

## DETERMINANTS OF ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AMONG SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL (SHS) STUDENTS IN THE ASHANTI MAMPONG MUNICIPALITY OF GHANA

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### ABSTRACT

The major thrust of this study was to establish the determinants of academic performance among SHS Students in the Ashanti Mampong Municipality of Ghana. Descriptive and correlational research designs were used and the data were collected through questionnaires. The sample size was therefore 571 students via a multi-stage sampling procedure. The findings of the study revealed parental involvement, parents' academic ambition for their children, peer influence, the child's academic ambition and the child's effort as the correlates of academic performance. The findings also established parental involvements, sex of the child, the child's academic ambition and the child's effort as the main determinants of academic performance. The findings however did not confirm the null hypothesis so it was rejected. On the basis of these findings, it was recommended that educational authorities should encourage parents to instill high academic ambition in their children and also parents should be told to monitor and assess the kind of friends that their children keep.

**Keywords:** Parental involvement, Parents' academic ambition for their wards, Peer influence, Child's academic ambition, Child's effort.

### INTRODUCTION

As developing nations move from the idea of exporting raw materials into manufacturing base, there is an ongoing debate about how to best prepare children and youth for adult success in the twenty-first century (Huitt, 2007). Education is considered as the development of the endowed capacities in the individual, which will enable the one to control his/her environment and fulfill his/her possibilities to a large extent (Saxton, 2000). Indeed, in this era of globalization and technological revolution, education is considered as the first step for every human activity. It plays a vital role in the development of human capital and is linked with an individual's well-being and opportunities for better living (Battle & Lewis, 2002). In truth, quality education ensures the acquisition of knowledge and skills that enable individuals to increase their productivity and improve their wellbeing.

Educational institutions have no worth without students. Indeed, that is to say students are the most essential assets for any educational institution (Sentamu, 2003). This view however becomes valid only when students' academic performance is good enough. Thus, grades awarded to individuals at the end of an academic study are important indicators of ability and productivity when those individuals look for their first jobs. In fact, a person's education is closely linked to his/her life chances, income and wellbeing (Battle & Lewis, 2002). Thus, students' success in any academic task has always been of special interest to educators, parents and society at large (Ajayi, 2006). The issue of factors affecting students' academic performance therefore remains a top priority to educators (Considine & Zappala, 2002).

The formal investigation into the determinants of children's academic performance is not a recent phenomenon (Mann, 1985). A number of studies have been carried out to identify the factors that affect academic performance of students in a number of educational institutions worldwide. Most of these studies focus on three elements that intervene, that is, parents (family causal factors), teachers (academic causal factors), and students (personal causal factors) (Crosnoe, Johnson & Elder, 2004). The combination of these factors influencing academic performance, however, varies from one academic environment to another, from one set of students to the next, and indeed from one cultural setting to another (Diaz, 2003). Indeed as it were, students' academic performance is product of socio-economic, psychological and environmental factors. Unfortunately, defining and measuring the determinants of students' academic performance is not a simple issue and the complexity of this process increases understandably because of the way and manner different stakeholders view academic performance (Blevins, 2009).

Literature on drivers of academic performance has established a number of factors that are related to students' academic achievement (Geiser & Santelices, 2007). We know, for example, that individual characteristics such as previous school achievements, academic self-efficacy or study motivation are positively correlated with academic performance (Anderson, Benjamin & Fuss, 1994). Again, socio-economic background, and particularly parents' education has a positive influence on the academic performance of students (Jeynes, 2002; Nyarko, 2011). In addition, apart from the influence of peers on students, the ways students are selected into specific programmes of study are an issue (McMillan & Western, 2000).

Without doubt, determinants of academic performance of students at the secondary level have been subject of intensive research over the last thirty (30) years (Head, 1990). In fact, number of factors has been identified as contributing to the poor performance of students' in Senior High School Certificate Examination in Ghana. This has become a recurrent phenomenon which has militated against the smooth transition from the secondary level to the tertiary level (Adetunde & Asare, 2009). The problem is so alarming that it has become necessary for students to pass certain required subjects become one will gain admission into tertiary institutions to pursue a particular programme (Ajayi, 2006). Admittedly, the mass failure of students in both internal and external examinations can be attributed to a number of factors which include teacher factors (low qualification, lack of experience, poor salaries and allowances, poor supervision, organizational climate (open and close), student factors (poor ability of students, under age, unwillingness to learn, bad peer groups influence, among others (Adetunde & Asare, 2009; Ajayi, 2006).

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

### **Parental Involvement**

According to the No Child Left Behind Act, 2102(4) (2001), "parent involvement means the participation of parents in regular, two-way, and meaningful communication involving student academic learning and other school activities including ensuring that (a) parents play an integral role in assisting their child's learning; (b) parents are encouraged to be actively involved in their child's education at school; and (c) parents are full partners in their child's education and are included, as appropriate, in decision making and on advisory committees to assist in the education of their child". Parental involvement is the degree to which a parent is committed to his or her role as a parent and to the fostering of optimal child development (Nyarko, 2011). In fact, it typically concerns the amount of effort put into child-oriented education versus other activities (Nyarko, & Vorgelegt, 2007).

The impact of parental involvement in a child's academic growth and development cannot be overemphasized (Sheldon & Epstein, 2005). For example, supportive and encouraging parental involvement is typically associated with higher achievement levels (Simpkins, Weiss, McCartney, Kreider, & Dearing, 2006), whereas parental punishment are negatively associated to school success (Niggli, Trautwein, Schnyder, Ludtke, & Neumann, 2007). Indeed, positive parent involvement continues to remain a strong predictor of academic achievements. Adekola (2008) asserts that academic achievements of students are the result of parental factors. Epstein (2005) also affirms that the more intensively parents are involved in their children's learning; the more beneficial are the achievement effects. Specifically, children whose parents are more involved in their education have higher levels of academic performance than those whose parents are involved to a lesser degree (Donkor, 2010; Georgiou, 2007). Thus, parent involvement in a child's early education is consistently found to be positively associated with a child's academic performance (Hill & Craft, 2003).

### **Parents Academic Ambition for their Wards**

At the outset of any activity, students differ in learning as a function of their prior experiences, personal qualities and social supports. The latter includes the extent to which parents encourage them to learn, facilitate their access to learning resources and teach them strategies that enhance skill acquisition. Parental ambition is what parents hope and want their children to achieve in the desire future. Parent's academic ambitions for their children might influence their children's academic achievements both directly and indirectly (Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara, & Pastorelli, 2001). In fact, parents' academic ambition for their children has been identified to have a telling effect on the children's academic performance (Osiki, 2001).

Lots of studies show a significant effect of parental ambition and academic performance of their wards (Agliata & Renk, 2007; Kobayashi, 2005). For example, according to Bloom (1956), parental ambitions are one of the extra-curricular factors that might influence children's academic performance. Bee (1992) also points out that parents who have high ambitions of their child to do well in academic matters have children who show most rapid cognitive progress. Zhan (2005) in a similar studies finds that parents' academic ambition for their children partially mediated the relationships between assets and children's educational achievements showing the importance of parental ambitions on education of the children after controlling for family income and other parent characteristics. Oishi and Sullivan (2005) conclude that some students have fulfilled their parents' academic ambition for them to a greater degree than others simply because the cultural difference in well-being is mediated by perceive fulfillment. In fact, it is well documented that parental ambitions aspirations and expectations for their wards influence the children's expectancies for success, which in turn affect their academic performance positively (Harackiewicz, 1996).

### **Peer Influence**

The need for social belongingness is inherent in humans and this moves us to become attached to and feel affiliated to others. Indeed, the need for affiliation is based on genetics or experience (Ryan, 2000). Castrogiovanni (2002) defines peer group as a small group of similar age, fairly close friends, sharing the same activities. In general, peer groups or cliques have two to twelve members, with an average of five or six. Peer influence therefore is defined as when people of your own age encourage or urge you to do something or to keep from doing something else, no matter if you personally want to do it or not (Ryan, 2000).

Indeed, it involves changing one's behaviour to meet the perceived expectations of others (Burns & Darling, 2002).

Stakeholders, educators and parents always harbor the idea that peer groups provide a variety of positive experiences for adolescents. Boujlaleb (2006) alleges in a study that peers have a more powerful influence on adolescents as compared to families. Indeed, according to Haynie (2002), adolescents get their self-esteem from the group they are belonging to and they cannot imagine themselves outside the gathering. Carman and Zhang (2008) in their study indicate that the adolescents who have a high level of conformity to unconventional peer behavior tend to have lower GPA than those who have lower level of conformity. Tope (2011) in his study, however asserts that peer group could either positively or negatively influences the academic performance in school. Chen, Chang and He (2003) also examine the association between peer factors and academic achievement of Chinese children. Their results suggest that teens' academic achievement was positively associated with popularity, measured by sociometric nominations. Understandably, attempts to directly estimate peer effects on educational achievement have been relatively inconclusive. Fuligni, Eccles, Barber and Clements (2001) for instance, find no relationship between peer effect and academic achievement while Wentzel and Caldwell (1997) report positive influences of higher achieving peers at least for some students.

### **Children's Academic Ambition**

The importance of setting up goals for behaviour was first suggested and defined by Dembo (1931). The ability to set goals and pursue these goals is sometimes referred to by educators as student's academic ambition (Dembo, 1931). Lewin, Dembo, Festinger and Sears (1944) demonstrate that ambitions can be linked to the seeking of success and the avoidance of failure. Pettigrove (2007) defines ambition as the persistent and generalized striving for success, attainment, and accomplishment. In short, ambition is about attaining rather than achieving, though of course there is a certain relationship between the two (Maurin, 2002). Ambition is thus discussed by numerous philosophers, with those seeing it as virtuous apparently outweighing those who perceive it as vicious (Pettigrove, 2007).

Students who choose to set difficult goals for themselves tend to become task oriented, with a sense of purpose for their lives (Quaglia & Cobb, 1996). Certainly, academic ambition can influence students' learning, preparation for life choices, academic motivation and achievement. Quaglia and Cobb (1996) conceive of academic ambitions as the "student's ability to identify and set goals for the future, while being inspired in the present to work toward those goals" (p. 130). Ambition thus, represents the perception that an activity is important as a means to future goals. It reflects individuals' perceptions that it is both possible and desirable to think in future terms and to plan for the future (Quaglia & Cobb, 1996).

Individuals' ambitions are considered important because they might influence key choices, and outcomes such as educational achievement (Goodman & Gregg, 2010). In fact, many studies suggest that young people with higher educational ambitions have greater motivation and higher educational attainment than their peers (Desforges & Abouchaar, 2003). For example, Blaver (2010) examines Hispanic young people and finds that self-reported competence in maths was associated with future educational ambitions, and also with maths performance. In fact, the relationship between educational outcomes and academic ambitions seems to be a complex one. Ambition thus, can both be a predictor of educational achievement and an outcome of it, and might be influenced by self-efficacy, personal traits,

experiences and mediating family factors (Gutman & Akerman, 2008), or linked to beliefs about ability (Phillipson & Phillipson, 2007).

### **Children's Effort**

Many students believe that they succeed for a variety of reasons, and their beliefs and interests are very important in determining how they deal with failure, the risks they are willing to take, and the ways in which they interact with new opportunities. It is without doubt that the academic achievement of students depends on number of basic factors of which effort is paramount (Tella & Tella, 2010). Effort refers to the overall amount of energy expended in the process of studying (Zimmerman & Risenberg, 1992). Carbonaro (2005) defines school effort as the amount of time and energy that students expend in meeting the formal academic requirements established by their teachers and/or school. He identified three different types of school effort, thus rule oriented effort (showing up in and behaving in class), procedural effort (meeting specific class demands such as completing assignments on time) and intellectual effort (critically thinking about and understanding the curriculum).

Refreshingly, when students attribute their academic success to effort or receive feedback that attributes their success to effort, they develop a higher self-efficacy and expectations for future skill development (Siegle & McCoach, 2007). Indeed, a number of researchers have in the context of achievement goals explored the contribution of effort and persistence on students' academic performance (Opore & Dramanu, 2002). Research evidence shows that effort makes a positive contribution to the prediction of academic performance outcomes (Bouffard, Boisvert, Vezeau, & Larouche, 1995). In truth, in analysis, effort is found to relate positively to academic performance (Phan, 2008). Pintrich (2004) for instance, finds effort to be the only direct predictor of learning outcomes amongst all general strategies.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Educational performance is perhaps the most imperative meter for measuring adolescents' well-being. It is the marker for successful college and university enrollment, scholarship awards and future job success (Ajayi, 2006). In Ghana, much emphasis is placed on education because it is believed to be the only avenue for national development (Nyarko, 2011). However, this can only be achieved if students who are the citadel of learning get actively involved in academic activities which will enhance their academic performance. Research works on factors affecting students' academic performance at the secondary level appears to be relatively limited (Opore & Dramanu, 2002). The question then is what factors bring about excellent academic performance? This is the pivot upon which the issue of investigating the determinants of academic performance among Senior High School students in the Ashanti Mampong Municipality of Ghana hinges.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to find out whether parental involvement, parents' academic ambition for their children, peer influence, the child's academic ambition and the child's effort has a relationship with the academic performance among Senior High School students in the Ashanti Mampong Municipality of Ghana.

## Significance of the Study

The study has enhanced our understanding of the real determinants of academic achievement at SHS level. Also, it has contributed to knowledge in the field that is relevant to academics, policy makers and educational practitioners. For academics, it did not only enhance their knowledge on the field but it also provided information that will inform the conduct of future researches. For policy makers and educational practitioners, the findings have enabled them to formulate policies that promote better academic performance among students. Most importantly, since copies were made available in the school library, it has served as a source of reference for students who are interested in knowing the determinants of academic performance.

## Research Questions

The research sought to provide answers to the following questions

- 1 What is the relationship between parental involvement and the child's academic performance?
- 2 What is the relationship between parents' academic ambition for the child and the child's academic performance?
- 3 What is the relationship between peer influence and the child's academic performance?
- 4 What is the relationship between the child's academic ambition and his/her academic performance?
- 5 What is the relationship between the child's effort and his/her academic performance?
- 6 What are the determinants of academic performance?

## Hypothesis

H<sub>0</sub> The independent variables will together determine academic performance of SHS students.

## METHODOLOGY

### Design of the Study

The study adopted descriptive and correlational as the research designs. First, we considered how the predictor variables, thus father's education, mother's education, sex of the child, the child's academic ambition and the child's effort/persistence influence and mediate students' academic performance. Second, we studied the relationship between these variables in the study and the academic performance of students.

### Population and Sampling Procedures

The population of this study was Form Two Senior High School Students in Amanianpong SHS, St. Monica's SHS, St. Joseph SHS and Kofiasé Seventh Day Adventist SHS of the Ashanti Mampong Municipality of Ghana. The form two students from each school were chosen obviously because they had been in the school at least for more than a year and therefore stood the better chance to provide useful information. Also, the forms two students were not under any final examination pressure which fostered their cooperation and commitment. The total population of the form two students of the four SHSs was 1631 comprising 565 students from St. Monica's SHS, 512 students from Amanianpong SHS, 329

students from St. Joseph SHS and 225 students from Kofiase SDA SHS out of which 571 was sampled. Multi-stage sampling procedure was therefore used to arrive at this sampled size. Thus, simple survey, purposive, stratified and quota sampling procedures were used to select schools, class, sex and number of students for the study respectively.

### Research Instrument

The instrument for collecting data in this study was the questionnaire. Questionnaires were used because they are the main method of data collection and also the population was literate. Also the coverage of questionnaire is wide as researchers can reach respondents more easily and is unaffected by problems of 'non-contacts'. Again, the popularity of questionnaires is probably based on some advantages among which are its low cost in terms of both money and time involved (Sarantakos, 1997). In all 35 items made up the questionnaire of which 7 items were open-ended and the remainder close-ended questions.

### Data Analysis Plan

Research questions one, two, three, four and five were answered with the use of the Zero-order correlation matrix while multiple regressions procedure was used to answer research question six and also test the hypothesis of the study.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

### Research Question 1: What is the relationship between parental involvement and the child's academic performance?

This research question has the sole aim of ascertaining whether parental involvement has any significant relationship between parental involvement and the child's academic performance in Mathematic and English language. The result of the Zero-order correlation between parental involvement and academic performance in Mathematics and English language is presented in

**Table 1: Parental Involvement and Academic Performance in Mathematics and English Language**

		Academic Perf. (Maths)	Academic Perf. (English)
Parental Involvement	Pearson Correlation	.433**	.477**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000
	N	471	471

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

According to the result in Table 1, the Zero-order correlation coefficients obtained on Mathematics and English Language are  $r = 0.433^{**}$  and  $r = 0.477^{**}$  respectively. Both are positive with significance or p-value = 0.000 which is less than  $\alpha = 0.05$ , implying that parental involvement was significantly related to academic performance in Mathematics and English Language.

These findings support the studies done by a number of researchers (Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Nyarko, 2011; Pryor & Ampiah, 2003). Indeed in their separate researches, they in one way or the other opine that there is positive relationship between parental involvement and academic performance of children. These findings also corroborate the views shared by

Adekola, (2008) and Epstein (2005). In their individual works, they both aver that the more intensively parents are involved in their children's learning; the more beneficial are the achievement outcomes. Specifically they states that, children whose parents are more involved in their education have higher levels of academic performance than those whose parents are involved to a lesser degree.

### **Research Question 2: What is the relationship between parents' academic ambition for the child and the child's academic performance?**

The interest in this research question was to establish the extent to which parents' academic ambition for their children is related to their children's academic performance in Mathematics and English Language. This relationship was assessed via the Zero-order correlation. The result is presented in Table 2.

**Table 2: Parents' Academic Ambition for their Child and the child's Academic Performance in Mathematic and English Language**

		Academic Perf. (Maths)	Academic Perf. (English)
Parents' Academic Ambi.	Pearson Correlation	.261**	.268**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000
	N	471	471

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

With reference to the result in Table 2, the Zero-order correlation coefficients got for Mathematics and English Language are  $r = 0.261^{**}$  and  $r = 0.268^{**}$  correspondingly. The coefficients are both positive with significance or p-value = 0.000 which is less than  $\alpha = 0.05$  denoting that parents' academic ambition for their child was significantly related to the child's academic performance in Mathematics and English Language. Although the coefficients of parents' academic ambition for the child tend to be low, it was still positively related to the academic attainment of the child.

These findings find consistency with a number of studies (Bandura et al., 2001). To start with, Zhan (2005) avers in a similar study that parents' academic ambition for their children partially mediated the children's educational achievements. Bee (1992) also in her study concludes that parents who have high expectations of their children to do well in academic matters have children who show most rapid cognitive progress. This undeniably shows the importance of parental expectations for their children's education. The results of this study again are in line with views express by Maurin (2002) finds that parental ambitions for children were associated with 19 and 12 percent of the variance in the children's academic performance respectively. Hill (1990) also opines that parental academic beliefs for their children influence the children's perceptions of their own abilities, their attitudes, and expectations for success and failure. Indeed, these directly affect the children's cognitive performance.

### **Research Question 3: What is the relationship between peer influence and the child's academic performance?**

As the need for social belongingness and the feeling for affiliation with others continue to permeate every aspect of human life, it becomes worthwhile to examine its impact. The



motive of this research question is to find out how peer influence relates to the academic performance of children. The Zero-order correlation test was therefore run to ascertain the relationship between peer influence and academic performance. The results are presented in Table 3.

**Table 3: Peer Influence and Academic Performance in Mathematics and English Language**

Language		Academic Perf. (Maths)	Academic Perf. (English)
Peer Influence	Pearson Correlation	.179**	.118*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000
	N	471	471

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

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

The relationship between peer influence and academic performance as presented in Table 3 shows that the Zero-order correlation coefficients obtained for Mathematics and English Language are  $r = 0.176^{**}$  and  $r = 0.118^{*}$  respectively. Though the coefficients are positive with significance or p-value = 0.000 and 0.011 which is less than  $\alpha = 0.05$ , they seem to be low. Notwithstanding this, the implication from the findings still remain that peer influence was significantly related to students' academic performance.

Refreshingly, my findings uphold research works such as Wentzel and Caldwell (1997); however these findings contradict a number of studies (Boujlaleb, 2006; Haynie, 2002). The findings of my study are also consistent with that of Chen et al. (2003) who in their work report that teens' academic achievement was positively associated with popularity, measured by sociometric nominations. Indeed, these results are encouraging because they provide evidence of peer influence bolstering positive teen outcomes, namely academic success. The findings of this study again share similar thoughts with Carman and Zhang (2008) who conducted a research on the topic "classroom peer effects and academic achievement". Their findings show a significant positive peer relationship with academic performance. Tope (2011) in a similar study asserts that peer group could positively influence the academic performance in school.

#### **Research Question 4: What is the relationship between the child's academic ambition and his/her academic performance?**

Three aspects of student life that together drive a student's expected future success are the determination to achieve desired goals, the belief in one's ability to achieve these goals, and the ability that matches these goals. In this study, these aspects are together referred to as a person's academic ambition. In this regard, this study desires to establish the relationship between the academic ambition of the child and the child's academic performance. The relationship was therefore assessed by means of Zero-order correlation. Table 4 presents the results.

**Table 4: Personal Academic Ambition and Academic Performance in Mathematics and English Language**

		Academic Perf. (Maths)	Academic Perf. (English)
Academic Ambition	Pearson Correlation	.759**	.744**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000
	N	471	471

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

According to results in Table 4, the Zero-order correlation coefficients got for Mathematics and English Language are  $r = 0.759^{**}$  and  $r = 0.744^{**}$  respectively. Both are positive with significance or  $p$ -value = 0.000 which is less than  $\alpha = 0.05$  implying that personal academic ambition was significantly related to academic performance in Mathematics and English Language.

These findings are consistent with a plethora of studies that emphasize a positive relationship between the child's academic ambition and his/her academic performance (Desforges & Abouchaar, 2003; Goodman & Gregg, 2010; Jacob & Wilder, 2010). Individuals' ambitions are certainly considered important because they might influence key choices, and outcomes such as educational achievement. For example, Cuthbert and Hatch (2008) using the data from the longitudinal study of young people in England, find that the ambitions of students are associated with their educational attainment.

#### **Research Question 5: What is the relationship between the child's effort and his/her academic performance?**

Our intention was to ascertain the relationship between these two variables. In this direction, Zero-order correlation was run to assess their relationship. The results are shown in the Table 5.

**Table 5: Personal Effort and Academic Performance in Mathematics and English Language**

		Academic Perf. (Maths)	Academic Perf. (English)
Personal Effort	Pearson Correlation	.538**	.515**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000
	N	471	471

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

Results in Table 5 show the Zero-order correlation coefficients obtained for Mathematics and English Language are  $r = 0.538^{**}$  and  $r = 0.515^{**}$  respectively. Both are positive with significance or  $p$ -value = 0.000 which is less than  $\alpha = 0.05$ . These results submit that personal effort was significantly related to academic performance in Mathematics and English Language.

Findings from this study are consistent with a number of studies (Opore & Dramanu, 2002; Phan, 2008; Grave, 2010). Carbonaro (2005) in a study asserts that student who puts forward significant effort in all the three categories will perform well academically. That is effort has

a positive link with test scores and academic performance in both direct and indirect ways. Caballo et al. (2004) in their study also postulate that high student effort leads to greater educational values, which in turn indirectly affects student academic performance. Again, Assouline et al. (2006) in a related study find out that brilliant students tend to attribute quality work to effort, though ability was also a major attribution factor for many of these students. However, Plant et al. (2005) disagree with the findings of this study, thus they establish an adverse relationship between the total amount of study time and grade point average.

### Research Question 6: What are the Determinants of Academic Performance?

The importance of this research question was to establish the main factors that affect children's academic performance in Mathematics and English Language. In view of this, multiple regression procedure was used to ascertain the determinants of academic performance. The result is presented in Tables 6 and 7.

**Table 6: Mathematic Test Score on the Independent Variables**

Predictor	Mathematics Test Score
	Model Summary $\beta$
Parental Involvement	.212 (.018)*
Parents' Academic Ambition for their Wards	-.027 (.020)
Peer Influence	.016 (.011)
Personal Academic Ambition	.685 (.021)*
Personal Effort	.448 (.027)*
Constant	-.401
R	.601
R <sup>2</sup>	.364
AR <sup>2</sup>	.353

\* $p < 0.05$ .

The result from Table 6 illustrates the multiple regression analysis. The Model summary gives the coefficients of the predictor variables, the standard error, the level of significance, the correlation (R), the R<sup>2</sup> and the adjusted R<sup>2</sup>. From the results in Table 6, it was established parental involvement, the child's academic ambition and personal effort are the major determinants of academic performance in Mathematics in this study.

**Table 7: English Language Test Score on the Independent Variables**

Predictor	Mathematics Test Score
	Model Summary $\beta$
Parental Involvement	.293 (.018)*
Parents' Academic Ambition for their Wards	-.020 (.026)
Peer Influence	.024 (.014)
Personal Academic Ambition	.661 (.020)*
Personal Effort	.439 (.027)*
Constant	-1.075
R	.590
R <sup>2</sup>	.348
AR <sup>2</sup>	.340

\* $p < 0.05$ .

Result from Table 7 shows the results of the multiple regression analysis. The Model summary gives the coefficients of the predictor variables, the standard error, the level of significance, the correlation (R), the  $R^2$  and the adjusted  $R^2$ . With reference to these results, it was realized that parental involvement, the child's academic ambition and personal effort are the major determinants of academic performance in English Language in this study.

The findings from this study are consistent with a plethora of studies. To begin with, a number of empirical studies show that children perform better in school when parents are involved (Nyarko 2011; Nyarko & Vorgelegt, 2007; Opdenakker & Damme 2005; Patall et al., 2008; Simpkins et al., 2006; Topper et al., 2010). ). Also, academic ambition and personal efforts have also been identified in previous studies to affect academic performance (Caballo et al., 2004; Carbonaro, 2005; Cuthbert & Hatch, 2008; Desforges & Abouchaar, 2003; Jacob & Wilder, 2010).

### **Testing the Hypothesis**

Attempts were made to test the hypothesis that guides the study. In view of this, multiple regression was run to test the hypothesis. The null hypothesis therefore states that...

$H_0$  The independent variables will together determine academic performance among day SHS students.

The results of the regression of the dependent variable on the predictor variables are shown in Tables 6 and 7. The evidence from the results as shown in Tables 6 and 7 are that the independent variables together did not predict academic performance in Mathematics and English Language. In reality, two predictor variables, thus parents' academic ambition for their wards and peer influence were not significant determinants of academic performance in Mathematics and English Language. Hence, the null hypothesis was rejected.

### **CONCLUSION**

The purpose of the study was to find out whether parental involvement, parents' academic ambition for their children, peer influence, the child's academic ambition and the child's effort has a relationship with the academic performance. The study therefore found a strong positive relationship between parental involvement, parents' academic ambition for their children, peer influence the child's academic ambition and the child's effort and academic performance. This presupposes that when these variables are present and positive, there is the likelihood that students will perform well in school. We therefore conclude that parents must encourage their children to be academically ambitious and when they do, they must work hard in order to succeed in their ambition. Also, it was established that an overwhelming majority of parents draw their children's' attention to aim high in their academic pursuit. Educated mothers were again found to influence the child's academic ambition much more than that of the educated father.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

On the basis of the findings and conclusions discussed above, the following recommendations are made.

- 1 Parents are powerful agents of nurturing their children to excel academically. In this study, the involvement of parents in their children's education is strong in many

aspects. It is therefore recommended parents should be encouraged to get involved in their children's education.

- 2 Besides parents' involvement, the child's academic ambition and effort are seen to play a crucial role in the academic attainment of the child. It is therefore recommended that parents and care givers to motivate their children to be ambitious academically and devote much effort to their studies.

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