

A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF PUBLIC AND PRIVATE JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOLS IN THE BASIC EDUCATION CERTIFICATE IN SEKONDI/TAKORADI

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ABSTRACT

Educational policies made in Ghana have always had quality as their hallmark. Even though quality has been the main aims of many reforms and policies, the desired quality has not yet been achieved. In this study, an attempt was made to establish the many reasons why private basic schools were doing considerably better than public schools. The descriptive research design was used in this study. Questionnaire was the main tool used for the research. Convenience sampling technique was used in selecting the sample. In all, 70 respondents were chosen for the research. This consisted of all 10 head teachers of the 10 schools, 3 teachers from each school brought the total teachers to 30. In the case of the students 3 pupils were chosen by the researcher from each school. In all 30 students were chosen for the study. Data was analyzed using frequencies, percentages, independent sample t-test and one-way ANOVA. Results of the study revealed that private schools were better resourced, had parents of pupils whose socioeconomic status was higher and were more involved in their children's education. Public schools had more professionally qualified teachers than the private schools. Also teachers should improvise the teaching and learning resources which were not available in the schools to enhance the quality of education in both private and public basic schools in the country

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

According to Nelson Mandela "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world. "Education in its general sense is a form of learning in which the knowledge, skills, and habits of a group of people are transferred from one generation to the next through teaching, training or research.

We have two types of education in the world which is formal and informal education, formal education includes Curriculum, Preschools, Primary schools, Secondary schools, Alternative education also known as Non-traditional education, special education and vocational education and informal education includes Auto didacticism, Indigenous and Education through recreation. In this study our attention will be focused on Junior Secondary school which is now known as Junior High school in Ghana.

In Ghana, Ghanaian children begin their education at the age of three or four starting from nursery school to kindergarten, then elementary school (Primary school), high school (Junior High School and Senior High School) and finally university. The average age at which a Ghanaian child enters primary school is 6 years. Ghana has a 6-year primary school education system beginning at age six, and they pass on to a 3-year Junior High School system. At the end of the third year of Junior High, there is a mandatory "Basic Education Certificate Examination". Those continuing must complete the 4 -year Senior High school program (which has been changed to three years) and take an admission exam to enter any

university or tertiary programme. The Ghanaian education system from nursery school up to an undergraduate degree level takes 20 years.

In Ghana, we have a total of 5955 Junior High Schools (JHS) comprising of 1589 private and 4366 public schools. Junior High School starts right after Primary 6, it has a different name as compared to other countries, and some countries call this stage either Junior High School or middle school. In America this stage starts in Grade 6 but in Ghana it starts when you are in Grade 7. The table below will help in understanding how this works;

Table 1

| High School | Junior High School |
|-----------------------|--------------------|
| 7 th Grade | JHS 1 |
| 8 th Grade | JHS 2 |
| 9 th Grade | JHS 3 |

Source: *Wikipedia.org (2014)*

The Junior High School is the entry stage for a comprehensive Senior High School training in vocational, technical, agricultural and general education. A good performance at this level must therefore be seen as the preparatory stage of education and the determining entry point into further levels of education in Ghana. Such performance is measured through externally supervised examinations conducted by the West African Examinations Council on behalf of the Ghana Education Service called the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE). Selection and placement of pupils to Senior High Schools and Technical/Vocational Institutes are based on pupils' performance at the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE). Results from the Basic Education Certificate Examinations (BECE) are the yardstick for the measurement of quality education at the basic level by many parents in Ghana. Poor performance in this area therefore becomes a great source of worry to majority of Ghanaians.

Most Junior High Schools are privately owned and are said they are the best way to earn a BECE certificate. Junior High Schools run by the government lack many educational facilities that enable students to understand what they are being taught in the classroom and as a result of this, most public schools do not write French and I.C.T in the examination. Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolitan Assembly is one of the Twenty-two (22) Districts in the Western Region. The Metro is bounded to the North by Mpohor-WassaEast, to the South by the Gulf of Guinea, West by Ahanta West District and to the East by Shama District. It has a total land area of 219km², with Sekondi as the administrative headquarters. The metropolis is located on the west coast; about 280km west of Accra and 130km east of La Cote D`voire. It is thus strategically located considering its closeness to the sea and the airports and accessibility to major cities by rail and road.

Statement of the problem

Academic performance of students in the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) has received much attention of late in the Ghanaian educational system. At the beginning of every academic year when BECE results are released, educational stakeholders raise a lot of concerns about the falling performance of students. In Ghana, public Junior High Schools are three times the size and also have the highest number of student than the private Junior High Schools. Currently more private Junior High Schools are emerging and are performing better in the Basic Education Certificate Examination and most of the parents are taking their wards from public JHS to private JHS on the basis that private JHS provide quality education, have

good supervision, high parental commitment, motivation and good methodology leading to the commitment of kids in their education than public JHS.

Objectives of the study

- i. To examine the academic performance of student`s by comparing the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) of some selected public and private Junior High Schools.
- ii. To investigate the factors accounting for the student`s performance in the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) in Junior High Schools.
- iii. To find ways to improve the academic performance in Junior High Schools.

Research hypothesis

- i. H_0 : The academic performance of student`s across the various schools do not differ.
 H_1 : The academic performance of student`s across the various schools differ.
- ii. H_0 : Parent socio-economic status does not significantly affect student`s academic performance in the B.E.C.E.
 H_1 : Parent socio-economic status does significantly affect student`s academic performance in the B.E.C.E.

METHODOLOGY

At this point we will consider the research design which will be used in collecting useful data for the research, the sample population as well as the sampling technique. It also focuses on the instrument used for data collection, data collection procedure and finally procedure for data analysis.

Collection of data

The target population consisted of head teachers, teachers and students in Junior High Schools in the Sekondi-Takoradi metropolis in the Western Region. Convenience sampling technique was used and total samples of 10 schools was drawn from the study area for this research consisting of 4 private schools and 6 public schools, this is because the public schools are more than the private schools in the population. In all, 70 respondents were chosen for the research. This consisted of all 10 head teachers of the 10 schools, 3 teachers from each school that brought the total of teachers to 30. In the case of the students 3 pupils were chosen by the researcher from each school. In all 30 students were chosen for the study. The instruments used for this research were questionnaires. The questionnaires contained items on a Likert-type scale tables, all the questions were closed-ended with the exception of one which was open-ended. Questionnaire for headteachers contained 42 items which were put under seven sections lettered A-F. The questionnaire for the teachers contained 44 questions which were put under seven sections lettered A-F. On the other hand, questionnaires for students contained 49 items which were put under seven sections lettered A-F as well.

To enhance a high return rate, personal contact was made by the researcher in the collection of data. It was stipulated that pre-arrangement should be made with respondents so that there would be precision in the information given. Also document on B.E.C.E results on 2013 was

obtained from Ghana Education Service which will be used to compare academic performance of students in Junior High Schools.

Analysis of data provided the researcher with facts and figures that enabled researcher to interpret results and make statements about the findings of the study. The analysis of the data gathered from this research was in two parts. The first part, which is the preliminary analysis made use of descriptive research design which mainly informs the researcher as to the characteristics a population may have and how regular certain events may occur. The further analysis made use of both inferential and further analysis statistics tool such as independent sample t-test and analysis of variance (ANOVA), which was used to find out whether the academic performance of student`s across the various schools differ and parent socio-economic status does significantly affect student`s academic performance in the B.E.C.E respectively. Also, a combination of statistical software (SPSS version 16 and Microsoft Excel) was used during data processing.

Table 2: Distribution of respondents

| School | Headteachers | Teachers | Students |
|-------------|--------------|----------|----------|
| Private JHS | 4 | 12 | 12 |
| Public JHS | 6 | 18 | 18 |
| Total | 10 | 30 | 30 |

Review of theory of statistical method

One way ANOVA

This is similar to t- test but it is used when we have two or more groups and we wish to compare their mean score on a continuous variable. It is called one way because we are looking at the impact of only one independent variable (academic performance) on your dependent variable (parents` socio-economic status).

Partitioning the total sum of squares

The one- way analysis of variance is based on the idea that the yield, x_{ij} , can be partitioned as follows: $x_{ij} = \mu + (\mu_j - \mu_i) + (x_{ij} - \mu_j)$,

Where μ is the overall mean: $(\mu_j - \mu_i)$ is the effect due to treatment j and $(x_{ij} - \mu_j)$ is the random error within treatment groups. By replacing the parameters μ and μ_j by their corresponding sample estimates, it can be shown, after some algebraic manipulations, that

$$\sum_{i=1}^n \sum_{j=1}^t (x_{ij} - \bar{x}_{..})^2 = \sum_{j=1}^t n_j (\bar{x}_{.j} - \bar{x}_{..})^2 + \sum_{i=1}^n \sum_{j=1}^t (x_{ij} - \bar{x}_{.j})^2$$

In equation

$$\sum_{i=1}^{n_j} \sum_{j=1}^t (x_{ij} - \bar{x}_{.j})^2$$

This is called the total sum of square (SS_T)

$$\sum_{j=1}^t n_j (\bar{x}_{.j} - \bar{x}_{..})^2$$

Treatment sum of squares (SS_{Tr})

$$\sum_{i=1}^{nj} \sum_{j=1}^t (x_{ij} - \bar{x}_{.j})^2$$

Error sum of square (SS_E)

The equation can be written as $SS_T = SS_{Tr} + SS_E$

In one-way analysis of variance we want to test the hypothesis

$H_0: \mu_1 = \mu_2 = \dots = \mu_k$ (Treatment means are equal)

$H_1: \mu_i \neq \mu_j$ for i and j (At least one treatment mean is different from the rest)

The test statistic is $F = \frac{\frac{SS_{TE}}{(t-1)}}{\frac{SS_E}{(n-t)}}$

Computing formulae

$$SS_T = \sum_{i=1}^{nj} \sum_{j=1}^t x_{ij}^2 - \frac{T_{..}^2}{n}$$

$$SS_{Tr} = \sum_{j=1}^t \frac{T_j^2}{n_j} - \frac{T_{..}^2}{n}$$

$$SS_E = SS_T - SS_{Tr}$$

One –Way ANOVA Table

| Source | d.f | SS | MS | F |
|-----------|-------|-----------|-------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Treatment | t-1 | SS_{Tr} | $\frac{SS_{Tr}}{(t-1)}$ | $\frac{SS_{Tr}/(t-1)}{SS_E/(n-1)}$ |
| Error | (n-t) | SS_E | $\frac{SS_E}{(n-t)}$ | |

Analysis and findings

At this stage the concern is the data collected from the field. The findings are mainly concerned with the comparative analysis of the factors that influence the academic performance of both public and private JHS. The analysis was done in relation with the objectives of the study. The data gathered 30 out 30 students, 30 out of 30 teachers and 8 out of 10 head teachers .Analysis were done using frequencies and percentages. The analysis is based on the factors which affect academic performance of students; these factors are educational background of parents/guardians, occupation of parents/guardians, those involved in the upkeep of the children in school, number of siblings, teachers` academic qualification including the availability of teaching and learning materials employed by teachers

Preliminary Analysis

Table 3: Educational background of parents/guardians

| | PUBLIC | | | PRIVATE | | |
|----------|---------------|---------------|-----------------|---------------|---------------|-----------------|
| | Father F % | Mother F % | Guardian F % | Father F % | Mother F % | Guardian F % |
| J.S.S | 0 (0) | 1 (6.2) | 0 (0) | 0 (0) | 1 (9.1) | 0 (0) |
| T.S/S.S | 8 (50.0) | 11 (68.8) | 0 (0) | 2 (18.2) | 2 (18.2) | 0 (0) |
| TERTIARY | 8 (50.0) | 4 (25.0) | 2 (100) | 9 (81.8) | 8 (72.7) | 1 (100) |
| NS | 0 (0) | 0 (0) | 0 (0) | 0 (0) | 0 (0) | 0 (0) |
| TOTAL | 16 (100) | 16 (100) | 2 (100) | 11 (100) | 11 (100) | 1 (100) |

Key: J.S.S-Junior Secondary School, T.S/S.S-Technical or Secondary School, NS- No schooling

Table3 represents the educational attainment of parents/guardians. From the data collected and represented in table 3, we can observe that public schools had the highest percentage of respondents, whose parents had had the least level of education, while the parents of the pupils in the private schools had the lowest percentage of respondents who had had the highest level of education and no respondents from both public and private school had a parents who had had no form of formal education.

From table 3 public schools had the lowest level of education with 50% of fathers and 75% of mothers, while the private schools recorded only 18.2% and 27.3% of fathers and mothers respectively. On the other hand private schools had the highest level of education whose parents had tertiary education with 81.8% of fathers, 72.7% of mothers and 100% of guardians, while the public schools recorded 50% of fathers, 25% of mothers and 100% of guardians who had tertiary education.

Table 4: Occupation of parents/guardians

| | PUBLIC | | | PRIVATE | | |
|------------|---------------|---------------|-----------------|---------------|---------------|-----------------|
| | Father F % | Mother F % | Guardian F % | Father F % | Mother F % | Guardian F % |
| SE | 7 (43.8) | 14 (87.5) | 2 (100) | 5 (55.6) | 2 (22.2) | 1 (100) |
| C/P S | 8 (50.0) | 2 (12.5) | 0 (0) | 4 (44.4) | 7 (77.8) | 0 (0) |
| UNEMPLOYED | 0 (0) | 0 (0) | 0 (0) | 0 (0) | 0 (0) | 0 (0) |
| NONE | 1 (6.2) | 0 (0) | 0 (0) | 0 (0) | 0 (0) | 0 (0) |
| TOTAL | 16 (100) | 16 (100) | 2 (100) | 9 (100) | 9 (100) | 1 (100) |

Key: SE-Self Employed, C/P S-Civil/Public servants

From the above ,table 4 indicates that pupils from the public schools parents had the highest number of respondents with the highest number of respondents being self employed with 7 respondents (that is 43.8%) of fathers and 14 respondents (that is 87.5%) of mothers and 2 respondents (that is 100%) of guardians, while pupils from the private school parents had the lowest number of respondents being self employed with 5 respondents (that is 55.6%), 2 respondents (that is 22.2%) and 1 respondent (that is 100%) of fathers ,mothers and guardians respectively. On the other hand pupils from the private schools parents had the lowest number of respondent with the highest number of them being civil/public servant indicating 4 respondents (that is 44.4%) of fathers 7 respondents (that is 77.8%) of mothers, while pupils from the public school parents with 8 (that is 50%) and 2 (that is 12.5%) of fathers and

mothers respectively. Only 1 respondent from the public schools (that is 6.2%) is uncertain on the type of job his or her father does.

Table 5: Those responsible for the pupils upkeep

| | PUBLIC | | PRIVATE | |
|--------------|--------|-------|---------|-------|
| | F | % | F | % |
| BOTH PARENTS | 13 | 76.5 | 8 | 66.7 |
| FATHER ONLY | 2 | 11.8 | 2 | 16.7 |
| MOTHER ONLY | 0 | 0 | 1 | 8.3 |
| GUARDIAN | 2 | 11.8 | 1 | 8.3 |
| TOTAL | 17 | 100.0 | 12 | 100.0 |

From the table 5 above indicate who takes care of the pupils' education at both public and private schools. Again it can be observe that public school pupils had the highest number of respondents with 17 respondents recorded for public and 12 respondent recorded for private. Public schools had the highest percentage of both parents taking care of them at school with 76.5% against private schools with 66.7%, while both schools had the same number of 2 respondents taking care of them at school being father only with 11.8% and 16.7% for public and private respectively. Only one respondent from private school had only mother taking care of him or her at school and finally private had the lowest number of guardian taking care of them at school with 2 respondents representing 11.8% against 1 respondent representing 8.3% of the total private schools population.

Table 6: Number of siblings

| | PUBLIC | | PRIVATE | |
|----------------|--------|-------|---------|-------|
| | F | % | F | % |
| ONE | 3 | 16.7 | 3 | 25.0 |
| TWO | 2 | 11.1 | 3 | 25.0 |
| THREE | 4 | 22.2 | 3 | 25.0 |
| FOUR AND ABOVE | 9 | 50.0 | 3 | 25.0 |
| TOTAL | 18 | 100.0 | 12 | 100.0 |

From table 6 above, majority of the respondents, that is 50% had four and above siblings in public school as compared to private school that is 25%. Unlike the public school, majority of the responses from private school indicates three and less number of siblings.

Table 7: Highest academic qualification of teachers

| RESPONSES | PUBLIC | | PRIVATE | |
|--------------------------|--------|-----|---------|------|
| | F | % | F | % |
| SSCE/GCE O LEVEL | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| GCE A LEVEL | 0 | 0 | 2 | 18.2 |
| BACHELORS DEGREE | 18 | 100 | 9 | 81.8 |
| MASTERS DEGREE AND ABOVE | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| TOTAL | 18 | 100 | 11 | 100 |

As illustrated in Table 7 above, majority of teachers in both public and private basic schools that was 18 (100%) and 9(81.8%) respectively have had a bachelor's degree. From Table 4.5 it was realized that total percentage of 2 private school teachers have had education below the first degree level.

Table 8: Use of teaching and learning materials

| TLM | R | PUBLIC | | | | PRIVATE | | | |
|--------------------------|---|--------|-------|-------|-------|---------|-------|-------|-------|
| | | A/A | A/NA | NA | U | A/A | A/NA | NA | U |
| TEXTBOOKS | H | 100% | 0 | 0 | 0 | 100% | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | T | 22.2% | 77.8% | 0 | 0 | 91.7% | 8.3% | 0 | 0 |
| | S | 33.3% | 66.7% | 0 | 0 | 83.3% | 16.7% | 0 | 0 |
| LABORATORIES | H | 0 | 0 | 75% | 25% | 25% | 25% | 25% | 25% |
| | T | 0 | 5.6% | 83.3% | 11.2% | 33.3% | 41.7% | 25% | 0 |
| | S | 0 | 0 | 94.4% | 5.6% | 0 | 25% | 66.7% | 8.3% |
| EQUIPMENT FOR PRACTICALS | H | 0 | 66.7% | 33.3% | 0 | 0 | 100% | 0 | 0 |
| | T | 0 | 56% | 44.4% | 0 | 58.3% | 41.7% | 0 | 0 |
| | S | 0 | 83.3% | 16.7% | 0 | 0 | 66.7% | 16.7% | 16.7% |
| LIBRARY BOOKS | H | 0 | 66.7% | 33.3% | 0 | 25% | 0 | 75% | 0 |
| | T | 5.6% | 55.6% | 38.9% | 0 | 70% | 0 | 20% | 10% |
| | S | 11.1% | 66.7% | 16.7% | 5.6% | 16.7% | 58.3% | 25% | 0 |
| ILLUSTRATION MATERIALS | H | 33.3% | 66.7% | 0 | 0 | 0 | 100% | 0 | 0 |
| | T | 5.6% | 61.1% | 27.8% | 5.6% | 58.8% | 41.7% | 0 | 0 |
| | S | 11.1% | 66.7% | 16.7% | 5.6% | 75% | 16.7% | 8.3% | 0 |

Table 8 continued.

| TLM | R | A/A | A/NA | NA | U | A/A | A/NA | NA | U |
|----------------------|---|-------|-------|----|---|------|------|----|---|
| WRITING DESK, CHAIRS | H | 33.3% | 66.7% | 0 | 0 | 100% | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | T | 44.4% | 55.6% | 0 | 0 | 100% | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | S | 66.7% | 33.3% | 0 | 0 | 100% | 0 | 0 | 0 |

Key: TLM-Teaching and Learning Materials, R-Respondents, H-Headteachers, T-Teachers, S-Students, A/A-Available and adequate, A/NA-Available but not adequate, NA- Not available at all, U-uncertain.

Respondents were asked about the availability or non availability of resources such as text books, library, laboratories for practicals, equipment, illustration materials and writing desks. 100% of headteachers in both the public and private schools agreed that textbooks were available and adequate. Majority of teachers and students percentage 77.8% and 66.7% indicated though textbooks were available they were not adequate. In the private schools, teachers and students had 91.7% and 83.3% respectively, representing the majority who responded that text books in their schools were available and adequate.

Availability of laboratories was selected not to be available at all by the majority of headteachers, teachers and student with 75%, 83.3% and 94.4% respectively in the public schools, while student in the private schools represented majority with 66.7% on not available at all and the headteachers indicated 25% among the options available and adequate, available but not adequate, not available at all and uncertain respectively. Even though all the three categories of respondents in the public schools agreed that they had libraries in their schools, majority of them thought that they were not adequate, while of head teachers, teachers and students in the private schools majority responded that they had library facilities which were not available, available and adequate and available but not adequate respectively. All three categories of respondents in both the public and private schools had majority of their respondents agreeing to the fact that the schools had illustration materials available in their schools, but for all respondents, these materials were not adequate.

When asked as to whether there were enough writing desks in both categories of schools, responses given showed clearly that both respondents in public and private schools had adequate writing desks with the exception both head teachers and teachers indicating not adequate. Indeed 100% of head teachers, teachers and students in private schools agreed that writing desks were adequate and available

FURTHER ANALYSIS

The further analysis employs statistical tools to test the hypothesis set for this study. The results of are shown in independent sample t-test and one- way ANOVA tables.

Hypothesis one

H_0 : The academic performance of student`s across the various schools do not differ.

H_1 : The academic performance of student`s across the various schools differ.

Independent sample t-test

Table 8: Percentage scores in the B.E.C.E

| | Levene`s Test for Equality of variances | | t-test for equality of Means | | | | | 95% confidence interval of difference | |
|-----------------------------|---|------|------------------------------|-------|---------------|-----------------|-----------------------|---------------------------------------|---------|
| | F | Sig | t | df | Sig(2-tailed) | Mean difference | Std. Error difference | Lower | Upper |
| Equal variances assumed | 4.151 | .079 | -.949 | 8 | .372 | -3.51200 | 3.71395 | -12.07638 | 5.05238 |
| Equal variances not assumed | | | -.946 | 5.609 | .383 | -3.51200 | 3.71395 | -12.75559 | 5.73159 |

From the table 8 above, the value of the test statistic is found to be 4.151. Now, since the significant value $.079 > 0.05$ we fail to reject H_0 and conclude The academic performance of student`s across the various schools do not differ.

Hypothesis two

H_0 : Parent socio-economic status does not significantly affect student`s academic performance in the B.E.C.E.

H_1 : Parent socio-economic status does significantly affect student`s academic performance in the B.E.C.E.

ANOVA

Table 9: Last school attended by father

| | Sum of squares | Df | Mean squares | F | Sig |
|----------------|----------------|----|--------------|-------|------|
| Between groups | .515 | 1 | .515 | 2.301 | .142 |
| Within groups | 5.370 | 24 | .224 | | |
| Total | 5.885 | 25 | | | |

From the table 9 above, the value of the test statistic is found to be 2.301. Now, since the significant value $.142 > 0.05$ we fail to reject H_0 and conclude Parent socio-economic status does not significantly affect student's academic performance in the B.E.C.E.

Table 10: Last school attended by mother

| | Sum of squares | Df | Mean squares | F | Sig |
|----------------|----------------|----|--------------|-------|------|
| Between groups | 1.208 | 1 | 1.208 | 3.242 | .084 |
| Within groups | 8.945 | 24 | .373 | | |
| Total | 10.154 | 25 | | | |

From the table10 above, the value of the test statistic is found to be 3.242. Now, since the significant value $.084 > 0.05$ we fail to reject H_0 and conclude Parent socio-economic status does not significantly affect student's academic performance in the B.E.C.E.

Table 11: Fathers' occupation

| | Sum of squares | Df | Mean squares | F | Sig |
|----------------|----------------|----|--------------|------|------|
| Between groups | .469 | 1 | .469 | .926 | .346 |
| Within groups | 11.156 | 22 | .509 | | |
| Total | 11.625 | 23 | | | |

From the table 11 above, the value of the test statistic is found to be .926. Now, since the significant value $.346 > 0.05$ we fail to reject H_0 and conclude Parent socio-economic status does not significantly affect student's academic performance in the B.E.C.E.

Table 12: Mothers' occupation

| | Sum of squares | Df | Mean squares | F | Sig |
|----------------|----------------|----|--------------|--------|------|
| Between groups | 2.336 | 1 | 2.336 | 15.627 | .001 |
| Within groups | 3.289 | 22 | .149 | | |
| Total | 5.625 | 23 | | | |

From the table 12 above, the value of the test statistic is found to be 15.627. Now, since the significant value $.001 < 0.05$ we fail to reject H_0 and conclude Parent socio-economic status does significantly affect student's academic performance in the B.E.C.E.

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

DISCUSSION

From the study the primary objectives was to examine the academic performance of student's comparing the B.E.C.E of some selected public and private schools in Sekondi/Takoradi, factors accounting for the student performance and find out ways to improve upon them.

In the background study a brief history of the country's education was given and it was discovered that there were differences in the academic performance of pupils in the public and private basic schools in the country, private basic schools were performing better than public basic schools academically. After comparing the percentages of 5 public schools with excellent track record for years and 5 private schools, it was realized and concluded that there were no difference in the academic performance of pupils in the public and private basic schools. The reason may be that students who attend public schools also have a great chance to perform credibly as their counterparts within the private schools if they put in more effort.

One of the reasons why most public schools in Ghana are underperforming may be because a lot of the public schools are within the rural areas, due to poor conditions teachers are not willing to stay there.

The study also concentrated on factors such as educational background of parents/guardians, occupation of parents/guardians, those involved in the upkeep of the children in school, number of siblings, teachers' academic qualification including the availability of teaching and learning materials employed by teachers. The study focused on these factors because they were indicators of academic performance in Ghana. In the study of the educational background of parents/guardians, it was realized that greater number of parents who completed their education at the technical/secondary school level prefer to take their wards to the public school instead of private school and parents who completed their education at the tertiary level prefer to take their wards to the private schools. For this reason parents of pupils in the private schools had higher socio-economic status, because they had attained higher education than most parents of pupils in the public schools.

From the study it was realized that greater number of parents who are self employed could afford to take their wards to the public schools but only lesser number of self employed parents took their wards to the private schools. On the other hand greater number of parents who are civil/public servant can afford to take their wards to the private schools and only lesser number of them prefers the public to the private schools. This might be monthly income earned; in addition due to their higher level of education they prefer private schools. Also the reason might be due to the fact that parents from private schools were more educated than those within the public schools. Therefore they have a higher understanding for paying more for quality education.

Most parents (that is both mother and father) in the public and private schools are responsible for their wards upkeep at school since both schools had high percentages of both parents involved in their education. From the study on the number of siblings students had indicates, parents who had more than four children prefer to take their wards to the public schools instead of the private schools but only little number of the parents with children more than four prefers private schools to the public schools.

The above mentioned factors about parents' education, occupation of parents, wards upkeep at school and size of family is in line with the statement made in the literature review that the higher the level of socio-economic status of the parents the higher the educational attainment of their children (that is socio-economic status and educational attainment are closely related). From the study about the qualification of teachers, it was realized that most teachers in the public schools were better qualified academically in the teaching profession with most of them attaining bachelor's degree than their private counterparts. This point is in agreement with the literature review that quality of teaching staff in a school was an important determinant in the educational standard of a nation.

On the study about the use of teaching and learning materials, it was realized that teachers did not use laboratories and equipment for practicals because they were not available and adequate in the public schools and only few were available and adequate in the private schools. Also private schools were better resourced than public schools in terms of library books and illustration materials. The availability, provision and the use of teaching and learning materials go a long way to improve quality of teaching and learning which enhances academic performance.

CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion the analysis revealed that:

- i. Parents of pupils in the private schools had higher socio-economic status, because they had attained higher education than most parents of pupils in the public schools. For this reason, parents of pupils in the private schools had better pay and regular salaried jobs.
- ii. Teachers in the public schools were better qualified academically in the teaching profession than their private counterparts.
- iii. Textbooks and writing desks were available and adequate in both types of schools.
- iv. Socio- economic status does not determine the academic performance of students.
- v. There is no difference in the academic performance in students in private and public schools.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

- i. The Education Directorate should supply Junior High Schools in the municipality with adequate teaching and learning materials as well as other study materials to help enhance teaching and learning, this will raise the academic standards of students. Efficient and effective teaching can be done to improved performance.
- ii. Parents should be more involved in their wards education, especially within the less endowed areas to encourage them to go to school regularly.