



## International Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies and Innovative Research

Publisher: Catholic University of Ghana

Editor-In-Chief: Prof. Daniel Obeng-Ofori

ISSN: 2737-7172 (O), ISSN: 2737-7180 (P)

Volume 11, Number 1, pp. 39-41

DOI: 10.53075/Ijmsir/641422535

### Fishing Activities and Academic Life of Junior High School Students at APAM in the Central Region of Ghana

**Isaac Kwasi Henyo**

Catholic University of Ghana, Post Office Box, 363, Sunyani, Ghana

Corresponding author: Isaac Kwasi Henyo. E-mail: isaachenyo@gmail.com

Date received: January 29, 2023

Date published: March 03, 2023

**Abstract:** This study assessed how students combine academic work with fishing activities. The main objective was to investigate how fishing activities affect students' education and how it influences their academic performance in Apam, a town in the Gomaa West District of the Central Region. Descriptive research design and a quantitative approach were used; questionnaire and structured interview guide were used to gather data from the respondents (students and teachers, respectively). Amongst all the students in this district, a hundred and ten (110) were sampled and nine (9) teachers selected for this study through census survey and purposive sampling, respectively. Validity and reliability of the research instrument were tested using expert judgment and Cronbach's alpha, respectively. Descriptive statistics (frequency count and percentages) were used in the analyses the data. It was revealed that students participated in fishing activities alongside schooling. About 68% of the students held the view that their colleagues who were involved in fishing performed poorly in class. Also, parent's occupation influenced students' involvement in fishing works. It is imperative that fishing societies cooperate with parents, heads of educational institutions and school management boards to introduce actions that would prevent students from doing fishing activities in order to help improve their academic performance.

**Keywords:** Fishing, education, academic life, JHS (Junior High School Students), fishing communities, Ghana

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

From the beginning of time, mankind has always sought enlightenment and erudition of all forms. Several studies (Mwinkaar & Ako, 2020; Ameyaw *et al*, 2020; Heyne *et al*, 2019; Gyan *et al*, 2020; Alemzero *et al*, 2021) have been done on how education impacts man's social and economic development. In the documents of the SDGs, which are global goals intended to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity (UNDP, 2019), it is evident that, there are strategies stipulated and arranged in helping improve on quality of education. Education is both a goal in itself and a means for attaining all the other SDGs. Ghana as a country advocating such goals has been a regional leader in the delivery of Education in the

West African Sub region. Over the years many scholars have entertained the view that engaging a child in income generating activities increases the probability of failing in class or even dropping out of school. According to Lee (2022) additional hours of work by students significantly increases the probability of the repeating a class. Most families if not all who are living along the coast of West Africa are into the fishing trade. Fishing serves as the source of trade and income to most people on the western coast of Africa since they have direct contact with the Atlantic Ocean. Ligeve *et al* (2011) also concluded that participation in fishing activities had an effect on academic achievement, and that the effect was moderated by gender. In most often times, parents who are into the fishing trade introduce their children into such trade to help. It is evident that the

help or assistance rendered by children to their parents has heavy negative consequences on their academic pursuit.

In Ghana, most school sessions take effect from morning hours of the day to mid-afternoon. This is the time parents trading in fishing employ the help of their children, either to help mend a broken net, help draw a canoe to shore, or go on an itinerant in selling fish. Children who labour in such situation and condition definitely miss school lessons. Those that are taken to sea at night also return days and weeks exhausted and fail to make it for school. Such children are always behind in the lessons taught and as such they lag behind in performance. This affects students' performance and concentration in class. Udo *et al* (2013), in their study, showed that academic performance of students was and inversely related to number of times of fishing per week. Further, they observed that only 12 percent of students who engaged in fishing place 1<sup>st</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> position in their classes, whereas their counterparts in the same environment who were not engaged in fishing achieved better grades in their classes. Lee (2022) established that low educational attainment existed in the fishing societies and only a few children complete primary school and far less a number continue to secondary school. They also observed a high dropout rate and poor results in the end of year examinations.

By 2016, net enrolment ratio and gender parity in schools had sky rocketed. Gender parity has been achieved at the kindergarten, primary, and JHS levels. That notwithstanding, many students in Ghana do not benefit from quality education, and girls are disproportionately disadvantaged, especially during the transition to senior secondary education. Between 1989 and 1999, school attendance increased for all age groups. Sackey For six-year-old children, the probability of attending school increased from 50% in 1989 to 75% in 1999. Between ages 11 and 12, when children are expected to complete class 6, school attendance probabilities increased from about 73% in 1989 to 87% in 1999 (Sackey, 2007). There has also been a tendency for more children to complete the primary level of schooling. Beyond this level school attendance is not encouraging. Thus, the school attendance profile shows some concavity, with attendance probability rising at early school age (i.e.,

the initial stages of school) and falling later on as children enter the teenage threshold.

According to GSS (2021), working at home or running a family business, education system not being fascinating, proximity, relationship, unwanted pregnancies, and illness are all significant cause for children not going to school. Senyamator *et al* (2018) were of the view that low attendance of children in schools is fishing. This is mostly prevalent in the coastal regions in Ghana, especially around the coastal areas (Heyne *et al*, 2019). Following from this, it stands to argue that the fishery sector is booming in Ghana and in the world economy at large. It takes the form of marine, fresh or lagoon water fishing. Over the years, the fishing industry has experienced a number of structural changes through technological advancement like the use of automated boats and nets (Ahmed, 1992). Though much efforts are put in developing the fish industry by the Ministry of Fisheries and other stakeholders, yet the sector is invariably experiencing an inverse relationship on other social sectors like education (Akpalu *et al*, 2018). Whiles one cannot underestimate the impact of education on the fishing industry, stakeholders seem to pay less attention to the negative impact it has on education. Currently, many educational policies, such as the Free Senior High School, have been implemented to pave a way for children to access education at the secondary level but the issue of low educational attainment among school children along the coastal lines is persistent. Most children normally engage in the fishing industry at a tender age alongside attending school which leads to the irregularity in school and eventually poor performance as well as low educational attainment. This paper seeks to address, why the story is different, in the coastal regions; the causes promoting this trend and to come up with proposed suggestions to avert if not eradicate totally this menace.

The study determined the effect of fishing activities on students' learning with particular consideration to the town of Apam

Specifically, the study sought to:

2. identify the influence of fishing activities on students' performance in class
3. determine the influence of family factors on students' education; and

4. determine the effects of fishing activities on students' class attendance
5. Identify some possible ways to control students' engagement in fishing activities.

## 2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

### 2.1 Study Area

Apam is a Coastal town and capital of Gomoa West District in the Central Region of Ghana, located approximately 45 km east of the Central regional capital of Cape Coast (Mwinkaar & Ako, 2020). It used to be a major port in pre-independence times but after Tema was built, shipping was abandoned. The town has an Odikro (Chief of the town). It is also a major town in the Gomoa Akyempem Paramountcy. It has a lot of fishermen as fishing is the main industry. Thus, inhabitants of Apam are predominantly fishers, farmers and traders. However, a few also are educationists, bankers and health workers. Apam has a secondary school, an FM station, several churches and a salt winning industry. Most of the inhabitants are Christians; only few are believers of Islamic and African Traditional Religions. The Benyah Lagoon is used for producing salt.

### 2.2 Research Design

A case study research design method was used in this research. This research design was appropriate in facilitating understanding of a complex issue or object and can extend experience or add strength to what is already known through previous research. This study was guided by descriptive research design. Creswell (2014) suggests using a descriptive survey when the objective of the study is to contact a sample of the target population and gather in-depth data from respondents. A descriptive survey was therefore the most effective method for addressing the subject of the study. This study adopted quantitative approach. Quantitative explains phenomena by collecting numerical data that are analysed using mathematically based methods (statistical analytical methods). We argue that this research is conclusive in its purpose as it tries to quantify the problem and understand how prevalent it is by looking for a projectable result by a large population.

### 2.3 Study Population

The population for the study covered the entire Gomoa West District which comprises students, teaching staff, parents and guardians. However, due to the size of the population in line with the time and financial constraints, a representative target population made up of the students and teachers within the township of Apam was used.

### 2.4 Sample Size and Sampling Technique

Three (3) junior high schools at Apam in the Gomoa West District of Central Region, Ghana were purposively selected. These schools were selected because they were located along the coastal area, and the major activity of the inhabitants was fishing. The sample size of the study was 119. This comprised 110 students who were directly involved in fishing activities and 9 of their teachers. The census survey was used to select all the students because it is devoid of prejudicial thinking and discrimination. With the help of the teachers, the students were purposively sampled. All the students were selected because they could provide the needed information to aid the focus of the study. In the case of the teachers, all nine were purposively sampled because they lived in the community with the students and at the same time taught them. They were, therefore, in the position to give the needed information.

### 2.5 Research Instrument

A well-structured questionnaire with close-ended and open-ended questions was used to collect data from the respondents. The close-ended questions were used to categorise the views of respondents while the open-ended questions allowed the respondents to express their opinions. Section 'A' of the questionnaire was on students' personal information; section 'B' looked at influence of fishing activities on students' performance; section 'C' covered the influence of family factors on students' performance; and section 'D' concentrated on the effects of fishing activities on students' performance. On the side of the teachers, structured interview guide was used to collect data from them. This was structured to reflect the objectives of the study. Creswell (2014) posited that structured interview refers to a context in which the researcher or interviewer has a series of questions that are in the general form of the interview schedule but is able to vary the sequence of questions. Although the series of questions to be

asked and the order of the questions were decided on in advance, the interviewer could rephrase the questions, modify them and add new questions to the list. This instrument allowed the researcher to use probes and prompts to control data as and when needed. In order to ensure validity and reliability of the instruments some of the questionnaires were pilot-tested on some selected students and teachers from other schools in the Apam Township. This revealed problem the students had with some of the questions. This helped the researcher to make some corrections and adjustments to the questionnaire before the final one was administered to the respondents.

### **2.6 Validity and Reliability**

Because content validity is determined by expert opinions, the instrument was developed closely under the oversight of colleagues with extensive knowledge in this area of endeavour. The questionnaire's reliability was pre-tested on 98 respondents. The pre-test demonstrated that the instrument's items were sufficient and covered all of the objectives. The test items' Cronbach's alpha values ranged from 0.9 to 0.8. This suggests that each and every item was acceptable.

### **2.7 Data Analysis**

Data analysis refers to examining and structuring of what has been collected to make inferences (Wanjiku, 2010). After collecting the data from the field, the researcher used descriptive statistics to analyze the data from the questionnaires. This allowed the researcher to use tables indicating

simple frequencies and percentages to analyze and describe the data. Descriptive statistics is a statistic that deals with mean, mode, bar chart, histogram and even percentages (Alonge, 2010). Thematic analysis was used to analyze the interview data. By the use of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20, the researcher organized the data, transcribed it, grouped it into themes, coded and described it. The thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting themes within data. It minimally organizes and describes the data set in details and it often goes further than this by interpreting various aspects of the research topic (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003).

### **2.8 Conceptual and Theoretical Framework**

This section of the paper brings out the variations through which the research intends to use in reaching its desired goal. Figure 1 shows a relationship between the dependent variables (Academic performance) in school and independent variables (fishing activities, parents' occupation and parents' level of education). From figure 1, it is clear that the learners' academic performance is influenced by factors such as parents' occupation (when the parents are gainfully employed, they are less likely to allow their wards to go out for fishing); also, parents' level of education (parents with good academic background are likely to be aware of the consequences of fishing activities on their wards' education); parents with smaller family sizes are well able to cater for their needs than those with larger family sizes; male students are more likely to engage in fishing activities than their female counterparts.

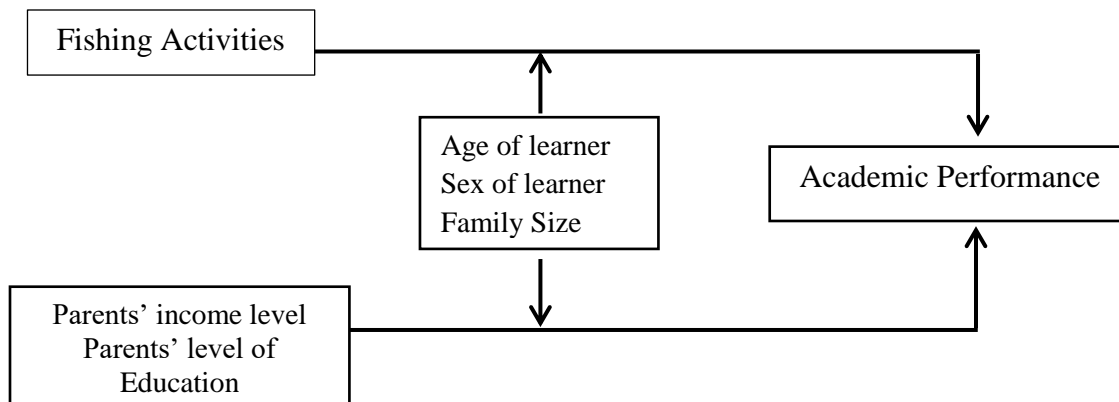


Figure 1 **Conceptual and theoretical framework for the study**

Source: Authors' Construct

The above framework was based on conflict theory advanced by Fuchs (2014). Taking its source from Karl Marx, there is some opposition among individuals, groups and social structures. This friction is eminent due to an overwhelming population constrained to share the little available resources. Hence central, to such opposition is the existence of scarcity or limitation of resources for achieving a goal. This challenge brings about the evaluation of the conflict theory which looks at the nature of resources available for different peoples and groups for sustenance and consumption. The resources include material benefits, wealth privileges, status and knowledge. It is for this reason that the main proponent of conflict theory Karl Marx proclaimed that “the history of all existing society is history of class struggle”. This struggle makes it difficult to satisfy the greater numbers who are poor in providing for their basic needs. For instance, there is struggle between the rich and the poor, power and the ruled, educated and uneducated. He claims that the structure of the industrial society is such that it breeds conflict in every stage. The theory was adopted for this study because of its relevance in helping analyze and synthesize the preferred variables under consideration, i.e., schools serving as one of the social institutions in the society always experiences conflict. As such in our educational sector we identify conflict between the learner’s willingness to learn and the inadequacy of the resources that enable them easy access to education

(Kilonzo, 2015). There is conflict within the school administration as they struggle for financial independence, sustainable and availability of teaching aids for smooth transmission of knowledge. Besides, there are other crucial channels of conflicts. Among such is the inability for parents to afford the required tuition fees and other bills demanded by the school for their children. As a result, parents are challenged to support their children’s education and this breeds the issue of school dropouts so that both parties (parents and children) are constrained or forced to embark on other socio-economic activities to meet the family needs as well as children’s educational needs. This brings about minors being exploited. When such difficulties are met by families situated along the coast of Ghana, the main viable opportunity to eradicate such drift is fishing. When these children who are school dropouts embark on such socio-economic activities like fishing in order to educate themselves and also to support their families it ends up having an impact on their academic performance. There is also conflict of interest in the teenagers as some may consider fishing as a beneficial and exploitative activity as they can share in the redistribution of wealth by earning wages. Some of the children also see it an opportunity to learn the fishing trade as a skill. Others also see it as carrying on with a family legacy, for instance it is noted that almost all the extended family are engaged in fishing (Ligeve *et al.*, 2011).



### 3. RESULTS

#### 3.1 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The characteristics of the respondents including age, sex and level of education are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1. Demographic characteristics of Students**

<b>Sex</b>	<b>Frequency (110)</b>	<b>Percentage (100%)</b>
Male	89	81
Female	21	19
<b>Age</b>		
10-12	24	22
13-15	34	31
16 and above	52	47
<b>Level of education</b>		
JHS 1	30	27
JHS 2	32	29
JHS 3	48	44

(Source: Field data, 2019)

From table 1 above, 89 (81%) students were males and 21 (19%) were females; 24 students representing 22% were between ages 10-12, 34 students representing 31% were between ages 13-15 and 52 students representing 47% were from ages 16 and above. This shows that, the respondents between ages of 16 and above were in the majority whiles those between ages 10-12 years

were in the minority. Also, out of the 110 students selected 65 representing 59% were males whiles 45 representing 41% were females. Out of the 110 students, 30 representing 27% of the students were in JHS 1, 32 representing 29% of them were in JHS 2, and 48 representing 44% were in JHS 3 (table 1). This shows that the majority of the respondents were in JHS 3 whiles the minority were in JHS 1.

#### 3.2 Demographic Characteristics of Teachers

**Table 2: Demographics of the Teachers**

<b>Sex</b>	<b>Frequency (9)</b>	<b>Percentage (100%)</b>
Male	6	67
Female	3	33
<b>Age</b>		
Under 25	2	22
25-30	4	45
Less than one year	2	23
<b>Years of Experience</b>		
1-5 years	3	33

5-10 years	3	33
10 years and above	1	11

From table 2, out of the 9 teachers selected 6 representing 67% were males while 3 representing 33% were females. Two teachers representing 22% were under the age 25, 4 representing 45% were between ages 25-30 and 3 representing 33% were from ages 30 or more. This shows that, respondents between ages of 25-30 were in the majority while those between ages under the age 25 and 30 or more were in the minority. We sought to find the years of teaching experience of the teachers. This is because teachers who have been in the school for a relatively long period of time are likely to be more aware of the issues. About 23% of the teachers have had less than a one year teaching experience, implying that this group consists of beginners. Three (3) representing 33% of them had 1-5 years of teaching experience. Three respondents representing 33% of them had 5 - 6 years of teaching experience and 1 representing 11% had 10 years and above teaching experience. According to the teachers, this experience has made them know the effects of fishing activities on pupils' education.

### 3.3 Influence of Fishing Activities on Students' Academic Performance

The study assessed the effects of fishing activities on the academic performance of students. In an answer to the question, whether students thought that their fellow students who engaged in fishing activities during school days, perform poorly in their class work, and if they thought that students who absented themselves from school to do fishing did better in academic work, etc. The data in table 3 show that 55% of students agreed that "students engaged in fishing activities during school hours, and 73% indicated that "students sometimes absented themselves from school to do fishing. From Table 3, 70% of students agreed with the statement that "engaging in fishing activities meets students' tuition requirements". At the same time 68% agreed with the statement "Students who engage in fishing activities tend to perform poorly in their class work as a result of fatigue" and 59% agreed with the statement "students claim those who do not involve themselves in fishing activities do better academically compared to those who are not involved".

Table 3: Influence of fishing activities on students' performance

Statements	Agree		Don't know		Disagree		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Students do fish during school hours	60	55	20	18	30	27	110	100
Students who do fishing achieve poor scores in their class work	75	68	10	9	25	23	110	100
Students often absent themselves to do fishing	80	73	12	11	18	16	110	100
Those who do not do fishing perform better in class work	65	59	11	10	34	31	110	100

The study sought to study the influence of fishing activities on academic performance of students (table 4)

Table 4: Influence of fishing activities on students' education outcomes

## Distribution of responses from Teachers

S N	Subject	Agree		Don't know		Disagree		Total	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1	Students perform fishing activities throughout school hours	5	56	2	22	2	22	9	100
2	Students who perform fishing activities tend to perform poorly	5	56	1	11	3	33	9	100
3	Pupils often absent themselves from school for fishing	4	45	3	33	2	22	9	100
4	Those who are not doing fishing perform well in school work than their counterparts who do fishing	7	78	-	-	2	22	9	100

(Source: field data, 2019)

The data in table 4 indicate that 56% of teachers agreed that “students are involved in fishing activities during school hours while 45% were of the view that “students sometimes absent themselves from school to engage in fishing activities”. The responses of the teachers correspond with that of the students. Thus, some students prefer fishing activities for short term gains to going to school. For this reason, they perform poorly in class. Also, 56% agreed with the statement “Students who engage in fishing activities tend to perform poorly in their class work as a result of fatigue” and 78% agreed that “students who do not

involve themselves in fishing activities do better academically compared to those who are not involved”.

### 3.4 Influences of Family Factors on Students' Education

This section looks at the influence of family factors on students' education at Apam in the Gomoa West District. On the issue of family related factors and education, the findings are presented in Table 5 below.

Table 5: Influences of family factors on students' education.

Statements	Agree		Don't know		Disagree		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Parents with low academic background have their wards dropping out of school	70	64	10	9	30	27	110	100
Students whose parents have no occupation hardly participate in school activities	65	59	11	10	34	31	110	100
Students whose parents have no occupation scarcely provide for their ward's basic needs	80	73	12	11	18	16	110	100
Parents with no career are more likely to have their wards dropping out of school	77	70	9	8	24	22	110	100



Poor parents are likely to have their wards do fishing	82	75	9	8	19	17	110	100
Parents with large family sizes are more likely to have their wards do fishing	60	55	20	18	30	27	110	100

From Table 5, students identified with all statements. Thus, students with wealthy parents stay in school since their parents are able to provide all the basic needs and provide the needed motivation needed to enable them stay in school and learn. Also, 70% were of the view that “Students with wealthy parents are not likely to join fishing”. Meaning, wealthy parents have the ability to afford their wards needs to keep them in school without dropping out. Also, “Students whose parents have no occupation are more likely to drop out of school”. As high as 73% of

students agreed with the statement that, “Parents with no occupation barely provide basic needs for their children”. In addition, 75% of agreed that students with poor parents are likely to join fishing activities. Additionally, 55% of the respondents said family size is also a factor that influences the likelihood of a child engaging in fishing activities.

The researcher also sought to find out from teachers the influence of family factors on students’ education.

Table 6: Influences of family factors on pupils’ education.

Subject	Agree		Don't know		Disagree		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Parents who are not learned are likely to have their wards drop out of school	3	33	2	22	4	45	9	100
Parents who have no job hardly have their wards participate in school activities	2	22	1	11	6	67	9	100
Parents with no job scarcely afford the basic needs of their wards	6	67	1	11	2	22	9	100
Parents with no job are more likely to have their wards drop out of school	7	78	-	-	2	22	9	100
Poor parents are more likely to have their wards join fishing activities	5	56	2	22	2	22	9	100
Parents with large family sizes are more likely to have their wards join fishing activities	5	56	1	11	3	33	9	100

(Source: field data, 2019)

According to results summarized in table 6, teachers agreed with all statements except one that is “Students with wealthy parents tend to drop out of school” which corresponds to that of the students. The highest proportion (89%) of teachers disagreed

with this statement. The same percentage (89%) of teachers opined that “Students with wealthy parents are not likely to join fishing”. Such students are adequately catered for by their parents and are able to attend school at the right age and do not drop out.

The results also show that “Students whose parents have no occupation are more likely to drop out of school”. As high as (67%) of students agreed that “Parents with no occupation barely provide basic needs for their children”. Therefore, their children are highly likely to join fishing activities.

### 3.5 Effects of Fishing Activities on Students' Education

The study sought to identify some of the problems associated with fishing activities amongst students by asking them to list down some of them (Table7).

Table 7: Effects of fishing activities on students' education

Statements	F	%
Lateness in school/absconding lessons	110	100
Leads to poor academic performance	100	91
Pregnancies and Early Fatherhood	70	64
Robbery with violence, rape, and general indiscipline	40	36
Exhaustion and loss of concentration in class	85	77
School dropouts	80	73
Disease prevalence (e.g., whopping cough)	50	45
Accidents (boats may sink)	92	84

(Source: Field data, 2019)

The data on table 7 indicate that the eight major problems associated with fishing include lateness in school/absconding lessons (100%), poor academic performance (91%), pregnancies and early fatherhood (64%), robbery with violence, rape, and general indiscipline (40%), exhaustion and loss of concentration in class (77%), school dropouts (73%),

disease prevalence (45%) and accidents causing boats to sink (84%).

In finding out from teachers about the effects of fishing activities on students' academic activities, the results are as shown in the table 8 below.

Table 8: Effects of fishing activities on pupils' education

Subjects	F	%
Lateness in school/absconding lessons	9	100
Leads to poor academic performance	8	89
Pregnancies and Early Fatherhood	6	67
Robbery with violence, rape, and general indiscipline	5	56
Exhaustion and loss of concentration in class	7	78
School dropouts	6	67
Disease prevalence (e.g., whopping cough)	6	67
Accidents (boats may sink)	5	56

(Source: field data, 2019)

The data contained in the table 8 indicates that the eight major problems associated with fishing include lateness in school/absconding lessons (100%), poor academic performance (89%), pregnancies and early fatherhood (67%), robbery with violence, rape, and general indiscipline (56%), exhaustion and loss of concentration in class (78%), school dropouts

(67%), disease prevalence (67%) and lake accidents causing boats to sink (56%).

### 3.6 Ways to Prevent Students' Involvement in Fishing

Table 9 shows some of the suggestions made by the respondents on ways of combating fishing among school children.

Table 9: Ways to prevent students' involvement in fishing

Statements	F	%
By way of counseling	70	64
By punishing students who are involved in fishing activities	100	91
By making students aware of the dangers associated with fishing	40	36
By construction of boarding schools to keep students in boarding house	80	73
By organizing weekend classes for students	92	84
By checking students attendance from frequently	65	59
Motivate students who work hard	82	75
Providing a conducive learning environment and conducting weekend tuitions	90	82
Admitting students with low marks to school	70	64

(Source: Field data, 2019)

In soliciting students views on what can be done solve the problem, the above responses were given. The views of students were that: heads of schools should hold discussion and counselling sessions with students and their parents (64%); disciplinary action against truants and those involved in fishing (91%); enforce school rules and regulations (77%); monitoring attendance through maintenance of class attendance registers (59%); create awareness on the dangers of fishing and related activities (36%); building more boarding facilities for students to board (73%); organizing weekend tuitions (84%); reward

hardworking students (75%); providing a conducive learning environment and conducting weekend tuitions (82%) and admitting students with low marks to school (64%).

The researcher asked teachers the role they could play to combat the involvement of students in fishing activities towards improvement of academic performance of school students at Apam in Gomoa district. The results were analyzed summarized and presented in table 10.

Table 10: Ways to prevent students' involvement in fishing-

Subject	F	%
Guidance and Counselling	5	56
Giving Relevant Motivational Talk	7	78

Provide boarding facilities/Retain them in school	9	100
Outlawing fishing for school going children	6	67
Developing school infrastructure	8	89

(Source: field data, 2019)

Table 10 shows what teachers could do to stop student's involvement in fishing activities. All respondents suggested that there should be provision of boarding facilities to retain students in school (100%). Teachers also, suggested that students should be given relevant motivational talk (78%) on the issue. Again, some respondents indicated undertaking guidance and counselling

(56%), others include outlawing fishing for school going children (67%) and developing school infrastructure (89%).

In answering the question on how the community could assist students towards improvement of academic performance, the results were analyzed, summarized and presented in table 11.

Table 11: Views of school heads on how to improve students' education  
Distribution of responses from Teachers

Statements	F	%
Providing financial support for the needy students	9	100
Building good school facilities	8	89
Creating awareness on the benefits of schooling	5	56
Instituting good disciplinary action	6	67
Banning students from doing fishing	8	89
Giving motivational talks to students	7	78
Parents often checking on their wards in school	6	67

(Source: field data, 2019)

From the table 11, majority of the heads of schools indicated that the communities should mobilize financial support for the needy children in school. Teachers' proposals given in Table 11 include: provision of learning materials (78%); recruiting more teachers and adequately covering the syllabus (67%); monitoring of students' attendance (45%); instilling discipline amongst students and involving parents in disciplinary matters (67%); guidance and counselling of students (56%).

#### 4. DISCUSSION

This study assessed the effects of fishing activities on students' educational outcomes in Apam, a town in the Gomoa West District of the Central Region. Over the years many studies have reported that

engaging a child in income generating activities increases the probability of failing in class or even dropping out of school. The results of the present study confirm the assertion that some students choose to attend fishing activities for short term gains avoiding school which leads to poor performance in class. Walakira et al (2008) pointed out a similar situation in their study of child labour in the fisheries sector in Uganda. It is noted that students believe that going fishing would help those who have difficulty in paying their fees. This lures students to engage in fishing activities. Furthermore, students' involvement in fishing has a negative effect on their academic performance. This is in line with the view of Ligeve et al (2012) that, fishing activities had negative influence on academic achievement though

it was gender bias. Kibera and Kimokoti (2007) opined that people of high socio-economic status may send their wards to school earlier because they have the resources. Their children therefore, have greater opportunity to do better in school. Occupation of parents can influence students' participation in fishing. This might be due to the fact that lack of occupation by parents leads to lack of regular source of income which creates difficulty in provision of basic needs for their children. Hence, children in these families become bread winners through fishing activities. It is imperative to note that parents play a critical role in ensuring their children attend school regularly. Schools can involve parents in activities that promote education, such as parent-teacher conferences, home visits, and school events. Local authorities can enforce truancy laws that penalize parents and students for failing to attend school. These penalties can include fines, community service, or even imprisonment in extreme cases.

Mwaure (2014) is of the view that parents' occupation lowers the self-esteem of children from low socio-economic background. The lack of a reliable source of income for parents with no occupation limits their capacity to adequately provide for their children's basic needs, which is the opposite for well employed parents. The problem of students' engagement in fishing to the detriment of going to school can be addressed through a multi-faceted approach that involves various stakeholders, including the students, their families, teachers, schools, and the community. Community leaders, schools, and local authorities can organize awareness campaigns to educate parents and students on the importance of education and the long-term benefits of attending school. These campaigns can also provide information on the negative consequences of engaging in activities that are detrimental to a student's education, such as fishing. It was revealed that Schools implement mentorship programs where successful community members, including fishermen, can share their experiences and encourage students to stay in school. This can help students see the value of education in relation to their personal goals and aspirations.

## 5. CONCLUSION

The study concludes from the findings above that students in Apam Township are actually engaged in fishing activities and this practice has a negative

influence on their academic performance. This is largely not out of the students' own volition but parents' occupation is a major contributory factor to the predicament of the students. The type of occupation by parents also influences the provision of children needs. Again, nonexistence of a reliable source of income for parents limit their capacity to properly provide for their ward's basic needs. It is imperative to note that addressing the problem of students' engagement in fishing to the detriment of going to school requires a multi-faceted approach that involves various stakeholders. By implementing these solutions, we can encourage students to value education and stay in school, while also recognizing the importance of their personal interests and aspirations.

Based on the above findings, the following recommendations are made.

1. The state should make funds available to support the needy students to help curb school dropout. Administrators of schools should continually engage parents on issues of fishing which is affecting their academic performance. Parents need to discipline their children and provide them with adequate parental care on issues that affect them negatively in their school life.
2. The Community should work together with the Management of the schools to institute measures that will prevent fishing activities among students. This could be done by limiting fishing activities to adults and setting deterrent bylaws for minors who engage in fishing activities.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We acknowledge the support of students and teachers at Apam for availing themselves for this exercise.

## REFERENCES

- Akpalu, W., Eriksen, S. S., & Vondolia, G. K. (2018). The fisheries sector in Ghana: A political economy analysis. *Norwegian Institute of International Affairs. NUPI Report*, 7, 2018.
- Alemzero, D. A., Iqbal, N., Iqbal, S., Mohsin, M., Chukwuma, N. J., & Shah, B. A. (2021).

- Assessing the perceived impact of exploration and production of hydrocarbons on households' perspective of environmental regulation in Ghana. *Environmental Science and Pollution Research*, 28, 5359-5371.
- Ameyaw, A. B., Breckwoldt, A., Reuter, H., & Aheto, D. W. (2020). From fish to cash: Analyzing the role of women in fisheries in the western region of Ghana. *Marine Policy*, 113, 103790.
- Creswell, J. W. (2014). A concise introduction to mixed methods research. SAGE publications.
- Fuchs, C. (2014). Karl Marx and the Study of Media and Culture Today. *Culture Unbound: Journal of Current Cultural Research*, 6 (1), 39–76. <https://doi.org/10.3384/cu.2000.1525.14639>
- Ghana. Statistical Service. (2021). 2021 Population & Housing Census, GSS, Accra.
- Gyan, W. R., Alhassan, E. H., Asase, A., Akongyuure, D. N., & Qi-Hui, Y. (2020). Assessment of postharvest fish losses: The case study of Albert Bosomtwi-Sam fishing harbour, Western Region, Ghana. *Marine Policy*, 120, 104120.
- Heyne, D., Gren-Landell, M., Melvin, G., & Gentle-Genitty, C. (2019). Differentiation between school attendance problems: Why and how? *Cognitive and Behavioral Practice*, 26 (1), 8-34.
- Kibera, L. W. & Kimokoti, A. (2007). *Fundamentals of sociology of education with reference to Africa*. University of Nairobi Press.
- Kilonzo, K. (2015). *Better educated workforce can help fight poverty*. Standard Newspaper of 25th Jan. 2015.
- Lee, H. C. (2022). Promoting slow fish education in southern Taiwan coastal areas: An empirical case study of five elementary schools. *Marine Policy*, 138, 104995.
- Ligeve, S. N., Poipoi, M. V. & Maragia, S. N. (2012). The influence of participation in fishing activities on academic achievement of primary school pupils in Suba and Homabay districts, Kenya. *An International Journal of Academic Research in Progressive Education and Development* 1 (3). 1-11.
- Ligeve, S. N., Poipoi, M. W., & Maragia, S. N. (2012). The Influence of Participation in Fishing Activities on Academic Achievement of Primary School Pupils in Suba and Homa-Bay Districts, Kenya. *International Journal of Academic Research in Progressive Education and Development*, 1 (3), 99-109.
- Mwaura, P. G. (2014). *Home-based factors influencing students' performance in KCSE in public day secondary schools in Lari District, Kiambu County* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Nairobi).
- Mwinkaar, L., & Ako, M. (2020). Female Education in Senior High Schools in Gomaa West District of the Central Region of Ghana: The Perspective of the Female Students. *Social Education Research*, 39-47.
- Sackey, H. A. (2007). The Determinants of School Attendance and Attainment in Ghana: A Gender Perspective.
- Senyamator, F., Gyimah, E. K., & Minadzi, V. M. (2018). Factors Affecting Pupils' Absenteeism at Felicormfort Junior High School (JHS) in Cape Coast, Ghana. *Journal of Education and Learning*, 7 (6), 138-149.
- Udoh, M. T., Achike, A. I., & Mkpado, M. (2013). Effects of Fishing Activities on the Academic Performance of Teenagers in Riverine Areas of Nigeria: Implications for Educational Development Policy in Nigeria. *Journal of Studies in Social Sciences*, 2 (2). 211-227
- UNDP, O., & Human Development Initiative. (2019). Global multidimensional poverty index 2019: Illuminating inequalities. United Nations Development Programme & Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative.