

# Achieving Quality Education in Ghana: The Spotlight on Primary Education within the Kumasi Metropolis

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## Abstract

Background: Ghana being a member of the United Nations, committed to the Universal Primary Education initiative in 2000 and has since implemented series of educational reforms to meet the target for the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 2. Despite the numerous government interventions to achieve the MDG 2, many children in Ghana have been denied Quality Primary Education by the state. This has resulted in mass illiteracy among children of Primary School age, unacceptable BECE examination results and overwhelming increase in anti-social behaviour nationwide. With the use of quantitative and qualitative approaches, data was collected through the use of questionnaire and rigorous interview. Sample consisted of 8 Head Teachers, 80 Class Teachers and 40 Pupils from four Primary Schools in Kumasi and its environs. Most respondents expressed the lack of teaching and learning materials, especially textbooks, workbooks and supplementary readers as setbacks for Quality Primary Education. Head Teachers, Teachers and Pupils of Primary Schools argued that textbooks and supplementary readers are the only tools available for most Ghanaian children to acquire knowledge and skills, absence or limited textbooks and supplementary readers in the primary school will affect the educational foundation of school pupils.

**Keywords:** Primary Education, Education, Quality, Textbooks, Supplementary Readers

## 1. Introduction

In attempt to identify possible obstacles for the falling standard of Education in Ghana, this study set out to ascertain the availability of textbooks and supplementary readers for Quality Primary Education. In Ghana, Primary Education is part of the Basic Education System, which consist of six years primary education and three years Junior High School education (JHS). Primary Education is free and compulsory and courses taught include English, Maths, Integrated Science, Ghanaian Language, ICT, Religious and Moral Education (RME) and Creative Art. Every two years, a sample of primary school pupils performance are assessed through a National Education Assessment (NEA) test in Literacy and Numeracy nationwide. Pupils are not awarded any certificate of completion at the end of primary school and automatically move on to Junior High School ([en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Education\\_in\\_Ghana](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Education_in_Ghana); NEA, 2013).

Generally, Primary Education is the first stage of compulsory Education and it comes between Kindergarten and Secondary Education in most countries ([en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Primary\\_education](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Primary_education)). Characteristics of primary education are the formal teaching of reading, writing and mathematics and aims to offer equal opportunities to all children, regardless of age, gender or country of origin, to achieve a balanced cognitive, emotional and psychomotor development (Department of Education UK, 2012).

According to Alexander, (2009), primary education provides pupils with fundamental and learning skills that will be the foundation for the rest of their academic careers. He further explained that, Primary schools offer pupils their first opportunities to relate with people from different religions, races and socioeconomic backgrounds and disabilities. Thus in primary school, pupils have a unique chance to be taught basic lifetime skills like reading, writing, spelling, interpersonal communication, tolerance, respect, time management and self discipline (Alexander, 2009). Before pupils can achieve these basic characteristics at the primary school, quality must be at the heart of Primary Education.

Quality primary education for all children has been identified by the United Nations, as the best way to enable children to learn, realize their full potential and to contribute meaningfully to society (UNICEF, 2000). Preparing children for better life through quality primary education requires the provision of suitable teaching

and learning environment, content and processes (UNICEF, 2000).

According to a Ministerial Round Table on Quality Education, by UNESCO, (2003: 1), “Quality has become a dynamic concept that has constantly being adapted to a world whose societies are undergoing profound social and economic transformation. Quality education should therefore equip all people, women and men, to be fully participating members of their own communities and also citizens of the world.”

UNICEF has outlined at least five key elements that affect quality education: what learners bring, environments, content, processes, and outcomes. Quality education begins with an adequate number of schools, books, pencils and trained teachers. It looks at the number of children who complete course of study in school. It moves beyond this to consider what goes on within and outside of school, noting that good programming, whether in education or any other sectors, is gender sensitive. It is therefore essential to ensure the improvement of all aspects of education to ensure excellence, so that recognized and measurable outcomes are achieved by all, especially, in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills.

A recent report on the achievement of the MDG 2 by UNESCO reported that, limited resources have regularly been used for growing systems with inadequate attention to quality enhancement in areas such as teacher training and the provision of adequate textbooks (UNESCO, 2015). UNESCO, (2015) strongly advice that expansion in enrolment must be accompanied by attempts to enhance quality of primary education if children are to be attracted to school, stay there and achieve meaningful learning outcomes. Recent assessments of learning achievement in some countries (including Ghana) have shown that a good number of children are acquiring only a small part of the knowledge and skills they are expected to attain. The committee therefore called on member countries and Governments and all other Education For All (EFA) partners to work together to ensure quality basic education for all, regardless of gender, wealth, location, language or ethnic origin (UNESCO, 2015).

There has also been urgent calls and directives from the United Nations, school management, teachers and parents for improvement in quality primary education through the provision of adequate textbooks and supplementary readers, in an attempt to address the challenges facing the Ghana Education Service in achieving quality in primary education (United Nations, 2000; Anzagira, 2015; UNESCO, 2015, ). Due to a catalogue of failures recorded in both the NEA (2011, 2013) and BECE (2009-2014), a number of reports and articles have highlighted the importance of improving the quality of primary education to provide pupils with strong reading, writing and spelling skills for future education and career (Amponsah, 2012; Anzagira, 2015; UNESCO, 2015 ).

Quality Primary education in most Sub-Sahara African countries, including Ghana is still saddled by serious shortages in resources due to increased enrolment. This is seriously undermining the quality primary education process. Elley, (1998) suggest that, one of the most effective way to equip pupils with lifelong skills in reading, writing and spellings in quality primary education is the provision of adequate number of readily available books for pupils to read in school, in order to cultivate the habit of enjoying reading.

According to the UK Department For International Development, 2012 (DFID), the importance of textbooks and supplementary readers in primary education is to help pupils achieve early literacy skills, instill reading habit, develop vocabulary, grammar, comprehension and self-expression . The success of teaching and learning in primary education largely depend on the availability and management of relevant resources to support the process ( Dare, 2005).

It could therefore be suggested that textbooks and supplementary readers are indispensable resources in the quality primary education process and that, the provision of adequate textbooks and supplementary readers for all primary schools in Ghana is the way forward to achieve early literacy skills, , instill reading habit, develop vocabulary, grammar, comprehension and self-expression among primary school pupils. This view is also evident in the way the United Nation have for years promoted a drive towards enhancing quality primary education (UN, 1990; 2000; 2015).

Kumasi is the second largest city in Ghana with a huge number of primary schools. In addition, there are a lot of primary schools in villages around Kumasi. All primary schools in and around Kumasi falls within the national quality primary education programme. Unsatisfactory results from the NEA report (NEA, 2011, 2013) include pupils from Kumasi and it's environ. The report suggested that, over 40% of primary school pupils who took the exams nationwide could not read and the possibility that some of these non-readers come from primary schools in Kumasi and it's environ cannot be ruled out. This report clearly suggest that, primary education in Ghana has a number of challenges that requires good collaborative effort from all stakeholders to address, in order to ensure the delivery of quality primary education tailored to meet the needs of pupils in particular and the nation as a whole.

Inadequate textbooks and supplementary readers, could be a contributing factor to the mass illiteracy and unsatisfactory performance of Primary School Pupils as suggested by the NEA report. This could also have negative impact on students performance at the Junior High School level, resulting in unacceptable early termination of schooling by some students at an early age of between 15 and 16 years.

The United Nations, (UN, 1989 ) indicates that, every child is entitled to the right to quality primary

education. This right requires children to be in school at the right age and remain in school for the full six years of primary education to ensure that they have the basic primary education required for the transformation of society, higher moral standards and contribution to economic growth (UNICEF, 2000). The analysis on the falling standard of education will examine the availability of textbooks and supplementary readers in the provision of quality primary education as well as its impact on education in general.

### **1.1 Statement of the Problem**

For the past five years, despair and uncertainty have clouded Ghana's Education system due to unsatisfactory performance of Primary School Pupils, and its negative impact on BECE results (Amponsah, 2012).

Basic school teachers are moaning about marginal performance of students and limited teaching and learning materials, parents are concerned about their children's unsatisfactory results and future; as most of them find it very challenging to write a single sentence correctly, and the whole nation appears to stare helplessly in anguish and disbelief at the recent past BECE results. (Amponsah, 2012; United Nations, 2015)

Universal Primary Education, which is a global commitment to provide quality basic education for all children, youth and adults has been advocated by the United Nations for over two decades. (World Declaration on Education for All, 1990; World Education Forum ,2000). This important programme formed the second MDG target for member countries of the United Nations. Ghana, being a member country of the United Nations enthusiastically accepted this educational challenge that led to several initiatives (access to education, equity in infrastructure, teacher development, gender equity, ICT in education, school feeding programme, supply of uniforms, exercise books, textbooks among others) to provide Quality Primary Education for all children.

A good number of United Nations country and regional reports, thesis and articles on Ghana's performance on the Universal Primary Education programme have established that a lot have been achieved in relation to increasing enrolment, training more teachers, bridging gender disparity and infrastructure (United Nations Educational, Science and Cultural Organization(UNESCO), 2015; The Forum for Education Reform, 2013).

Most of these reports however acknowledge that, increasing enrolment, training more teachers, bridging gender disparity and providing suitable infrastructure are not the only relevant indicators for Quality Primary Education, and that it will be difficult for Ghana to reach the MDG2 by 2015. Currently we are in 2015 and true to the assertion of these reports, Ghana is far from achieving these goals.

Ghana's educational system has the responsibility to facilitate the achievement of Ghana's Millennium Development Goal Target 2. Despite the education reform in 1987 and the numerous intervention by successive governments, the United Nations and other stakeholders, Ghana as a nation appears to be struggling to build and maintain Quality Primary Education.

Over the past five years, researchers and management of schools in Ghana have raised concerns about the declining state of education in the country, with calls on government and stakeholders to assist in reducing challenges of falling standards of education (Amponsah, J. 2012; Adomonline, 2014; 2014; Anzagira, 2015).

While Education management and parents are strongly blaming government for not doing enough, government ministers are robustly defending government for doing the best (Kwakyee-Ofosu, 2014). In the face of these concerns, adequate research need to be carried out to establish the root causes of the unsatisfactory performance of students, especially at the Primary Education level, which is the foundational level for current and future education and career, hence the need for this study.

#### **1.1.2 Objectives of the Study:**

- To explore and identify possible obstacles for the falling standard of Education in Ghana.
- To assess the impact of these obstacles on education in general.
- To make recommendations to help address the falling standard of Education in Ghana.

#### **1.1.3 Scope of the study**

The scope of the study was on the challenges facing Primary School Education in Kumasi and its environ, with the availability of textbooks and supplementary readers as the main focus.

## **2. Methodology**

In an attempt to explore and identify possible obstacles for the falling standard of Education in Ghana, a mixed method approach which involved a combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods was used to obtain comprehensive views and experiences of respondents. Data was collected through questionnaire and rigorous interview. Two different sets of data were collected for this study, quantitative and qualitative data. Thematic analysis was used in the analysis of the qualitative data in order to help capture the complexities of meaning within the documented data. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was also used to analyse the quantitative data in order to obtain a descriptive statistics to summarize and organize the data for easy understanding.

Descriptive analysis was used to summarize the data, which was presented in tables and expressed as

ratio to make it meaningful and easy to understand. In all, four primary schools were selected for the study. Two of these schools were urban primary schools in Kumasi and two rural primary schools. The choice for these schools was to obtain a representational data on the textbook/pupil ratio in both urban and rural primary schools in general. Ethical approval was sought and obtained from the Head Teachers and Teachers of the four schools. Voluntary informed and written consent was obtained from all participants.

Questionnaires were sent across the four Primary Schools by researchers. Whilst all School Heads and Class Teachers were given questionnaire, Pupils were interviewed. For clarity, understanding and confident self expression, English and Twi were used for pupils interview. Interviews were audio taped and transcribed. All respondents were obtained through purposeful sampling, as they were pupils and teachers in the various Primary School studied. Respondents included Head Teachers (8), Teachers (80) and Pupils (40). Due to the purpose of this study, purposive sampling was deemed appropriate, as targeted respondents were either teachers or pupils in the selected primary schools and could provide comprehensive and useful data for this study. 72 questionnaire were obtained out of the 88 distributed to participants. There were 8 missing data. The study period was June 2014 - December 2015.

## 2.1 Presentation and Analysis of Qualitative Data

To explore and identify possible challenges for the falling standard of Education in Ghana, 40 respondents were interviewed from the pupils sample. Four broad themes, which were supported with relevant quotations from the transcribed rigorous interview emerged from the analysis of the interview data. They include Limited Textbooks, Non-Availability of Supplementary Readers, Financial Constraints and Inability to Read. These four themes are all related to respondents perception, opinions and experiences on textbook and supplementary readers in primary education.

### 2.1.2 Theme 1: Limited Textbooks

The limited textbook theme dominated pupils interview. Pupils were very concerned about the difficulty associated with three or four students sharing one textbook most of the time. They lamented about not being able to read the text from their various positions and had to stretch their necks to catch a glimpse of the text. They also stated that they give up following the text when their neck is hurting and have to rely on what their teachers tell them or what other pupils read from the textbooks. Pupils were of the view that the limited textbooks are having negative impact on their performance.

Table 1: Quotes from pupils (PU) relating to limited textbooks

Pupil	Illustrative Quotes
PU2	"In my class, we have textbooks but they are not enough, three of us share one English textbook."
PU18	"We do not use maths textbooks/workbooks, Madam always write the questions in the maths books on the blackboard for us."
PU26	"I have all the textbooks but since some of my friends do not have, I share mine with them, however, I wish everybody has books so that I can sit down comfortably and enjoy the lesson."
PU35	" I am tired of stretching my neck to look in the textbook, I wish there are enough textbooks for all of us. I enjoy the lesson if we do not use the textbooks and Sir has to do all the talking."
PU40	" I can't remember the last time I looked in any textbook in class, It's not comfortable when you have to share a textbook with somebody for two good periods."
PU13	" We have textbooks at master's office but madam says we are ripping them so she does not give them to us anymore. She is the only one who has the textbook during lessons. Also, at times she will dictate notes from the textbooks for us to write but because my spellings are not good, I find it very difficult to read and understand my own notes."

On the issue of limited textbooks, evidence from studies suggest that if students have access to textbooks and access to reading, they perform better (Cullinan, 2000; Pretorius, 2010). The current textbook situation in the schools under study is disturbing and need urgent attention, to help provide pupils with the basic life skills they will need for the rest of their lives.

### 2.1.2 Theme 2: Non-availability of supplementary readers

In the course of the interview with pupils, the disappointment and frustration on the faces of some of the pupils for their inability to read with understanding was observed. All respondents saw the importance of reading in their education and the need for them to be able to read with understanding in order to pass their exams. Most respondents lamented for not being in any position to acquire a single storybook or have access to any school or public library to help them improve their reading skills.

Table 2: Quotes relating to non-availability of supplementary readers

Pupil	Illustrative Quotes
PU6	"We do not have supplementary readers in school and I don't have books at home, so I do not read."
PU20	"I don't read any book apart from my school textbooks."
PU12	" I love reading but I do not know where to find any public library."
PU7	" I hate reading because I cannot read."

The importance of supplementary readers in quality primary education has been well established (Cullinan, 2000). Unfortunately for most primary school pupils in Ghana, it is impossible to have access to supplementary readers from schools, libraries, bookshops, retailers, older siblings and other relatives. Thus shattering their hopes of good education and bright future.

#### 2.1.3 Theme3 : Financial constraint

The financial constraint theme was also one of the major concerns raised by pupils during the interview, as this has resulted in non-availability of some textbooks and supplementary readers. Pupils were of the view that, poverty, due to unemployment, unfavourable business conditions as a result of frequent power outage and unbearable high cost of living, parents are unable to buy textbooks for them. Pupils explain that, though the school provides them with some textbooks, they are inadequate, therefore parents have to supplement.

Table3 : Quotes relating to financial constraint

Pupil	Illustrative Quotes
PU 4	"High cost of living makes it very difficult for my parents to buy textbooks for me and my four siblings."
PU1	"I live with only my mother who is a seamstress but because of her backache she cannot work with her hand machine. However, because of the many light offs she does not sew much so she has no money for all my school needs."
PU17	"I remember when I was in lower primary my parents use to buy me books, but since I came to upper primary I hardly get all my school textbooks because daddy is out of work and mum's cold store business is gradually collapsing because of regular power cuts."
PU9	"We are five children in my family, my senior sister is at Polytechnic and the four of us in JHS and primary school do not go to school every day. Two of us go to school twice in week one, the other two will go thrice, then in week two, we will go to school thrice and those who went thrice in week one will go twice in week two because my parents do not have enough money to send all of us to school every day."
PU23	"When I ask for textbooks, my father always tell me buying food for the family is a problem and you are worrying me with textbooks."
PU33	"My dad always tell me, have patience, at the moment I can't afford to buy a single textbook for you, when things get better I will buy them. I have been waiting for more than two years without things getting better so I have stopped asking for textbooks."

This studies revealed that some pupils were going through very pathetic educational conditions as they go through the whole six year Primary Education without ever possessing any of the textbooks parents are required to provide. Thus, pupils always rely on teacher's lessons and notes. Pupils were concerned about their inability to obtain these textbooks and were completely lost for words to explain how they feel about the complete absence of some textbooks in the course of their study.

It was also observed that, absentee fathers, break down of family system resulting in single parent, break down of social/financial systems, lack of employment opportunities, large family size and poor economic conditions were huge contributing factors to financial constraints on parents. It also came to light that due to the huge financial constraint on parents, most pupils indulge in the selling of various items to support family financial demands. These activities prevents pupils from going to school regularly and doing any school work at home after school or during the holidays.

#### 2.1.4 Theme 4: Inability to read

Another vital theme that came up strongly in the course of the interview with pupils' was their inability to read fluently. Pupils explained that some of them find it very difficult to read and understand written text, and also have problems with confidently expressing themselves in English language. Pupils lamented that, apart from occasionally reading their textbooks in school, they hardly read any storybooks in School or at home as there are no books to read. It also emerged during the interview that although most of them do not have their own textbooks, there are a few lucky ones among them whose parents have actually provided them with all the seven textbooks required for Primary Education. However, because some of these pupils cannot read fluently and are not in a position to explain what they read, they either leave their textbooks at home or keep them in their school bags during lessons, for fear of being asked to read. Pupils see all these as having adverse effect on their education as most of the time they find it difficult to read and understand examination questions.

Table4 : Quotes relating to inability to read

Pupil	Illustrative Quotes
PU 16	" I can read some words but not much."
PU 21	" I love reading and can read fluently so I always read in class because most of my class mates cannot read."
PU 8	"If you want me to die ask me to read. I hate reading because I cannot read."
PU 29	"In my class, only five of us can read very well and I am one of them."

The inability of pupils to read with understanding and express themselves in English could result in poor academic performance and lack of self confidence.

### 3. Presentation and Analysis of Quantitative Data

This section of the study provides a presentation and description of quantitative data. The data is presented in tables and expressed as ratio for easy reading, understanding and conceptualizing of the results.

**Table 1: Availability of Maths Textbooks**

SUBJECT	2009/2010	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013	2013/2014	AVERAGE
MATHS 1	0.41	0.55	0.51	1.62	1.16	0.84
MATHS 2	0.37	0.36	0.34	0.97	0.89	0.63
MATHS 3	0.4	0.49	0.47	1.05	1.15	0.71
MATHS 4	0.26	0.78	0.37	0.72	0.75	0.51
MATHS 5	0.53	0.49	0.48	0.72	0.67	0.58
MATHS 6	0.29	0.4	0.45	0.7	0.66	0.5

Source: Author's computation (2014)

From Table1, results on the availability of Maths textbooks suggest that Y5 had the highest number of Maths textbooks ( 0.53) in 2009/2010 academic year and Y4 had the least (0.26). The remaining year groups had between 0.41 and 0.29 of Maths textbooks. In the subsequent academic year (2010/2011), Y4 had the highest number of maths textbooks of 0.78 and Y2 had the lowest (0.36). The remaining year groups had Maths textbooks ranging between 0.55 and 0.4. Figures in 2011/2012 academic year suggest a significant loss of maths textbooks in Y4, as the number of textbooks drastically reduced by over 0.5. Thus making Y1 the class with the highest number of maths textbooks of 0.51 in that year and Y4 with the least of 0.34. However, the picture changed considerably in 2012/2013 academic year with a sharp increase in the number of maths textbooks for all year groups. These were as follows: Y1-1.65, Y3-1.05, Y2- 0.97, Y4-0.72, Y5-0.72 and Y6- 0.7. In the following academic year, 2013/2014, the data shows a few reduction in the number of maths textbooks for all year groups and this could be as a result of mal-handling of books, stealing of textbooks, poor handling of textbooks and over use of few textbooks.

On the average data from Table 1 demonstrate that, for the five year period of this study, textbook/pupil ratio for maths was 1:2.This suggest that the number of maths textbooks in the various schools would be enough for only half of pupils in all year groups.

Table2: Availability of English Textbooks

SUBJECT	2009/2010	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013	2013/2014	AVERAGE
ENGLISH 1	0.52	0.48	0.5	1.21	0.96	0.92
ENGLISH 2	0.33	0.37	0.3	0.95	0.9	0.71
ENGLISH 3	0.34	0.36	0.38	0.86	0.97	0.73
ENGLISH 4	0.28	0.14	0.25	0.84	0.78	0.57
ENGLISH 5	0.33	0.26	0.23	0.68	0.65	0.54
ENGLISH 6	0.4	0.4	0.32	0.65	0.61	0.6

Source: Author's computation (2014)

Results on the availability of English textbooks in Table2 revealed that Y1 had the highest number of textbooks ( 0.52) in 2009/2010 academic year and Y4 had the least (0.28). The remaining year groups had between 0.4 and 0.28. In (2010/2011), Y1 had the highest number of English textbooks of 0.48 and Y4 had the lowest (0.14).

The remaining year groups had English textbooks ranging between 0.37 and 0.26. Figures in 2011/2012 suggest that, Y1 had the highest number of textbooks of 0.5 and Y5 with the lowest of 0.23. 2012/2013 academic year shows a boost in the number English textbooks for all year groups as follows: Y1-1.21, Y2- 0.95, Y3- 0.86, Y4-0.84, Y5-68 and Y6- 0.65. During 2013/2014 academic year, the data shows that, with the exception of Y4 which had an increment of about 0.11, English textbooks for all year groups had a slight reduction. On the average, it is estimated that within the five year period of this study, textbook/pupil ratio for English was 1:2. Again it could be suggested from the information in Table 2 that only half of pupils had access to English textbook, which requires two pupils to share one book in the course of English lessons.

**Table3: Availability of Science Textbooks**

SUBJECT	2009/2010	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013	2013/2014	AVERAGE
SCIENCE 1	0.44	0.57	0.47	1.2	1.4	1
SCIENCE 2	0.33	0.34	0.43	1.1	0.96	0.78
SCIENCE 3	0.17	0.2	0.2	0.85	0.96	0.6
SCIENCE 4	0.43	0.55	0.51	0.6	0.57	0.67
SCIENCE 5	0.32	0.31	0.39	0.81	0.78	0.65
SCIENCE 6	0.4	0.42	0.38	0.8	0.75	0.69

Source: Author's computation (2014)

According to the results in Table3, Y1 had the highest number of science textbooks ( 0.44) in 2009/2010 academic year and year 3 had the least (0.17). The remaining year groups had between 0.43 and 0.32. In (2010/2011), Y1 had the highest number of science textbooks of 0.57 and Y3 had the lowest (0.2). The remaining year groups had science textbooks ranging between 0.55 and 0.31. Figures in 2011/2012 suggest that, Y4 had the highest number of science textbooks of 0.51 and Y 3 with the lowest of 0.2. 2012/2013 academic year shows an increase in the number English textbooks for all year groups as follows: Y1-1.2, Y2- 0.1.1, Y3- 0.85, Y4-0.6, Y5-0.81 and Y6- 0.8. During 2013/2014 academic year, the data shows that, Y1 and 3 had additional science textbooks as against that of the previous year. Y1 moved from 1.2 to 1.4 and year three from 0.85 to 0.96. All other year group had a slight reduction. On the average, with the exception of Y1 which had a textbook/pupil ratio of 1:1 all other year group ratio was estimated at 1:2.

The above statistics suggest that two pupils share a copy of the core subjects textbooks at the primary levels in some schools, and that, the idea of each child having one core textbook is yet to be realised.

**Table4: Availability of Ghanaian Language Textbooks**

SUBJECT	2009/2010	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013	2013/2014	AVERAGE
GHANAIAAN LANGUAGE 1	0.95	1.1	0.86	0.89	1	0.9
GHANAIAAN LANGUAGE 2	0.31	0.27	0.36	0.33	0.3	0.32
GHANAIAAN LANGUAGE 3	0.41	0.52	0.43	0.62	0.66	0.53
GHANAIAAN LANGUAGE 4	0.43	0.45	0.49	0.58	0.53	0.5
GHANAIAAN LANGUAGE 5	0.07	0.1	0.11	0.19	0.18	0.13
GHANAIAAN LANGUAGE 6	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.21	0.19	0.17

Source: Author's computation (2014)

Considering the availability of Ghanaian Language textbooks, the data analysis presented in Table 4 indicates that, Y1 had the highest number of textbooks, that was 0.95 in 2009/2010 academic year and Y5 had the lowest with 0.07. The remaining year groups had between 0.41 and 0.15 of Ghanaian Language textbooks. In the subsequent academic year (2010/2011), Y1 had the highest number of Ghanaian Language textbooks of 1.1 and Y5 had the lowest (0.1). The remaining year groups had Ghanaian Language textbooks ranging between 0.52 and 0.15. Figures in 2011/2012 academic suggest that Y1 had the highest number of Ghanaian Language textbooks of 0.86 and Y5 had the lowest with 0.11 . In 2012/2013 academic Y1, 3 and 4 saw a little increase in the number of textbooks with few reduction in the number of Ghanaian Language textbooks in the remaining year groups, compared to that of the previous year. In the following academic year, 2013/2014, the data shows a slight increase in Y1 and 3, with a further reduction in the remaining year groups. On the average data from Table 4 demonstrates that for the five year period of this study, textbook/pupil ratio for Ghanaian Language was approximately 1:2 for Y1, 3 and 4. 1:3 for Y2 and 1:4 for Y5 and 6.

The above data suggest that much attention was not given to the study of Ghanaian Language in Primary Education like the core subjects, as it was one of the subjects with few textbooks. However, Y1 had an encouraging number of Ghanaian Language textbooks throughout the study period and it could be suggested that, this was due to the realisation of the importance of helping beginners to grasp the skills of reading their native language, which could be easily transferred to the reading of English, as most of the Ghanaian Language alphabet have similar sounds like the English alphabet.

Table5: Availability of ICT Textbooks

SUBJECT	2009/2010	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013	2013/2014	AVERAGE
ICT 1	0.36	0.31	0.27	0.48	0.43	0.37
ICT 2	0.65	0.57	0.78	0.88	0.58	0.69
ICT 3	0.51	0.59	0.55	0.72	0.81	0.64
ICT 4	0.7	0.73	0.79	1	0.94	0.83
ICT 5	0.66	0.65	0.72	0.9	0.88	0.76
ICT 6	0.79	0.77	0.75	0.96	0.87	0.83

Source: Author's computation (2014)

Results from Table 5 suggest that, on the availability of ICT textbooks, Y6 had the highest number of textbooks, that was 0.79 in 2009/2010 academic year and Y1 had the lowest with 0.36. The rest of the year groups had between 0.66 and 0.51 of ICT textbooks. In the subsequent academic year (2010/2011), Y6 had the highest number of ICT textbooks of 0.77 and Y1 had the lowest (0.31). The remaining year groups had ICT textbooks ranging between 0.73 and 0.57. Figures in 2011/2012 academic year implies that Y4 had the highest number of ICT textbooks of 0.79 and Y1 had the lowest with 0.27. In 2012/2013 academic year all year groups saw an increase in the supply of ICT textbooks, with Y4 leading with 1 and Y1 with the lowest of 0.48. In the following academic year, 2013/2014, the data shows a few reduction of ICT textbooks in most year groups. On the average with the exception of Y1 which had an average ratio of 1:3, all other year groups had 1:2. Results from Table 5 suggested that ICT was the only subject with the highest number of textbooks throughout the five year study period. This could be due to the need to equip pupils with skills for the current information age sweeping across the world. Unfortunately, the data suggest that much attention was not given to Y1.

Table6: Availability of Creative Art Textbooks

SUBJECT	2009/2010	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013	2013/2014	AVERAGE
CREATIVE ART 1	0.29	0.29	0.24	0.43	0.39	0.33
CREATIVE ART 2	0.33	0.29	0.41	0.48	0.45	0.39
CREATIVE ART 3	0.45	0.53	0.49	0.69	0.75	0.58
CREATIVE ART 4	0.3	0.3	0.32	0.44	0.41	0.35
CREATIVE ART 5	0.08	0.08	0.09	0.14	0.14	0.11
CREATIVE ART 6	0.18	0.17	0.16	0.19	0.18	0.18

Source: Author's computation (2014)

The results from Table 6 suggest that, on the availability of Creative Art textbooks, Y3 had the highest number of textbooks of 0.45 in 2009/2010 academic year and Y5 had the lowest with 0.08. The remaining year groups had between 0.33 and 0.18 of Creative Art textbooks. In the subsequent academic year (2010/2011), Y3 had the highest number of Creative Art textbooks of 0.53 and Y5 had the lowest (0.08). The remaining year groups had Creative Art textbooks ranging between 0.29 and 0.17. Figures in 2011/2012 academic suggest that Y3 had the highest number of Creative Art textbooks of 0.49 and Y5 had the lowest with 0.09. In 2012/2013 academic year all year groups saw an increase in the supply of Creative Art textbooks, with Y3 leading with 0.69 and Y5 with the lowest of 0.14. In the following academic year, 2013/2014, the data shows that with the exception of Y3 with a slight increment, all other year groups saw a slight reduction.

On the average Y3 recorded the highest ratio of 1:2, Y1,2 and 4 with 1:3 and finally Y5 and 6 with 1:4. Data from Table 6 also implies that creative art is not given enough attention like the core subjects.

Table7: Availability of RME Textbooks

SUBJECT	2009/2010	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013	2013/2014	AVERAGE
RME 1	0	0	0	0	0	0
RME 2	0	0	0	0	0	0
RME 3	0	0	0	0	0	0
RME 4	0	0	0	0	0	0
RME 5	0.003	0.003	0.003	0.05	0.05	0.002
RME 6	0	0	0	0	0	0

Source: Author's computation (2014)

Data from Table 7 suggest that with the exception of Y5 with very few RME textbooks ranging between 0.05 and 0.002 there were no RME textbooks for all the other year groups under study. Data from Fig 7 suggests that with the exception of year 5 which had a textbook/pupil ratio of more than 1:4 throughout the study period, the remaining year groups had no RME textbooks.

It could also be observed that there was no data for supplementary reading books as the schools did not have them at all.

#### 4. RESULTS FROM THE STUDY

In attempt to unearth possible challenges resulting in the falling standard of Education in Ghana, this study set

out to explore and identify some of these challenges, with the availability of textbooks and supplementary readers as the main focus. The questionnaire and interview helped to reveal some of the challenges.

Information from the data suggests that the state of the textbook/pupil ratio in the schools studied had adverse effect on pupils performance as none of the participated schools had enough textbooks for all pupils. Out of the seven textbooks (English, Maths, Science, ICT, RME, Ghanaian Language and Creative Art) required for quality primary education in Ghana, only Y1 science textbook met GES textbook/pupil ratio target of 1:1. Government could not meet the GES target for textbook/pupil ratio of 1:1 during the five year study period for all other subjects.

It was observed that, even though the availability of ICT textbooks did not meet the target ratio of 1:1, it was the only textbook with a stable textbook/pupil ratio of 1:2 throughout the study period for Y 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6. The study also revealed that with the exception of ICT, during the first three years of the study period, that is from 2009/2010 to 2011/2012 academic years, the textbook/pupil ratio was between 1:3 and 1:4 for most subjects and year groups.

However, substantial improvement in the textbook/pupil ratio was made in 2012/2013 academic year in Maths, English and Science, which also had an impact on the textbook/pupil ratio of the 2013/2014 academic year. This improvement could be due to government supply of textbooks.

This improvement brought the textbook/pupil ratio from 1:3 and 1:4 to 1:2 for Maths, English and Science, (Education Sector Performance Report, 2014).

It was also observed that the improvement in the textbook/pupil ratio during the last two years of the study period did not reflect on Y5 and Y6 Ghanaian Language and Creative Art textbook/pupil ratio. This shows that, during the five year study period, Y5 and Y6 maintained a constant textbook/pupil ratio of 1:4 in Ghanaian Language and Creative Art.

However, Y1, Y3 and Y4 had an average textbook/pupil ratio of 1:2 for Ghanaian Language and Creative Art, while year 2 had a ratio of 1:3 This suggests that Ghanaian Language and Creative Art were being marginalized in the Quality Primary Education process as they were the subjects with the lowest textbook/pupil ratio.

The study revealed that, Maths, English, Science and ICT were the subjects with the highest textbook/pupil ratio of 1:2 in most year groups throughout the study period. On the other hand, within the same study period, Ghanaian Language and Creative Art mostly had the lowest textbook/pupil ratio of 1:3 and 1:4 for most of the year groups. It could be seen from the quantitative data that there was not much data to establish the textbook/pupil ratio for RME, and also there was no data for supplementary readers at all during the study period, as there were no supplies in the schools because parents have to buy them for their children. Generally, it could be observed that with the exception of ICT textbooks, Y1 had more textbooks than Y6 and this could be due to parents preparedness to spend more on first time school pupils than graduating pupils.

Data from the qualitative data also revealed that pupils were aware of the challenges ( limited textbooks, non-availability of supplementary readers, inability to read and financial constraints) preventing them from doing well in school and were seriously concerned, due to the impact on their future studies and career.

## 5. DISCUSSION

In order to implement measures to improve primary education in Ghana, it was essential to establish and understand the nature of the challenges hampering the delivering of quality primary education and its impact on pupils. In this study, Head Teachers, Teachers and Pupils from four primary schools sympathetically expressed their concerns about the state of textbooks and supplementary readers in primary education.

Quality Primary Education has been hailed worldwide as the best way to give every child the opportunity to develop his/her natural potential to the fullest without discrimination in any form or shape, as it is the means to develop and transform individuals, society and economy (Nagel, 2003). This concept has become very important in both national and international education for the past two decades as studies show that primary education without quality has adverse effect on future education and career (Gutman &Feinstein, 2008).

On the whole, primary education in Ghana appears to have some challenges that need to be addressed to improve and maintain Quality Primary Education. Data from this study suggest that, the Ghana Education Service textbook/pupil ratio target of 1:1 could not be met during the study period. This was confirmed by the Minister of Education and the Deputy Minister of Communication (Opoku- Agyemeng, 2015; Ofosu, 2015) that, until 2013 and 2014, the textbook/pupil ratio was 1:3 and 1:4 respectively.

In spite of this, a report from the Global Information Technology, compiled by the World Economic Forum(WEF) and also reported by the Ministry of Education stated that, Ghana was at the top of Maths and Science in Africa in 2014 and 48th in the world ( WEF, 2015; Opoku-Agyemeng, 2015). The assessment for this great accomplishment was based on a number of achievements including textbook/pupil ratio. According to the report, Ghana currently has a textbook/pupil ratio of 4:1 and according to the Ministry of Education, before this feat, the textbook/pupil ratio was 1:3. This claim has also been made by the deputy Minister of communication

(Opoku- Agyemeng, 2015; Ofosu, 2015). However, results from this study suggest that the textbook pupil ratio of 4:1 as reported by the World Economic Forum and reiterated by the Ministry of Education is not nationwide.

The textbook/pupil ratio in this study suggest that pupils do not have enough textbooks for the various subjects. In addition to the limited number of textbooks available to pupils, it came to light that pupils do not always have access to these limited textbooks. Most of the time, the textbooks are only used by the teachers. This could be due to the fact that teachers do not want pupils to damage or take the limited textbooks home without permission as they were not sure when the next supply would be made.

By this behaviour it could be suggested that teachers were genuinely protecting the limited textbooks in stock so that, at least, they will always have copies to use. This also suggests that pupils do not have regular access to these textbooks and do not read regularly in school.

To achieve quality education, pupils should have access to their textbooks in school during lessons and at home for their home work, revision and to read them. The various textbooks should be in the possession of pupils throughout the primary education, especially where the textbook is the only resource available to them. Anything short of this undermines quality primary education.

Usually, when textbooks are not sufficient in schools, Parent Teacher Association (PTA) Executives encourage their members who can afford, to provide their children with relevant textbooks so that children whose parents cannot afford will use the limited ones in the schools. Unfortunately, this study revealed that, even though few parents have managed to provide their children with some textbooks, majority of the parents could not afford due to financial constraints. The inability of parents to provide their children with the necessary textbooks suggests that these children are being denied quality education due to poverty. The Universal Primary Education and the Quality Primary Education programme clearly states that no child should be denied quality primary education because of poverty, and that primary education should enable children to reach their fullest potential in terms of cognitive, emotional and creative capacities (UNESCO, 2005). Results from this study suggest that, thousands of Ghanaian children could be denied the opportunity to develop their potentials to the fullest due to poverty and insufficient textbooks.

In the cause of limited textbooks and parents inability to supplement government efforts in the provision of textbooks and supplementary readers due to financial constraints, it is expected that pupils can turn to either school or public libraries to read and borrow relevant textbooks and supplementary readers to help them learn and do their homework. Unfortunately, the study revealed that, the schools reviewed did not have their own libraries. Also, most of the pupils have no knowledge of any public library, not even the Ashanti Regional Library which is very popular even to foreigners due to its location in the Kumasi Cultural Centre and portrays the culture of Ghana to the world. Additionally, due to location and financial constraints on parents, most pupils were not in the position to visit public libraries.

Another challenge facing the quality primary education in Ghana is the inability of pupils to read either English or Ghanaian Language fluently with understanding. If primary school pupils, at the very basic level of their education, where they are expected to acquire reading skills have no textbooks, supplementary readers or any other relevant books and Teaching Learning Materials (TLM) to read, the outcome is obvious, they cannot read very well with understanding. Results from the National Education Assessment (NEA) for P3 and P6 pupils across the country, testing their knowledge and understanding of reading comprehension suggest that, in 2011 and 2013, 42.4% of P3 pupils were likely to be non-readers for both years and 41.4% of P6 pupils in public schools were considered to be non-readers in 2013 (NEA, 2013). In another development, after accessing the outcome of the Universal Primary Education after 15 years of its implementation, the UN conceded that as many as 250 million pupils worldwide cannot read and write after 4 years of primary schooling (United Nations, 2015). The report further explains that, without these basic skills, the basis for all future learning is severely undermined (UN, 2015). These statistics are not surprising as pupils in most developing countries like Ghana, do not have sufficient textbooks and supplementary readers to read to improve their reading skills and build their vocabulary.

The implication of the complete absence of textbooks and supplementary readers for pupils to read in school and at home is that, pupils are denied the opportunity to improve their reading skills, enrich their vocabulary, develop higher reasoning and critical thinking (National Endowment for the Arts, 2007). Reading skills are vital for children's development, and numerous studies have shown a connection between proficiency in reading and overall achievement (Cullinan, 2000), as pupils who can read with understanding are more likely to perform better in exams than those who cannot read with understanding. Pupils who can read with understanding have the ability to comprehend various sentences and the organizational structure of a text. Therefore, when given any work, they understand what they are required to do. This study have also found a strong relationship between reading and vocabulary knowledge. Pupils with a wide range of vocabulary generally read very well, and since reading is the most suitable way to acquire vocabulary, pupils involved in extensive reading are good readers. In another development, research findings in applied linguistics and reading research, continuously portray a strong relationship between reading proficiency and academic achievement from the primary school through to university level, and students who read a lot with understanding more often

perform very well ( Pretorius, 2010). From the above discussion, it could be suggested that, reading is very essential for the achievement of quality primary education as well as all future academic success. Denying primary school pupils books to read deprives them of all future academic success and a better life .

Insufficient textbooks, limited parental support, complete absence of other relevant textbooks, supplementary readers and library facilities in primary education suggest that some pupils complete primary education with very limited knowledge, yet, the acquisition of knowledge is one of the objectives of the Quality Primary Education Programme (EFA, 2014). Although pupils can learn in many ways, books are the best source of acquiring knowledge. Apart from the acquisition of knowledge, reading of books activates the mind in the same way as the muscle is activated through exercise (Carson, 1992). The acquisition of knowledge in Primary Education is very important as it could be translated to further education and skills. It also provides avenue that leads to understanding and insight (Carson, 1992). The power of knowledge at the primary level of education cannot be underestimated because of its ability to transform and liberate, no matter ones circumstance. "Knowledge enriches life, makes people better and makes society and the world safe" (Carson, 1992:216).

These revelations does not mean all primary pupils under study could not read and write. A good number of them were doing very well but the point is, pupils have different abilities and capabilities in whatever they do, and also come from different backgrounds. Some pupils are very talented and are able to understand whatever they are taught in class without difficulty and can make it to the top irrespective of their family financial status. Others are slow learners and have to bury their heads in textbooks for several hours to understand what they have been taught, and with extra tuition, relevant books and encouragement, they grasps what they have been taught and once they grasp it, it remains with them for life and can apply that knowledge when necessary. However, there are others who fall in the second group but have no access to books to bury their heads in, no extra tuition and no encouragement due to family's financial constraints. Such pupils are sadly left behind and termed as academic incompetent. No, they are not. These pupils have been let down by the system due to poverty. The inability of pupils to perform better at school could be a recipe for school dropout . In Ghana, between 10% to 15% of primary school pupils drop out of primary education every year (MOE, 2010; UNDP, 2012).

To reduce school dropout and provide every pupil with quality primary education, enough textbooks, supplementary readers and Teaching Learning Materials should be made available to all primary school pupils.

Although this study involves a small number of primary schools (4), the findings of this study, coupled with the educational reports from UN, UNICEF, USAID, Government and NGOs on limited textbooks and supplementary readers for primary education in Ghana, suggest that, the educational foundation for most children in Ghana is very fragile. When a huge structure is mounted on a fragile foundation what happens? The answer is obvious. That is, the entire structure will collapse and that is exactly why BECE results in Ghana are not satisfactory. According to the NEA report for 2013, about 41.4% of P6 pupils in public schools could not read. Why? They did not have sufficient textbooks or supplementary readers to read, parents could not buy books for them, teachers were protecting limited resources and they had no access to any library. According to a Ghanaian adage, the type of stew you provide workers on your farm, will determine the type of work they will do on the farm. Studies also suggest that the input in quality education determines the output or outcome (Elley, (1998)).

After acquiring this weak foundation, pupils move on to Junior High School (JHS), Which is a continuation of primary education and not a place of second chance for those who came with weak foundation. At the JHS level, the subjects are many, textbooks are many, notes are a lot, home work and class work are very demanding and challenging. Pupils from primary school without basic skills like reading, writing, and spelling could be overwhelmed by the enormous work at the JHS level.

They might find it very challenging to concentrate, manage their time, organize their work, plan for assignments and review study material. When faced with this huge responsibility, students are more likely to give up on Education or may go through the system and come out without qualification and basic life skills, thus defeating the aim of quality education for all children.

In 2009, BECE results was 50.21%; in 2010, it was 49.12; this was followed by 46.93% in 2011; then in 2012, 99.6% was reported, however this later turned out to be 65% as reported by the Statesman (thestatesmanonline.com, 2013). In 2013, the result was 53.5 and 60% in 2014 (Ministry of Education, 2014). These results show a study decline from 2009 to 2011, with improvement in 2012, but slipped back again in 2013, before a slight increase in 2014. These results suggest that on the average, approximately 50% of JHS students do not gain admission to Senior High School due to unsatisfactory performance. When primary school pupils do not acquire the fundamental skills in reading, writing and spelling, the basis for all future learning is severely damaged. Since about 41.9% of P6 pupils who took the NEA test in 2013 could not read with understanding, the effect will most likely have negative impact on BECE results. When the BECE 2011 results were released, government quickly put in desperate measures at the JHS level to improve students' performance. In 2012, a 99.6% pass rate which later on turned out to be 65% was reported ( thestatesmanonline.com , 2013 - ).

Then in 2013, the result was back to 53.5. Evidence from this study and the performance of year 3 and 6 pupils at the (NEA, 2013) suggest that, the root cause of huge failures at the BECE examination does not lie at the JHS level but at the foundation (primary). In the recent biggest global school ranking in Mathematics and Science conducted by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), Ghana secured the last position out of 76 countries. Haffer, 2015 lamented that he was not surprised at Ghana's unenviable position due to the unsatisfactory performance of students in the Northern, Upper East Upper West, Volta and Central Regions of the country. He also suggested that key infrastructure and policy direction that should enhance quality education in Ghana are lacking. In another development, Akomea, 2015 also attributed this unacceptable performance to lack of sound investment in the nation's educational sector. These revelations reaffirms the findings of this study that most pupils and students at the Basic educational level cannot read, do not understand examination questions and are not able to provide correct answers to help them pass examinations.

It is suggested that any effort to rectify the situation should be directed at the quality primary education programme and not the JHS. If primary school pupils acquire reading, spelling and writing skills before moving on to JHS, a good number of them can write and pass BECE examination easily.

The availability of textbooks and supplementary readers and pupils/students performance in national examinations are important indicators of quality education. Therefore, if textbooks and supplementary readers are not sufficient in primary education and a good number of pupils/ students are failing national examinations, it could be suggested that, Ghana as a country is promoting quantity education at the expense of quality education.

In advancing the need for reading in developing countries, Greaney, (1996) suggested that to increase and sustain literacy levels, adequate quality reading materials have to be the focus. Elley, (1998) also suggest that essential inputs required to raise literacy in quality primary education include adequate amount of readily available books, enough time for pupils to read in school and to enjoy reading on their own. In an attempt to review the research behind the view that large quantities of reading are the most important factor in vocabulary development and overall reading competence, Anderson, (1993) states that, if students read just 15 minutes a day in school and 15 minutes a day outside of school, they will be reading more than a total of one million words per year. If 20,000 of these are new words and, as research suggests, at least 5% of these are learned, Anderson estimates 1000 words a year will be learned, much more than would normally be learned by direct vocabulary instruction. Reading also surpasses oral language via conversation and TV as a source of vocabulary enrichment. Anderson cites one study which found that even comic books provided at least a two times richer lexical environment for children than did talking with adults.

Jiang, (2011) also states that, pupils who are good in reading and writing their native language are more likely to read and write a second language easily. Results from this study revealed that Ghanaian language was one of the subjects with the lowest number of textbooks. This could have a negative impact on pupils ability to read and write their own native language and could subsequently affect their ability to read and write a second language. To help primary school pupils acquire literacy skills, Ghanaian language must be taken seriously at the primary level, as performance in literacy skills transfer across languages.

Talking about inadequate textbooks for primary education in the country, most of these books are published and printed in Foreign countries, while these books could be easily produced locally to ensure regular and sustainable textbook supply throughout every academic year. Ghana currently have a vibrant publishing industry, made up of over 150 small, medium and large scale printing industries; with the capacity to print all textbooks for basic and secondary education in Ghana. Apart from the production of textbooks for basic and secondary education, these local publishing industries have the technical expertise to produce all other Teaching Learning Materials. Currently, these publishing industries are producing under capacity while pupils in some primary schools have limited or no textbooks (Education Sector Performance Report, 2014; Anzagira, 2015). At the onset of the Universal Primary Education for all children, the UN advised member countries on the need to build strong local publishing industry to ensure the regular supply of textbooks for the Quality Primary Education Programme (United Nations, 2000). The UN recognized the importance of the local publishing industry and regarded it as an important stakeholder in quality education, especially in developing countries like Ghana. Also, the UN expressed the need for member countries to match progress in accessibility of primary education with the corresponding resources. that In addition to enrolling all children of school going age, all countries will need to ensure that there are a sufficient amount of teachers, classrooms and Teaching Learning Materials (TLM) to meet the demand (UN Facts Sheet, 2015).

Unfortunately, Successive governments have not fully entrusted the provision of textbooks into the hands of the local publishing industry and do not regard it as an important stakeholder in the quality education process. Ghana has a vibrant publishing industry, capable of producing all textbooks for basic Education in Ghana, yet, the ultimate aim of the quality education programme is being defeated by the absence of sufficient textbooks and supplementary readers.

Equal access to quality primary education is an important educational policy target for all countries. This framework, requires the availability of quality teaching and learning materials for all pupils. Textbooks and

supplementary readers are vital resources for quality primary education, especially in developing countries like Ghana, where they are the only means of acquiring information, knowledge and skills for most teachers and pupils (The World Bank, *A Chance to Learn*, 2001; Hunt, 2006). To provide pupils with reading, writing and spelling skills for quality primary education requires adequate quantities of textbooks and supplementary readers for every child (Department for International Development, 2012).

The importance of textbooks and supplementary readers in primary education is to help pupils achieve early literacy skills, instill reading habit, develop vocabulary, grammar, comprehension and self-expression. The success of teaching and learning in primary education will more likely depend on resources made available to support the process and how these resources are managed. It is obvious that schools without textbooks or learning materials will not be able to do an effective and efficient job, hence the importance of textbooks and supplementary readers for quality primary education. (Dare, 2005).

## 6. Conclusion

The importance of quality primary education for all children cannot be underestimated, as it has been widely accepted by Government and the international community as the most effective and efficient way to ensure quality primary education for all children, regardless of gender, wealth, location, language or ethnic origin. Achieving quality primary education requires a number of inputs including textbooks, workbooks and supplementary readers.

Academic performance of primary school pupils and Junior High School students in Ghana has falling in recent years, and to help ascertain the challenges resulting in these poor performances, this study set out to identify challenges facing quality primary education in Kumasi and its environs, with the availability of textbooks and supplementary readers as the focus. A mixed method approach such as questionnaire and rigorous interview were used. A broad range of literature on education, primary education, quality, textbooks and supplementary readers were reviewed. The review of literature lighted the importance of quality in primary education. The literature review revealed the vital role of textbooks and supplementary readers in primary education, especially in developing countries. The study findings to reveal the attainment of the study objectives has been presented. The study limitations and areas for further studies are also presented.

The findings of this study as revealed by the questionnaire and interview suggest that, Schools that participated in the study did not have enough textbooks and supplementary readers for all pupils in all seven subjects for primary education during the study period. Ghanaian Language and Creative Art were not given due attention.

This study also revealed that, the limited textbooks were not always made available to pupils due to the uncertainty of when more textbooks would be supplied. It also came to light that most pupils had no access to supplementary readers and the only source of reading materials for these pupils were the textbooks, and that, some pupils have never read any story book throughout their primary education.

It also emerged that pupils have no access to school or public libraries and apart from the government textbooks, workbooks and teachers guide, most teachers have no other relevant books to keep them abreast with changes and developments in the various subjects they teach.

It also came to light that, a good number of pupils could not read and write with understanding and lastly, support from the communities, PTAs and NGOs for extra textbooks and supplementary readers were not forthcoming due to financial constraints.

Findings from this study suggest that, Ghana is struggling to build and maintain quality primary education. Most primary school pupils cannot read and write due to limited number of textbooks and the absence of supplementary readers and library facilities.

This study concludes that although Ghana has achieved a lot in increasing enrolment, training more teachers, bridging gender disparity and infrastructure, these achievements are not enough to provide pupils with the basic reading, writing, spellings and expression skills they desperately need to enhance their future. Thus, the provision of adequate textbooks, supplementary readers and library facilities for all primary schools in Ghana is very essential in building and maintaining quality primary education for all pupils.

This study is limited to 4 primary schools in Ghana and the results may not be generalized to other primary schools. An independent rigorous studies on the textbook/pupil ratio nationwide is required to reveal the actual textbook/pupil ratio nationwide.

## Recommendations

1. An independent evaluation of the textbook/pupil ratio in primary schools nationwide need to be undertaken by Government and the Ministry of Education.
2. Government and the Ministry of Education to Generation internal funds for a 100% production of textsbooks and supplementary readers by the local printing industry.
3. Government in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and all stakeholders in Education to help

establish School and mobile libraries across the country.

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