



COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AND TEACHER ATTENDANCE IN BASIC SCHOOLS: THE CASE OF EAST MAMPRUSI DISTRICT IN GHANA

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ABSTRACT

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The purpose of the study was to investigate the extent of community members' involvement in school activities to enhance teacher attendance in the East Mamprusi District of Northern Ghana. The research design was a survey. Stratified sampling method was employed to group the study population into five (5) strata of teaching staff, SMC/PTA executive members, District Education Officers, and community members. Questionnaires were used to collect data from 150 participants. The Statistical Product for Service Solution (SPSS) version 20.0 was used to analyze the data collected. The purpose of the study was made known to participants. The findings depicted that though the level of community involvement in the activities of the schools was encouraging it had limited influence on teacher attendance. Characteristics such as age, gender, ethnicity, language, wealth, weak democracy, illiteracy, work and time served as barriers to community involvement in monitoring teacher attendance. Recommendations of the study include, the training or sensitization of SMC and PTA executives as well as community members on their rights and privileges to be involved in school activities, especially monitoring of teachers' attendance. In addition, they should be equipped with skills and knowledge to exercise their duties and responsibilities. The study will benefit all stakeholders of education and policy makers.

Contribution/Originality: This study contributes in existing literature and knowledge in matters related to community members' involvement in school activities that enhance teaching and learning. Teachers', attendance have influence on students' academic performance. Thus, the study throws more light on what community's members can do to enable teachers improve upon their attendance.

1. INTRODUCTION

It is widely recognized that community involvement in school activities has become an integral part of the educational system today. Ghanaians are more involved in their children's education at home than in school (Chowa *et al.*, 2012). In Ghana, community involvement in school activities has been growing gradually after independence in 1957 as a result of the increasing awareness of the importance of education (Adam, 2005).

Nonetheless, it is reported that Ghana tops the list of teacher irregularities in school attendance among Sub-Saharan African countries (Kesseben, 2014). Since the introduction of formal education in Ghana, teacher attendance and punctuality in schools have been dwindling irrespective of community involvement in School Management. The World Bank report states that the annual average teacher absenteeism in developing countries

such as Tunisia and Morocco are 11.6 days and 13.4 days respectively, while in Ghana it is 43 days (Peacefmonline, 2011). In Ghana teacher absenteeism is higher in deprived communities and more isolated schools where parents are less involved in education, contributing to unequal educational opportunities (NNED and IBIS, n.d). Guerrero *et al.* (2012) described teacher attendance to school as fundamental to children's educational achievement. Teacher absenteeism from class hinders intellectual achievement of children, thus resulting in low standards of education (Okurut, 2012).

One most important element that may contribute towards the improvement in standards and quality of education is the active involvement of parents in their children's education (Wanke, 2008). In addition, there is the need for the full support of community members as well. It is anticipated that parents should play a role not only in the promotion of their own children's achievements but more broadly in school improvement and governance. The Ministry of Education (MoE) in Ghana emphasized active parental and community involvement in school activities as a key indicator of the quality of schooling in various communities (Ghana Education Service, 2010). The educational reform and policy Act 87 of 1961 initiated freedom and opportunity for parents and school communities to be involved in school activities. The act spelt out and streamlined the roles of PTAs and SMCs in schools (MoE, 2010).

The idea of educational decentralization in Ghana in 1996 started with greater recognition of the important roles parents and communities play in school management and development. According to Barrera-Osorio *et al.* (2009) decentralization enhances school-based management at the local level. Standards and quality of education improve when education is decentralized to shift the blame for poor performance to parents and communities (Wanke, 2008). One of the principal objectives of Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) which was introduced in 1996 by the government of Ghana was "Increasing Access and Participation" which demonstrates the extent of government's recognition of the share responsibilities of parents and communities in education (GES, 2010). Akyeampong (2004) stated that the School Management Committees (SMCs) and Parent-Teacher-Associations (PTAs) were introduced after FCUBE programme in order to entrust holistic management of schools into the hands of parents and communities. In addition, the School Performance Appraisal Meeting (SPAM) Policy was also introduced later to hold teachers accountable to the parents and communities at the local levels.

Though some communities have established schools voluntarily, recruited teachers and provided places for teaching and learning for their children, the impact of communities involvement in school activities or management has not been fully harnessed. According to Eldah *et al.* (2004) Community Schools are defined as schools which are built, financed and managed by the communities themselves, with or without government assistance". The degree or capacity of parental and community involvement in school activities to improve the quality and standard of education is still questionable since standards and quality of education are still regarded as being poor or falling standards (Kinsford, 2010).

1.1. Problem Statement

Teacher absenteeism is a serious threat to quality education in Sub-Saharan African countries as a whole and Ghana in particular (Okurut, 2012). Poor attendance of teachers to schools in Ghana had dominated media reports in recent times, which raises concern about the role of communities in curbing that social menace. According to a study by Northern Network for Education Development (NNED) and Danish International NGO (IBIS) in Northern and Upper East regions of Ghana, there is massive teacher absenteeism in the regions to the extent that teachers virtually abandon schools in rural communities (NNED and IBIS, n.d). PTAs, NGOs and other concerned people in the East Mamprusi District complained about the irregular attendance to schools by teachers, which eventually affected the academic performance of children in their BECE and SSSCE results. Though several studies have been conducted on teacher absenteeism other areas still persist. Thus the study of teacher attendance in the East Mamprusi District is to be looked at through the lenses of community involvement in school activities.

1.2. Research Questions

The study sought to provide answers to four questions below:

1. How effective is the involvement of communities in school activities in the East Mamprusi District?
2. What factors hinder community's involvement in school activities?
3. How can community involvement in school activities improve teacher attendance in schools?
4. What strategies can be used to enhance community involvement in school activities?

1.3. Objectives of the Study

The general objective of the study was to examine the extent of community involvement in school activities in relation to teacher attendance in the East Mamprusi District of Northern Ghana. The specific objectives of the study include the following:

1. To determine the level of community involvement in school activities in East Mamprusi District.
2. To assess factors that hinder community involvement in school activities in the East Mamprusi District.
3. To examine community involvement in school activities in relation to teacher attendance.
4. To determine strategies to be used to enhance community's involvement in school activities.

1.4. Justification of the Study

The development of every nation depends on the quality of education. This can be realized if parents and communities are put in the centre and fully involved in the day-to-day management of the schools. Teacher attendance issues from previous studies indicated that some of the causes include lack of monitoring by school officials such as head teachers and circuit supervisors.

The study has thrown more light on the problem of poor teacher attendance in the schools of East Mamprusi District and the efforts community members have made to minimize the problem in the area of the study. It has drawn more attention on the issue of poor teacher attendance. The findings of the study will be beneficial to educational authorities, policy makers and educational planners in making useful decisions.

1.5. Scope of the Study

Contextually, the research laid emphasis on involvement in education delivery in junior high schools (JHS). It took into consideration relevant literature concerning the various schools of thought in education and the concepts of involvement in education. It also discussed the level of involvement, how to improve involvement, the influence of involvement on teacher attendance and challenges of involvement in education delivery.

The geographical scope of the study was the East Mamprusi District in the Northern region of Ghana. East Mamprusi District is located at the north-eastern part of the region. It shares border to the West by West Mamprusi District and the South by Gusheigu and Karaga Districts. To the North it shares boundaries with the Garu-Tempene, Bawku West and Talensi-Nadam districts. It is also bordered to the East by Bunkpurugu-Yunyoo district (Feigben, 2010).

Educationally, there are seventy one (71) primary schools with kindergartens and thirty three (33) private primary schools, nineteen (19) Junior High Schools (JHS) and eleven (11) private Junior High Schools, two Senior High Schools (SHS), one Youth Leadership Training Institute and one Health Training School in the district.

The study covered public JHS. It covered communities expected to provide support services to teachers. Specifically, it covered personnel from the district education office, members of school communities, parents, members of the school management committees and parent teacher associations and teachers.

The study was carried out in three JHS in the East Mamprusi District which include Gambaga Presby JHS, Gbintiri JHS and Nalerigu D/A JHS. East Mamprusi District is a rural district and has very limited natural resources and low economic activities. Even though, the surrounding districts had similar socio-economic

characteristics, problems and environmental features, the nature of parents and communities' involvement in the schools, the persistent absenteeism of teachers from the schools in the East Mampurisi District, leading to continuous poor performance of the students in the Basic Education Certification Examination (BECE) informed researchers' decision to choose the East Mampurisi District for the study.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Community Involvement in Education

The role of communities in education cannot be over emphasized. According to Uemura (1999) it is a social responsibility for communities to take part in school activities within their environs. The complex nature of education requires contributions from all stakeholders to make it complete. An individual cannot claim to have educated a person without the support of other people in the community.

Teye (2012) stated that a community's involvement in education is a symbiotic relationship between the community and the school. The community contributes in building the school to serve as an instrument of developing the community. There is an assertion that a community's initiative is not a natural occurrence, but is supposed to be a gradual process aimed at achieving the maximum number of people over time.

According to Cilliers *et al.* (2013) communities' involvement in monitoring and supervising teachers has the potential of improving teacher attendance. Also, parents and communities' partnership with the head teacher is one way that can reduce teacher absenteeism in schools. It is believed that communities monitoring teachers is more "reliable" than any other monitors on teacher attendance.

Furthermore, the involvement of communities in monitoring teacher attendance is cheaper and convenient. Community's involvement in education includes the involvement in decision-making process, management, governance or running of a school. That is the level at which parents and other identifiable community groups contribute towards creating conducive environment for efficient and effective teaching and learning. That is active involvement of parents and communities in day-to-day meetings in schools; formulation of policies; decision making; monitoring or supervising of teachers and children's performance; sharing information as well as identifying school needs and; finding solutions to make the school more effective to achieve educational goals and expectations of the community.

The Educational Act (Act 778) provides opportunity to establish a "well-balanced" system of stakeholders with experience in education (Opoku-Agyemang, 2013). The implementation of the Act identifies SMCs and PTAs as a mouth piece of every community in public basic schools to monitor and supervise attendance of both teachers and students to school and classes. It is expected that every parent or family actively participates in the activities of schools located in their communities to provide quality education. Henderson and Mapp (2002) stated that low involvement in children's education by families, parents, homes and communities provides a critical challenge to quality and educational development.

2.2. Levels of Community Involvement in Schools

In Ghana, parents and communities are involved in school activities in the form of representative groups. The most notable groups include PTAs and SMCs which are in partnership with the government and tied to educational sector to enhance quality educational delivery. They are constituted by parents and community members to analyze situations of the educational sector and to propose necessary changes. These associations are mandatory in all basic schools in Ghana. In the formation and implementation of FCUBE policy in 1996 the government invested legitimate authority in parents, school communities and other stakeholders to ensure share "roles and responsibilities" in school management (Akyeampong, 2004). The PTAs and SMCs in schools are usually established on the bases of law or local arrangement. The composition of PTAs and SMCs include staffs of the schools, the head teachers, parents, community members, opinion leaders, NGOs and local political representatives.

The major role of PTAs and SMCs is to serve in day-to-day happenings in basic schools in terms of the overall development process and informed decision making. In recent times the involvement is not seen as the mere presence at meetings but more active role in decision-making processes to influence learning opportunities, quality of learning facilities and learning outcomes.

Globally, the core principle of School Management Committees (SMCs) and Parent-Teacher-Associations (PTAs) has become an instrument for achieving intended objectives of all schools. The concept of School Performance Appraisal Meetings (SPAM) in some countries has been extended to a large scope in which parents and communities are directly involved in hiring and paying teachers (Adam, 2005). The issue of accountability is the sole objective of the formation of SPAM in Ghana education service. A teacher at the end of the day is expected to account for the children's performance to the parents and community. The SMCs and PTAs are thus the local governance platform to manage local decision-making for the effective running of basic schools.

2.3. Challenges in Community Involvement in Education

Community involvement in school activities includes people of different classes, tribes, views, languages and sometimes people from different communities with different cultural backgrounds coming together to work. In addition, different institutions and stakeholders join hands to ensure that the management and governance of a school goes on smoothly. Such institutions and stakeholders may have problems that directly or indirectly affect their level of involvement in educational delivery. Uemura (1999) states that the ideas and thinking of individual members of representative groups in the educational sector cannot be the same because factors such as sex, age, traditions, communication barriers, tribalism as well as failure to allow democracy to thrive could pose as challenges.

Teye (2012) observed that communities are unable to be involved in school activities as a result of challenges such as: Failure to allow democracy to thrive; lack of partisanship in school governance; societal values; differences in mother tongue; lack of information and communication skills; lost of interest and hope; low knowledge about parental and community involvement; negative perception that schools are owned by government and that community has no hand in school management; modernization and frequent educational reforms; lack of education and poor economic conditions and; ethnicity and parallel cultures.

Uemura (1999) attributes the challenges of community involvement to the conditions that prevail in a particular community. It is obvious that less endowed communities usually do not show much interest in terms of involvement in their children's education. European Network of Education (2010) states that all stakeholders in educational sector have different views on school governance or management and how to contribute to improving community involvement in schools. There is a conflict of interest among them. For instance, teachers in communities are often seen as role models and therefore do not want other stakeholders in education especially parents and community members who are illiterates to monitor or supervise them. They profess that will make parents or community members look superior and that may threaten their dignity in the communities. This struggle contradicts the role of teachers as medium for promoting effective parental or community involvement in school activities and rather become agents distracting communities' involvement in school activities (Uemura, 1999).

2.4. Influence of Community Involvement on Teacher Attendance

Literature had underscored the importance of parents or community involvement in education. Uemura (1999) had spelt out the benefits that could be derived from community and parental involvement in school activities. These include: Improving teachers attitude towards their work; mobilizing financial resource for educational institutions; making sure that people report early to school; carrying out minor repairs in educational institutions; providing skilled and unskilled labour to schools; lobbying for schools; taking part in hiring staffs as well as

ensuring general welfare of staffs; ensuring punctuality and regularity of tutors in class; ensuring the presence of PTAs and SMCs in educational institutions; having in-depth knowledge of teaching and learning; helping in socialization of students; monitoring child learning at home; helping the schools in “resource” mobilization; campaigning for increasing female enrolment; contributing in providing accommodation for staffs; taking part in annual planning for the schools e.g. drawing of school's timetable; helping in managing the school funds; enhancing quality education by helping to improve children's performance and; feeding children with balance diet to prevent malnutrition among children in order to enhance their academic performance.

Community involvement in school activities is not only the physical presence in the school but its affirmative impact on school infrastructure and attitude of teaching staffs in the schools. Community involvement contributes to improvement in children's academic performance, regularity of teachers in school, lesson delivery, school achievement, parent-teacher relationship, school-community relationship and improves the integrity of teaching as a profession (Momina *et al.*, 2014).

2.5. Conceptual Framework

In recent years, several literatures have been written about parental or community involvement in education. One of such literature that explained community involvement in education with regard to teachers' attendance was the study of Cilliers *et al.* (2013) in Uganda. The study used different stakeholders as monitors to induce higher teacher attendance and to produce frequent and reliable monitoring reports. Some of the major findings from the study indicated that parents or communities monitoring school activities improved teacher attendance. Parents or communities monitoring with school administrators were the most cost-effective of the other monitors. Potential advantage of enlisting parents as monitors was motivated by intrinsic concern for their children's education, and had a stronger desire to punish absent teachers. Attendance increased as teachers placed greater trust in the system and were motivated. Shaeffer (1994) explained that involvement in school activities may be in the form of rendering services in students admission or sacrificing in any work that will benefit the school; offering donations in cash or in kind towards the development of the school; encouraging attendance of both teachers and pupils; finding solutions to problems; discharging duties or responsibilities of stakeholders; implementing delegated powers and; involvement in strategic planning towards the development of the school.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Profile of East Mamprusi District

3.1.1. Geographical Location and Size

The East Mamprusi district was established in 1776 in the Northern Region with its capital located in Gambaga. It is located in the extreme north-eastern part of the region. It shares boundaries with the Talensi-Nabdam district, Bawku West and Garu-Tempene districts in the north, Gusheigu, Cheriponi, and Karaga districts in the south, Bunkpurugu and Yunyoo districts in the east and the west by West Mamprusi. The district has a land mass of 10,659sqkm, representing 2.4 percent of the total land mass of the region (Feigben, 2010).

3.2. Population

The East Mamprusi district is the mother district which the West Mamprusi District was carved in 1988 and in 2004; the Bunkpurugu-Yunyoo District was also demarcated out to promote developments. The current population of the district according to the GSS (2012) 2010 Population and Housing Census is 121,009 out of which 61715 being female and 59294 male with a total dependency ratio of 109.2. A large number of the population 81,850 resides in the rural communities of the District with the remaining 39,159 in the urban areas. The average density of population is 59 persons per square kilometre. The district has 142 communities with five of the communities with population above 5000. These communities are Nalerigu, Gambagu, Langbinsi, Sakogu and Gbintiri. The

Mamprusis are the major ethnic group in the district. Other ethnic groups in the district are the Bimobas, Konkonbas, Talensis, Moshis and Busansis.

3.3. Education

There are seventy-one (71) primary schools with kindergartens and thirty three (33) private primary schools, nineteen (19) Junior High Schools and eleven (11) private Junior High Schools, one Youth Leadership Training Institute and two Senior High Schools in the district. The greatest problem facing education in the district is inadequate teachers. There are few untrained teachers in the district to supplement the situation. This situation adversely affects the performance of pupils and students in the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) and the Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination (SSSCE) respectively.

Table-1. Gross Enrolment at the Basic Level in East Mamprusi District (2014-15)

Year	Enrolment	KG/Number	%	Primary/Number	%	JHS/Number	%
2014	Boys	9291	65.2	10629	78.6	3777	66.5
	Girls	4959	34.8	2889	21.4	1900	33.5
	Total	14250	100	13518	100	5677	100
2015	Boys	3856	51.1	16413	63.7	3869	56.5
	Girls	3693	48.9	9364	36.3	2979	43.5
	Total	7549	100	25777	100	6848	100

Source: Field Data (2017)

From Table 1 above it shows that in transition from KG to primary the boys' enrolment increased while the girls' enrolment decreased. The transition rate from primary to the JHS is not encouraging. In absolute terms there was a decrease in the number of boys and an increase in the number of girls from primary to JHS and in percentage wise there was a decrease in that of boys in 2014 and 2015 whereas the girls increased in both years though boys are still dominant over girls in the schools. Table 2 presented statistics of teacher population at the basic school level in the district from 2014 to 2015. It contained statistics of both trained and untrained teachers.

Table-2. Teacher Population at the basic school level

years	Kindergarten teachers		Primary teachers		JHS teachers		Trained teachers		Untrained teachers	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
2014	25	64	308	80	171	24	367	123	137	45
Total	89		388		195		490		182	
2015	23	72	359	88	189	31	449	151	122	40
Total	95		447		220		600		162	

Source: Field Data (2017)

Majority of the teachers in the district were males only a few of them were females. In 2014 27.1 percent of the teachers in the district were untrained and this consequently reduced the quality of education and academic performance at the basic level. The percentage of untrained teachers however decreased from 27.1 in 2014 to 21.3 percent in 2015. The percentage of trained teachers was gradually improving in the district.

Table 3 presented percentages on teacher attendance at the basic level in the district

Table-3. Teacher attendance at the basic school level in 2015

Classes	Number of teachers	Percentage of days present	% of days absent with permission	% of days absent without permission
KG	95	82.4	10.0	7.6
Primary	447	84.0	10.8	5.2
JHS	220	83.0	13.6	3.4

Source: Field Data (2017)

The attendance of teachers in the district showed better attendance in the primary and JHS than the KG. The average rate of absenteeism in the district was 16.2 percent and this does not augur well for academic work at the basic level.

3.4. Research Design

The research design adopted for the study was a survey. Precisely, sample survey was employed to assess the impact of community involvement in school activities in relation to teacher attendance in three basic schools in the East Mamprusi District in Northern Ghana. According to Fellegi (2010) a survey is a systematic collection of evidence about characteristics of interest from some or all units of a population using well-defined concepts, methods and procedures, and compiles such evidence into a useful summary form. In addition, a survey is a mode of collecting valuable information from a sample of population of interest with the use of questionnaires. Survey research, like all scientific and evidence-centered approaches, can be used to generate data for testing theory or for making effective decisions.

3.5. Population of the Study

Population is a set of elements, events or things with common characteristics that conform to specific criteria of which researchers generalize the results of the study. According to Teye (2012) population is a collection of elements that are suitable for researchers' investigation. The target group for the study includes Head teachers, teachers (trained and untrained), School Management Committees (SMCs), Parent-Teacher-Associations (PTAs) Executive members, parents, GES officials and community leaders and members of the communities in which the three schools under study were located. They constituted the population for the research.

3.6. Sampling and Sampling Techniques

A sample is the collection of elements selected from the universe for observation and analysis. Sampling can also be explained as the process of choosing a number of individuals from the population for a study in such a way that the individuals determine the generalization of the results (Teye, 2012). According to Opoku (2002) sampling techniques ought to be carefully selected to produce accurate results in the analysis. The sampling techniques such as random sampling and stratified sampling (Feigben, 2010) were employed to select the respondents for the study. Stratified sampling method was used to group the school communities' population into four (5) strata: Teaching staff, SMC, PTA executive members, District education officers (DEO) and Community members. Stratified sampling procedure was employed to divide the population into sub-groups or strata for independent sampling. The simple random sampling procedure was applied in selecting key officials who could provide relevant information required for the study.

3.7. Sample Size

A sample size of one hundred and fifty (150) respondents made up of twelve (12) teachers, three (3) head teachers, three (3) District Education Officers, fifteen (15) SMC, fifteen (15) PTA executive members, ninety three (93) parents and nine (9) community members undertook the exercise in order to examine the community involvement the activities of basic schools and its impact on teacher attendance.

Table-4. Sample size chosen

Community school	Teaching staff and District education officers	SMC executives	PTA executives	Parents and community members	Total
Nalerigu D/A JHS	6	5	5	46	62
Gambaga Presby JHS	6	5	5	29	45
Gbintiri D/A JHS	6	5	5	27	43
Total	18	15	15	102	150

Source: Field Data (2017).

5.8. Data Collection and Sources

Data was collected mainly from the primary source using questionnaires. The demographic information of the respondents and written responses to the survey questionnaire served as sources of information for the study. Results from these sources formed the basis for analysis. The information was gathered from parents, community members, SMCs, PTAs, teachers, head teachers and District Education Officers through fieldwork.

5.9. Data Collection Instruments

The study relied mainly on primary data for the analysis. The secondary data such as SMCs/PTAs meeting minutes, attendance records of parents to school meetings, visitor's books, teachers' attendance books, staff appraisal reports, log books, movement books were studied. The data collection tool that was employed in the study includes the use of questionnaire. The researchers administered the questionnaires to all the respondents after explaining the purpose and also assuring them of confidentiality with regards to the information they gave. The vast nature of the study area and the size of the sample required the services of research assistance in administering the questionnaires. In addition, they helped in areas where there were language barriers.

5.10. Validity and Reliability

Questionnaires were pre-administered and corrections made to remove ambiguity and to guarantee clarity. In trying to ensure reliability of the data collected researchers trained and monitored the research assistants in the process of administering the questionnaires. Pretest technique was adopted to practically establish the reliability of the questionnaires. The data that was collected included the number of times parents or members of the communities visited schools.

5.11. Ethical Consideration

Ethical consideration in research is the ability of researchers to consider the norms and standards of conducts that distinguish between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. According to Stevens *et al.* (2015) ethics in research would better be maintained if respect for society, professionalism and research participants were taken into consideration when planning the research. For the purpose of maintaining ethics, the researchers trained the research assistants in ethical communication that is the ability to express language cordially and politely to the respondents as well as the ability to ensure the respondents of confidentiality. The researchers were also decently dressed in the right cloths. Feasibility studies were also conducted in the school communities to know their customs, norms and traditions before the questionnaires were administered.

6. DATA ANALYSIS

The data collected was organized, coded and analyzed using a combination of multiple techniques. Variables such as the level of community involvement in school activities such as management, teachers' attendance to schools, among others were measured. All responses were coded, and fed into a computer for statistical analysis using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The analysis produced descriptive statistics of frequencies, counts and percentages. The results were presented in tables and graphs.

7. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The presentation was based on participants' responses in relation to the level of community involvement in school activities, factors that negatively affected community involvement in school activities, the impact of community involvement on teacher attendance and factors that promoted effective community involvement in school activities.

7.1. Responses to Statements on the Level of Communities' Involvement in School Activities:

Data collected indicated that the involvement of SMCs and PTAs in decision making in the schools was encouraging as illustrated in table 5 below. In all 57.4% and 91.3% responses from the respondents respectively ranging from very high to moderate accepted that SMCs and PTAs were involved in decision making in the schools. In addition, 65.3% of the respondents said that schools have accepted suggestion from parents and community members.

In consonance with Adam (2005) parents or communities were usually involved in school activities through financial contributions and communal labour. However, parents or communities' involvement in providing school buildings was low in the study. Seventy percent (70%) of the respondents confirmed that it was low. They claimed that school buildings were built by the government. Community members' involvement in securing accommodation for teachers was low and paying regular visits to the schools was also very low. Community interference with teaching and learning was also low. The respondents indicated that parents or community members had little concern for teachers which seems to be inconsistent with the expected support of communities for teachers.

Table-5. Responses to statements on the level of communities' involvement

Statement	Percentages (%) of responses on level of involvement to each statement.				
	Very High	High	Moderate	Low	Very Low
Involvement of SMC in decision making	16.0	38.7	2.7	26.7	15.9
Involvement of PTA executive in decision making	9.3	57.3	24.7	8.7	0.0
Suggestions from parents/community members	7.3	26.7	65.3	0.7	0.0
Financial support to the school by the community	0.6	46.7	24.7	28.0	0.0
SMCs and PTAs supervising teachers	12.0	14.7	8.0	24.0	41.3.
Provision of TLMs to the school by the community	0.0	1.0	19.0	33.3	46.7.
Monitoring of children to study by the community	11.2	5.3	17.3	37.5	28.7
Ensuring pupils regularity in school by community	0.7	2.7	17.3	37.3	42.0
Regularity of community members visits to teachers	11.3	12.7	64.7	11.3	0.0
Concern of parents and communities for teachers	10.7	6.0	2.0	74.0	7.3
Government-Communities-Teacher relationship	0.0	2.0	68.0	24.7	5.3
The community's provision support for teachers	0.7	0.0	68.7	6.3	24.3
Community's interference in teaching and learning	1.3	4.0	56.0	38.0	0.7
Encroachment of school land by community	2.7	4.0	35.3	58.0	0.0
Parents and community Willingness to help school.	2.0	1.3	12.0	32.0	52.7
Provision of school building by community	0.0	7.0	26.0	60.1	6.9
Provision of furniture by parents and community	0.0	6.7	40.0	53.3	0.0
Provision of accommodation for teaching staff.	0.0	0.0	40.0	13.3	46.7
Provision of portable water for the school	0.0	0.0	13.3	33.3	54.4
Parents participation in school communal labour	13.3	0,0	20	13.3	53.4

Source: Field Survey (2017)

7.2. Responses to Statements on Barriers to Community Involvement in School Activities:

It was discovered that lack of confidence, trust, exposure and experience in public affairs affected parental or community involvement in school activities, as shown in Table 6 below. Furthermore, weak democratic tradition, socio-cultural barriers, language barrier, lack of awareness on the value of community involvement in education, high level of poverty affected community involvement in school activities as shown in Table 6 below.

Table-6. Responses on barriers to communities' involvement in school activities

Statement	Percentages (%) of responses on factors that negatively affect parental and community involvement				
	Very High	High	Moderate	Low	Very Low
Socio- cultural barriers	8.0	46.0	33.3	6.0	6.7
Language barriers	60.3	14.0	16.0	0.4	9.3
Lack of exposure and experience on public affairs	28.7	0.6	13.3	12.7	44.7
Lack of confidence and trust	1.7	18.3	1.3	46.7	32.0
Awareness of the value of community participation	31.7	41.0	20.7	5.3	1.3
Weak democratic tradition	0.0	20.7	62.0	15.3	2.0
Community attitude towards education	54.0	8.7	18.7	12.6	6.0
High level of poverty and illiteracy.	41.3	21.3	12.7	7.3	17.7

Source: Field Survey (2017)

7.3. The Role of Communities' Involvement in Reducing Teacher Absenteeism

Out of 150 respondents 88 of them representing 58.7% indicated that the parents or communities need to motivate teachers. For instance, 13.3% raised issues of communities providing accommodation for teachers to enable them live in their communities. Twenty-eight percent (28.0%) of the respondents said that communities need to take up the role of monitoring and supervising teachers' attendance.

Table-7. The role of communities' involvement in reducing teacher absenteeism

Reducing teacher absenteeism	Frequency of responses	Percentages (%)
Monitoring and supervision	42	28.0
Motivational related	88	58.7
Accommodation issues	20	13.3
Total	150	100.0

Source: Field Survey (2017)

7.4. Level of Co-Operation between Teachers and Communities

Out of the total number of 150 respondents 118 respondents rated the cooperation between teachers and community involvement from very high to high which constituted 78.7%, 19.3% responded to be average, whilst 3 respondents (representing 2.0%) said it was low (Table 8).

Table-8. Level of co-operation between teachers and community

Cooperation	Frequency of responses	Percentages (%)
Very high	28	18.7
High	90	60.0
Average	29	19.3
Low	3	2.0
Total	150	100.0

Source: Field Survey (2017)

8. CONCLUSION

The research study was set out to investigate the impact of community involvement in school activities in relation to teacher attendance in East Mamprusi Districts of Northern Ghana. Teacher absenteeism was a serious threat to the quality of education in Sub-Saharan African countries, especially in Ghana. According to the studies of Northern Network for Education Development (NNED) and Danish International NGO (IBIS) (NNED and IBIS, n.d) in Northern and Upper East regions of Ghana, there was massive teacher absenteeism in the regions to the extent that teachers virtually abandoned schools in rural communities. PTAs, NGOs and other concerned people in the East Mamprusi District complained about the irregular attendance to schools by teachers. These irregularities of teachers eventually affected academic performance of children in the District.

The specific objectives of the study include the determination of the level of community involvement in school activities in East Mamprusi District; the assessment of factors that hinder community involvement in school activities in the East Mamprusi District; examination of community involvement in school activities in relation to teacher attendance and; the determination of strategies used to enhance community's involvement in school activities.

Literature reviewed was related to the impact of community involvement in school activities, especially in relation to teacher attendance. The research design used in the study was survey. Stratified sampling method was used to group the school communities' population into five (5) strata of teaching staff, SMC, PTA executive members, District Education Officers and community members. Questionnaires were used to collect data from 150 participants and the Statistical Product for Service Solution (SPSS), version 20.0 was used to analyze the data collected. Participants understood the purpose of the study and were honest in their participation.

9. FINDINGS

The study revealed that communities were involved in the management of schools in the study area. There were PTAs and SMCs in the study schools and their patronage to meetings were high. It was found that SMC or PTA met 1 to 2 times in each academic year. The study found that male parents did not like to take part in PTA meetings. However, a number of community members had visited schools. The involvement of the SMCs and PTAs in decision making in the schools was encouraging and suggestions from parents were also taken into consideration by the schools during decision making. It was revealed that the schools usually reported problems they encountered to communities for solutions. Most of the problems that the schools reported to the parents or communities were related to infrastructure.

It was found that there was freedom of expression at PTA or SMC meetings. However, age, gender, ethnicity, language, culture and race affected the involvement in school activities.

It was observed that the PTAs and SMCs executives did not have in-depth knowledge of their duties and responsibilities. PTAs and SMCs that were supposed to help in the running of the schools were not functioning well in most schools in the area.

The parents and community members did not know their rights and privileges of being involved in school activities. There was no effective GES-Parent-Community-Teacher coordination on the welfare of the schools.

Though the SMCs and PTAs were partially involved in the school management they were not equipped with skills and knowledge to strategize their operations in relation to monitoring and supervising of teachers and pupils in the schools. Thus, communities' involvement in schools did not have adequate influence on teachers' attendance.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study recommendations made were as follows:

The PTA and SMC executives should be given training on their duties and responsibilities. This could be done by the Ghana Education Service.

Monitoring and supervising of schools and teachers should be done on regular or continuous basis by GES in order to enhance teacher attendance.

Community members should work hand in hand with GES and other stake holders to ensure effective school attendance by teachers, to enhance teaching and learning in the schools.

Heads of schools should work with GES to sensitize community members annually on their rights, responsibilities and duties of involving themselves in school activities. In addition, community members should be encouraged to improve their level of involvement in school activities, especially in relation to teacher attendance.

Finally, schools and their management teams should offer parents and community members more opportunities in decision making about the welfare of the schools. The voices and contributions of community members in relation to teacher attendance should be given due attention that may be needed.

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