.				
c.The time table should be structured so that schoolcan close early.				
d.Guardians and counseling of both parents and students on the importance of education could be done.				
e.P.T.A meetings should be encouraged and used to educate parents.				

8. Please write briefly below giving your opinion on how school attendance can be improved.

APPENDIX C

UNIVERSITY OF CAPECOAST, INSTITUTE FOR EDUCATIONAL PLANNING AND ADMINISTRATION THE IMPACT OF THE ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT ON SCHOOL ATTENDANCE IN KWABRE DISTRICT OF ASHANTI REGION QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS

INTRODUCTION

A research is being conducted into the effects of the economic environment on school attendance in Kwabre district of Ashanti Region. It would be appreciated if you would help by sparing some of your time to respond to this questionnaire.

Be assured that all information volunteered for this exercise would be treated as confidential and utilized only for research purposes.

A. BIODATA

Please fill in the spaces provided below the information requested, or where response choices are provided tick “X” in the appropriate box next to the appropriate answer (s)

- 1) Gender: () Male () Female

- 2) Number of years spent in the school at the time of answering this questionnaire

 () Less than 1 year () 1 – 3 years

 () 3 – 5 years () More than 5 years

The following are factors which encourage children to be absent from school. For each factor listed below please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree by placing an 'X' in the appropriate box.

Scale Notation is

- Not at all true - 1
- Not true 2
- Some how true 3
- True - 4
- Very true 5

Select only one response for each statement what are the types of economic activities students engage in.

TYPES OF ACTIVITIES	VT	T	SHT	NT
a) Kente Weaving				
b) Basketry				
c) Pottery				
d) Textiles (Adinkra cloth)				
e) Parenting				
f) Farming				
g) Selling				
h) Other, (please Specify)				

C. Factors that encourage pupils to engage in economic activities.

4. indicate the extent to which you agree that the following factors can encourage pupils participation in economic activities

FACTORS	SA	A	DA	SDA
<p>a) Pupils engage in the economic activities to support their parents.</p> <p>b) Pupils engage in the economic activities to provide for their basic needs</p> <p>c) Pupils engage in the economic activities because they do not find school interesting.</p> <p>d) Pupils engage in the economic activities because they are compelled to do so.</p> <p>e) Pupils engage themselves in the craft activities because their friends also do them.</p> <p>Other, please Specify</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>				

Ways in which engagement in the economic activity affect their school attendance and performance.

2. indicate the extent to which the economic activities affects their school attendance.

STATEMENT	SA	A	DA	SDA
a) Children who engage in economic activities have low school attendance b) Children’s engagement in the economic activities affect their academic performance c) Children who engage in the economic activities do so during school hours. d) Children who do not attend school regularly find most of the school subjects difficult.				

FACTORS	SA	A	DA	SDA
a) Craft activities should be an integral part of the schools curriculum. b) The district assembly should sponsor needy student. c) The time table should be structured so that school can close early. d) Guidance and counseling of both parents and students on the importance of education				

Please write briefly below, giving your opinion on how school attendance can be improved.

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