

**KWAME NKRUMAH UNIVERSITY OF  
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY,  
KUMASI**

**COLLEGE OF ART AND BUILT ENVIRONMENT  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL INNOVATION IN SCIENCE  
AND TECHNOLOGY**

**FACTORS AFFECTING LOW ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF VISUAL  
ART STUDENTS IN SELECTED SENIOR HIGH SCHOOLS IN THE EJISU  
MUNICIPALITY, ASHANTI REGION, GHANA**

**By**

**Seth Kwaku Nti**

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By

Seth Kwaku Nti

(B.A. Communication Design)

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## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this project to God Almighty my creator, He has been the source of my strength throughout this program and on His wings only have I soared. I also dedicate this work to my dear wife; Theresa Omane Boateng who has encouraged me all the way and whose encouragement has made sure that I give it all it takes to finish that which I have started. To my children Christopher Evans Peprah Nti, Alexander Gyan Fosu Nti, Immaculate Josephine Nti and Seth Kofi Nti who have been affected in every way possible by this project. Thank you. My love for you all can never be quantified. God bless you

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## ABSTRACT

Low academic performance in both internal and external examinations in relation to elective visual arts subjects has plagued students for decades. In view of this and the seeming lack of empirical investigations into the subject, the study sought to ascertain the factors that result in low academic performance of visual art students in selected Senior High Schools within the Ejisu Municipality of the Ashanti Region. The study adopted a mixed method and case study approach. The study population included students and staff of four selected schools. Questionnaires and interview guides were used to collect Secondary data for analysis. Purposive sampling was adopted to select 221 visual arts students. The study found that poverty, poor health, poor teaching methods, indiscipline, lack of proper teaching materials, poor evaluation methods / instruments, inadequately trained teachers, broken homes, changing of teachers incessantly, hyperactivity in students, truancy and poor approach to learning were the main causes of low academic performance amongst visual arts students of the Ejisu municipality in the Ashanti region. Also, the study showed that the unstandardized coefficient,  $b_3$ , for low level of thinking on the part of the student is equal to 600. This means that for every 1-unit improvement in level of thinking on the part of the student, there is an increase in level of academic performance of 600. Hence, the higher the quality of thought visual arts students' exhibit, the higher they perform academically. Based on the findings, the study recommends that the Ghana Education Service, Headmasters and other relevant stakeholders see to it that the Visual Arts Programme in each school are provided with all necessary teaching and learning materials and adequate infrastructure to aid practical lessons. The study also recommends that the Ghana Education Service, through the district and regional directors of education, organize lectures and seminars for teachers to re-orient their perceptions on the Visual Arts Programme and also re-train teachers on new ways of teaching technically gifted students in the Visual Arts field.

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## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.0 Overview**

This chapter provides an introduction to the thesis. It comprises the following subtopics: background to the study, statement of the problem, objectives and research questions. It spells out the limitation, delimitation, definition of terms, importance of the study and the organization of the rest of text.

#### **1.1 Background to the Study**

The development of any nation or community largely depends upon the quality of education available to its citizens. It is generally believed that the basis for any true development must commence with the development of human resources. Hence, formal education remains the vehicle for social-economic development and social mobilization in any society. Secondary education is the foundation on which further education is built. Secondary education has two main purposes. The first purpose is to produce a literate and numerate population that can jointly deal with problems both at home and at work. It also serves as a foundation on which further education is built (Akanle, 2007; Lockheed & Verspoor, 1991).

Education in Ghana generally has witnessed a transformation over the years. Hitherto these transformations, technology and economic development as well as growth in population have contributed to the current educational trends in Ghana. The introduction of the concept of Junior High School (JHS) in 1987 and then SHS in 1990 came to replace what previously was called Ordinary Level (O'Level).

Education is one of the most powerful instruments known for reducing poverty and inequality (Opoku-Asare and Siaw, 2015). Students have the option to read General Science, General Arts, Business, Home Economics and Visual Arts at the SHS level. The Dzobo Committee of 1974 introduced the concept of “comprehensive” Junior Secondary Schools to teach academic and practical skills to all students’ (Anamoah-Mensah, 2004). This followed the latest education reforms in 1987, reforms which introduced the Junior and Senior Secondary School (JSS) concept (Anamoah-Mensah, 2004). Visual art, a vocational programme, was introduced to replace the art and craft programme at the SSS level in 1990 level and thus culminates with students writing for the SSSCE (currently WASSCE).

Students’ performance is considered a vital indicator of good schooling, so the poor performance of students’ at the basic level of education has not only led to public outcry, but also educationists have been increasingly occupied in their attempt to identify factors that influence students’ performance especially in Basic Education Certificate Examination in Ghana. For example, Anamuah-Mensah (2010), an educationist attributed the phenomenon to lack of effective supervision and monitoring at school, lack of motivation for teachers and inadequate number of qualified teachers to fill empty classrooms. Also, Etsey (2005) attributed the cause of poor academic performance in the Shama Sub-Metro of Shama Ahanta East Metropolitan Assembly (SAEMA) in Ghana to a combination of factors relating to the school environment, teachers, students’ and parents. In the same vein, Diaz (2003) found factors such as intellectual ability, poor study habit, achievement motivation, lack of vocational goals, low self-concept, low socioeconomic status of

the family, poor family structure and anxiety as contributing to educational performance.

In the field of art, there are factors that appear to be depressing, the opportunities for growth in the level, status and quality of provision in art education. On the other hand, the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) are its predecessor, the Department of National Heritage, Institutions like KNUST (Faculty of Art), University of Education, Winneba (Department of Art Education), Takoradi Technical University (School of Applied Arts), Ho Technical University (Department of Industrial Art), and Bolgatanga Polytechnic (Department of Industrial Art) have sought to encourage young peoples' involvement in the study of the arts. Close to two decades, the Department of Culture, Media and Sport has highlighted the potential contribution the arts could make towards combating social exclusion (GB – DCMS, 1999).

In addition, the recent collaboration between Ghana Arts Teachers' Association (GATA) and Qualification and Curriculum Authority (QCA) has provided a publication to help schools consolidate and build on their existing knowledge on how arts are taught, learning occurs and collaboration between the art teachers and the students.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

This study examined factors affecting the low academic performance of Visual Arts students in selected SHS in the Ejisu Municipality of the Ashanti Region, Ghana. The low academic performance has been a contributing factor not only to the failure

of students, but also to the poor performance in their academic work, especially in Picture Making, Graphic Design and General Knowledge in Art in the internal and external examinations conducted by their schools and the West Africa Examination Council (WAEC) respectively (Opoku-Asare and Siaw, 2015).

Anecdotal evidence gathered by the researcher shows that the educational standard of Visual Arts students within the Ejisu Municipality is not progressing. There is limited research on the reasons why students are not performing well at the SHS level on the Visual Arts programme, apart from studies by Opoku-Asare and Siaw (2015), Axadzi (2014) which are related to the current study under investigation. Though many students within the Municipality are offering Visual Arts, the WASSCE results continue to record low performance (2012-2017). Hence, there is the need to conduct a study that seeks to examine the low academic performance of Visual Art students in the Ejisu Municipality.

### **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

The objectives of this study were to:

1. Examine the causes of low academic performance of Visual Arts Students in the Ejisu Municipality at the Senior High School level.
2. Find out the effects of low academic performance and its influence on Visual Arts students in the Ejisu Municipality.

#### **1.4 Research Questions**

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study:

1. What are the causes of low academic performance of Visual Arts students in Ejisu Municipality?
2. What are the effects of low academic performance of Visual Arts students in the Ejisu Municipality?

#### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

The researcher has been motivated in this field for quite some time now due to the falling standards of the academic performance of some Visual Art Students. An original publication is to be put in the public domain arising from the findings of the study. This will contribute to the current debate in the field as far as Visual Arts education is concerned. The researcher hopes to organize workshops to train parents, teachers and students to understand that early childhood training is more critical in the development of their children rather than at a later time in life.

This research on academic performance of students within the Visual Arts Programme in the Ejisu Municipality might prevent many parents from finding alternative ways of contributing towards low academic performance of their children.

#### **1.6 Scope of the Study**

The study is limited to Ejisu Municipality. The reason for the choice of this is that it is one of the native town settlements of the Ashanti. The researcher has decided to sample three senior high schools for this study due to time factor and financial

constraints. This study intends to cover the following second cycle institutions in the Ejisu Municipality:

- i) Achinakrom Senior High School
- ii) Ejisuman Senior High School
- iii) Ejisu Senior High Technical School

### **1.7 Limitation of the Study**

The limitations of the study were that one of the schools could not partake in the study. This was because the school at the time the researcher visited for the data collection exercise had vacated so it was difficult to get students to answer questionnaire. Teachers on the other hand, were not willing to take part in the interview guide that the researcher had prepared for the study. Some declined comments based on issues that had occurred in one of the schools in the municipality, and hence were afraid that their views might be used as a bait in a situation that one of the recruited schools were dealing with at the time. This seems to suggest a lack of trust with the researcher although permission was sought from the Ejisu Municipal Education Office (see Appendix 1).

### **1.8 Organization of the Study**

Chapter Two highlights the review of related literature with emphasis on the theoretical framework relevant for this study. In Chapter three, an appropriate research methodology is used to enable be effective at responding to the research objectives. Chapter Four focuses on the analysis and results sections which is based on the data gathered from participants. Chapter Five provides the summary, conclusions and recommendations for policy and practice.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERAURE REVIEW**

#### **2.0 Overview**

This chapter addresses topics like factors affecting low academic performance at Senior High Schools, the context for teaching and learning Visual Arts, educational change towards low academic performing students, theoretical framework, and review of literature that relates to the topic.

#### **2.1 The Concept of Low Academic Performance**

Academic performance is the extent to which a student, teacher or institution has achieved their short or long term educational goals. The averages (is used in the SHS) and cumulative weighted averages (CWA) or Cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA) is used in calculating the results of students at the tertiary level of education. Opoku-Asare and Siaw (2015) argue that academic performance is affected by several factors. As pointed by Adesemowo (2005) the attitude of some teachers about their work, in turn reflects in the poor attendance to class, arriving late to school, making unpleasant comments about students' performance thereby damaging the ego of students and poor methods of teaching directly affect students' academic performance.

A study by Mzokwana (2008) believes that conditions hindering students learning which are likely to affect their performance include their cultural background, psychological issues, changes in curriculum, and teachers without specialization handling the subjects. Dorleku (2013) has underscored some factors that need attention to ensure that students are successful and they include school climate,

curriculum change, teaching methods, availability of teaching aids, assessment methods, learners' discipline, school culture, overcrowding in classes, motivation, and students background.

It could be surmised that low academic performance has been a characteristic of not only Visual Arts subjects, but many other programmes too. This is usually a problem which occurs as a result of a number of underlying factors which this thesis seeks to find out and come out with recommendation for practice and for policy makers as they review the teaching syllabus of various subjects in the Visual Arts programme across the country.

As noted by Sakyi, Senior Lecturer of Zambia, Centre for Accountancy Studies, in Lusaka, Zambia in an article captioned as “The Challenges of Ghana’s Educational System – Some reflections” posted on Ghanaweb.com on July 6, 2015: The poor performance in education and the mass admission of students where quality is not a major concern for its key stakeholders has affected education in Ghana, where there seems to be indiscipline among teachers and students, lack of commitment, poor government policies, current economic situation, disruptions by latest gadgets among others are all factors that accounts for this situation.

Indeed, this view of the Ghanaian diasporean is not far from the truth. However, there could be more examples which could be attributed to the low academic performance. As this research seeks to find out the factors that cause low academic performance, it is worthwhile to examine the previous pass rates of students across the country. One would be surprised that the WASSCE results has been rather low from its inception in 2006. Table 2.1 shows the rate of students that passed the examination.

**Table 2.1: WASSCE pass rate in all subjects**

Year	2014	2013	2012	2011	2009	2008	2007	2006
%	28.10	19.15	31.19	26.00	14.58	12.95	10.58	12.51
No of Candidates	422946	391079	376859	372826	395637	N/A	N/A	N/A

**Source: WAEC**

A critical look at Table 2.1 makes it clear that those who pass have been less than 50% of the total candidates who sit for the examination. What do these pass rates mean to educational stakeholders in Ghana? Are there any practical measures to deal with the issue of low academic performance not only in the entire WASSCE results but also in the various programmes of study? Are teachers adequately looking at ways to improve their teaching methods to ensure that they are able to close this gap of mass failure of students during the academic year? What is the missing link between the way WAEC set their questions and how questions are set by these selected schools? How prepared are students to answer questions correctly based on their understanding of how examination questions are supposed to be answered making use of the profile dimension as specified in the Teaching Syllabus of the Curriculum Research and Development Division (CRDD) for each subject taught at this level of education?

## **2.2 Factors Affecting Low Academic Performance of Visual Arts Students**

As noted by Amenuke (personal communication, January 20, 2018), the factors that affect the low academic performance of students offering Visual Arts are enormous. He emphasized that the challenges that we see now started some years ago because certain process which were supposed to be followed after reviewing the Dzobo

Committee Report in 1987 were not implemented by the government at the time. The first issue to discuss under this section stem from the way admission requirements are carried out in schools.

### **2.2.1 Admission Requirements**

The admission requirements into Senior High Schools (SHS) begins with the selection of programmes at the Junior High Schools (JHS). Students choose various subjects of their choices and then write the BECE at the end of the JHS education. After the marking and scoring of the candidates, the Computerised School Selection and Placement System does the placement of students into their various choice of schools based on their grades at the end of the examination. Some students might be given programmes that they did not even choose. Others might get good grades but the school of their choice might not offer the programme that they might have been placed in.

However, in selecting a programme at the SHS level, students should be given some form of counseling and orientation as it pertains to their career paths so that they are fully aware of the courses they might want to pursue at the Senior High School level. Anecdotal evidence suggest that many school managements think that students who do not perform well at the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) are those who are supposed to read the Visual Arts programme, whereas those with the good grades should read the General Science or General Arts or Business. Sometimes, they even label the Visual Arts class as the notorious class in their school and might be bias in dealing with students who are enrolled in the

programme. This plight is also experienced by those who also read the Home Economics Programmes at the SHS level too.

According to the Teaching Syllabus of General Knowledge in Art (CRDD, 2010) the rationale for the study of Visual Arts is to provide the student with a broad-based knowledge and skills in the theory and practice of visual art. This is expected to culminate in the student's ability to communicate effectively through the use of the vocabulary in the subject. Amenuke, Dogbe, Asare, Ayiku and Bafoe (1993) have stated that the purpose of visual arts and this is summed up as follows:

- Developing one's ability to think, feel and act creatively with visual materials;
- Education of visual art students is required for the artistic development of Ghana;
- Activities in the programme will provide student the opportunity to study the nature of tools, materials and technologies;
- Works of art might be used to maintain the ideas, knowledge, practices and beliefs of a society as handed down from generation to generation;
- African works of art like pots, bowls, baskets, kente, fugu are useful in everyday life;
- Artefacts are used as teaching aids to educate the youth about various responsibilities of life;
- Works of arts such as emblems, linguist staffs, clan staffs, state skins and stools identify different groups of people, individuals and institutions;
- Artefacts might serve as a source of knowledge, making it possible to interpret it in terms of history, sociology, religion, function and ideas of beauty;

- As society changes, its members should become more aware of the visual changes in the environment;
- It is believed that art activities can help reduce tension in people;
- The study of visual arts will encourage us to appreciate the usefulness of indigenous art processes;
- The visual arts programme provides a creative base for small-scale and rural art industries.

In fact, the objectives for the rationale for the study of visual art education is multifaceted and students stand the chance of having the ability to explain the role of visual arts education in fostering creativity by helping the individual to think, act and feel creatively. Educating the person holistically – head, hand and heart is also one of the objectives. Encouraging appreciation of the artistic and cultural heritage of Ghana and other nations; creating awareness of the role of art in society and promoting qualities of citizenship desired in an artist are also other objectives for the rationale of visual arts education. This should be made clear to admission teams or school management so that they are aware of what students in the programme stand to benefit. This will clear the misconceptions that they have about the programme and students who are enrolled in the programme should be given some form of orientation during the selection of their programmes and be made aware of the future career opportunities.

The admission requirement should also factor into consideration the subject that was studied by the potential visual arts student at the JHS level. As stated by the Teaching Syllabus of General Knowledge in Art (CRDD, 2010) students who wish to be considered for Visual Arts at the SHS level of education should have acquired

satisfactory literacy and numeracy skills including basic skills in drawing and designing as well as knowledge in social studies at the Junior High School. This is based on the Basic Design and Technology subject at the Junior High School level.

### **2.2.2 Lack of Continuity in the Subjects**

Studying Visual Arts at the SHS level is based on the premise that students have acquired requisite skills in drawing and design which is linked to the Basic Design and Technology (BDT) subjects. Subjects studied here are 10 in number including two Home Economics subjects, thus Catering and Sewing. Due to lack of adequate funding for the Visual Arts programme and inadequate staffing needs, a school might not be in the position of teaching many Visual Arts subjects as they wish. This is because the Ghana Education Service might have issues with funding and also being able to provide the requisite basic needs for all the visual arts subjects for a school. As such, students from the JHS level might not get the chance to choose the programme that they studied in BDT from their former JHS. When this happens, it affects the student's ability to perform well in the Visual Arts Programme due to the fact that they would have to study their chosen Visual Arts electives for only three years at the SHS level, instead of six years (thus, three years at the JHS level and another three years at the SHS level). This is one of the issue which stakeholders might begin to look at carefully if they want to curb the low academic performance of visual arts students in their schools.

Collaborations with higher institutions for funding should be initiated and other experts should be consulted so that every school could have as many Visual Arts subjects in their schools as possible. Also, students ought to be aware of the various elective subjects that the SHS they wish to select are running so that they are fully

aware of what options they would wish to choose at the SHS given the fact that students can choose any one subject from each of two groups (Group A: Graphics, Picture Making and Textiles; Group B: Basketry, Ceramics, Jewellery, Leatherwork and Sculpture) as stated in the Syllabus for General Knowledge in Art (CRDD, 2010).

Higher institutions in collaboration with the National Service Secretariat, Ghana Education Service and the various SHS could request that graduates from visual arts programme be posted to their schools to help with the training of students at that level. This way each SHS would have at least some graduate assisting them as part time tutors in their schools. When this is initiated, the rate at which low academic performance is mentioned among visual arts students might reduce due to the adequate staffing issues which might have been catered for in such arrangement between the stakeholders mentioned earlier. Schools authorities could also write for assistance from higher institutions regarding any persons who wish to serve at the SHS level which will strengthen the staffing issues of those schools.

### **2.2.3 Inadequate School Infrastructure**

Every school will always be desirous to have adequate infrastructure which makes learning smooth and lively. However, this is not the case with visual arts programme as well as other programmes at the SHS level. Of course, programmes that are not practice based or involves practical work like Business or General Arts might be able to cope with such situations. The case of practice based programmes are different. General Science, Home Economics and Visual Arts programmes will to some extent, need adequate infrastructure for their practical works. If this is not fully met, they would not be able to meet the full requirements of their syllabus which require

students to get some hands-on practical work as they work in class or out of class on their own.

Due to the lack of classroom space and studio space, the students find it difficult to do their practical project works. Some times when two practical lessons are ongoing, one of the classes would have be conducted under a tree to make room for the other to be done in the studio. This suggests that there is lack of infrastructure and teachers have to improvise. On days when it is windy or it is raining, such lessons might not be able to come off due to the weather conditions. Also, storage space for both unused materials and finished artefacts might affect the way students study in the studio. If the studio space is such that it is congested due to limited space allocated for visual arts students and their teachers for academic work, then they might have to manage the situation. This does not make the learning or studio environment appealing for students to want to learn, thereby making academic environments unstable. The heads of schools are not encouraging their students or teachers to seek for funding in diverse ways to solve the infrastructure challenges. Old students and philanthropists could send support in terms of books and funds to their alma maters to help solve this issue.

#### **2.2.4 Inadequate Textbooks for Syllabus Requirements**

Although the syllabus for each subject might be easily obtained from the Ghana Education Service, the office of Curriculum Research and Development Division or from the internet, there is still a lack of adequate text books for all subject areas in Visual Arts education. Indeed, only one text book exists for the Visual Arts programme, thus General Knowledge in Art written by Amenuke, Dogbe, Asare, Ayiku and Baffoe in 1991 was printed through funds from the World Bank. Today,

this text book which was first published in 1991 is still being used in Ghana and some other West African countries that take part in examinations conducted by WAEC. The remaining 10 Visual Arts subjects have no text books that is universally accepted. Instead, other private persons or teachers have written their own materials for sale in various bookshops and market in some specific places.

The government could not provide financial support to develop other text books just as that of the General Knowledge in Art. Meanwhile, the World Bank made the experts who were part of the Dzobo Committee aware of the fact that they do not fund vocational or technical subjects; hence they could not make funds available apart from subjects in the sciences, mathematics, engineering, among others. This might be because they cannot see the direct relevance of funding vocational or technical education programmes.

#### **2.2.5 High Enrolments at Senior High School Visual Arts Programme**

High enrolment in some Visual Arts Programme comes with issues of teacher to student ratios and how effective the teaching might be. In order that there will be efficient and effective teaching in a practice based programme like that of General Science and Home Economics, students should not be crowded in a class where they will hardly struggle to get a desk to sit on. This implies that students who come to class early might get a place to sit depending on the seating arrangement for the class.

As noted by Opoku-Asare and Siaw (2015), classrooms are the specific types of environments for teachers. They have unique features which influence students in the class irrespective of students seating or arrangement of desks or what the teacher

believes about education. In fact, the size of a class is an important factor with respect to the academic performance of students. There is an agreement amongst researchers and educational scholars that as students achievement decreases, the class size also increases (Babatunde & Olanrewaju, 2014).

### **2.2.6 Curriculum Delivery**

The background of teachers at this level of education is usually those with Diploma in Education from the Colleges of Education. A few of them might have gone for a Bachelor's degree or a Master's degree. Where a teacher however trained he might have advanced in the subject and even this requires taking some action steps which helps to deal with students who are slow learners. Though this might be captured in the education programme at the training colleges, sometimes, learning strategies should be modified to include current ones as they emerge in the field of education.

Teachers teaching any subject at the SHS level ought to have gained mastery of the subject area taking into consideration the profile dimension as stipulated in the Teaching Syllabus for General Knowledge in Art (CRDD, 2010). Where a teacher does not know what the syllabus requires for a particular topic in his subject areas, he could contact higher institutions or books in libraries to make up for that gap in his or her knowledge. This makes the teacher adequately prepared for a particular topic in the class that he or she handles. Lack of preparation and planning might be seen on the part of the students and this will not augur well for the teacher.

The goal of any teacher is to ensure that what is taught in class is well understood by the students. In order to know that students are asked questions at the lower level of the Blooms Taxonomy which deals with Knowledge and Understanding type of questions. If students are unable to answer questions at this level, then the teacher is

able to gauge the extent to which the students have understood what was taught. Asking questions in class should be encouraged by teachers to determine if students really understand what has been taught. Teachers should instill this attitude in the students and encourage their students to share what they have learnt in class with their colleagues. If a student asks a question, the teacher could let another person in class answer the question. The ability or inability on the part of the students could also provide the teacher the level of understanding as it pertains to the subject. Teachers should vary the type of teaching strategies that they employ in class based on the students learning abilities, be it auditory, verbal, visual and kinesthetic. Teachers should ask questions at the Application, Analysis, Synthesis, Evaluation levels as part of the assignments students are to present in class. If students do not answer such questions well, then it seems that what was taught did not go down well. Suggestions have been made in the syllabus for General Knowledge in Art and teachers will have to pay heed to that section if they are to succeed in handling the particular subject that they teach.

Teachers should do well to stick to possible question rubrics that constitute the type of questions that the West African Certification Examination Council set for the SHS students. This will culminate in students achieving a good result at the end of their programmes. Meanwhile, prior to the final examination conducted by WAEC for SHS students, students should be made aware of the basis of assessment so that they are aware of the various components as stipulated by the syllabus of the various Visual Arts subjects that they are studying.

### **2.2.7 Use of Instructional Time**

As stated in the Teaching Syllabus for General Knowledge in Art (CRDD, 2010):

A variety of Visual Arts subjects can be taught by schools having teachers and resources for those subjects enabling students to select their preferred subjects. Subjects should focus on the requisite scope stated in the curriculum in addition to student's choice of two other subjects, from groups A and B, apart from the compulsory General Knowledge in Art subject with six periods within a week for each subject. For GKA, a suggestion is made to focus two periods on the following topics: Art History, Appreciation and General Concepts in Art. Three periods should be used for practical work and the remaining one period should centre on School Based Assessments (SBA). Still life drawing, imaginative composition should be paid attention to during lessons so as to develop the drawing abilities and competency of Visual Arts students. Planning should be done carefully considering for all the terms in relation to how the logic structure of the topics unfolds.

This explanation provided in the syllabus suggest the number of periods allocated to General Knowledge in Art. Other Visual Arts subjects might also have their own time allocations on a school's timetable for a particular programme. Where teachers are involved in other important meetings at the administration level or staff teachers meeting, students contact hours with their teachers are affected. When this happens, the students might also not make judicious use of their time. If the teacher is already aware of that meeting, then another activity could be given to the students so that it does not go waste. In cases where the teachers are unable to give specific instructions to their students, such times are wasted due to a lack of communication.

Class prefects who think that teachers are delaying in attending a class might run to places like the staff common room to take a look there and see if they could find their subject teachers. If this is done but no answer is provided by way of students being informed of the where about of their subject teachers, the students in the class

might either disturb, study privately on their own or do discussions based on what they have been doing during such free periods which ought to have been occupied by a teacher. As such, the responsibility rest on the teacher and the class prefects to strategize so that the students make good use of such free periods which were not supposed to be free.

When teachers return from whichever meetings that might have occupied them and were unable to meet with their students, they must go back to where they left off and continue their lessons from there. If this situation happens many times in a term, then it is likely to affect the performance of the students at the end of the terminal, yearly and final examinations. Teachers should be fast to see where there might be emergency meetings and may not be able to meet with their students and plan ahead what to do when such times present itself.

### **2.2.8 Inadequate Monitoring by Ghana Education Service (GES)**

According to Anamoah-Mensah (2004) the Government of Ghana White Paper on the Educational Reform recommended among other things that: inspectors should be drawn from the Ghana Education Service (GES) and sent to the Ministry of Education (MoE), Youth and Sports. Their mandate is to conduct a periodic evaluation of first and second cycle institutions across Ghana. They will then report back to the MoE to ensure that recommendations submitted are put into action. Within this arrangement, the inspectorate will have the ability to ensure that standards are maintained at every school in both public and private settings. Meanwhile, the usual routine inspection which is carried out by directors and supervisors in the regional and district directorates of education should still be intact to keep the performance in teaching and learning at its standard.

Who is monitoring the teachers in general and those teaching the Visual Arts subjects? This is supposed to be done by inspectorates from the Ghana Education Service (GES). How often do they embark on such activities? These and many questions are key issues which when addressed might help with the problem of low academic performance of students at the level. How many inspectorates are usually assigned by the various districts of education across the country? Who do they report to and what becomes of their report after visiting the schools? What can schools do to ensure that each time the inspectorates visited their school they were ready for such processes as mandated by the bodies in charge of such activities. Names of bodies that might be involved include the Ministry of Education (MoE), Curriculum Research and Development Division (CRDD), Ghana Education Trust Fund (GETFund), Ghana Education Service (GES), among others. What is the role of these stakeholders in providing the best form of monitoring by way of observation or interviewing teachers in various schools? Is questionnaire given to teachers to fill and later on submit to the appropriate authorities? These visits must be consistent and be factored into the planning for each term of the programme.

### **2.2.9 Inadequate Evaluation by Ghana Education Service (GES)**

Evaluation should be done every four years by GES. The question that one might tend to ask is this: is there evaluation of the curriculum to ensure that new information is being added to update it as it stands now? Evaluation improves performance and makes teachers accountable for what they have been assigned to do. Where there is a lack of evaluation by the appropriate body, then anything could happen or anybody could be assigned to teach the subject whiles that subject might not be the specialization of that teacher.

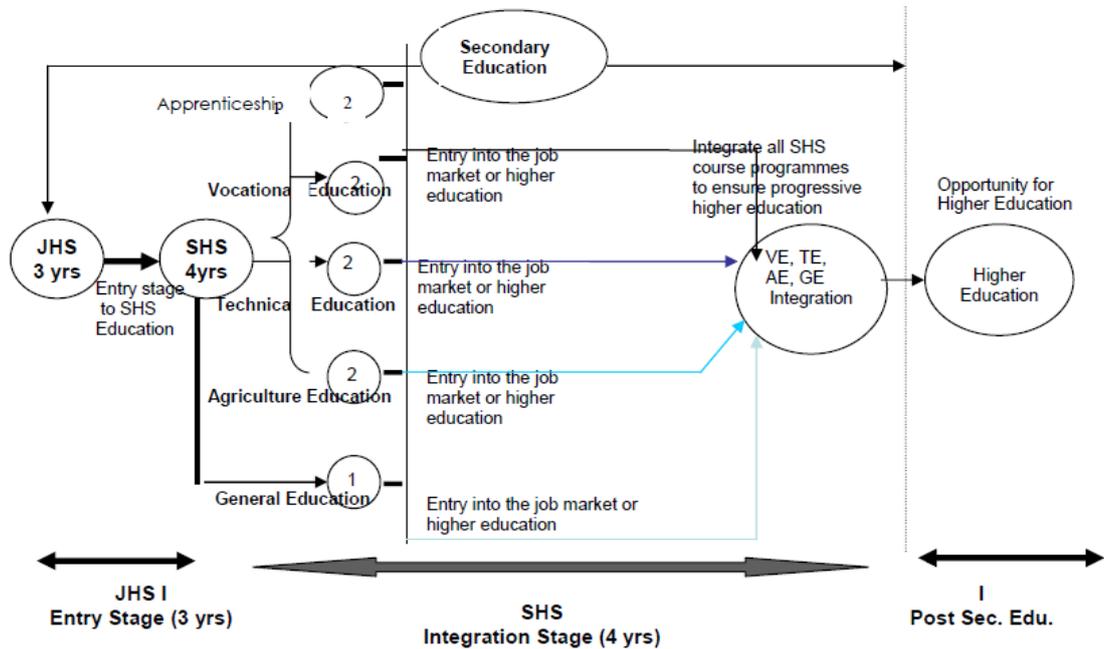
### **2.3 High School Education in Ghana**

The structure of the existing Junior Secondary School and Senior Secondary School education lasted for three years at each level. However, this was reviewed in the Anamoah-Mensah's report. The Anamoah-Mensah's (2004) report on education review stated that the existing structure for the Junior Secondary School and Senior Secondary School was reviewed. The report stated that Ghana Government position on high school education is made up of two parts, junior high school and senior high school. The JHS will consist of three-year period with the focus on general, comprehensive education where students' will get to learn a number of subjects and skills. It will take up the system of Universal Compulsory Basic Education for all students', which is unique in its quality and methods from education at the Secondary level.

The SHS part equals a four-year period and it will provide students chance to further their education after completing JHS or by taking up skills training in a formal instruction manner as in the case of sandwich programmes. The novel structure and content of SHS should equip students to go in for education at third cycle institutions.

Fig. 2.1 shows the proposed new structure of both Junior and Senior Secondary education under the new reforms and it gives a pictorial view of how Government intends to restructure secondary education across the nation.

Figure 2.1: The Analytical Structure of Secondary Education under the New Education Reform



Source: Anamoah-Mensah (2004)

Anamoah-Mensah (2004, pp. 4-5) claimed that hitherto the previous JSS system which ended the educational level of most students', JHS will be the access point for entering SHS by either enrolling in a general education, agricultural, technical or vocational programmes. It is hoped that once an improvement has been made at the basic level of education, the new system will be beneficial in the following ways:

1. increase the demand for basic education and also improve the survival rates in both Secondary and Junior High Schools.
2. improve the standards of Junior High education by providing various options to students'.
3. the rates of transition between Junior High and Senior High will dramatically improve so that eventually the majority of the youth will have had a full course of second cycle education.

4. finally, the wastage of talent through the present attrition which arises from premature selection of career streams before reaching the legally employable age of 15 years would be eliminated.

The content, thus subject areas or discipline was also featured in this report. Specifically, for the Junior High School level, the Government of Ghana further hopes to review the existing curricula particularly for basic and high school education. This was to consider subjects that are relevant towards the development of knowledge and skills capable of meeting both tertiary work and the job market. To this end, the JHS level, proposed subjects which comprised 1) English Language, 2) Mathematics, 3) Social Studies, 4) Integrated Science, 5) Agriculture Science, 6) Ghanaian Language, 7) TVET (pre-technical vocational, 8) ICT, and 9) French. The guidance and counselling unit was mandated to offer students at the JHS level the right information in choosing a suitable programme of the interest and career objectives.

On the other hand, at the senior high school (SHS) level, five core subjects were proposed which includes 1) English Language, 2) Mathematics, 3) Integrated Science, 4) Social Studies and 5) Information and Communication Technology. Moreover, in addition to the core subjects, the Government of Ghana has ensured that students offer one of the course programmes shown in Fig 2.1 (for example, Agriculture, Technical, Vocation and General Education).

It stands to reason that the content and structure of Ghana's educational system is very rich; however, little is known about how the recommendations in this education reform was implemented.

## **2.4 Rationale for Visual Arts Education**

Art is very vital especially when it functions as a tool to communicate ideas to people (Sylvanus, Patrick & Eric, 2012). The introduction of the Visual Arts Programme at the Senior Secondary School level begun in 1991 due to the recognition that art brings an enormous contribution to life in general. The programme aimed to promote Ghanaian culture, increase education, equip the students with employable skills and to meet the commercial and industrial demands of art in the country.

The educational policy makers of Ghana deemed it necessary to introduce art at all levels, thus leading to the introduction of Basic Design and Technology (BDT) in the Junior High Schools and Creative Arts in the Secondary Schools during the 2007 Educational Reform. This initiative was to give the young one's (students' and students) a strong foundation in art and to "develop in them the spirit of innovation, creativity and resourcefulness" (Curriculum Research and Development Division–CRDD, 2007, p. iii). In Chapter One of the General Knowledge in Art textbook, Amenuke, et al (1993) have stated the purpose of Visual Arts education and this is summarized as follows:

- Developing one's ability to think, feel and act creatively with visual materials;
- Education of visual art students is required for the artistic development of Ghana;
- Activities in the programme will provide student the opportunity to study the nature of tools, materials and technologies;
- Works of art might be used to maintain the ideas, knowledge, practices and beliefs of a society as handed down from generation to generation;
- African works of art like pots, bowls, baskets, kente, fugu are useful in everyday life;

- Artefacts are used as teaching aids to educate the youth about various responsibilities of life;
- Works of arts such like emblems, linguist staffs, clan staffs, state skins and stools identify different groups of people, individuals and institutions;
- Artefacts might serve as a source of knowledge, making it possible to interpret it in terms of history, sociology, religion, function and ideas of beauty;
- As society changes, its members should become more aware of the visual changes in the environment;
- It is believed that art activities can help reduce tension in people;
- The study of visual arts will encourage us to appreciate the usefulness of indigenous art processes;
- The visual arts programme provides a creative base for small-scale and rural art industries.

## **2.5 The concept of teaching**

Teaching is an activity undertaken by experience and knowledgeable persons with the aim of helping those with less experience and knowledge. Teaching is an educational activity (Kyriacou, 1997). The World Book Encyclopedia (2001) explains teaching as “helping other people learn”. The curriculum has made it clear that the concept of teaching as a way of helping other persons to learn to do things, to think and to solve problems and to react in novel ways. Felipa (2003) sees teaching as an activity of facilitating learning. It stands to reason that the aim of teaching is to see positive change in thought and behaviour of any individual who undergoes such an experience. On the one hand, an experienced teacher leads the

teaching session, and on the other hand, the student responds or listens to what the teacher is teaching.

## **2.6 Theories of learning**

Different learning theories exist in the field of education. The most influential learning theories include behaviorist theories, cognitive psychology, constructivism, social constructivism, experiential learning, multiple intelligence, and situated learning theory and community of practice.

The main idea behind behaviorism is that learning involves a change in behaviour due to the acquisition, reinforcement and application of associations between stimuli from the environment and observable responses of the individual. Behaviorists are interested in measurable changes in behaviour, and a key proponent of the theory by name Thorndike proposed that 1) a response to a stimulus is reinforced when followed by a positive rewarding effect, and 2) a response to a stimulus becomes stronger by exercise and repetition. This perspective of learning is similar to the drill and practice programmes.

Cognitive psychology holds the view of complex mental phenomena which behaviorist ignored and was influenced by the emergence of the computer as an information processing device, which became analogous to the human-mind. In this theory, learning is understood as the acquisition of knowledge: the learner is an information-processor who absorbs information, undertakes cognitive operations on it, and stocks it in memory.

Multiple intelligences is based on the assumption that learning theories is a universal human process that all individuals experience according to the same principles. Howard Gardner is the main proponent of this theory which was carried out in 1983. Moreover, Gardner asserts that every person's level of intelligence actually consists of many unique intelligences, which include 1) linguistic intelligence, 2) logical-mathematical intelligence, 3) spatial intelligence, 4) bodily-kinesthetic intelligence, 5) musical intelligence, 6) interpersonal intelligence, 7) intrapersonal intelligence, and 8) naturalist intelligence. The recognition of multiple intelligences, according to Gardner, is a means to achieving educational goals rather than an educational goal in and of itself.

## **2.7 Empirical Studies on the Effects of Low Academic Performance of Students**

Diverse studies have been carried out that sought to determine the causes and effects of low academic performance of students in various academic disciplines, including visual arts. This section reviews some of these studies.

In a study that sought to address the reasons for the low level of academic achievement of visual arts students in mathematics at Tulkarem schools, Barakat & Harz Allah (2010) used a quantitative research design in combination with a descriptive approach, and questionnaires as data collection instruments. The study found the causes for the low level of academic achievement in mathematics of visual arts students at Tulkarem schools to be due mainly to: a. Health problems affect student achievement in Math b. Behavioral problems affect the achievement of students in mathematics performance. c. Lack of self-desire to study may lead to students low academic achievement in mathematics level. d. Lack of a sense of belonging to the school can cause a sense of unconcerned to the study. e. Teachers'

lack the required knowledge of modern educational and psychological theories can lead to students poor academic performance. The study recommended to give more attention to students health so that they could focus on their studying and provide a relaxing school environment in order to increase the motivation of students and increase the level of belonging to the school. Teachers also have to use attractive techniques and educational activities to motivate students for leaning. Moreover, parents should be responsive to their children's problems and pursue their academic achievement step by step. Also it is necessary to arrange training courses and workshops for teachers, who are teaching mathematics, especially those teachers who teach mathematics from different subjects, to develop their skills in teaching mathematics.

In another study, Tamimi (2012) conducted a study about weakness in visual arts students academic performance. In this study, he pointed out this problem has become a global problem. He found that the factors that lead to poor academic achievement amongst visual arts students, like students of other disciplines, are social factors, economic factors and political conditions. The study recommended staying away from violence and inappropriate words with students who suffer from academic weakness and encourage these students by offering them some gifts and paying them more attention.

Similarly, Ahmed & Wias (2012) did a study to examine the reasons for the low level of academic achievement among high school students from teachers and students perspective; the study showed these reasons, including the large number of distractions around the student like the spread of mobile phone, means fun, low motivation of students towards learning and the weakness of the attention of parents

to follow up the level of their children. The study recommended minimizing the distractions of attention, to concentrate on motivation, to strengthen the work of students in science subjects by giving them more courses and to provide them with modern teaching methods that are in line with the tremendous scientific advances.

Eldridge (2012) study concentrated on the reasons for educational failure of visual arts students and to a larger extent, students of all disciplines and the pedagogical support techniques to face this phenomenon. The study showed that there are six key elements in the definition of academic failure these are: First, schools' Exams. It is known that the school years in all levels of education, either end with final exams, or divide a year into several semesters, each of which ends with a periodic exam (quarterly), and sometimes applying the two methods for evaluating students together. However, the educational system usually ends with General Education Examinations (standardized tests) covering all formal and informal educational institutions in all regions.

Second, failure. It means not achieving the required mark in that exam. That failure may be partially or completely without affecting the student's average, which usually indicated whether the student has succeeded or not. According to the planned programs, teachers should respect the quality of education and its objectives, fitting to the age of the students and their abilities in general. Third, psychological feelings. The repetition of academic failure may be accompanied with psychological feelings as well as negative social attitudes. The feelings of sadness and anxiety that accompany the student failure make failure a psychosocial special case. Then, failure

is often followed by social situations like sarcastic or moral punishment that may be followed by physical punishment and ignoring for the careless student.

Accordingly, the consequences of academic failure have bad effects on both psychological and social aspects. Fourth, academic failure and learning difficulties. The distinction should be made between academic failure and learning difficulties. Basically, the learning difficulties are a temporary situation that almost happened to most of the normal students. Therefore, learning difficulties can be categorized into three levels: simple, medium and strong according to the educational support, or what it calls therapeutic program that is dealing with members of this class, according to their level of difficulty.

This study recommended the need to focus attention on the educational support activities by adopting the modern means and techniques, using the most appropriate educational procedure that are common within the scope of deepening the understanding and skills development. However, the reinforcement of students achievement among groups at all levels of education enable them to realize the weak points, highlight their true potential, reduce the gap between them and face the difficulties and obstacles to solve them. Finally, attention should be paid much to the diagnosis because it is essential scientific practice that will set the reasons of academic failure and its quality.

In Ghana, studies on the phenomenon are rare but categorization of Senior High Schools seems to have direct correlation with student performance in BECE, placement in the respective elective programmes of study, and invariably,

achievement in WASSCE. This is explained by the BECE grade cut-off points the schools have specified for the respective programmes of study they offer; in this context, Business, General Arts, Science and Visual Arts (Asihene, 2009; Owusu-Afriyie, 2009; Siaw, 2009; Agbenatogbe, 2011; Adinyira, 2012). The first class schools accept BECE Aggregate 6-10 for Science, 6-12 for Business, 6-12 for General Arts and 6-15 for Visual Arts whereas second class schools accept BECE Aggregates 8-15 for Science, 8-20 for Business, and 10-25 for Visual Arts and General Arts. In the case of third class schools, BECE Aggregate 8-15 go into Science, 10-20 for Business and General Arts, and 10-30 for Visual Arts (Asihene, 2009; Siaw, 2009).

Whether the low admissions criteria specified for Visual Arts is intended to compensate Junior High Schools which lacked specialist teachers to implement the Visual Arts component of the Basic Design and Technology curriculum (Agyenim-Boateng, 2011) is not clear. This notwithstanding, Evans-Solomon (2004), Asihene (2009) and Adinyira (2012) indicate that many applicants who make excellent BECE grades and make personal decisions to pursue Visual Arts are often diverted into Science which is believed to be 'the programme for brilliant students'. The worst scenario is where applicants whose grades fall below the acceptable grades for their preferred Business or General Arts programmes accept placement in Visual Arts just to be in their preferred school. Non-Visual Arts students who are good athletes could even be transferred from other schools to boost a school's sports team and end up in the Visual Arts department, making Visual Arts look like a programme fit only for low achievers (Evans-Solomon & Opoku-Asare, 2011). Some non-Visual Arts teachers therefore hide behind this façade and denigrate the programme and its

students, with some even refusing teaching duties in the Visual Arts department (Asihene, 2009; Evans-Solomon & Opoku-Asare, 2011; Adinyira, 2012).

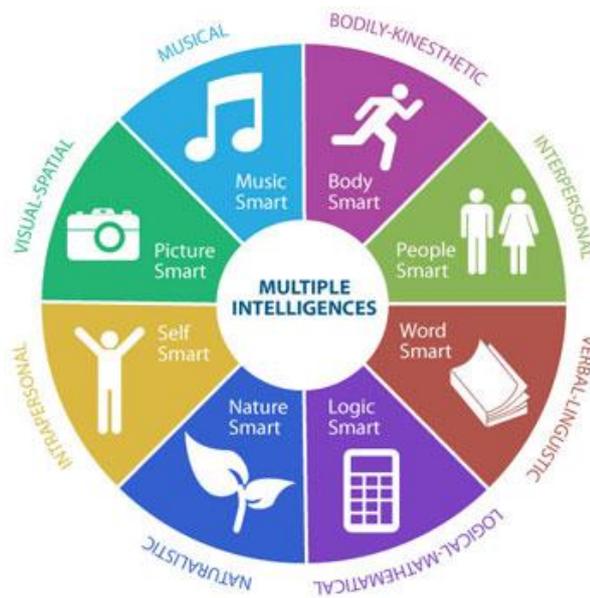
## **2.8 Conceptual Framework**

A conceptual framework is defined as an organized way of thinking, why we do it, what is the process and activities; and influenced by other similar ideas from experts in the field. This study which stem from a qualitative perspective making use of a case study design employed a conceptual framework, which is synonymous to qualitative studies.

The framework upon which this study draws from is the theory of multiple intelligence. This theory served as the lens for studying the topic under review.

Armstrong (2009) posits that the theory of multiple intelligences was developed by Dr Howard Gardner, professor of Education at Harvard University in 1983. It suggests that the traditional notion of intelligence, based on intelligent quotient (IQ) testing, is far too limited and proposes eight different intelligences to account for a broader range of human potential in children and adults. Fig. 2.2 shows the theory of multiple intelligence.

Figure 2.2: Theory of Multiple Intelligence



Source: Armstrong (2009)

1. Linguistic intelligence (“word smart”)
2. Logical-mathematical intelligence (“number/reasoning smart”)
3. Spatial intelligence (“picture smart”)
4. Bodily-Kinesthetic intelligence (“body smart”)
5. Musical intelligence (“music smart”)
6. Interpersonal intelligence (“people smart”)
7. Intrapersonal intelligence (“self-smart”)
8. Naturalist intelligence (“nature smart”)

Armstrong (2009) has observed that though schools and culture focus their attention on “linguistic and logical-mathematical intelligence”, equal emphasis should be put on other intelligences, for instance: “artists, architects, musicians, naturalists, designers, dancers, therapists, entrepreneurs, and others who enrich the world in which we live”. Moreover, this theory suggests a major transformation in the ways in which schools are run and proposes that teachers should be trained to present their

lessons in various ways making use of music, cooperative learning, art activities, role play, multimedia, field trips, inner reflection, and much more.

Armstrong (2009) argues that the theory has received the attention of many educators across the United States of America and hundreds of schools are using its philosophy to redesign the way children are educated. Though some schools are still sticking to their old ways of teaching which includes dry lectures, boring worksheets and textbooks. The situation now is how to get this information across to many teachers, school administrators, and others who work with children, so that each child has the opportunity to learn in ways harmonious with their unique minds.

Again, Armstrong (2009) argues that multiple intelligences has rigorous consequences for adult learners and their development. A lot of mature people get jobs that fail to use their highly developed intelligence. This theory provides adults with a view to examining their lives, the capabilities they have not been using since they were a child, but now have the chance to develop through courses, hobbies, or self-development programmes.

One of the most remarkable features of the theory of multiple intelligences is how it provides eight different potential pathways to learning. If a teacher is having difficulty reaching a student in the more traditional linguistic or logical ways of instruction, the theory of multiple intelligences suggests several other ways in which the material might be presented to facilitate effective learning. Whether you are a kindergarten teacher, a graduate school instructor, or an adult learner seeking better ways of pursuing self-study on any subject of interest, the same basic guidelines apply. Whatever you are teaching or learning, see how you might connect it with

- words (linguistic intelligence)
- numbers or logic (logical-mathematical intelligence)
- pictures (spatial intelligence)
- music (musical intelligence)
- self-reflection (intrapersonal intelligence)
- a physical experience (bodily-kinesthetic intelligence)
- a social experience (interpersonal intelligence), and/or
- an experience in the natural world. (naturalist intelligence)

For example, if teachers at the SHS level are handling Visual Arts subjects that require any of the intelligences listed in this theory, they simply draw on a particular type of intelligence and make use of it. Also, observation in class will be needed for teachers to carefully examine the type of intelligence needed to teach a class. Dialogues with students regarding their preferred mode of teaching might be helpful if teachers are able to find out what ways a student can learn better.

Since there is a theory called Hermann Ebbinghaus's Forgetting Curve as stated by Weinschenk (2011), it is very prudent that teachers review what they have taught in class to ensure that students still understand previous lessons accurately. This gives the teacher a good overview whether the students still understand what was taught or not. In Figure 2.3 the more time passes, the less people remember information. The same could be said of teaching.

Figure 2.3: Hermann Ebbinghaus's Forgetting Curve

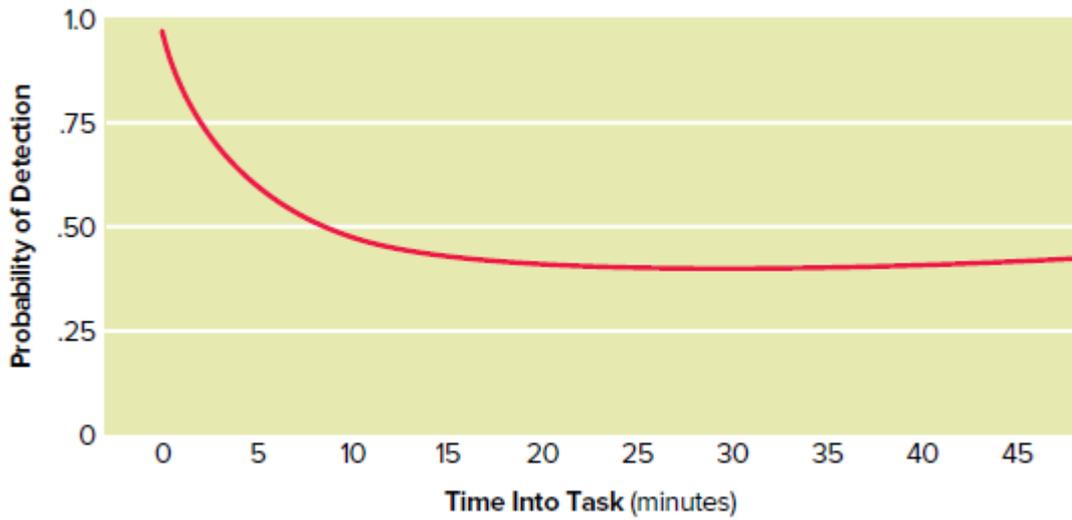


Source: Weinschenk (2011)

Apart from the curve of forgetting, teachers should pay heed to what Weinschenk (2011) attributes to mind that wanders away 30% of the time. She further adds that how information is organised is not dependent on the person. Rather since people like to categorise information, the more organised the information, the better people remembered it. Since time is relative and depends on an activity a teacher has decided to do, it is better if it is done in bits of ten.

Weinschenk (2011) is of the view that attention starts to wane after 10 minutes. In Figure 3.4, it is clear that as time passes by, the level of attention also begins to fall. As a suggestion, she proposes that “people can take a short break and then start over with another 7- to 10-minute period, but 7 to 10 minutes is about as long as we can pay attention to any one task.” Teachers can take a cue from this advice and examine if their lessons are receiving the attention it deserves.

Figure 2.4: Attention starts to wane after 10 minutes



Source: Weinschenk (2011)

The implication of the review for the study is that the educational reform captured in the Anamoah-Mensah (2004) report made various recommendation which by far makes the education system in Ghana rich in content and scope; however, little seems to have been achieved in implementing some of its recommendation. Indeed, this study seeks to examine the factors that affect lowering academic performance of Visual Arts students in the Ejisu Municipality in the Ashanti Region of Ghana.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.0 Overview**

This chapter focuses on the appropriate research methods employed for the study. The sub-topics are arranged as follows: research design, research methods, population for the study, target population, accessible population, sample and sampling procedure, data collection instruments, ethical considerations and data analysis plan.

#### **3.1 Research Design**

Fraenkel and Wallen (2009) have defined research design as the overall plan for collecting data in order to answer the research questions. This process also looks at the specific data analysis techniques or methods that the researcher intends to use in the study. The chosen research design enabled the researcher to look into details of the information gathered and also apply analytical techniques to the interpretation of the results. The research design for this study was a mixed method. The first part which is the qualitative research aspect offered the means of obtaining first-hand information on the topic. Under the quantitative research design, the survey technique was used to collect information on the subject from the participants of the study.

##### **3.1.1 Qualitative Research Approach**

Qualitative studies deal with a situation where the “research in which the investigator attempts to study naturally” occurs in a “phenomenon in all their complexity”

(Fraenkel, Wallen & Hyun, 2012). Qualitative research is a means of *exploring*, *describing*, and *understanding* the depth, richness, and complexity inherent in the central idea or phenomenon identified in a research problem, purpose, and research questions. The main types of qualitative research are phenomenological research, ethnographies, case studies, grounded theory and historical research.

Moreover, two types of reasoning (inductive and deductive) come to mind in deciding on the research approach. The inductive research is called *theory-building* research, and the deductive research called *theory-testing* research (Bhattacharjee, 2012). Deductive research aims to test concepts and patterns known from theory using empirical data. This type of research is more productive when there are many competing theories of the same phenomenon and the researches are interested to know what theory works well and under which circumstance (Bhattacharjee, 2012). Wilson defines deductive research as “*developing a hypothesis based on an existing theory, and then designing a research strategy to the hypothesis*” (Wilson, 2010). This approach is used in the “hard” sciences with reference to survey techniques. This study makes use of deductive reasoning due to the use of a Likert scale questionnaire in a case study. It also makes use of inductive reason when interpreting the interviews and observation data collected from the field.

However, for inductive research, the aim of the researcher is to deduce or conclude from theoretical concepts and patterns from observed data (Bhattacharjee, 2012). Plans are made for data collection process and analysis is done to see if any patterns emerge that suggest relationships between variables. Possible generalization, relationship and even theories may be built (Gray, 2004). Babbie, states that inductive research can be thought of as a “bottom-up” approach to building of knowledge. The researcher used interviews and self-administered questionnaire to

collect data for the study. This study made use of a case study design with reference to selected senior high schools in the Ejisu Municipality in the Ashanti Region of Ghana.

### **3.1.2 Case study**

Case studies provide detailed information about one or more cases. A case could be a single individual, a group of people, or even a country. It can be argued that a case study is an indication of the scope of the research rather than a research design as such. Yin (1984) who is one of the key researchers in case study together with other renowned case study researchers has proposed a six-step process when dealing with case studies:

- 1) Determine and define the research questions,
- 2) Select the cases and determine data gathering and analysis techniques,
- 3) Prepare to collect the data,
- 4) Collect data from the field,
- 5) Evaluate and analyze the data, and
- 6) Prepare the report (Soy, 1997).

This study was completed using Secondary data in the form of a survey instrument (questionnaire). This helped the researcher to ask follow up questions where it was necessary to clarify a point of view of participants. The choice of the schools was based on the fact that these schools offer Visual Arts.

### 3.2. Population

A definition of the target population is the actual population to which a researcher would like to generalize the results of a study. This is the researcher's ideal choice for the study (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009). The target population for this study is Form Three students because they are in their final year and would have studied more about the three elective subjects and are better placed to answer the questions. They are also chosen because they should be prepared to pass their final exams without which they cannot continue their education at the third cycle institutions.

#### 3.2.1 Accessible Population

Accessible population refers to the population that a researcher is able to generalize from in a particular study (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009). The study will select Form Three students, who have similar characteristics of students in all four schools in the municipality. Therefore, the accessible population for the study was made up of the following four selected schools:

Table 3.1: Respondents from the school

Senior High Schools	Respondents	Frequency
<b>1. Ejisuman Senior High School</b>	Students	60
	Head of Department	1
	Subject Teachers	3
<b>2. Ejisu Senior High Technical School</b>	Students	60
	Head of Department	1
	Subject Teachers	3
<b>3. Church of Christ Senior High School</b>	Students	60
	Head of Department	1
	Subject Teachers	3
<b>4. Achinakrom Senior High School</b>	Students	60
	Head of Department	1
	Subject Teachers	3
<b>Total</b>		<b>256</b>

### **3.3 Sample and Sampling**

Fraenkel and Wallen (2009) have defined the term ‘sample’ as the group from which an information is to be obtained. In other words, sampling is a process of choosing a number of persons or objects from a population which is representative of the larger group referred to as the population.

The sampling design is the type of sample appropriate for a particular study based on opinions of experts. It also entailed the selection of a particular sample based on a certain level of knowledge specific to the study being undertaken. This knowledge of the respondents will aid the researcher in answering the research questions posed for the study.

The choice of participants will be determined by how relevant those in the wider population were beneficial to the study in question. This should reflect the true characteristics of the participants. The three subjects were taught by two teachers, in the sense that one teacher taught both General Knowledge in Art and Graphic Design and the other teacher taught Picture Making or vice versa. As a result, the study employed purposive sampling techniques.

#### **3.3.1 Purposive sampling**

A purposive sampling is a non-probability sample that is selected based on characteristics of a population and the objective of the study. Purposive sampling is also known as judgmental or selective sampling. Purposive sampling was used to select both staff and students from the four schools in the municipality to participate in the study. Purposive sampling is used to select a representative sample for the study which is relevant in the presentation of the findings for recommendation and future studies.

### **3.4 Data Collection Instruments**

With reference to the research approach, the data collection instruments were interviews, observation, performance assessment and a questionnaire.

#### **3.4.1 Observation for Collecting Data**

Observation will usually be a description of an activity, a behaviour, an action, a dialogue, an interpersonal interaction, an organization or community processes or any other aspect of observable human experience. In order to gather data through that means, it will require describing in detail the environment from which that observation is made (Lemanski & Overton, 2011). Within academia, observations could be made in determining a particular teacher's skill and assessment of a practical skill. It should be emphasized that, observation as a data collection method ensures that the research questions are answered and makes the provision of the full documents of observation by recording and also making field notes on the place or persons observed (Ruane, 2005). The researcher made use of an observation guide, which relies on the field notes gathered while lessons were underway in the three subjects.

To observe the reactions of students during teaching sessions in the three subject areas (General Knowledge in Art, Graphic Design and Picture Making), the time they come to class, how students respond to questions, sports students performance in class, among other scenario based examples.

#### **3.4.2 Interview Guide**

Interviews were held with the subject teachers in addition to heads of departments. Asking a participant personal information on a particular subject is referred to as an interview. A good interview involves a dialogue which is comfortable, and

conversational in a way (Ruane, 2005). Open-ended questions and inquiry which demands an in-depth response to people's experiences, perceptions, opinions, feelings and knowledge is characteristic of interviews (Lemanski & Overton, 2011). Interview data could consist of direct quotations and enough content to be interpreted. Ruane (2005) argues that interview is the best tool for advancing understanding and acquiring the truth. The types of interviews are: structured, semi-structured or unstructured.

Structured questions was asked to collect answers to important questions regarding the teaching and learning of General Knowledge in Art, Graphic Design and Picture Making from subject teachers through one-on-one interview. It was also necessary that the researcher verified information gathered from the observations. By way of conversation, the interview was conducted to ensure that the respondents were comfortable in participating in the study and their willingness to give out information freely as proposed by Hancock (2002) who mentions that 'qualitative interviews should be fairly informal.' An interview guide was used to guide the manner of the discussions.

### **3.5 Types of Data**

Data collected involved first-hand information from respondents directly and this form of data is considered as Secondary data. These included interviews with respondents (teachers), observations of lessons and performance assessment for the students regarding the teaching and learning of General Knowledge in Art, Graphic Design and Picture Making which are common subjects studied in all four-selected schools in the municipality.

### **3.5.1 Data Collection Process**

An introductory letter was obtained from the Department of Educational Innovations in Science and Technology and this letter was presented to the head teachers of the four schools to introduce the researcher and explain the purpose of the study. Permission was granted by the head teachers and this enabled the researcher to begin the study through observation. The researcher visited the four schools on the agreed dates and times for the scheduled interviews, observation sessions and performance assessments which happened in the approved dates, lasting for a period of 30 minutes in each session. The results of interviews, observation and performance assessment conducted were presented in detail in Chapter Four of this study.

### **3.6 Data Analysis Plan**

Data analysis is the process by which meaning is obtained from collected data. Information obtained from the questionnaires was analysed using descriptive statistics. Interview data was analysed based on thematic analysis of Miles and Huberman (1994) framework where interview transcripts are coded, and then categorized into minor themes and finally grouped into major themes. The emerging themes will be compared with what other researchers are saying on the field.

### **3.7 Ethical Issues**

The required ethical clearance was sought from the Department. Informed consent, voluntarily participation, rights to service and anonymity were used in reporting of the findings of this study. Students names were concealed so that nobody could trace their responses to their names.

### **3.8 Profiles of the Schools**

Three schools were available for the data collection exercise. These schools were Achinakrom Senior High School, Ejisu Senior High School and Ejisuman Senior High School all located within the Ejisu Municipal. Each of the three schools sampled studied visual arts as a course which students have the chance of choosing as a programme of study prior to their admission.

#### **3.8.1 Achinakrom Senior High School**

Achinakroom Senior High School was created out of then Methodist Secondary and Middle School. The then Methodist School benefited from the Educational Reform programme and graduated to Junior Secondary Demolishing School, the first of its kind in the rural to serve the Achinakrom Community and its environs. The School was established in 1990 to absorb the Junior Secondary School graduates for Agriculture, General Arts and Home Economics Programmes. The School was officially opened on 20<sup>th</sup> day of January, 1991 with 67 students. The initial teaching staff of the school was 10 including the Headmaster and 13 non-teaching staff. Initially, the school was housed in a four-classroom block and a four-unit staff quarters which were originally used by the Junior Secondary School and a big multipurpose workshop. The school's vision is 'to seek to sustain and enhance excellent as an institution through outstanding teaching and learning'. It also has a mission which states 'to produce graduate of distinction committed to leading learning for national development'.

In 1991, work was commenced on the construction of six classroom block, a library, and administration block, a Generator shelter and two staff quarters by the Government with the community participation. The project was completed and

commission in November, 1992. As a result of communal spirit of the community, two additional staff quarters were constructed as a morale booster for the community. The school has P.T.A, Board of Governors, S.R.C, and Students Clubs. Currently the total enrolment of the school is 1325 with 65 teaching staff and 60 Non-teaching staff. In 1993, the school presented the first batch of 70 students for the Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination (SSCE).

Since then (1993) the school has gradually grown to its present position with a lot of infrastructural development such as a modern girl's dormitory, a beautiful administration block, a one story 14-unit classroom blocks, a fence wall and a few others. The school has now become an attractive destination for most Junior High School graduates from the catchment areas who hitherto sought admission in urban schools in Kumasi and Ejisu. The enrolment in the school as of the 2017/2018 academic year is 1,375, out of this, the Visual Arts student comprise of 187 students with Mr Adomako as Head of Department for the Visual Arts programme.

### **3.8.2 Ejisuman Senior High School**

Ejisuman Senior High School was established on 13<sup>th</sup> September, 1970 as a Private Sec/ Technical School and was housed at the current Information Services Department at Ejisu/Juaben Municipal Assembly. It became a Public Assisted Secondary School in 1973 with Mr. J.E. Amoah as the first headmaster and moved to its present location at Ejisu Bafoso with a land size of 120 acres donated by Nana Dikopim III Ejisumanhene of blessed memory.

The mission of the school is “to provide effective and efficient delivery of pre-tertiary education relevant to the manpower and social needs of the nation”. The vision is “to be among the best second cycle institutions in the country in preparing

students holistically – intellectually, morally, physically and socially for tertiary education and other field of endeavor”. Indeed, the school started with a student population of 105 with nine teaching staff and two supporting staff. The student population grew to seven hundred and fifty-nine in 2002. It now has a student population of 2,870. The staff strength stands at 110 teaching and seventy-six non-teaching staff.

When the school became a public school in 1973, it dropped the Technical Programme due to lack of technical bias tutor and run three programmes namely, Agriculture Science, Business and General Arts. It is at the moment running five programmes in General Arts, Business, General Science, Visual and Home Economics. The school has chalked a lot of successes in the area of academics and sports. For eight years running it has produced the best students in the Ejisu/Juaben Municipality. It has also churned out many prominent personalities who occupy various positions in society.

### **3.8.3 Ejisu Technical Senior High School**

The Omanhene of Ejisu, Nana Akwasi Afrane II established the school as a middle school in 1950 in Ejisu Traditional Area. It was turned into a model school from 1970 to 1987 with emphasis on teaching and learning of Agriculture Science specifically Animal Husbandry. The school then became a Junior Secondary School in 1987 and was later on upgraded into a Senior Secondary School in 1991, offering courses such as Agricultural Science, Home Economics, Visual Arts and Technical programmes. As time went on, three courses were added, namely General Arts, Business and General Science.

The first Headmistress of the school was Mrs. Cedrina Ayesu-Offei and served from 1991 to 1997. She was followed by Mr. E. E. Penni who served from 1997 to October 2011. Mr. E.E Penni was succeeded by Mr. R.E.C. Amoah from 2011 to October 2012. The Late Mrs. Ernestina Nyame-Kwarteng took over from Mr. R. E. C. Amoah and worked until March 2015. The baton of leadership of the school is now in the hands of Mr. Obeng-Antwi Boateng. The motto of the school is “Hard Work for Success”.

The vision of the school are as follows: to achieve academic excellence, to inculcate into the student’s good characters, to make students functional in the societies after completing school. The mission of the school is to abiding by the principles of discipline, dedication and hard work. The school has both made provision for day and boarding students with boarding facilities allocated for only boys. As such, there is no boarding facility for the girls presently.

## CHAPTER FOUR

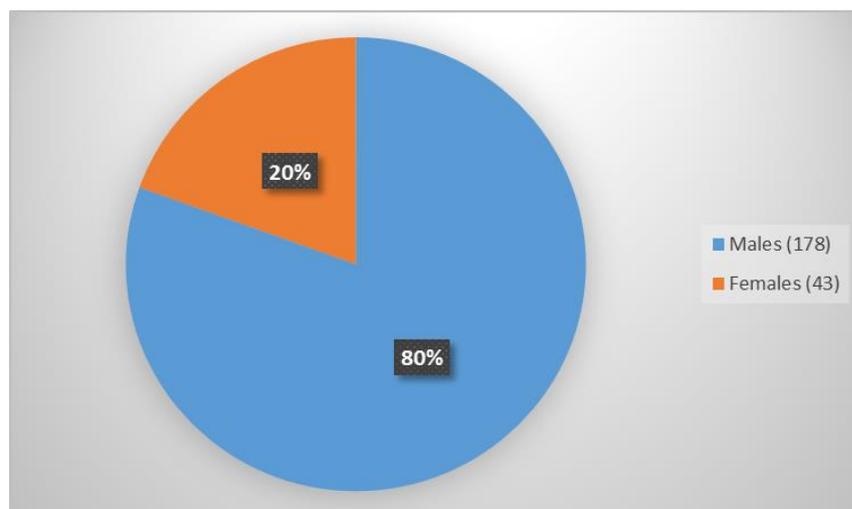
### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### 4.0 Overview

The chapter focuses on the results and discussion of the study which sought to find out the factors affecting low academic performance of visual art students in selected Senior High Schools in the Ejisu Municipality, Ashanti Region, Ghana. The results are based on the objectives set forth in Chapter One of this study. Essentially, the objectives were as follows: To find out and examine the causes of low academic performance of Visual Arts Students in the Ejisu Municipality at the Senior High School level. To find out the effects of low academic performance and its influence on Visual Art students in the Ejisu Municipality.

#### 4.1 Characteristics of the Respondents

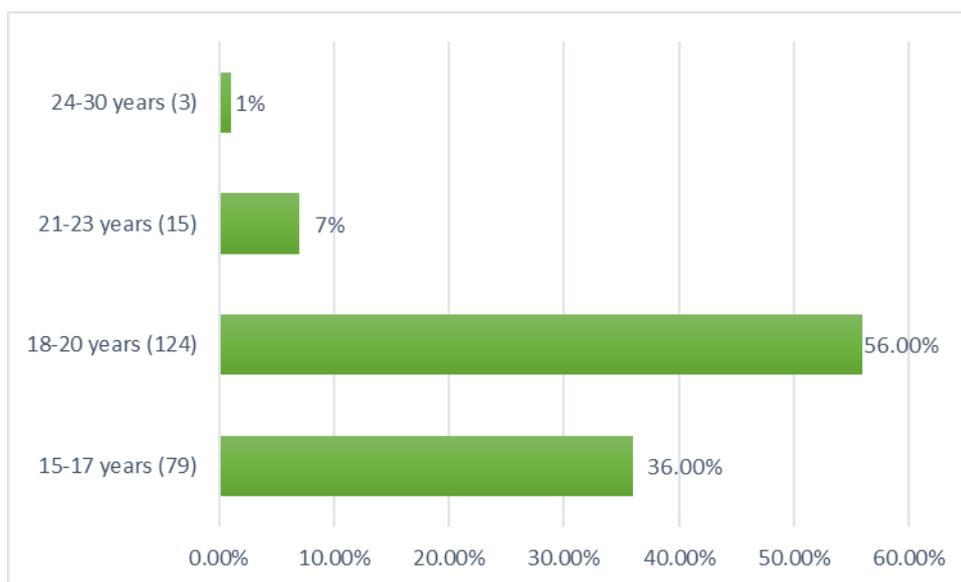
The study analyzed the demographic characteristics of respondents in relation to their gender and age distribution of respondents. The study sampled 221 respondents.



**Figure 4.1 Gender Distribution of Respondents**

Source: Field Data Analysis, 2019

Distribution of respondents by gender showed that 178 respondents representing 80.5% were males and 43 respondents representing 19.5% were females. This showed males the visual arts course it totally dominated by males. This finding gives credence to the assertion by Morduch (2017) that males are more artistically oriented in terms of creativity in the fine arts than females.



**Figure 4.2 Age Distribution of Respondents**

Source: Field Data Analysis, 2019

Age distribution of respondents showed that 79 representing 35.7% of the sample were in the age brackets 15-17 years, 124 representing 56.1% were also between the ages of 18-20 years, 15 representing 6.8% ranged 21-23 years, and only 3 representing 0.9% falls below 24-30 years. The wide variance in age ranges showed that the study was able to sample respondents across the various age ranges of visual arts students in the senior high level.

Overall, the analysis of demographic profiles of participants showed that sampling procedures adopted provided the study with a representative and diverse study sample size capable of providing authentic and credible responses.

#### **4.2 Examine the causes of low academic performance of Visual Arts Students in the Ejisu Municipality at the Senior High School level.**

Research question one sought to examine the causes of low academic performance of Visual Arts Students in the Ejisu Municipality at the Senior High School level. To do this, the study conducted mean and standard deviation analysis to show the trend of responses. Weights have been allocated to the responses ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree (1= Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Unsure, 4=Agree, 5= Strongly Agree). A mean figure below .3000 was considered to be skewed towards majority disagreement whilst that over .3000 was considered to be skewed towards majority agreement.

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
1. Poverty	221	3.9276	1.35318	.09102
2. Poor health	221	3.8914	1.39706	.09398
3. Poor teaching methods	221	3.9276	1.34307	.09034
4. Indiscipline	221	4.0633	1.28118	.08618
5. Lack of proper teaching materials	221	3.9955	1.32287	.08899
6. Poor evaluation methods / instruments	221	3.9774	1.37987	.09282
7. Inadequately trained teachers	221	3.8145	1.48843	.10012
8. Broken homes	221	3.9638	1.35128	.09090
9. Changing of teachers incessantly	221	3.8959	1.41840	.09541
10. Hyperactivity in students	221	3.9729	1.35485	.09114
11. Truancy	221	3.9457	1.37403	.09243
12. Poor approach to learning	221	3.8688	1.42254	.09569

**Table 4.1 Causes of Low Academic Performance of Visual Arts Students in the Ejisu Municipality**

Source: Field Data Analysis, 2019

As shown on table 4.1, the study sought responses on 12 possible causes of low academic performance of visual arts students on Ejisu Municipality and for all 12 items, mean values were higher than 3.5, indicating that majority of respondents agreed that each of the 12 items were credible causes of low academic performance. The study therefore conclude that Poverty (mean=3.9276, SD=1.35318), Poor health (mean=3.8914, SD=1.39706), Poor teaching methods (mean=3.9276, SD=1.34307), Indiscipline (mean=4.0633, SD=1.28118), Lack of proper teaching materials (mean=3.9955, SD=1.32287), Poor evaluation methods / instruments (mean=3.9774, SD=1.37987), Inadequately trained teachers (mean=3.8145, SD=1.48843), Broken homes (mean=3.9638, SD=1.35128), Changing of teachers incessantly (mean=3.8959, SD=1.41840), Hyperactivity in students (mean=3.9729,

SD=1.35485), Truancy (mean=3.9457, SD=1.37403) and Poor approach to learning (mean=3.8688, SD=1.42254).

To this end, the study showed that the causes of low academic performance of visual arts students in the Ejisu municipality are myriad, with each one contributing significantly to the low performance. Although reasons found have been divergent, the plentiful nature of the causes of low academic performance has not been in doubt across several studies. In a study conducted by Ahmed & Wias (2012) to examine the reasons for the low level of academic achievement among high school students from teachers and students perspective; the study showed these reasons, including the large number of distractions around the student like the spread of mobile phone, means fun, low motivation of students towards learning and the weakness of the attention of parents to follow up the level of their children. The study recommended minimizing the distractions of attention, to concentrate on motivation, to strengthen the work of students in science subjects by giving them more courses and to provide them with modern teaching methods that are in line with the tremendous scientific advances.

Similarly, Tamimi (2012) conducted a study that sought to determine the reasons for the low level of academic achievement of visual arts students in mathematics at Tulkarem schools, using a quantitative research design in combination with a descriptive approach, and questionnaires as data collection instruments. The study found the causes for the low level of academic achievement in mathematics of visual arts students at Tulkarem schools to be due mainly to: a. Health problems affect student achievement in Math b. Behavioral problems affect the achievement of students in mathematics performance. c. Lack of self-desire to study may lead to students low academic achievement in mathematics level. d. Lack of a sense of

belonging to the school can cause a sense of unconcerned to the study. e. Teachers' lack the required knowledge of modern educational and psychological theories can lead to students' poor academic performance.

### **4.3 Find out the effects of low academic performance and its influence on Visual Arts students in the Ejisu Municipality.**

Research objective three sought to examine the effects of low academic performance and its influence on visual arts students in the Ejisu municipality. The study conducted impact analysis of effects of academic performance on level of performance of visual arts students. Multiple linear regression analysis was conducted. The study regressed 'selected variables on effects of academic performance (as independent variables) on overall level of visual arts students' academic performance' as dependent variable. Figure 4.1 contains the resulting regression output.

#### **Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.790 <sup>a</sup>	.624	.617	.83794

- a. Predictors: (Constant), Low standard of living is one of the effects of poor academic performance., Engaging in examination malpractice is one of the effects of poor academic performance. , A low level of thinking on the part of the student is one of the effects of poor academic performance., Low rate of research making / activity is one of the effects of poor academic performance.

**ANOVA<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	250.725	4	62.681	89.271	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	150.961	215	.702		
	Total	401.686	219			

a. Dependent Variable: Overall Academic Performance of Students

b. Predictors: (Constant), Low standard of living is one of the effects of poor academic performance., Engaging in examination malpractice is one of the effects of poor academic performance. , A low level of thinking on the part of the student is one of the effects of poor academic performance. Low rate of research making / activity is one of the effects of poor academic performance.

**Coefficients**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	.559	.189		2.960	.003
1 Engaging in examination malpractice is one of the effects of poor academic performance.	.122	.090	.120	1.364	.174
1 A low level of thinking on the part of the student is one of the effects of poor academic performance.	.600	.144	.579	4.163	.000
1 Low rate of research making / activity is one of the effects of poor academic performance.	.138	.152	.135	.907	.365
1 Low standard of living is one of the effects of poor academic performance.	-.025	.122	-.024	-.204	.838

a. Dependent Variable: Overall Academic Performance of Students

The model summary table represents the regression model summary which can be used to determine how well the regression model fits the data. The study showed that the adjusted  $R^2$  of our model is .617 with the  $R^2 = 624$ . This means that 62.4% of the variation in level of academic performance are explained by the independent variables. The remaining 37.6% can be explained by other factors that are not in the model.

The  $F$ -ratio in the ANOVA table tests whether the overall regression model is a good fit for the data. The table shows that the independent variables statistically significantly predict the dependent variable,  $F(4, 215) = 89.271, p < .0000$  (i.e., the regression model is a good fit of the data).

The unstandardized coefficients indicate how much the dependent variable varies with the independent variables when all other independent variables are held constant. The unstandardized coefficient,  $B_3$ , for low level of thinking on the part of the student is equal to 600. This means that for every 1-unit improvement in level of thinking on the part of the student, there is an increase in level of academic performance of 600. Hence, the higher the quality of thought visual arts students' exhibit, the higher they perform academically.

According to Ahmed & Wias (2012), this quality of thought could be found in visual arts students giving greater thoughts to their actions and inactions and how these affect their academic work. When students do not put into consideration the effects. This findings backs some previous studies on the topic. In a study that sought to know the factors accounting for the weaknesses in the performance of visual arts students, Tamimi (2012) sampled both Secondary and secondary data in a panel data

that spanned 24 years and found that, stigmatization and low mental perceptions about themselves (visual art students) also accounted significantly to the low level of performance.

#### **4.4 Analysis of Interview Guide**

The study collected data from 12 subject teachers and 4 heads of departments. From the interview sessions, the study taken was transcribed verbatim and categorized into general as well as specific themes, conceptual patterns and inferences. The key findings are presented and discussed as follows.

##### **4.5.1 Causes of Low Academic Performance of Visual Arts Students in the Ejisu Municipality at the Senior High School Level.**

In response to the question on causes of low academic performance of visual arts students in senior high schools in the Ejisu Municipality, the responses gathered from the interviewed staff respondents indicated that majority of them agreed to 6 thematic factors being the Secondary or main causes of low academic performance. Although different respondents stated these factors in different ways, the general understanding showed that poor teacher attitude towards attending classes, lack of necessary teaching and learning materials, lack of infrastructure for the Visual Arts Programme, ineffective teaching strategies adopted by teachers, low teacher competence and lack of student interest in the visual arts course were the main factors responsible for low academic performance of visual arts students in the Ejisu Municipality at the senior high school level.

Regarding perceived poor teacher attitude towards attending classes,

One head of department asserted that:

*Most teachers, especially teachers who don't teach the elective visual arts subjects hold the perception that visual arts students are not that bright so no matter how well they teach them, they would not get it or excel as students in other courses. This makes them portray lackadaisical attitudes towards instructional periods with visual arts classes.*

Another head of department commented that:

*You see, there is a general perception that visual arts students are not serious. You see, most of our athletes in the school are in the visual arts class and these student athletes don't even come to class. So when a teacher comes to class once or twice and finds only a few students in the class, the teacher tends to blacklist the class as not being serious and this affects his (the teacher's) motivation to attend that class.*

A visual arts teacher noted that:

*Maybe it is true that some visual arts students often absent themselves from class. But that is not the fault of all the students. A teacher's job is to teach. So irrespective of the number of students you find in a class, you have to teach them as energetically as you would teach a full class. To me, teacher attitude towards attending visual arts classes is poor because some teachers have poor attitudes towards their jobs and that must stop. When some visual arts students are not in class, maybe they are doing their practical work in sheds provided for them. Maybe the sports master has occupied them on the school field. It is the responsibility of the subject teacher to find out where the class or sections of the class have gone so as to take appropriate action. He goes there once and finds the class half-filled and hence adopts a*

*lackadaisical attitude towards the class, then the teacher is not doing his job properly.*

Like the 3 quoted responses, all the responses from the other respondents seemed to tow the above point of view, either blaming negative perceptions of teachers or poor attitudes of students of the visual arts course for the poor attitudes of teachers in attending classes.

Although the common notion of lack of necessary teaching and learning materials was shared by almost all the interviewed staff, the types of teaching and learning materials proposed differed from sections of respondent to sections of respondents.

One subject teacher lamented that

*Schools should have adequate teaching and learning materials for all courses, especially practical courses like visual arts and home economics. With the visual arts, in our school for instance, they don't even have a painting studio, they do carving under trees and disturb other classes. You see other teachers going to warn them to keep the noise down. All this is disheartening and demotivating. If students have to go through such inconveniences to learn a course or a skill, how can they learn it joyfully and excel in it. So government, through the Ghana Education Service, needs to provide adequate teaching and learning materials.*

A head of department opined:

*Some of the students do not have the financial capacity to afford the materials that they need to execute the course they have undertaken. The government says they*

*would bring the materials and they don't bring them, the teacher too cannot, on his own, provide all the teaching and learning materials, so it's a problem. That is one of the causes of low academic performance. If you don't have the necessary tools and materials, how can you partake in any serious academic endeavour, such as the practical work?*

Regarding the other factors mentioned as causes, the study showed that responses were generally common on the lack of infrastructure for the visual arts programme, with almost all respondents lamenting the lack of studios for painting and other works, the lack of workshops for sculpture practical and the lack of school-owned materials for practical works in the various visual arts subjects.

Regarding the factor of ineffective teaching strategies adopted by teachers, responses were unanimous to the fact that, *because visual artist are practical-oriented, the lecture method of teaching other subjects to them are often incompatible to their artistic, practice loving nature. This scenario therefore required teachers to be innovative in finding ways of inciting their senses with new and innovative teaching styles that would raise their interest and concentrate their minds on what is being taught.*

In view of this, teachers would need to find measures to improve their competence in dealing with the challenge of teaching artistically-gifted students in the visual arts programme to excel at other subjects besides their elective art subjects. Respondents were unanimous that when this is done, student interest in the visual arts course

would spike and perceptions about the course and the type of individuals in the course would improve significantly. To this, a head of department opined that:

*If students are disinterested in the course and are exhibiting low academic performance, it is due to what we have said and done with students in the course over the years. It is up to us to change and improve.*

#### **4.5.2 Explore the Effects of Low Academic Performance and its Influence on Visual Arts Students in the Ejisu Municipality.**

In response to the question on the effects of low academic performance and its influence on Visual Art students in the Ejisu Municipality, responses were quite similar. Responses obtained were generally based on three themes: lack of student interest in the course as a result of low academic performance, low teacher motivation and poor perception about the visual arts course amongst potential visual arts students.

One head of department asserted that:

*In spite of the high level of academic performance students of the visual arts programme exhibit in their elective subjects, they are not able to replicate such strong performance in the core subjects and that affects their ability to progress to tertiary institutions because passes in core subjects are a critical requirement. The onus lies on teachers and all stakeholders to find appropriate measures to solve this problem.*

One subject teacher posited that:

*The cancer of poor student performance amongst visual arts students can really be blamed on teachers, especially non-art teachers who continually castigate the visual students and make them feel less than students in the sciences and other fields. I have personally witnessed how some teacher treat visual students and their perception about the course and it makes me sad. Ghanaians, we don't like the fine arts, the practical courses. We look down on them. This is the reason why the students also show low interest in the course. And it affects teacher motivation too. Which leads to teachers not showing enthusiasm in helping Visual Arts students excel in the non-art course.*

Another head of department commented that:

*The Visual Arts course is a fine course that equips students with fine skills for self-employment. The poor perception that has come to be associated with the course has been due to the nation's neglect of the arts in preference for the sciences. This is wrong. We should devote equal attention to both. The nation needs people with skills to set up enterprises to employ others. We need to work together to encourage potential students to go into the visual art programme so make it lively and strong again.*

#### **4.5.3 Conclusion**

This chapter focused on the analysis of responses obtained from both questionnaire and interview guides that were used to collate data. The findings showed that the causes of low academic performance amongst students of visual arts in the Ejisu municipality was primarily grouped to six factors: poor teacher attitude towards

attending classes, lack of necessary teaching and learning materials, lack of infrastructure for the visual arts programme, ineffective teaching strategies adopted by teachers, low teacher competence and lack of student interest in the visual arts course. The study also showed that the effects of low academic performance and its influence on Visual Art students in the Ejisu Municipality was exhibited in lack of student interest in the course, low teacher motivation and poor perception of potential students about the visual arts course.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

#### 5.0 Overview

The final chapter for the study focuses on the summary, conclusions and recommendations in order to answer the research questions put forth in the first chapter of the study. Primarily, this study was undertaken to ascertain the factors that result in a low academic performance of visual art students in selected Senior High Schools within the Ejisu Municipality of the Ashanti Region.

#### 5.1 Summary of Findings

The general objective of the study was to examine factors affecting low academic performance of visual art students in selected senior high schools in the Ejisu municipality, Ashanti region, Ghana. This section summarizes the findings of the study.

Research objective one sought to examine the causes of low academic performance of Visual Arts Students in the Ejisu Municipality at the Senior High School level. , the study showed that Poverty (mean=3.9276, SD=1.35318), Poor health (mean=3.8914, SD=1.39706), Poor teaching methods (mean=3.9276, SD=1.34307), Indiscipline (mean=4.0633, SD=1.28118), Lack of proper teaching materials (mean=3.9955, SD=1.32287), Poor evaluation methods / instruments (mean=3.9774, SD=1.37987), Inadequately trained teachers (mean=3.8145, SD=1.48843), Broken homes (mean=3.9638, SD=1.35128), Changing of teachers incessantly (mean=3.8959, SD=1.41840), Hyperactivity in students (mean=3.9729, SD=1.35485), Truancy (mean=3.9457, SD=1.37403) and Poor approach to learning

(mean=3.8688, SD=1.42254) were the main causes of low academic performance amongst visual arts students of the Ejisu municipality in the Ashanti region.

Research objective three sought to examine the effects of low academic performance and its influence on visual arts students in the Ejisu municipality. The study showed that the unstandardized coefficient,  $B_3$ , for low level of thinking on the part of the student is equal to 600. This means that for every 1-unit improvement in level of thinking on the part of the student, there is an increase in level of academic performance of 600. Hence, the higher the quality of thought visual arts students' exhibit, the higher they perform academically.

## **5.2 Conclusion**

The study concludes that, Visual Art students in the Senior High school are limited when it comes to infrastructure for academic work. They do not have enough space for their practical assignments and working tables as well, which makes them work outside the studio when the assignment is given to them. There are inadequate tools and materials to aid in the practical activities at the SHS level. The students love to hold an exhibition in the school to appreciate what they can do as artists but they do not get such opportunities.

Further, the pedagogical strategies used by their teachers are obsolete and are not updated with current trends in art practice. The teachers also accuse students of not being serious enough and use it as an excuse in absencing themselves from classes. They do not show any positive attitude towards the enrollment of students in the Visual Arts programme because of the notion that Visual Art students are not

serious, especially the core subject teachers and some of the teachers also do not report to class on time.

The study also revealed that, while some students work on their practical assignments in order to acquire the skills and knowledge to better their future, some of the students rather pay people to get their work done because they do not really understand what the teachers teach them and also they do not have the tool and materials to work with in order to produce a successful work so they will rather pay for people for a good work to be done for them to get their marks.

### **5.3 Recommendation**

1. The study recommends that, the authorities should see to it that the Visual Art students are provided with the adequate infrastructure and tools which will help the students to excel academically.
2. Furthermore, there should be enough textbooks for the students and also, they should make sure an exhibition is organized for the students once every two months, which will make people know what they can do and also will prepare them for a better future.
3. The heads of the schools should see to it that the teachers' report to class on time and also make sure those teachers take the class seriously.
4. The Ghana Education Service, through the district and regional directors of education should organize lectures and seminars for teachers to re-orient their perceptions on not just the visual arts but on other practical programmes such as Home Economics and Technical programmes that are often looked down upon. Teachers should also be re-trained on new ways of teaching technically gifted students such as those in the visual arts.

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## APPENDIX 1: LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

### DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL INNOVATIONS IN SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

FACULTY OF ART, COLLEGE OF ART & BUILT ENVIRONMENT  
KWAME NKRUMAH UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Tel: (233) 03223-98218



University Post Office  
Kumasi – Ghana  
West African  
E-mail:  
[generalart.cass@knust.edu.gh](mailto:generalart.cass@knust.edu.gh):  
[Headgeneralart.cass@knust.edu](mailto:Headgeneralart.cass@knust.edu)

Ref: GAS/S/3

Date: 11<sup>th</sup> December, 2017

Ejisu Municipal Education Office  
Ghana Education Service  
Ejisu

Dear Madam,

#### LETTER OF INTRODUCTION – SETH KWAKU NTI

Mr. Seth Kwaku Nti is an MPhil Art Education student in the above Department of KNUST with a student number PG 5638016.

He is conducting a research on "*Factors affecting Academic Performance of Visual Art Students in selected Senior High Schools in the Ejisu Municipality*".

I would be very grateful if you could provide him with any information he may need.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. Osei-Poku'. The signature is fluid and cursive.

Dr. Patrick Osei-Poku  
HEAD OF DEPARTMENT

**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL INNOVATIONS  
IN SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**  
FACULTY OF ART, COLLEGE OF ART & BUILT ENVIRONMENT  
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Tel: (233) 03223-98218



University Post Office  
Kumasi – Ghana  
West African  
E-mail:  
[generalart.cass@knust.edu.gh](mailto:generalart.cass@knust.edu.gh):  
[Headgeneralart.cass@knust.edu](mailto:Headgeneralart.cass@knust.edu)

Ref: GAS/S/3

Date: 28<sup>th</sup> August, 2017

Headmistress  
Achinakrom Senior High School  
Achinakrom - Ashanti Region

Dear Madam,

**LETTER OF INTRODUCTION – SETH KWAKU NTI**

Mr. Seth Kwaku Nti is an MPhil Art Education student in the above Department of KNUST with a student number PG 5638016.

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Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'POPAK', written in a cursive style.

Dr. Patrick Osei-Poku  
**HEAD OF DEPARTMENT**

**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL INNOVATIONS  
IN SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

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University Post Office  
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[generalart.cass@knust.edu.gh](mailto:generalart.cass@knust.edu.gh):  
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Ref: GAS/S/3

Date: 28<sup>th</sup> August, 2017

Headmistress  
Ejisu Senior High Technical School  
Ejisu

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Dr. Patrick Osei-Poku  
**HEAD OF DEPARTMENT**

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Yours faithfully,

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Dr. Patrick Osei-Poku  
**HEAD OF DEPARTMENT**

APPENDIX 2: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR VISUAL ART STUDENTS

KWAME NKUMAH UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY  
 COLLEGE OF ART AND BUILT ENVIRONMENT  
 DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL INNOVATIONS IN SCIENCE AND  
 TECHNOLOGY

**QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENTS OFFERING VISUAL ARTS  
 IN SHS IN THE EJISU MUNICIPALITY**

This questionnaire seeks to find out the Factors Affecting the Low Academic Performance of Visual Arts students in the Ejisu Municipality. Please you are kindly requested to respond to the following questions. All information provided will be treated as confidential.

Thank you very much.

**SECTION A**

1. Name of School: .....
2. Gender: Male [ ] Female [ ] 3. Age: 15-17 [ ], 18-20 [ ], 21-23 [ ], 24-30 [ ]
4. How many streams of Visual Arts classes do you have? 1 [ ], 2 [ ], 3 [ ] and 4 [ ]
5. Please provide your elective subjects in Visual Arts  
 .....  
 .....

**SECTION B**

**Questions Relating Research Objectives 1 and 2.**

Please indicate your agreement or disagreement to the following statements.

Please tick ONLY ONE answer. Please use the following key:

(Key: 1= Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Unsure, 4=Agree, 5= Strongly Agree)

	1	2	3	4	5
7. Difficulty in sourcing short-term finance / credit is a financial challenges afflicting downstream oil and gas companies.	1	2	3	4	5

8. Difficulty in sourcing long-term finance / credit is a financial challenges afflicting downstream oil and gas companies.					
9. Limited financial capacity of owners is a financial challenges afflicting downstream oil and gas companies.	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
10. Huge initial capital outlay is a financial challenges afflicting downstream oil and gas companies.	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
11. Lack of availability of sufficient resources to meet long-term investment needs is a financial challenges afflicting downstream oil and gas companies.	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
12. Large state fees and taxes is a financial challenges afflicting downstream oil and gas companies.	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>

Kindly tick the correct response for the following statements.

	<b>Strongly disagree 1</b>	<b>Disagree 2</b>	<b>Neutral 3</b>	<b>Agree 4</b>	<b>Strongly Agree 5</b>
1. There is a positive attitude on the part of teachers towards enrolment of students in Visual Arts programmes.					
2. There are art studios for various Visual Arts subjects in your school.					
3. There is an art exhibition room.					
4. Visual Arts classes have different streams.					
5. Teachers use a variety of teaching strategies.					
6. Practical works are done by students.					
7. Teachers report to class early within their contact hours.					
8. Teachers have mastery in the subject they teach.					
9. Students have textbooks for each Visual Arts subject.					
10. School has adequate infrastructure for academic work.					
11. There is continuity in the subjects taught at JHS and those offered in the school for Visual Arts students.					
12. Admission requirements (i.e. grades obtained in BECE) are low for fresh students.					
13. Students who perform well are given scholarships.					

**APPENDIX 3: INTERVIEW GUIDE**

**KWAME NKRUMAH UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY  
COLLEGE OF ART AND BUILT ENVIRONMENT  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL INNOVATIONS IN SCIENCE AND  
TECHNOLOGY**

**INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR TUTORS TEACHING VISUAL ARTS RELATED  
SUBJECTS IN SHS IN THE EJISU MUNIIPALITY**

Dear Sir/Madam,

This interview guide seeks to find out the ‘Factors Affecting the Low Academic Performance of Visual Arts Students in the Ejisu Municipality’. Please you are kindly requested to respond to the following questions. All information provided will be treated as confidential.

Thank you very much.

Seth K. Nti  
MPhil Candidate in Art Education, KNUST

Below are the questions:

1. What are the causes of low academic performance of visual arts students in the ejisu municipality at the senior high school level?

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