

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

FACTORS AFFECTING ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AMONG
REGISTERED GENERALNURSING (RGN) DIPLOMA STUDENTS IN
NURSING TRAINING COLLEGES IN ASHANTI REGION OF GHANA

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BY

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Education

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DECLARATION

Candidate's Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own original research and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or elsewhere.

Candidate's Signature:..... Date:.....

Name: Norbert Akobaase Akurigo

Supervisors' Declaration

We hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the thesis were supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of thesis laid down by the University of Cape Coast.

Principal Supervisor's Signature:..... Date:.....

Name: Professor Yaw A. Ankomah

Co-Supervisor's Signature: Date:.....

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ABSTRACT

Identification of factors which affect students' progression, performance and completion is instrumental in the planning and development of programme to ensure best outcomes for both the institution and the student. This notwithstanding, it appears there is some literature gap on this subject matter in Ghana in relation to the academic performance of nursing training college students. It is not yet known why some nursing students fail to attain the standards expected of them. This study sought to examine the factors that affect academic performance of RGN diploma students in nursing training colleges in the Ashanti Region. Data were elicited with a questionnaire from a sample of 214 students and 88 tutors for the study. Specifically, the study sought to find out the socio-demographic characteristics and the school environmental factors affecting students academic performance. It was also to ascertain whether students' indiscipline and the teaching style of tutors do affect the academic performance of RGN diploma nursing students. The study adopted the cross-sectional study design. It was found from the study that entry aggregate and occupation of mothers were socio-demographic factors which influenced the academic performance of the students. It was also observed that various factors such as library in the school, and Internet connectivity for students' use, influence academic performance of students. On the basis of the findings it was recommended that Heads/Principals of Nursing Training institutons should put in measures such as infrastructural development to ensure that the nursing training institutions have a conducive learning environment.

KEY WORDS

Academic Performance

Ghana

Learning Environment

Nursing Students

Students Performance

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DEDICATION

To my family for their unwavering support throughout this journey.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

In order to turn out quality graduates for the production of manpower for a country's economic and social development, the students' academic performance plays an important role. Employers also place emphasis on the academic performance of students in hiring workers especially in the case of fresh graduates (Alos, Caratone, & David, 2015). Both parents and teachers have a responsibility to provide students with facilities that will promote academic performance. If students are equipped with good knowledge and skills, they will be able to help in the development of the nation (Daniyal, Nawaz, Aleem, & Hassan, 2011). On the other hand, it is the responsibility of the students to also put in their best efforts for good academic performance.

Students' academic gain and learning performance are affected by numerous factors including gender, age, teaching faculty, students schooling, father/guardian social economic status, residential area of students, medium of instructions in schools, tuition trend, daily study hour and accommodation as hostelries or day scholar. Studies have been conducted about the factors contributing to student performance at the different study levels. According to Shoukat, Zubair, Fahad, Hamid, and Awals (2013) age, father/guardian social economic status and daily study hours significantly affect the academic performance of students. Considine and Zappala (2002) observed that parent's income and social status positively affect the student test score in

examination. Other factors that affect a students' academic performance include the educational background of the parents, and the behaviour of teachers in the classroom. Their contribution in the academic achievements of the students and the importance of co-curricular activities in their educational achievements (Agus & Makhbul, 2002).

The involvement of students in co-curricular activities has also been found to affect the academic performance of students positively. These activities enable a student to learn strong character and health, enable the students to communicate effectively, develop the habit of sportsmanship and teamwork, build up moral and ethical values among students and widen their creative thinking (Daniyal, Nawaz, Aleem, & Hassan, 2011). Afe (2001) indicated that teachers play a role in the academic performance of students since it is the teacher who transforms the policies into practical actions which is developed during interaction and collaboration with the students. Academic competence, test competence, time management skills, study strategies and test anxiety have been identified as important factors that may affect students' academic performance (Sansgiry, Bhosela, & Sail, 2006).

The academic performance of nursing students can not be overlooked: Monitoring their performance, abilities and the expectations of them are important in indentifying their educational needs to help them develop professionally (Marshburn, Keehner, & Swanson, 2009; Robb & Dietert, 2002). Nursing programs across the world use a variety of measures to determine the academic performance of nursing students including grade point average. Empirical studies have proven that numerous factors affect academic

performance of nursing students (Damayanthi & Dharmaratne, 2002). The previous educational outcomes of students performance is a good indicator of the students future academic performance (Alos, Caratone, & David, 2015).

The nursing competence may be defined as the ability to perform nursing duties and to effectively integrate cognitive, emotional and psychomotor skills during nursing cares (EdCaN, 2008). This however, can not be the responsibility of the student alone. For a student to be able to have nursing competence largely depends on some school related factors as well. Some of these school related factors include qualified and well trained teachers, adequate facilities, and good instructional materials. Non-school factors include poverty, low educational attainment and illiteracy of parents and poor health and nutrition (Alos, Caranto & David, 2015).

Following from the above, one can say academic performance of nursing students is affected by the teaching process of teachers and the learning style of students as well as other environmental and background characteristics.

Statement of the Problem

Academic success has a great impact on a student's self-esteem, motivation, and perseverance in higher education. Poor academic performance or high failure rates possibly will result in unacceptable levels of attrition, and increased cost of education. This will also reduce the admission prospects for tertiary students seeking higher degrees. As such, students' academic performance has always been a topic of interest for educators. Educators and

researchers have been interested in identifying and understanding the variables that contribute to academic excellence. Numerous researchers have identified demographic, socio-economic, family and school factors as variables contributing to students' academic performance (Farooq, Chaudhry, Shafiq, & Berhanu, 2011; Crosnoe, Johnson, & Elder, 2004).

Several studies have been conducted on the academic performance of nursing training colleges students. For example, Confer, Turnwald, and Wallenberg (1995) in their study found academic factors as better predictors of students' academic performance than non-academic factors. In a study conducted by Medigan (2006) previous health-related experience, postsecondary educational qualifications, background, student entry type, and gender were all found to be significant predictors of first-year academic performance. It was evident that certain academic and non-academic variables could play a very important role in prediction of the academic performance of the students.

In Ghana, Bell, Rominski, Bam, Donkor and Lori (2014) found that there is inadequate tutors in nursing training institutions which is mostly as a result of poor remuneration for tutors as compared to governmental agencies such as the Ministry of Health. Doe, Oppong and Sarfo (2018) in their study found that students' socio-demographic and academic characteristics such as gender, campus residential status, and entry grade influence the outcome of the final licensure exams of nursing students.

Identification of factors which affect students' progression, performance and completion is instrumental in the planning and

development of programs to ensure best outcomes for both the institution and the student. The Nurses and Midwifery Council (NMC) of Ghana and the various school academic affairs have noted that some students perform highly well and others do not perform well (The NMTC'S office Records on NMC Results from 2010-2013). There is lack of sufficient research in the case of RGN diploma awarding nursing and midwifery institutions in Ashanti Region as to what specific factors contribute to academic performance of the students. There is therefore the need to conduct a study to examine the factors that affect academic performance of RGN diploma students of nursing and midwifery training colleges in the Ashanti Region.

Purpose of Study

The main purpose of the study was to examine the factors that affect academic performance of nursing diploma students in Ashanti Region. The study specifically sought to:

1. Find out the socio-demographic characteristics affecting academic performance of RGN diploma students;
2. Examine the school environmental factors that affect academic performance of RGN diploma students in Ashanti Region.
3. Ascertain whether students indiscipline affect academic performance of RGN diploma students in Ashanti Region.
4. Explore the teaching style of tutors in academic performance of RGN diploma nursing institutions.

Research Questions

The research questions that guided the study were as follows:

1. What socio-demographic characteristics affect academic performance of RGN diploma students?
2. What school environmental factors affect academic performance of RGN diploma students in Ashanti Region?
3. In what ways does student indiscipline affect academic performance of RGN diploma students in Ashanti Region?
4. In what ways does the teaching style of tutors affect the academic performance of students in the RGN diploma nursing institutions?

Significance of the Study

The study will provide first-hand insight into the factors influencing the academic performance of nursing students in Ghana. For instance, it will unveil the socio-demographic characteristics influencing academic performance and the school environmental factors that also influence academic performance of students. The results of the research, hopefully, would justify the need for the implementation of relevant policies by government and other stakeholders to regulate activities to help improve on the academic performance of nursing students. It is also expected that the current study will help fill the knowledge gap on the subject of academic performance of nursing students in Ghana and further serve as reference material for students, scholars and other researchers who may want to go into similar studies.

Delimitation

This study covers nursing students at the various nursing training colleges in Ashanti Region.

Limitation

The study used the epi data in calculating the sample size. While the epi data sampling software has a merit of being representative of the population it carries larger errors from the sample size than that found in stratified sampling and it lacks the use of available knowledge concerning the population. This notwithstanding, it is found to be free from errors in classification and totally free from bias and prejudice.

Organisation of the Study

The study is organized into five distinct chapters. The first chapter is introductory in nature and gives the background of the study, statement of the problem, research questions, the objectives, significance of the study, and organization of the study. The second chapter deals with the literature review, theoretical review and the conceptual framework.

Chapter three highlights the methods used in collecting data and the analysis of the data. It covers subtopics such as research design, population, sampling size and sampling procedures used, data collection, sampling techniques and data analysis. Chapter four is a presentation of data and analysis, which provides an overview of the variables that were studied. The final chapter, chapter five gives a summary of findings, conclusions and recommendations. This part of the project provides information on the

outcome of the study (research findings), the conclusive statements that were made on the bases of the findings obtained. Recommendations regarding future researches in the same or similar areas have also been captured.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Health-care delivery is highly labour intensive. The quality, efficiency and equity of services are dependent on the availability of skilled and competent health professionals when and where they are needed. It is essential that health workers be appropriately trained to deliver the required services according to set standards. Due to critical shortages of certain key health workers, the challenge to health authorities is to ensure that the available health workers are appropriately skilled and motivated to provide effective health-care services to populations living in a vast geographical area. It is important now, more than ever, to assess the factors that positively and negatively affect the performance of nursing students.

A number of studies have been carried out to identify and analyze the numerous factors that affect the academic performance of students in various centers of learning. Their findings identify students' efforts, previous schooling (Siegfried & Fels, 1979; Anderson, Benjamin, & Fuss, 1994), parents' education, family income (Devadoss and Foltz, 1996), self-motivation, age of student, learning preferences (Aripin, Mahmood, Rohaizad, Yeop & Anuar, 2008), class attendance (Romer, 1993), and entry qualification as factors that have a significant effect on the students' academic performance in various settings. The utility of these studies lies on the need to undertake corrective measures that improve the academic performance of students, especially in public funded institutions. Although there has been considerable debate about the determinants of academic performance among educators,

policymakers, academics, and other stakeholders, it is generally agreed that the impact of these determinants vary (in terms of extent and direction) with context, for example, culture, institution, course of study etc. however, since not all factors are relevant for a particular context, it is imperative that formal studies be carried out to identify the context-specific determinants for sound decision making.

The factors that affect the academic performance of students in tertiary institutions may be described as being diverse as they may include teacher, learner, and environmental factors that cannot be overemphasized. Indeed, students themselves play a critical role in getting good grades (Lau, 2003). This study seeks to find factors affecting the academic performance of nursing students. Literature will therefore be reviewed on teaching methods and aids, motivation, influence of school environment, learning styles/ strategies and preferences, teacher effectiveness, prior academic achievement and test anxiety level among many others.

Academic Achievements and Students Behavior

Morrison, Anthony, Storino, and Dillon (2001) reviewed the records of students who were referred to an in-school suspension program. From their study, it was observed that students with indiscipline records had lower GPAs than students without indiscipline in their records. Roeser, Eccles, and Sameroff (2000) also observed that student's indiscipline really affects their academic performance in middle schools. In using a Likert discipline scale to

examine academic performance and indiscipline behaviours, it was observed that the discipline scores demonstrated a negative correlation with grades.

However, various studies have shown that the poor academic performance of indiscipline students is usually as a result of time spent on serving punishments which keeps them out of class (Scott & Barrett, 2004; Putnam, Handler, & O’Leary-Zonarich, 2003; Putnam, Handler, Rey, & O’Leary-Zonarich, 2002). These studies however indicated that when punishment times are reduced and students spend more time in class, their performance improves. The emergence of the zero tolerance disciplinary paradigm has to some extent linked the use of school suspension and expulsion with the philosophical approach of zero tolerance (Skiba & Peterson, 1999; Skiba & Rausch, 2006). Skiba and Rausch (2006) have argued that there are assumptions to the use of suspension and expulsion that are universal to all disciplinary approaches; for example, one would expect that any effective disciplinary procedure would have among its goals to ensure the safety of students and teachers, and create a climate conducive to learning. Also there are assumptions connected with zero tolerance that appear to be unique to that approach. Zero tolerance policies and procedures presume, for example, that removing a student from school will have a deterrent effect on future misbehavior for the offending student and his/her peers (Ewing, 2000) and that the removal of certain students will yield a more productive learning climate for those students that remain (Public Agenda, 2004).

School suspension and expulsion might be conceptualized as contributing either positively or negatively to school achievement. Consistent

with the philosophy of zero tolerance (Ayers, Dohrn, & Ayers, 2001; Ewing, 2000; Noguera, 1995) student removal might be expected to positively affect student learning by removing disruptive students from school, thereby protecting and preserving the learning environment for those who remain. Student removal might also improve the learning environment by functioning as a deterrent: by severely punishing student misbehavior, the probability of future student misbehavior, for both the offending student and his/her peers, will diminish. Ewing (2000) argues that zero tolerance “appropriately denounces violent student behavior in no uncertain terms and serves as a deterrent to such behavior in the future by sending a clear message that acts which physically harm or endanger others will not be permitted at school under any circumstances.”

The introduction of child development projects that reduced indiscipline behaviours among students was found to be effective in promoting students’ academic performance. Schools that participated in the child development project were found to record higher academic performance as measured by grade point average (GPA) (Battistich, Schaps, & Wilson, 2004). A systematic review of existing literature on character education programs in schools found a significant outcome of improved behaviour and academic achievement which includes grades, test scores and promotion to the next grade (Berkowitz & Bier, 2014).

Ehiane (2014) observed that effective discipline helps in achieving goals, expectations and responsibility of students. This also creates a good image of the school and parents are likely to enroll their children in schools

with good discipline, which often leads to better academic performances. However, studies have shown that disciplinary policies in schools have different effect on students behaviour (Schoonover, 2009; Chen, 2008; Verdugo & Glenn, 2002). Nichols (2004) also indicated that suspensions do not prevent students from being indisciplined in the future. Indiscipline on the part of the teachers also accounts for poor academic performance of students (Ehiane, 2014). For example, teachers who are always absent from school, present ill-prepared lessons, and lack of professional work ethic. Birkett (2004) argued that lack of respect and discipline among teachers is a major factor that hinders teaching and learning in the classroom. According to Froyen and Iverson (1999), conduct management is essential to the creation of foundation for an orderly task-oriented approach to teaching and learning. Classroom management discipline problems can be dealt with either on an individual basis (between teacher and student) or by group problem solving (class meetings).

Docking (2000) opines that a disciplined student will be on time for lectures and a discipline teacher will also respect the times allocated to him on a timetable. Kelly (2004) observed that the efficient use of time by teachers and students is directly associated with increased academic performance. According to Andrew (1994), discipline helps to train students to become useful in society. It is a fact that disciplined students pay more attention in class, concentrate on their studies and perform very well in their examinations.

The Role of Teachers in Students Academic Performance

According to Encarta English Dictionary (2009) the word 'performance' could mean an accomplishment of a task in line with what is required of an individual in a given setting. It could also connote the tendency of the way in which somebody does a job which is judged by an awaiting reward. Thus, entities such as schools need highly qualified teachers to assist their students to perform satisfactorily at the end of their programs of study. Accomplishing a task successfully and performing it at a higher rate can be a source of satisfaction and a feeling of mastery and pride while poor performance, could be a source of dissatisfaction or even sometimes as a personal failure (Sonnentag & Frese, 2002).

The available literature suggests that the main driver of the variation in students' academic performance at school is the quality of teachers. The positive outcome for any school system is essentially the sum of the quality of the instruction that its teachers deliver. The entire task of the school system therefore is to ensure that when a teacher enters the classroom, he/she has the right materials available, along with the knowledge, the competence and the ambition to take one more child up to the standard today than did yesterday (Barber & Mona, 2008). Quality schools are defined by teacher effectiveness and student achievement under the auspices of building strong interpersonal skills (Froyen & Iverson, 1999). As mutual trust builds up between teacher and students, the latter are gradually released from teacher supervision by becoming individually responsible. As a result of that, both educators and

students become co-participants in the teaching and learning process, striving to make the most of them.

Behaviour is an observable, identifiable phenomenon (Joyce, 1980). Teachers also need to be thoughtful in the way in which they react to students' comments. Generally, teachers react by using praise, acceptance, remediation, or criticism in responding to students (Derk, 1997). Teaching is an arrangement and manipulation of a situation in which there are gaps or obstructions and where an individual tries to overcome the problem from where he learns (Iqbal, 1996). Teachers and administrators of all categories and levels should be aware of the roles played by them in the present context of education. They should understand that their roles and behaviours are not fixed, but are revolving around the influence of changes taking place in a society and the educational system itself (UNESCO, 1975). Behaviour is a response which an individual show in his environment at different times (Taneja, 1989).

Teachers play a very important role in the academic achievements of students (Hattie, 2009). According to Marzano (2003) an individual teacher can produce a powerful gain in student learning. Regardless of the effectiveness of a school, if the teacher is ineffective, the students will perform poorly. Various studies have also indicated that effective teaching and learning cannot take place in a poorly managed classroom (Jones & Jones, 2012; Van de Grift, Van der Wal, & Torenbeek, 2011; Marzano, Marzano, & Pickering, Classroom management that works. Research-based strategies for every teacher, 2003). Hence a teacher need to manage his classroom to promote

effective teaching and learning. This can be achieved by establishing a positive classroom environment including effective teacher-student relationships (Wubbels, Brekelmans, Van Tartwijk, & Admiraal, 1999). As such, teachers are supposed to take actions that will create an environment that promotes both academic and social learning (Evertson & Weinstein, 2006).

According to Evertson and Weinstein (2006), to achieve a high classroom management, teachers must develop caring, supportive relationships with and among students and organize and implement instruction in ways that optimize students' access to learning. The importance of developing favourable teacher-student relationships was also indicated by Marzano et al. (2003). Furthermore, Evertson and Weinstein (2006) indicated that teachers should encourage students' engagement in academic tasks, which can be done by using group management methods. Teachers are also required to promote the development of students' social skills and self-regulation. Marzano et al. (2003) in their study referred to this as making students responsible for their behaviour. Lastly, Evertson and Weinstein (2006) are of the view that teachers should be able to use appropriate interventions to assist students with behaviour problems.

Mankoe (2002) says that one measure of productivity in education is students' academic performance. For that matter, education personnel such as teachers, administrators and supervisors should be very efficient to enable students improve on their performance. The proper supervision by circuit supervisors, headmasters, teachers, and prefects of schools can lead to attainment of high academic standards. Supervisory duties are performed by

the heads (Tanner & Tanner, 1980). The immediate purpose of supervision is to develop favourable settings for teaching and learning. The most prominent role of supervisors, according to Mankoe (2002) is to observe and judge teachers.

Attitude of Parents and Guardians towards Education

Some parents and guardians are so much concerned about the academic performance of their wards because they consider education as an investment in human resource. They believe that when their wards are well educated and gainfully employed, they would be able to cater for them in their old age. They therefore complain bitterly when the academic performance of their wards falls below expectation. Others do not care much about the education of their wards and therefore do not know much about the falling standard of education in schools (Galloway, 1987). Galloway comments that educated parents help their children to improve on their academic performance. They pay their school fees on time and they provide them with all their basic needs. They make sure their wards are punctual and regular at school and visit the school from time to time to find out how they behave and perform at school.

Engin-Demir (2009) argued that sizable research has consistently shown that student' academic achievement has been influenced by background of family characteristics such as socio-economic status of parents. Schiller, Khmelkov and Wang (2002) also argued that parents who have more education appear better able to provide their children with the academic and

social support important for educational success when compared to parents with less educated.

Acheampong (1992, cited in Avotri *et al.*, 1999), for instance, found that the educational status of parents was a major factor determining a child's academic achievements. This finding corroborates that of Johnson and Kyle's (2001) study that parental education, particularly the mother's education has a big influence on children's school achievement. Fertig and Schmidt (2002) also found that mother's education has a greater effect on child's learning overall, but that father's education becomes more important when they have attained tertiary levels.

Parents who are illiterates or whose level of formal education is low do not attach much value to formal education and therefore fail or refuse to pay fees for their wards on time. They also feel reluctant to provide them with the necessary things. The performance of such students is usually poor. Coleman,

Campbell and Hobson (1966) state that socio-economic status of the child's parents and their educational attainment can have a very strong influence on their learning in school. Students from rich families perform better in the school than those from poor families. Beaumont-Walters and Soyibo (2001) say that students' performance very much depends on their socio-economic background.

Fuchs and Woessmann (2015) found parental education and occupation to have more substantial effects on reading than on mathematics test scores. They stated that parental occupation and having at least one parent

with a full-time job have important effects on pupil academic performance. In other words poverty, low level of parental education, parental and neighbourhood negative attitudes toward schooling in general, children among from disadvantaged background have significantly affected academic achievement negatively (Currie, 1995; Gregg & Machin, 1999) whereas children with high level of parental education have greater access to a wide variety of economic and social resources (family structure, home environment, parent-child interaction) that can be drawn upon to help their children succeed in school (Coleman, 2006; McNeal, 1999). Higher family income is associated with higher students' achievement (Hanushek, 1992). According to Asikhia (2010) pupils from poor homes are forced out of school and made to engage in hawking, selling packaged drinking water and the likes so as to save money for their school expenses. Most of the time, they cannot afford instructional materials, and are always at the mercy of examiners during examination period. The persistence of this in the life of an individual student may spell doom for his academic success. Tracy and Walter (1998) as cited in Asikhia (2010) corroborate this when they submit that individuals at the lowest economic level are often the least well-served by the school system.

Influence of Teaching Methods on Academic Performance

It has been proved that teachers have an important influence on students' academic achievement. Teachers play a crucial role in educational attainment as they are tasked with the responsibility of translating policy into action and principles based on practice during interaction with the students

(Afe, 2001). In their study, Sanders, Wright, and Horn (1997) conclude that the most important factor influencing student learning is the teacher. Teachers stand in the interface of the transmission of knowledge, values and skills in the learning process. If the teacher is ineffective, students under the teacher's tutelage will achieve inadequate progress academically. This is regardless of how similar or different the students are in terms of individual potential in academic achievement.

One of the most difficult obstacles to improve the quality of instruction among the students to promote their academic performance is the medium instruction. The ability to read and write in a specified language is often considered one of the primary goals of formal education (Buckland, 2000). The medium of instruction in Ghanaian schools is English Language and most at times the lower academic performance among the disadvantaged schools and pupils are mostly associated with their inability to comprehend what is taught in class as well as how to read and write good English (OECD, 2012). Mushtaq and Shabana (2012) in their research on factors affecting pupils' academic performance in schools found that the most important classroom factor which has influence on students' academic performance is their competence in English Language.

During teaching, various teaching methods are used during teaching, but studies have shown that students prefer some teaching styles than others. A study by Adeoye and Popoola (2011) showed that majority of students preferred a well delivered lecture method of teaching to other teaching methods. Student centered teaching methods such as independent study and

small group teachings were not students' preference. However, other studies showed that teacher-centered teaching methods such as lecture leads to the ability to recall, but the student-centered methods such as discussion produces higher level of comprehension (Adesemowo, 2005). A study by Callister, Khalaf and Keller (2000), showed that most students tended to prefer teacher-centered approaches of teaching whilst the lecturers preferred student-centered approaches such as group work, project work. These presentations demand more work from the students than the lecturer.

Also, some students have shown that the choice of teaching methods whether student-centered or teacher-centered does not affect the effectiveness of the teaching. According to Leufer (2007), learning is dynamic, student-centered, task-oriented learning process involving active participation of both tutors and students. This technique assumes that students and tutors can learn from each other. According to Lau (2003), teaching and learning must be made less theoretical and more practical in preparing students for their future careers. Beers (2003) also found that there was no significant difference between the scores of students who were taught using problem-based learning and those using the traditional method. This therefore showed that the choice of teaching method may not be the only determining factor for students' but other factors such as the teaching aids, motivation, students' learning environment and the strategies employed during the learning process.

UNESCO has rightly reported that the learning process completely depends upon the teacher's ability and experience. Sweatt (2000) cited findings of a study conducted by Goldenberg, which concluded that teachers'

expectations from students do not matter a lot, whereas, teachers' actions matter a lot and play a dominating role in the learning process. A reciprocal relationship between students and teachers showed that such a relationship influences students' achievement to the extent that teacher's expectations may not have as much influence on achievement as do teachers' actions.

According to Muleyi (2008), teachers do influence students' academic performance. School variables that affect students' academic performance include the kind of treatment which teachers accord the students. Odhiambo (2005) contends that there is a growing demand from the Kenya government and the public for teacher accountability. Schools are commonly evaluated using students' achievement data (Heck, 2009). Teachers cannot be dissociated from the schools they teach and academic results of their schools. It would therefore be logical to use standardized students' assessment results as the basis for judging the performance of teachers. Teachers celebrate and are rewarded when their schools and teaching subjects are highly ranked. In Chile, for instance, teachers are rewarded collectively when they work in schools which are identified as high-performing by the National Performance Evaluation System of Subsidized Schools. In Kenya, teachers who excel in their teaching subjects are rewarded during open education days held annually in every district (Cherongis, 2010). While appreciating the value of rewarding teachers who produce better results, teachers should not escape a portion of blame when students perform poorly.

Students Traits and Academic Performance

Evidence suggests that non-academic or demographic variables could play very important role in predicting academic performance of the students and can thus be justified to use in the admission process (Lytle, 2007, Platt et al., 2001, Tanya, 2009, Trofino, 2013). Generally, various studies that attempt to explain academic failure start with the three elements that intervene in education: parents (family causal factors), educators (academic causal factors), and learners (student-related factors). Among the student-related factors, age, parent's education level, grades obtained in basic sciences, note taking skills and student's ability to study in groups have been studied (Colucciello, 2010, Lewis, 2009). Parental education as well as employment background is important factor that significantly affects students' academic success (McKenzie & Schweitzer, 2001).

A student's individual traits or social background can influence schooling and academic achievement. Research in SSA countries has shown that achievement is strongly related to students' social background in various ways (Lee et al., 2005). In Ghana, one indicator of dropout rates is a child's age at first enrollment in school (Fentiman et al., 1999). Older children are more likely to drop out because they are expected to help more at home by working and earning income as they age (Fentiman et al., 1999; Glewwe & Jacoby, 1995).

Educational performance at school has also been found to vary according to the student's sex (Horne, 2000). In particular, reviews of the evidence suggest that boys suffer an educational disadvantage relative to girls,

especially in terms of performance in literacy (Buckingham, 1999; 2000). There are several explanations for this increasing gender gap which include: biological differences; gender biases (such as reading being seen as ‘not masculine’); teaching, curricula and assessment (for instance less structured approaches to teaching grammar may have weakened boys’ literacy performance); and socioeconomic factors (Buckingham, 1999). The last explanation is of particular interest in the context of this paper, especially the finding that the gender gap continues within each socio-economic level (Teese et al., 1992).

That is, girls have been found to out-perform boys within high or low socio-economic groups. Furthermore, the performance of boys deteriorates more rapidly than the performance of girls as they move down the socio-economic scale (Teese et al., 1995). As was noted above, the relationship between the performance of boys and socio-economic status is often mediated or partially explained by family structure (Buckingham, 1999).

Throughout the world, how students think about schooling is a predictor of student achievement. Students’ self-concept, self-efficacy, attitudes, and motivation are positively related to academic achievement (Ajayi, 2012; Bandura et al., 1996; Chevalier, Gibbons, Thorpe, Snell, & Hoskins, 2009; Jegede et al., 1997; Kiamanesh, 2005). In Iran, self-concept—or students’ self-efficacy and attitudes toward mathematics—is highly correlated with math achievement (Kiamanesh, 2005). Similarly, in Nigeria, self-concept and academic motivation are significant predictors of students’ attitudes toward math, personality traits (e.g., agreeableness and extraversion)

predict student educational aspirations, and academic achievement itself predicts educational aspirations of students (Ajayi, 2012; Jegede et al., 1997).

In addition to these internal motivators, externalized behaviors influence academic achievement. Students who believed in their academic self-efficacy and who had high educational aspirations report that they did very well academically, were more willing to help others, experienced few behavioral or emotional problems, and were accepted by their peers (Bandura et al., 1996). Further, students who believed or were taught that they could attend college with financial aid assistance had higher grades and worked harder in school than students who believed or were taught that college is too expensive (Destin & Oyserman, 2009).

Students also vary in their engagement with or participation in school. Girls tend to be more engaged than boys, and younger students tend to be more attached and engaged than older students (Johnson, Crosnoe, & Elder, 2001). School attachment and commitment are positively linked with academic achievement (Stewart, 2007).

It is important to highlight that while school environment can have a strong influence on students' academic performance, other external factors such as: economic status of household, parental educational attainment, family size and other home-based factors can equally indirectly influence pupils' outcomes. There is sufficient evidence from the fields of education and psychology that the home-based socio- economic status has significant impacts on child's academic performance in school. Several researches pointing to the household factors affecting a child academic performance in

school has consistently shown that parental involvement in children's education does make a positive difference to pupils' academic achievement (DCSF, 2008).

Among educators, it is generally understood that students' family life does affect the behaviour of students. Therefore, the goal of many schools is to improve student behaviour by focusing on a partnership program with parents (Sanders & Sheldon, 2009). Focusing on such a partnership may, in addition, help to improve their academic achievement. Thus, better behaviour of students help to improve their academic achievement (Sanders & Sheldon, 2009). A study of 827 African American eighth graders found that how students perceive their family support for academic achievement positively influences their behaviour. The improved behaviour in turn positively and significantly influences their school grades (Sanders & Sheldon, 2009). Richardson (2009) claims that better behaviour, among students, is one of the major benefits of parental involvement.

In order to improve student behaviour, the school usually only focuses on what teachers need to do in school, instead of the school, parents and the community to work together towards that goal (Sanders & Sheldon, 2009; Sheldon, 2009). This is in spite of suggestions that the co-operation of everyone is needed to reduce problematic behaviour and to improve learning in school. Sheldon and Epstein (in Sanders & Sheldon, 2009) also claim that schools who have improved their partnership program with parents and the community have fewer students sent to the principal, given detentions or suspensions.

According to Epstein (in Richardson, 2009), parental involvement is the most powerful influence in a child's education. It can have various effects on students, both academically and behaviourally. Initially, research on family involvement generally did not aim at differentiating between the effects of specific types of involvement on definite student outcomes (Sanders & Sheldon, 2009). But rather, the connections between general measures of parental involvement with students' test scores and grades were analysed. However, recently, researchers started studying how different types of involvement connect to specific student outcomes. According to the Center for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement (Obeidat & Al-Hassan, 2009), successful parental involvement may be defined as "the active, ongoing participation of a parent or primary caregiver in the education of his or her child". At home, parents can demonstrate their involvement in different ways; such as by reading for their child, assisting with homework, and having regular discussions about school or school work with their child. In addition, it is important for parents to convey their expectations to their child's education.

Ogoye (2007) notes that socio-economic status is a critical issue in many African communities where illiteracy and poverty levels are high, thus limiting parental involvement in homework. In some cases learning and reference materials have to be shared among pupils, and not all parents are able to buy for their children personal subject-specific text copies. More important is the fact that some parents expect the children to help them after school, during the time the children are expected to undertake their homework assignments. Based on the traditional gender division of labour, this is the time

when the boys have to look after the animals and the girls to fetch water, firewood and help in the evening to prepare the family food before they eventually clear the table and wash the dishes. This is against the children's desires to study in the evening and in a quiet place. High poverty levels lead to crowded homes where distractions and little opportunity for concentration are the norm. The net effect of distractions and lack of concentration is that homework is not guided, poorly done, incomplete or never done at all, and therefore precipitates conflicts at school and at home.

The development of high-level achievement motivation is attributed to early independence training and achievement training according to Adewale (2002). Akabayashi and Psacharopoulos (1999) argue that successful parents tend to provide early independence training which is necessary in the development of achievement motivation. According to Rothstein (2004) found, in the course of his investigation, that the parents of higher academic achievers practise more professional, administrative and clerical occupations, while the parents of the under-achievers pursued relatively more occupations such as trades; production work and semi-skilled and unskilled occupations.

Jeyne (2005) examined five different variables including, mother's education, father's education, father's occupation, mother's occupation, and family income. Ayoo (2002) operationalised similar variables which included family income, mother's education, father's education, mother's occupational status, father's occupational status, household size, marital status, and the percentage of students at the mother's high school who were poor. The results

of research demonstrate a clear link between mathematics test scores and income.

Effects of teaching aids/ Instructional Materials on academic performance

Instructional materials have been defined by various authors. For example, Obanya (1989) viewed them as didactic materials thing which are supposed to make learning and teaching possible. According to Abdullahi (1982), instructional materials are materials or tools locally made or imported that could make tremendous enhancement of lesson impact if intelligently used. Ikerionwu (Isola, 2010) referred to them as objects or devices, which help the teacher to make a lesson much clearer to the learner. Instructional materials are also described as concrete or physical objects which provide sound, visual or both to the sense organs during teaching (Agina-Obu, 2005).

Learning material includes both print and non-print material that is meant to equip students with information in their learning process (Dahar & Faize, 2011). Instructional material, textbooks, magazines, newspapers, pictures, recordings, slides, electronic media and online services are crucial in the teaching and learning process of the student (Dahar & Faize, 2011).

Kieffer (1965) outlines the following as being the importance of teaching aids: First, they stimulate a high degree of interest in students. Secondly, teaching aids provide a concrete basis for developmental learning and thereby making learning more permanent. Similarly, teaching aids provide experiences not easily secured in other ways and hence contribute to the depth

and variety of learning. Kieffer, finally states teaching aids add much to the growth of understanding thereby making learning more permanent.

Wise and Groom (1996) (as cited in Lau, 2003), established that multimedia tools can often convey course materials to students in a visual and graphic form which could help to clarify abstract concepts. Brace and Roberts (1997) (as cited in Lua, 2003) adds that computer technology provides effective attention-gathering tools and can be used to enrich and complement classroom teaching and learning and may reinvent subject matter. Lau (2003) concludes that using appropriate technologies, students can visualize the concepts in their minds and are better able to absorb the material.

The real problem of poor academic performance in the public schools, as noted by Davidson (1997) is the inadequate provision of teaching aids which would generate effective and quality knowledge impart from the cradle. Morrison (1999) states that: “To a very large extent many pupils from our basic schools are unable to make it to the senior secondary school. This is due to the unfortunate poor academic performance in our basic schools. This has brought in its wake the springing up of many private schools” (p. 7).

According to Davidson (1997) it is a fact that in the public basic schools, the foundation is not well reinforced with the necessary inputs thus it eventually easily develops cracks and therefore it is that area that must be looked at. He continued to say that the unattractive situation with regards to teaching crippled by lack of necessary inputs in the public schools has made the private schools to take advantage of that situation making the public schools for the poor. Further Davidson Snr. Observed that it will be beneficial

to both students and parents, if we adopt teaching aids with the lecture method.

Kieffer (1965) holds the view that teaching aids is rapidly becoming a necessary part of good teaching. According to him, teaching aids are new contributions to teaching that are indispensable to the modern classroom. He additionally contends that, in a very practical way, they can and do free teachers of great deal of routine and detailed work, and enable them to do more creative teaching and to work with individual students. The Education Reforms Review Committee on Pre-Tertiary Education Report (1994) observes that reason why teaching and learning aids are seldom used is mostly probably because teachers do not have the materials to prepare such teaching and learning aids. According to the World Bank Report (1988), there is strong evidence that increasing the provision of instructional materials, especially teaching aids, is the most cost-effective way of raising the quality of education. The Report further admits that the scarcity of learning materials in the classroom is the most serious impediment to educational effectiveness in Africa. World Bank Report (WBR) (1988). Coleridge (as cited in Jones, 1967), is of the view that a picture is that midway between a thought and a thing. Yet, as films and televisions become a major means of communication in society, more and more of the population especially the young are becoming as more 'picturate' as they are literate.

Factor that affect student's academic performance

Learning Strategies Styles and Performances

Rourke and Lysynchuck (2002) indicated that recently many researchers accepted learning styles as an important construct in education. This had led to numerous individual studies and subsequent meta-analyses that found significant correlation between learning styles and learning outcomes. A learning style is generally described as an attribute or quality of an individual which reflects a pattern of information-processing behaviours used to acquire knowledge or skills and prepare for an anticipated test of memory (Rognstad & Polit, 2002).

The literature suggests that the variety and distribution of learning styles is wide among nursing students' population. It seems sensible for educators to consider learners' characteristics and to monitor ways in which students say they learn best and to listen to their preferences (Stork, 2003; Sweatt, 2000). A recognition of the strengths and weaknesses of individuals' learning styles by the individual concerned and the educator is the key to providing the appropriate learning experiences to develop those individuals (McAllister, 2010). Farooq, Chaudry, Shafiq and Berhanu (2011), observed that females usually show more efforts leading to better grades at school. However, in a study by Dahar and Faize (2011), it was found that there was no significant gender difference in the GPA of students. Entwistle et al. (2008) also noted that married students are more aware and skilled in time management and these help them to be more focused in their studies.

According to Engin-Demir (2009) regardless of intelligence, students who spend more time on assignments and homework are very important activities to improve their grades. The amount of time students invests in homework and other related activities have also been found to be strongly related to motivation.

Several researchers have investigated the significant role of pupil attitudes toward learning with regard to their academic achievement. Pupils' attitudes such as absenteeism, truancy, indiscipline, etc can affect their performance. For instance, McLean (1997) found, by distinguishing between the attitudes of high and low achievers, that five attitudinal factors were significantly related to academic performance. Pupils' attitudes may not only directly affect academic achievement, but also may indirectly influence the effect of other factors as well. In another study, Abu-Hilal (2000) found the effect of attitudes on student level of aspiration. Despite the difference between the findings of these two studies, the authors achieved consensus as regards to the significance of attitudes in predicting achievement. House (2000) further complemented the results of earlier studies, with the former proving that the pupil's initial attitude towards school was significantly related to academic performance, while the latter found that attitudes predicted the pupil's basic approach to learning.

Motivation

Motivation is a broad term, which explains the inspiration, persuasion, inducement, impulse, and incitement of a student. Ergul emphasizes that self-

efficacy is also a major contributing factor. Glynn, Aultman and Owens (2005) define motivation as an internal state that arouses, directs and sustains human behaviour. Artelt (2005) defines motivation to learn as a current or recurrent desire to acquire knowledge. According to Entwistle (2008), academic achievement depends on the effort the student puts in and the general level of motivation that a student has.

Motivation is considered a highly significant psychological concept in education (Leufer, 2007). When students are asked to carry out academic tasks, such as preparing an assignment, the way in which they tackle those tasks will depend on the reason why they are taking the course and on what they believe the learning requires of them (Entwistle, Tait, & McCune, 2008). Meyer and Turner (2002, p. 108) view “motivation to learn”, as evidenced by students’ perceptions and pursuits of learning, as goals that could be captured through efforts to seek and engage challenging academic tasks. The expectations that students have of college life may play a critical role in understanding academic performances, the pursuit of academic work, research and the formation of professional identity (Frankel, 2009). Explicit and implicit expectations of students towards the institution may fuel motivation, achievement and commitment.

Types of Motivation

There are two types of motivation; Intrinsic and Extrinsic motivation. However, Al-Fattal and Ayoubi (2013) maintain that one should not assume that these two categories are exclusive.

Intrinsic motivation

Intrinsic motivation is a desire from within to obtain knowledge. Al-Fattal and Ayoubi (2013) posited that intrinsic motivation emphasizes on self-dimensions such as self-rewarding, self-satisfaction and self-actualization. Therefore, Artelt (2005) states that intrinsic learning incentives possibly reside within the learner. This can be attributed to striving towards self-actualization. According to Weaver (2006), their study showed that engaging in group projects suggested that intrinsic factors may have encouraged students to engage in activities at different times, indicating the possibility that personal factors and social styles affected adopted learning approaches. Students regard altruism and self-realisation as important internal motivational factors for occupational choice (Rognstad & Polit, 2002). Furthermore, adult students are more intrinsically motivated, self-directed, willing to seek assistance from classmates, and are contributing members of the learning process (Spitzer, 2000). Intrinsic motivators for nursing students however, may be the genuine desire to become a nurse and not just taking the nursing course because of family or peer pressure or the lure of dollars and travel abroad.

Extrinsic motivation

Extrinsic motivation, on the other hand, is reinforced by external factors, such as the need to acquire a qualification or a secure job (Artelt, 2005). Thus, extrinsic motivation has an external stimuli dimension such as society and rewarding systems (Al-Fattal & Ayoubi, 2013). Rognstad and Polit (2002) affirm this by stating that the opportunity to earn a living and advance in a career, by observing and following the nursing role, is external motivational factors. Spitzer (2000) states that extrinsic motivation is especially seen in younger students who are more dependent and relying more on the instructor to indicate what should be learned and how. Extrinsic motivation among nursing students may be the desire to earn dollars and go abroad and discover the world.

Meanwhile, Roeser et al (1996) equally carried out a study to investigate the impact of poor motivational facilities in school environment and students' academic performance. Two hundred and ninety-six (296) randomly selected students participated in this study. Students' responses to self-report questionnaires revealed that 79% of them were adversely affected academically by poor motivational facilities in the school, while 21% showed that, the lack of motivational facilities in the University premises had no adverse impact on their academic performance. From the results, we can see that more people were affected by poor motivational facilities at the school. This means that, adequate motivational facilities have a profound influence on students' academic performance.

Importance of Motivation

A study conducted by Stork (2003) revealed that motivation has a direct effect on the academic achievement of nursing students. There are no studies however that differentiate from extrinsic and intrinsic motivation and whether intrinsic motivation positively affects academic performance of nursing students, more than extrinsic motivation. According to Dahar and Faize (2011), motivation is a prerequisite for student learning and students can foster this motivation by setting clear, explicit learning goals and understanding the expectations of success. Intellectual ability may determine academic performance. There are no empirical proofs whether very bright students achieve more or average students underachieve. There are other mediating factors such as quality of teaching instruction and a healthy and challenging environment that may put off an average student but encourage the brighter student to excel.

Considering some importance of motivation, DeBourgh (2008) enumerates the following as being importance of motivation; a properly motivated staff, he says, are always likely to be highly productive. Motivation, according to him, is related to leadership for good leadership sets an example; provides guidance, encouragement and instruction and can be one of the greatest motivations of all. He further believes that schools with effective principles have motivated staff and pupils and similarly, knowledge of motivation move administrators or supervisors to better understand their subordinates and also help management in the formulation policies.

In an attempt to improve student's academic performance, the role the individual student cannot be overemphasized. Indeed, students themselves play a role in getting good grades and therefore need to be motivated to achieve this (Lau, 2003). Finally, Malhotra (2002) supports that if teachers are not provided with the right impetus or a sound psychological frame of mind through inducement, they cannot perform creditably. The quantity, quality, motivation and skill of teachers, he maintains, largely determine how good education would be; an emphasis that an improvement in education depends largely on a well-motivated teaching force.

Motivation and its Effects on Academic Performance

According to Prugsamatz, Pentecost and Ofstad (2006), the quality of a school or education is properly defined by the performance of students and graduates. As far as learning is concerned it has been established that a relationship exists between motivation and achievement. In a study on motivation, Rourke and Lysynchuk (2002), found that as drive level increases, learning also increases till drive is at optimum level. For good performance, the level of motivation has to be at the optimum. This means that teachers have to reinforce pupils' answers in class to make them perform.

Sweatt (2000) points out that motivation stands as a necessary factor which could determine the pupil's academic performance. For him, motivation and occupational goals of students are the main driving force in students' tendency to work harder at school so as to be well placed in society. On motivation, the World Bank notes that; the teacher's use of time and other

resources is known to be a principal determinant of pupil's achievement. The school teacher must not fail in the important task of turning into reality government improved strategies for improving quality. But for this to take place the teacher must be motivated.

Malhotra (2002) observes that the large number of teachers in the system deter successive governments from according them all the attention they deserve. Malhotra continues to say that some frustrations come from the administrators of some of the educational institutions and government itself to the teachers. Isola (2010) however contends that by large, the greater factors in educating pupils are the teacher and if teachers are not provided with the right imputes or a sound psychological frame of mind through inducement, they cannot perform creditably. It is therefore very important that students be reinforced to learn as is echoed by Isola (2010) that the school will not be realize it's goals fully until pupils, teachers and administrators themselves are sufficiently motivated. Leufer (2007) also argued that motivation is a prerequisite for student learning and students can foster this motivation by setting clear, explicit learning goals and understanding the expectations of success.

Influence of School Environment on Academic Performance

According to Astin's theory of Input-Environment- Output/Outcome (I-E-O) model, input refers to personal characteristics of the student at the time before enrolling in the institutions (Astin, 1993). The highlighted characteristics of input may be family background, marital status, age, gender,

race, parental education, housing, high school grades, goal commitment and academic self-concept, social experiences, achievement expectancies, and past experiences. Environment in this context is defined as institutional resources to facilitate the learning atmosphere of the student including various programmes, policies, faculties, peers and educational experiences (Astin, 1993). The outcome is identified as the students' resultant characteristics such as knowledge, skills, critical thinking, attitudes, values, beliefs, and behaviour after being involved in the academic environment and the student's level of academic success (Astin, 1993). Students' academic success is greatly influenced by the type of school they attend. Aptran (2010) argued that poor facilities, poor feeding, lack of classrooms, laboratories, workshops, teachers and equipments contribute to indiscipline among students.

The climate of the school can affect discipline in students. School factors include school structure, school composition and school climate. The school that one attends is the institutional environment that sets the parameters of a students' learning experience. As schools are faced with more public accountability for student academic performance, school level characteristics are being studied to discover methods of improving achievement for all students. Considerable research has been conducted on teaching skills, climate, socioeconomic conditions, and student achievement (Rafferty, 2003). Depending on the environment, schools can either open or close the doors that lead to academic performance (Barry, 2006).

The school environment has been recognized as either encouraging, or impeding a positive learning experience for professional nurses (Frankel, 2009). According to Entwistle et al. (2008), the influences of teaching-learning environments on the quality of the learning outcomes start from extensive observation of current structures and practices. This would then lead to conceptualization of the influences on outputs, collaborative thinking about realistic possible changes, discussions with the main groups in the organization who are likely to be involved in any changes, implementation of agreed changes, and evaluation of their effects.

Nursing students need the appropriate knowledge and skills to enable them to deliver safe and competent care to their patients (Leufer, 2007). Nursing faculties are challenged to provide learning experiences for students that are as authentic as possible, in order to represent the complex and dynamic nature of contemporary patient care settings (DeBourgh, 2008). The learning environment in which students receive these knowledge and skills would contribute to their learning experiences and to how much they retain.

Baykal, Sokmen, Korkmaz and Akgun (2005) state that to improve the quality of education, educational institutions should have modern buildings and equipment, sufficient both in quality and quantity. The University of California (UC) has committed to not only training professional nurses to work in hospitals, but in also ensuring that nursing classrooms are staffed by the best instructors (Aremu & Oluwole, 2001). According to Leufer (2007), in order to optimize the teaching and learning experience, it is essential to consider how nursing students experience learning in a large class

environment. The author observed that participation levels were lower in large class settings. Large cohorts of students often make it difficult for conveners to create an environment in which students feel that their own personal needs are being met (Stork, 2003). Fewer students in a class create more opportunities for interaction and in-depth feedback, by using innovative questioning, coaching and collaboration (DeBourgh, 2008). Factors that inhibit student participation in such settings include low levels of student-instructor interaction, lectures that are not motivating and difficulty in paying attention (Leufer, 2007).

Learning environment can either be structured or unstructured. Schools are recognized buildings or structures that are put up for teaching and learning. Supportive learning environments have high level of impact on learners and use learning as the main transformative force to change their behaviors. Providing a friendly reception to the child, in an environment where he/she can feel safe and ready for teaching is essential for the development of each individual pupil and the general students as a whole (UNESCO, 2012:39). All learning environment must take into consideration the locational safety, period of learning and availability of essential facilities to support learning process in the schools. Without adequate facilities within the learning environment, teaching and learning will be adversely affected.

Furthermore, a study conducted by Nelson (1993) whose main objective was to identify a number of school factors that promote female students' success in higher education discovered that, the most critical factor is a University staff that believes all students can succeed. Other key factors

included valuing students' languages and cultures, holding high expectations, making education a priority, offering a variety of courses, providing sound counseling, and providing staff training to help teachers serve female students more effectively. However, in this study, it was reported that lack of support from teachers, absence of concerned people in the University about female students' problems and absence of adequate counseling services were problems mentioned by students that contributed to their poor performance.

Equally, a study conducted by Mohamedbhai (2014) at the University of Nairobi, the main Jomo Kenyetta memorial library, whose main objective was to find out the impact of over enrolments of students on academic performance discovered that, the large number of students than the University could accommodate had a profound influence on students' academic performance. The capacity for the University library could not sustain the large student population such that, the University which was designed to accommodate 1,500 students had to cope with 8,000 students a day. A similar study conducted by Bloom (2005) at the University of Eduardo Mondlane showed that, due to over enrolment of students, their academic performance was heavily affected such that, the dropout rate of student in 2006 for the whole University was estimated to be within the range of 15-28%, the larger percentage being for the earlier years. In 2006, only about 6% of the students completed their degrees in the normal course duration compared to 17% in 2001. Also, in 2006, 41% of the student took one or more additional years to complete their programmes, whereas the corresponding figure in 2001 was

28%. Thus, from this, there has been deterioration in the students' academic performance over the past five years at the University of Edourdo Mondlane.

The home environment also affects the academic performance of students. Educated parents can provide such an environment that suits best for academic success of their children. The school authorities can provide counseling and guidance to parents for creating positive home environment for improvement in students' quality of work (Marzano, 2003). The academic performance of students heavily depends upon the parental involvement in their academic activities to attain the higher level of quality in academic success (Barnard, 2004). Kunje (2009) observed that wealthier families in Malawi seemed to influence achievement of their children in school more than poorer families by providing for the needs of students and encouraging them to go to school. However, absenteeism, ill health, malnutrition, hunger and other elements of children from poor families may be militating against their growth and achievement in school (Muola, 2010).

Teacher Effectiveness

All the educationists are well familiar with the fact that all the learners have a different learning style, whereas the problem lies in catering to all of them with an effective teaching strategy. Students learn in different ways as per their capabilities. Some learn by seeing, hearing, reflecting, modelling, reasoning, and drawing etc (Felder et al., 1998). With an agreement to Felder, similarly there are different teaching styles as well. Some give lectures, some discuss the topic, some make their students work in groups, some use

technology, some use textbooks and many more. But, the main purpose behind these efforts is to help students grasp content knowledge and align them with the real world scenario.

Agina-Obu (2005) defines that ‘effective teachers are those who achieve the goal they set for themselves or was set by them for others. Al-Fattal and Ayoubi, (2013) points out that, educational achievement depends on individual differences in ability and performance. In addition to the nature and conditions of learning, growth and development also affect the academic performance of children. An important factor identified is the quality of instruction. It is true that there are differences in pupil’s entry behavior, so these are the need for the teacher to explain the prescribed subject matter thoroughly.

A former education minister in Ghana, rightly stresses that the teacher is the source of knowledge and an inspirer of knowledge and a guide to the methods and sources for knowledge acquisition, so it is up to the government and the Teacher Association of Ghana to work out a scheme to attract good people to the teaching profession (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007). The competence of the teacher is needed for students to perform. Weaver (2006) noted that a well-documented literature points out that out of class contact with students has a profound influence on student learning.

Additionally, a comprehensive study by Wilson, Wood and Gaff (1974), found that exceptional and effective teachers are those who: work one-on-one with students, who need special attention; are accessible to students

outside the classroom; design leaning activities so that the student can become capable learners; and provide timely and consistent feedback to students.

Farkas (2003) investigated the effect of teaching styles on two groups of seventh-grade students. Students in the experimental group preferred similar learning styles and were taught according to their preferences, while the control group was taught with a conventional teaching style. In this study, the students in the experimental group, who received a teaching style that matched their preferred learning styles, outperformed the control group academically. The experimental group also showed more positive attitudes towards learning, more understanding of people's feelings, and an increased ability to transfer what they had learned from one area to another. Researchers have classified teaching style in many ways and have considered certain teaching styles more effective in improving student learning. Curtin (2005) studied a group of English Second Language (ESL) learners and their teachers and categorized teaching styles as didactic and interactive. Didactic teachers make most of the decisions in the classroom, emphasize teaching the content, and put students in a passive role. On the other hand, interactive teachers allow for the diverse learning styles of their students, place much emphasis on the teaching and learning process, and expect students to be active learners. The findings of Curtin's (2005) study suggest that teachers who adopt an interactive teaching style can better meet the unique needs of their ESL students. The interactive instructors utilized more cooperative learning strategies along with numerous activities that worked best with ESL students. Smith, Lee and Newmann (2001) analyzed whether didactic or interactive

teaching methods are more effective in teaching elementary school children and found that interactive teaching is associated with higher gains in test scores.

Prior Academic Achievement

Academic factors, specifically prior academic achievement, can help predict the future academic success of a student in higher education (Bryman & Bell, 2007). There have been several studies that discuss the effect that high school grade point average has on academic success in higher education (Agina-Obu, 2005). The consensus of this literature is that students with high aptitude in high school have higher grade-point averages in college. Recently, Adebayo (2008) continued this research by surveying 147 students who were accepted to a public university's conditional acceptance program. Similar to previous findings, the results indicated that high school grade point average was one of the best predictors of first semester college grade point average. Students who performed well in high school were more likely to perform well in college. It has also been suggested that students with higher grade point averages in high school are more likely to persist in college (Ali et al., 2009).

Agina-Obu (2005) reported that, school grade point average was significantly related to decrease attrition during the first year. The author concluded that this information can be used to help develop a time-dependent model of student attrition. Standardized test scores have also been shown to be a strong predictor of success in higher education. Leufer (2007) are also of the view that teaching and learning activities should be tailored to the needs of

students with different levels of experience where possible in order to promote progression in learning. Although it has been shown that prior academic achievement can be a strong predictor of success in college, other factors may have an impact on a student. Non-academic factors such as gender, ethnicity, and academic program have been shown to play a role in a student's college achievement.

Test Anxiety Level

Test anxiety is a major predictor of academic performance and various studies have demonstrated that it has a detrimental effect (McAllister, 2010; Malhotra, 2002). Students with high test anxiety develop and maintain less complete conceptual representations of the course content. To improve academic performance, academic counsellors often focus on the underlying causes of test anxiety and on the student's studying behaviour. Prugsamatz, Pentecost and Ofstad (2006) observed that many factors can lead to the development of test anxiety.

According to McDonald and Schrattenholzer (2001) students' past experiences and beliefs, which have been shaped by a complex interplay of factors, may result in unique reactions to a test situation and lead to test anxiety. These may include their past experiences with courses and their perceptions of course load, as well as their ability to manage time. Test anxiety has been defined as the reaction to stimuli that are associated with an individual's experience of testing or evaluating situations. Al-Fattal and

Ayoubi (2013), hence, it can also be defined as the reaction that students exhibit to examinations.

Two principal components of test anxiety are cognition and emotion (Adeoye & Popoola, 2011). The cognitive component is the mental activity that revolves around the testing situation and its potential implications on the individual and constitutes elements, such as thinking about consequences of failure, Aremu and Oluwole (2001) and worrying a great deal about examinations and lack of confidence in one's ability (Deshler et al., 2001). The emotionality component is the physiological component of test anxiety leading to tension, apprehension, and nervousness towards examinations, which may be associated with somatic symptoms such as palpitation, nausea, and perspiration.

According to Artelt (2005), though individuals with test anxiety do not have any kind of intellectual deficiency, they are not able to tackle test-taking issues effectively. Perceived course load could be one of the factors leading to test anxiety. Extensive course load and comprehensive information in academic curricula necessitates use of proper time management and effective study strategies. Time management can be defined as clusters of behavioural skills that are important in the organization of study and course load. Hence, one of the aspects of time management is to develop effective study habits that essentially help in managing the study load. Time management skills typically include planning in advance, prioritizing the work, and adhering environment are important determinants of the quality of their learning outcomes. The

course load may also affect the manner in which students learn and can be useful in the design and evaluation of curricula.

A study by Putwain (2008) found that students' perceptions of the teaching and the learning environment, such as assessment methods, relevance of the course, and their source load also influence students' approaches to learning. Higher academic performance may be achieved by balancing time management and study techniques effectively. The study additionally indicated that students used many coping strategies during times of stress and/or anxiety. Many students indicated "talking with a family member" as their primary strategy for coping with stress and/or (39.4%) followed by talking with classmates (33.2%) and using self-coping strategies (32.6%). Only about two percent of the students indicated approaching a faculty member or counsellor to help them cope with stress and anxiety.

Theoretical Models

This section of the study reviewed theories related to the study. The theories reviewed include the Retention Theory for Non-Traditional Students: Circles of Progression and Vroom's Expectancy Theory of Motivation.

Retention Theory for Non-Traditional Students: Circles of Progression

This model describes the progression of a student from pre-entry (school and family background), the initial entry into university (first few weeks/orientation), and entry into university (teaching and learning environment) and until completion of studies (Jama, Mapesela & Beylefeld, 2008). The theory takes into consideration students' academic progression

prior to entry into the university, initial entry into university, progression into the actual teaching and learning experience, and the ongoing social and academic integration into the university. Two other common variables finance and language, will also be incorporated into the retention theory as they affect almost every stage of a student's life in the university.

According to the theory, a non-traditional student begins the path of academic life in the pre-entry circle. In this small circle, some non-traditional students find themselves within a family background without or with limited resources and support to help them with the integration in the second circle. Neither has the school background equipped the student with the necessary skills to help with the academic integration into university life (Berge & Huang, 2004).

The compounded financial difficulties of non-traditional students often begin in this first circle because they and their family lack knowledge about financial schemes and how to access these schemes. In some cases, the student and the family do not even realise that this phase will have financial implications for them (Johnstone, 2004). In certain instances, some of these students have been exempted from paying school fees and they believe the same will happen in the university. Generally, towards the end of this phase, students are highly motivated, especially so when they receive their matriculation results and realise that they have access to the next circle of their academic life (Johnstone, 2004).

Movement into the second circle is a critical phase referred to as initial entry into the social and academic life of the university. Social integration

entails a new environment in a big city and campus with new people from different backgrounds and cultures. Some students, who are from small schools in rural areas, have never been exposed to a culture different from their own (Toni 2002). It is in this circle that the financial problems of the students begin to take their toll when students realise that they need to obtain financial aid. Even if the students have secured financial aid in the form of loans or bursaries, problems arise because some loans are usually not enough to cover the total costs of the university and some bursaries are paid out late (Bukula, 2004).

The movement of any student into the next circle ushers into the realities of academic life. The realities of this new environment mean that students are introduced to their specific learning programmes. It is in this circle that students begin to learn about, inter alia, new methods of teaching, rules and regulations and assessment methods (Toni 2002, 19). Furthermore, students have to get acquainted to big and different classroom arrangements, lecturers and classmates from different cultures and study materials which are arranged in different formats for every subject. Besides having to grasp subject-specific concepts, students have to learn the new language of teaching and learning such as a 'semester', a 'module', 'module mark', 'semester mark', 'formative assessment' and 'summative assessment'.

In most cases the last circle, where students begin to specialise within a specific learning programme, is usually the last stage of academic integration. It is in this stage that students are prepared for their roles as professionals or specialists in a particular field. They are expected to apply the theoretical

skills they learned in the previous circle in order to acquire professional or special skills. As in the previous circle, students are further introduced to a new academic language, a new academic environment and they are expected to apply higher-order critical thinking skills (Lau, 2003).

From the retention theories discussed in this article, it is clear that retention is not due to an isolated factor but it is a result of a whole range of interrelated factors and therefore there is no one single explanation and solution to student attrition. Based on the literature, generalisations about student retention can be misleading because each student, each country and each institution is unique.

Vroom's Expectancy Theory of Motivation

As originally developed by Vroom (1964), expectancy theory is made up of two related models? The valence model and the force model. The valence model attempts to capture the perceived attractiveness, or valence, of an outcome by aggregating the attractiveness of all associated resultant outcomes. More specifically, the model posits that the valence of a first-level outcome is equal to the summation of the products from all associated second-level outcome valences, with the perceived belief (or instrumentality) that the first-level outcome will result in the second-level outcome.

Several researchers have examined the relationship between Vroom's expectancy theory and student academic performance. Vollmer (1986) found that, even after controlling student preparation time, past grades, and perceived ability, expectancy was still positively associated with subsequent

grades. Interestingly, however, Vollmer (1986) did not find that expectancy determines effort expenditure. Malloch and Michael (1981) used a multiple regression approach and found that community college students' GPAs could be predicted from ability and expectancy measures and that valence and instrumentality constructs added little if any to the predictability of student performance. Likewise, Moore and Davis (1984) found that General Educational Development scores were dependent on individuals' expectancy subscale scores and not on valence subscale scores. However, the authors of these earlier studies used an across-persons approach to modelling expectancy theory and its related constructs. Recent studies using a more appropriate within-persons approach to expectancy theory (Stahl & Harrell, 1981, 1983) have found that individual effort level decisions are more affected by perceived valence of outcomes than the probability of expected success (Griffin & Harrell, 1991).

Bloom's Sub Environment Model

It was not until Bloom (1964) and a number of studies which examined the family and children's affective and academic outcomes that a school of research emerged to investigate the relationships between family influences and academic outcomes. Bloom defines family environments as the conditions, forces, and external stimuli that impinge on children. He proposes that these forces, which may be physical or social as well as intellectual, provide a network that surrounds, engulfs, and plays on the child. The Bloom model suggests that the total family context surrounding a child may be

considered as being composed of a number of sub environments. If the development of particular characteristics, such as academic motivation and academic achievement, are to be understood, then it is necessary to identify those sub environments that are potentially related to the characteristics. The analyses guided by the sub environment model indicate that it is possible to measure family influences that, when combined, have medium associations with children's academic motivation and large associations with their academic achievement.

Conceptual Framework

The study will adapt the Retention Theory for Non-Traditional Students: Circles of Progression and Vroom's Expectancy Theory of Motivation as the conceptual framework. These two theories will be adapted to help the study understand how self-efficacy and cognitive ability, demographic factors and the dynamic and contextual nature of student's learning environment affect their academic performance.

Research findings from Education Planning and Research Division (1994), suggest that negative attitudes toward learning are attributed to lack of basic skills in learning, weak mastery of language skills and poor self-efficacy that influence the success or failure of the students. Self-efficacy is the belief that one possesses the capabilities to organize, plan and carry out the courses of action required to manage situations at hand (Bandura, 1994). These beliefs are described as the determinants of how people think, behave and feel (Bandura, 1994). Hence, a handful of research findings indicate that self-

efficacy influences academic achievement and motivation (Pajares, 1996; Schunk, 1995). Self-efficacy is also related to setting aims and goals in life, and the plan of actions in achieving them. Setting goals and objectives are important in carrying out everyday tasks (Pintrich & Schunk, 1996).

Student

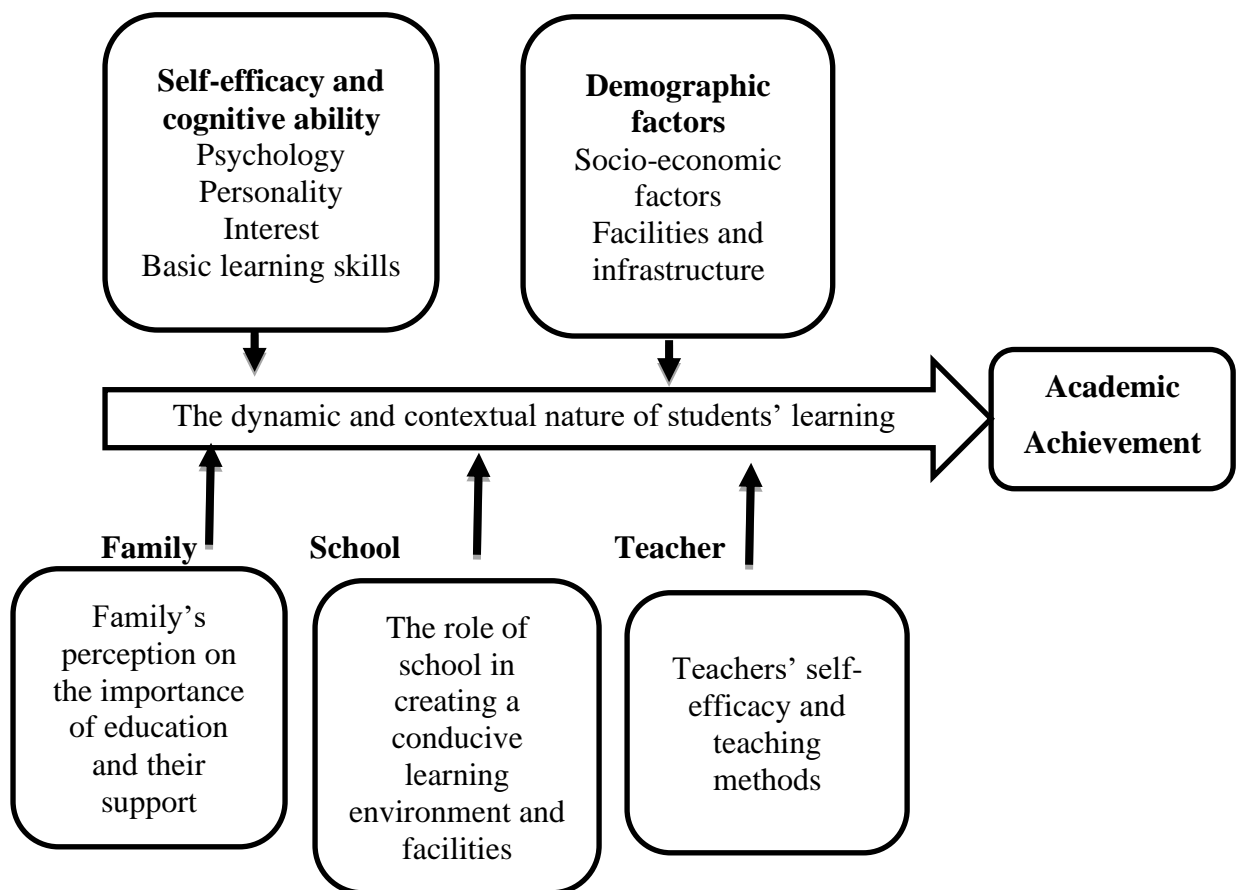


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Educators and counsellors need to work closely with parents in matters involving children development. A student's family institution marks the beginning of a student's learning habits, pattern and culture. Parental guidance is thus very crucial in cultivating the right learning culture amongst the

students. In order to develop the students' positive self-concept, which affects the way they see learning, parents need to create a harmonious climate, provide adequate necessities and ensure happiness at home (Gadeyne, Ghesquiere & Onghena, 2004). Home environment and early experiences help to create curiosity, help build self-efficacy and shape the individual's behavior. Factors like parents' expectations, home environment, and discipline and parent involvement do affect students' achievement (Sumari, Zaharah & Siraj, 2010). A well function family could create a positive climate in the family institution which the dynamic communication and effective relationship could determine the educational climate in the family, and in turn influence the academic results (Diaz, 2003).

Apart from family support, the framework also incorporates support from teachers and schools. Teachers and schools play pertinent role in the capabilities development and academic achievement of the students. Teachers are seen as the main source of learning in schools especially in ensuring the students' success. This study takes into consideration not only the self-efficacy amongst students, but also the teachers' extent of belief in their influence on their students' success. This belief is fundamental as teachers' belief lie at the very heart of teaching (Kagan, 1992).

It is acknowledged that students' performance is also largely influenced by the teachers' pedagogical approach to teaching. It has been reported that the teaching methodology largely adopted in schools is the traditional teacher-fronted, noncommittal teachers, lack of interaction and bond between teachers and students. Learning process should be enjoyable

where the teaching approach used could attract the students' attention, develop interest in learning, and ensure full participation in the classroom.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

This chapter outlines the methods employed in gathering the data from the field. Issues covered include the study area, philosophical underpinning, study design, sources of data, target population, sample size, sampling, research instrument, data collection procedure, pre-testing, data analysis, ethical consideration and experiences from the field.

Research Design

A cross-sectional design was used for this study. It was applied to the study to help identify the factors that affect the academic performance of nursing students by looking at their socio-demographic background characteristics, school environmental factors, students' indiscipline and the teaching style of tutors within a short period at a one-time point. Data was collected on individual characteristics and their exposure to the relevant issues under consideration. This design enabled the study to use a questionnaire with Likert scale questions, multiple response questions and open ended questions to solicit the views of the respondents.

There are various research paradigms that were taken into consideration for this study. These paradigms are; the interpretivist perspective, pragmatic approach and the positivist perspective. The interpretivist perspective of research deals with the interpretation and the understanding of social life through direct detailed observation (Creswell, 2007). Also, the pragmatic approach to research recognises the ties or themes

that connect quantitative and qualitative approach and as such sees the benefits of blending quantitative and qualitative methods (Morgan, 2007).

The positivist perspective usually involves the collecting and converting data into numerical form so that statistical calculations can be made and conclusions can be drawn (Creswell, 2007; Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007). The positivist perspective indicates that real events can be observed empirically or experimentally and explained with logical analysis (Creswell, 2007).

Positivism is a mixture of empiricism and rationalism which deals with hypotheses in an objective manner (Bhattacharjee, 2012). This approach is empirical, deterministic and logical, placing emphasis on empirical data collection. Positivists take note of the cause and effect issues which will aid in the generalisation of findings (Creswell, 2007). The interpretivist perspective does not make room for generalisation of findings and as such the positivism was used.

In positivism, the hypothesis can be worked out from a deductive approach to an inductive approach. It begins with observing a particular problem or issue which would then help in generalising their findings to the world (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007). Positivists use quantitative methods to pursue research such as surveys, longitudinal methods, cross-sectional and experimental methods (Creswell, 2007; Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007). With positivism, it allows the researcher to remain detached from the respondents, unlike the interpretivist perspective that allows close interaction with respondents (Creswell, 2007).

Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) argue that the issues under study can be generalised to a larger extent, with which data obtained from the same issue with various social context can be collected. It will also help in making future predictions. This means that researchers can generalise their research findings when it has been replicated in various populations and subgroups (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). This philosophical underpinning provides information in an objective manner so that researchers can use the information obtained to make scientific assumptions. When a reliable research instrument is used it will yield data similar results over time (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007). All the various explanations of positivism in the previous paragraphs provide the basis for which the study used positivism as its philosophical underpinning.

Study Area

Kumasi is the capital city of the Ashanti region of Ghana. The city of Kumasi was founded in the 1680's by King Osei Tutu I to serve as the capital of the Asante State (Fynn, 1971). Given its strategic location and political dominance, Kumasi as a matter of course, developed into a major commercial centre with all major trade routes converging on it.

The unique centrality of the city as a traversing point from all parts of the country makes it a special place for many to migrate to. The metropolitan area shares boundaries with Kwabre East District to the north, Atwima District to the west, Ejisu-Juaben Municipal to the east and Bosomtwe to the south.

Kumasi is located in the south-central part of the country, about 250 km (by road) northwest of Accra.

Lake Bosumtwi, the largest natural lake in Ghana, is located approximately 32 km south of Kumasi. Downtown Kumasi with a population of 1,517,000 (2005, source: United Nations Population Division), Kumasi is the second-largest city in the country. The largest ethnic group is the Ashanti, but other ethnic groups are growing in size. Approximately 80% Christians and 20% Muslims, with a smaller number of adherents to traditional beliefs.

It is an Anglican diocesan and Roman Catholic archdiocesan see. The city exists in the forest region of West Africa, but there is evidence that the area around Kumasi has been kept cleared since the Neolithic. The city rose to prominence in 1695 when it became capital of the Ashanti Confederacy due to the activities of its ruler Osei Tutu. The ruler of Kumasi, known as the Kumasehene, also served as ruler of the Confederacy. Parts of the city, including the

Royal Palace, were destroyed by British troops in the Fourth Anglo-Ashanti War of 1874. It remains a royal city, although since all of Ghana was declared independent in 1957, the role of king has been mainly symbolic. The city holds an important place in the history of the Ashanti people, as legend claims that it was here Okomfo Anokye received the Golden stool, an embodiment of the soul of the Asanti nation.

Due to large gold deposits that have been mined in the area, Kumasi has been among the wealthier cities in Ghana. Today's major exports are

hardwood and cocoa. Kumasi has 50% of the timber industry in Ghana, with more than 4,000 employed in the business.

Specifically, the study will be conducted in three nursing training colleges in the Region. Namely, Komfo Anokye Nursing and Midwifery Training College (NMTC), SDA Nursing and Midwifery Training College (NMTC) Kwadaso- Kumasi and Agogo Presbyterian Nursing and Midwifery Training College (NMTC). Nursing and Midwifery Training College, Kumasi is located at Bantema on the same premises with Komfo Anokye Teaching Hospital. (KATH) It shares boundaries with the Uaddara Barracks (Old 4BN). The college since inception has existed as two college running nursing and midwifery programmes under two different administration namely Nurse's Training College (NTC) and Midwifery Training School (MTS). In 2007, both institutions merged under one administration hence the name NURSING and Midwifery Training College (NMTC).

The nursing programme was started in 11th January, 1955 with a State Registered Nursing (SRN) certificate programme which was three years duration. In 1968, a two-year Enrolled Nursing (EN) programme was introduced which ran alongside the SRN. The SRN certificate programme later gave way to a 3-year Comprehensive SRN Programme in August 1969. In 1983, the Enrolled Nursing programme was phased out. A Registered General Nursing (RGN) Diploma programme was introduced in 1999 and that is currently running.

The Midwifery programme also started in 1957 with a two year and two and half year duration depending on once entry qualification. These

continued until the early 1980s when it was replaced with a one year post Basic programme after completion of SRN. A three-year Registered Midwifery (RM) Diploma programme was introduced in 2003. These programmes run concurrently till 2007 when the certificate was phased out. Currently the College is running a 3-year Diploma in Registered General Nursing and Registered Midwifery. Two-year certificate in Midwifery programme has been introduced in 2016/2017.

Population of Tutors at KMNTC= 30

Table 1: Population of Students in KMNTC

Population	Male	Female	Total
RGN 3 rd year	57	177	232
RGN 2 nd year	53	139	192
RGN 1 st year	37	120	157
RM 3 rd year	-	110	110
RM 2 nd year	-	124	124
RM 1 st year	-	133	133

Source: Field work, (2018)

SDA Nurses Training College, Kwadaso- Kumasi is located on the Kumasi- Sunyani road. It is three miles away from Adum (i.e the main commercial city). It is within the Kwadaso constituency. The establishment of SDA NMTC came into being through the initiative of the management of the SDA Hospital, Kwadaso- Kumasi. The in-house presented this wonderful proposal to the Hospital Board for approval. By God’s grace the hospital board did approve such proposal.

The management at that time then wrote Nurses and Midwifery Council- Ghana for directives about the establishment of NMTC. Nurses and Midwifery Council also replied to their letter and gave them a line-up of what to put in place before the school could be operated. Among the requirements proposed were the number and types of buildings and equipment constitute the set up? Following this, Nurses and Midwifery Council came for inspection on three consecutive times. It was during the final inspection that they gave the school a temporal accreditation to run the Registered General Nursing Diploma programme which started in October, 2005. The school started with 39 students but 33 completed. Currently the school has a population of 770 with 61 staff.

The SDA NMTC is a quasi-government institution. This means it is partly supported by the government of Ghana and partly assisted by the SDA church. The college is therefore owned by the Seventh-day Adventist Church and assisted by the Government of Ghana through the Ministry of Health.

The total population of the area is about fifty thousand people. The main occupation for the inhabitants here is petty trading and some civil servants.

SDA NMTC KWADASO

Population of Tutors= 44

Table 2: Population of Students in SDA NMTC Kwadaso

Population	Male	Female	Total
RGN 3 rd year	104	178	282
RGN 2 nd year	100	153	253
RGN 1 st year	151	104	255
RM 3 rd year	-	157	157
RM 2 nd year	-	217	217
RM 1 st year	-	166	166

Source: Field work, (2018)

Agogo Presbyterian Nursing and Midwifery Training College was established by the Swiss Missionaries in March 1936 as the first Mission Nursing Training College in Ghana. The College started with a 2year practical training for nurses. In 1939 however, training of nurses was interrupted by the Second World War. The College reopened in 1945 to continue the training of nurses. In 1950, the college started the Qualified Registered Nursing course (QRN) in line with standards set by the Nurses' Board of Gold Coast. By 1968, the College had trained 184 QRNs who had passed their examinations. The concentrated State Registered Nursing (SRN) course started in 1966 and the straight SRN started in 1972 and ended in 2001(this program was intended to bring the Qualify Registered Nursing (QRNs) to the level of SRN). The enrolled nursing program was being concurrently run with the SRN from 1967 to 1983 and this was a result of the Ministry of Health phasing out the training of the QRNs.

In the pursuance of the training of SRNs, Christian Health Association of Ghana (CHAG) asked the college to train SRNs for all church institutions in Ghana. Sister Vreni Fiechner carried the main responsibility for the training of the SRNs for the church institutions. In the years 1962-1964, a major building programme financed jointly by the Ghanaian and Swiss governments, accommodation for 76 pupil nurses was built along with the facilities needed for teaching, lecture rooms, a library, a kitchen and a dining hall. Between 1972 and 1988 based on the recommendation of CHAG the college became ecumenical enterprise. The formal opening ceremony for the Ecumenical Nurses' Training College was held on 31st March, 1973 and the ceremony was chaired by Nana Otumfou Opoku Ware II, and some of the dignitaries who were at the ceremony were the Health Minister represented by the DMS, Dr. MD Baidoo, and the Swiss Ambassador by Mr. Vettavarlia.

The college is currently training students in the following programmes; Registered General Nursing, Registered Midwifery (August 2014) and Post Health Assistant Clinical/Community Health Nursing (HAC/CHN Midwifery (October 2012).

The institution is under the Christian Health Association of Ghana (CHAG) and trains nurses for CHAG, private and government institutions.

Population of Tutors at Agogo Presbyterian Nurses and Midwifery Training College= 14

Table 3: Population of Students at Agogo Presbyterian Nurses and Midwifery Training College

Population	Male	Female	Total
RGN 3 rd year	50	90	140
RGN 2 nd year	35	95	130
RGN 1 st year	40	80	120
RM 3 rd year	-	49	49
RM 2 nd year	-	69	69
RM 1 st year	-	106	106

As such a total of 2,892 students and 88 tutors were the population for the study.

Sample and Sampling Procedure

Out of the total population of students (2892) of nursing and midwifery training colleges in Kumasi, 214 were sampled. This sample size was derived with the aid of a software called Open Epi (Version 3) using a proportionate sample size at a confidence level of 95 percent and confidence limit of 4. The confidence limit was reduced to 4 so as to get a larger sample size in order to have a more representative sample. The total population of students was entered into the software and it calculated the sample size using this formula:

$$\text{Sample size } (n) = [\text{DEFF} * Np(1-p)] / [(d^2 / Z^2_{1-\alpha/2} * (N-1) + p*(1-p))]$$

Where:

Population size (for finite population correction factor or fpc) (N): 7,479

Hypothesized % frequency of outcome factor in the population (p): 50% +/-5

Confidence limits as % of 100 (absolute +/- %) (d): 4%

Design effect (for cluster surveys-*DEFF*): 1%

Since the total population of the tutors is small (88), a census was conducted. Thus, each tutor was required to answer a questionnaire. Hence, the total sample size for the study was 302.

To determine the number of respondents to be interviewed from each school, the number of students in a school was divided by the total number of students of all the schools and multiplied by the sample size. The result for each school represents the number of respondents that will be taken from each school.

Table 4: Sampling Table for Study

Name of School	Population of Students (X)	Respondents (X / 2892) * 214
Komfo Anokye Nursing and Midwifery Training College (NMTC)	948	70
S. D.A. Nurses Training College, Kwadaso- Kumasi (NMTC)	1330	98
Agogo Presbyterian Nursing and Midwifery Training College (NMTC)	614	46
Total	2892	214

Source: Field work, (2018)

The simple random sampling technique would be used in selecting the respondents from the schools. Specifically, the lottery method would be used. The selection of the respondents would follow a three stage procedure. In stage one, a list of all the students and their academic level would be obtained

from the administration for the selection. This constituted the sampling frame for the study. In stage two, the names listed in the sampling frame would be substituted with numbered marbles so that each marble corresponds to a name from the sampling frame. All the marbles would then be placed in a bowl. In stage three, the marbles would be mixed well and a marble would be removed from the bowl. The number on this marble would be registered and the corresponding name in the sampling frame is ascertained. This constitutes the first respondent. The marble would be left out and the process would continue until the total sample size of each school is obtained. The simple random sampling technique would be used because it gives all units of the target population an equal chance of being selected.

Data Collection Instrument

A structured questionnaire was used. The structured questionnaire contained both closed- ended and open-ended items. The open-ended questions gave respondents the opportunity to provide additional information relevant to the study.

The questionnaire consisted of 4 sections. The first section addressed the background characteristics of the respondents, section B school environmental factors, section C attitudes of students towards learning, D probed into the teaching styles of tutors in nurses training colleges.

The instrument for the data collection was pilot-tested on nurses training students and tutors in the Central Region. The instrument was pre-tested in the Central Region nurses training schools because of the similarities

in the population. The reason for the pre-test was to find out if the instrument would be reliable and able to capture all the necessary information needed for the study. Sixty questionnaires were pre-tested and analysed using Statistical Package for the Service Solutions (SPSS) version 22. A reliability test was done to show the Cronbach's Alpha. A Cronbach's Alpha less than 0.6 would mean the instrument is not reliable. The pilot-testing would make it possible for corrections to be made on the instrument and also ensure the validity of the instrument. The pilot-test also helped the field assistants get familiar with the questionnaire.

Data Collection Procedure

Due to the large sample size, the study employed the use of field assistants to enable the smooth and easy collection of data within the stipulated period. Three field assistants were recruited to assist in the administration of the questionnaires. One male and two females were recruited as field assistants. The selection of field assistants was based on the person's ability to read, understand and interpret the items on the questionnaire to the respondents.

The selected field assistants were taken through training exercises to equip them on how to approach respondents. They were informed not to influence the response of the respondents. Also, they were trained on ethical issues such as informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity. The field assistants read the consent form and told to let respondents read the form and sign before the interview process commenced.

The study recorded % as a response rate of 97 the return rate for the questionnaires.

Data Processing and Analysis

Data collected from student records and current students were entered and cleaned using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21. This process comprises coding of the various variable options on their appropriate scales. Frequency and percentage were descriptive statistics used in presenting the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents. The following also explain how each of the research question was analysed and the general justification for the use of the statistic adopted.

Research Question 1: What socio-demographic characteristics affect academic performance of RGN diploma students?

The influence of these socio-demographic characteristics (Sex, Age, Ethnicity, Religion, Entry aggregate, Course read at SHS, Occupation of father, Occupation of mother, Level of education of father, Level of education of mother, Religion of mother, and Religion of father) was examined using chi-square statistics. The level of statistical significance for the chi-square analysis was set at $p < 0.05$.

Research Question 2: What school environmental factors affect academic performance of RGN diploma students in Ashanti Region?

The influence of school environmental factors (There are adequate number of classrooms, Classrooms are spacious, Items written on marker/chalk boards can be seen clearly from afar, There is a library in the school, There is easy access to the school's library, The library is well resourced, The library is spacious, The school has internet connectivity for students' use, There is easy access to the internet to do research, The school has a school laboratory, There is easy access to the school's laboratory, The laboratory is able to accommodate a class at a time, Equipment in the skills laboratory is appropriate for learning, Lights in dormitories/hostels are put out too early in the night, Mock examinations organized by the school prior to the licensing examinations are not satisfactory) on academic performance was also measured using chi-square analyses. Again, the level of significance for the tests was set at $p < 0.05$.

Research Question 3: In what way does student indiscipline affect academic performance of RGN diploma students in Ashanti Region?

Chi-square tests were again used in analysing the effect of factors constituting indiscipline (Students who don't miss class are more likely to get good grades, Students who are punctual to Prep are more likely to get good grades, Students who go on suspension are more likely to perform poorly in academics, Students who serve more time spent on punishment are likely to perform poorly in academics, Students who frequently absent themselves from school perform more poorly than their counterparts, The poor performance of some students is due to the ill preparedness of some tutors in the college, Lack

of professional work ethic of some teachers in the college affect students' academic performance negatively) on academic performance. The level of significance for the tests was set at $p < 0.05$.

Research Question 4: In what way does the teaching style of tutors affect the academic performance of students in the RGN diploma nursing institutions?

Like the other objectives, the effects of teaching style of tutors (Tutors are qualified and experienced at their work, Students receive detailed feedback from tutors on their work and written assignments, Tutors are fair and unbiased in their treatment of individual students, Tutors relate to students professionally appropriate, Tutors demonstrate a high level of knowledge in their subject area, Tutors make appropriate use of modern technology and audio-visual aids to enhance learning, Tutors make an effort to understand difficulties students have with their coursework, Tutors make their subjects interesting, The quality of instruction received from tutors is good and helpful, Tutors are able to complete the syllabuses of the various courses, and End-of-semester examinations set by tutors are comparable to past question of the licensing examinations) on academic performance was analysed using Chi-square. The level of significance for the tests was again set at $p < 0.05$.

Chi-square was adopted as the main statistical tool in analysing the objectives because, it is flexible in that it fitted perfectly with the nature of the variables being measured. Thus, as a statistical tool, it was appropriate to use chi-square for categorical variables like sex, age groups, and religion. All

questions/statements which constituted the variables measuring the rest of the variables were framed in the Likert-Scale format which is ordinal in nature. Chi-square, therefore, becomes the best statistic to use in determining their influence on the main outcome variable (academic performance) which was also categorical (multicotomous) in nature

Ethical Consideration

The topic for the study was first approved by the Institute for Educational Planning and Administration Department of the University of Cape Coast. Ethical clearance for the study was sought and received from the University of Cape Coast Institutional Review Board.

This study will not cause any risk or harm to the participants. The respondents were assured that this research was for academic purposes and whatever information they gave was kept highly confidential. Anonymity would also be assured. Any information given by the respondents was kept private and no third party had access to the responses given. Information that were given could not be traced back to the respondents.

Consent was sought from the respondents using an informed consent form. The purpose of the study was explained to the participants and those that agreed to take part in the study signed the informed consent form. Respondents were informed that their participation was voluntary and that they could decide not to answer certain questions they felt uncomfortable with.

Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the methods that were adopted in conducting the study. It included the study design which was cross-sectional, the study areas which was Kumasi (the capital of the Ashanti Region), and the study population which comprised nursing training students and their tutors. Sample and sampling procedures for the study were also discussed in this study. The formulae $(n) = [DEFF * Np(1-p)] / [(d^2 / Z^2_{1-\alpha/2} * (N-1) + p*(1-p)]$ was used to arrive at a sample size of 70 students from Komfo Anokye Nursing and Midwifery Training College (NMTC), 98 students from SDA Nurses Training College, Kwadaso- Kumasi (NMTC), 46 students from Agogo Presbyterian Nursing and Midwifery Training College (NMTC). Overall, 214 students were sampled for the study. Tutors targeted for data collection through a census also constituted 88. The simple random sampling technique was used in selecting students from the various schools. A questionnaire divided into sections based on the socio-demographic characteristics of respondents and the research questions, was used for the data collection.

The data analysis was also discussed in this chapter, where it was explained that Data collected from student records and current students were entered and cleaned using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21. Frequency, percentage and chi-square statistics were discussed as being the main statistical tools adopted in analyzing the data. Concerning ethical issues, it was indicated that the topic for the study was first approved by the Institute for Educational Planning and Administration Department of

the University of Cape Coast and Ethical later sought and received from the University of Cape Coast Institutional Review Board.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents results of data collected from students and tutors on the field. The results are organized based on the socio-demographic characteristics of respondents as well as objectives of the study. After the results presentation, discussions are then conducted based on key findings made. A sample size of 70 students from Komfo Anokye Nursing and Midwifery Training College (NMTC), 98 students from SDA Nurses Training College, Kwadaso- Kumasi (NMTC), 46 students from Agogo Presbyterian Nursing and Midwifery Training College (NMTC) was used. Overall, 214 students were sampled for the study. At the end of data collection, however, 208 instruments were retrieved from the students giving a response rate of 97 percent. Tutors targeted for data collection through a census also constituted 88. After data collection 51 questionnaires were retrieved given a response rate of 57 percent.

Socio-demographic characteristics that affect academic performance of RGN diploma students

Socio-demographic characteristics included in the study were; sex, age, ethnicity, religion, and years of teaching. From Table 5, females were the majority of respondents surveyed for both students (67.3%) and tutors (54.9%). While most (80.3%) of the students were in their early 20s, the tutors were generally in their 40s (40-44=29.4%, 45-49=23.5%). Regarding Ethnicity, Akans constituted the sheer majority (84.6%), and comparative

majority (39.2%) among students and tutors respectively. Christians also formed the majority of the respondents surveyed among students (92.3%) and tutors (90.2%). Most of the tutors had also been working in this capacity for 11-15 years (51.0%).

Table 5: Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents

Variable	Students (N=208)		Tutors (N=51)	
	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Sex				
Male	68	32.7	23	45.1
Female	140	67.3	28	54.9
Age				
15-19	4	1.9		
20-24	167	80.3		
25-29	35	16.8	2	3.9
30-34	2	1.0	3	5.9
35-39			9	17.6
40-44			15	29.4
45-49			12	23.5
50-54			8	15.7
55-59			2	3.9
Ethnicity				
Akan	176	84.6	20	39.2
Ewe	15	7.2	16	31.4
Guan	2	1.0	1	2.0
Mole-Dagbani	5	2.4	4	7.8
Ga/Dangme	4	1.9	4	7.8
Other	6	2.9	6	11.8
Religion				
Christianity	192	92.3	46	90.2
Islam	13	6.3	5	9.8
African Traditional	3	1.4		
Years of teaching				
1-5			6	11.8
6-10			10	19.6
11-15			26	51.0
16+			9	17.6

Source: Field work, (2018)

The academic performance of the students surveyed were measured using cumulative grade point averages (CGPAs) which reflect their respective

academic class positions (See Figure 2). From Figure 2, 47.1% of the students were in the 2nd class upper division at the time of the study. While 15.9 percent were first class students, 5.3 percent were in the 3rd class division.

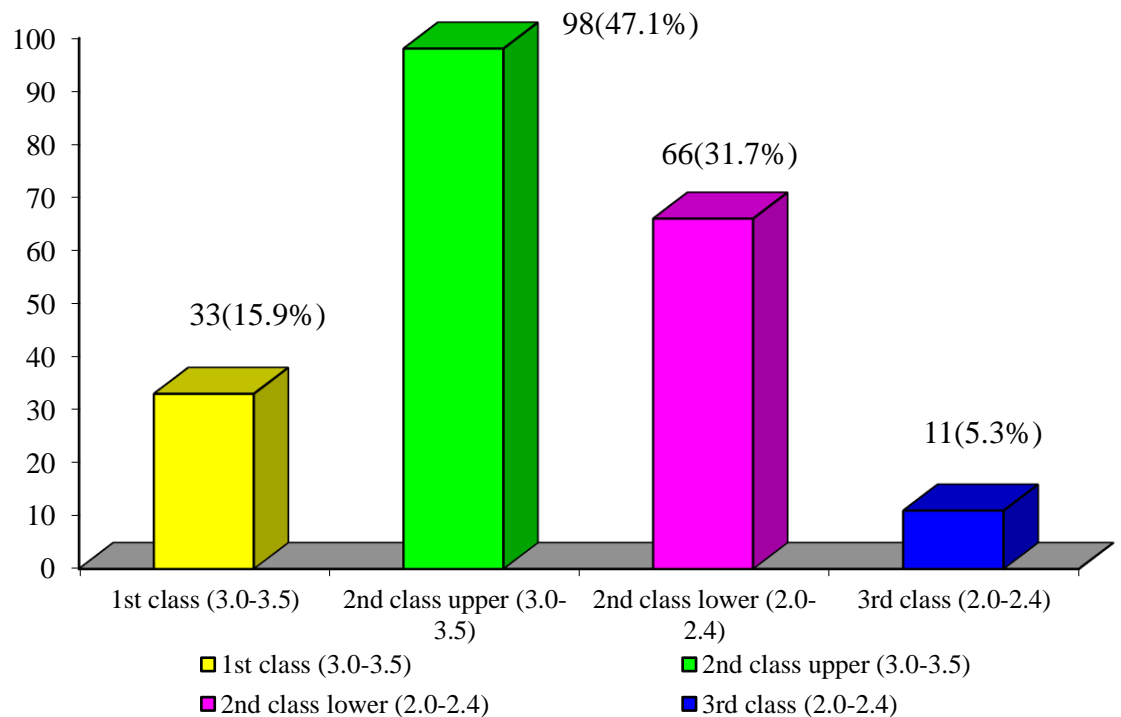


Figure 2: Academic performance (CGPA) of students

Source: Field work, 2018

Socio-demographic factors influencing academic performance

The influence of socio-demographic characteristics (which include student-based factors in the research instrument) was examined using chi-square analyses. From Table 6, it was realized that entry aggregate ($X^2=89.19$, $p=0.03$) and occupation of mother ($X^2=74.587$, $p=0.05$) were the socio-demographic factors which influenced the academic performance of the students

Table 6: Socio-demographic factors influencing academic performance

Socio-demographic variable	Academic performance	
	Chi-square	p-value
Sex	3.53	0.32
Age	1.77	0.99
Ethnicity	22.43	0.1
Religion	6.1	0.41
Entry aggregate	89.19	0.03*
Course read at SHS	26.82	0.63
Occupation of father	3.84	0.99
Occupation of mother	74.59	0.05*
Level of education of father	13.73	0.32
Level of education of mother	12.41	0.41
Religion of mother	2.51	0.87
Religion of father	2.74	0.84

Source: Field work, (2018) *Significant at $p < 0.05$

Key for Weighing of Responses

SA=1 A=2 D=3 SD=4

It was found that the comparative majority of the respondents were in 2nd class upper division at the time of the study followed by about 3 out of 10 who were 2nd class lower division. Entry aggregate and occupation of mother were the socio-demographic factors which influenced the academic performance of the students.

The findings only reiterate the role of socio-demographic characteristics in the academic achievement of students. Studies conducted in the past regarding the academic achievement of students such as one conducted by Kocakaya and Gönen (2012) reveal that the occupation of mother is important factor in estimating the students' achievement. It has been shown for instance that mothers with very lucrative occupations and income levels have been paying more attention to daily performances of their children in comparison with the families with lower income levels (Kocakaya Gönen, 2012).

The practice of using Senior High School entry grades as the main determinant of university entrance is very common in some countries such as Ghana (Kobina, 2012). In Ghana, students are selected into nursing and midwifery training institutions based on the grades obtained from their previous schooling sessions such as Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination (SSSCE), West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE), Ordinary and Advanced Level. Consistent with findings of the current study, previous studies have also found entry grade as an important factor which influences the academic performance of students (Kobina, 2012).

A study by Abdullah (2010), using ordinary least squares multiple regression model and a sample of 566 students, found that academic performance in a tertiary institution can be determined by entry grades of students from Senior High Schools. Win and Miller (2009) also found that Senior High School entry grades have an impact on the academic performance on tertiary grades. Again, Niu and Tienda (2009) found in their study that

Senior High school grades are good predictors of college performance than standardized test scores.

The findings of the present study, however, contract a study conducted by Amankwaa, Agyemang-Dankwah, and Boateng (2015) who indicated that the sociodemographic background of the students had no influence on their cumulative performance in the nursing training.

School environmental factors that influence academic performance

From Table 7, school environmental factors which influenced the academic performance as argued by students were; availability of library in the school ($X^2=166.48$, $p=0.05$), internet connectivity for students' use ($X^2=170.01$, $p=0.04$), access to the internet connectivity ($X^2=182.08$, $p=0.04$), and access to the school's laboratory ($X^2=188.18$, $p=0.03$). Among tutors, the factors which statistically influence the academic performance of students statistically were; classroom space ($X^2=18.28$, $p=0.03$), the level of resources in the library ($X^2=14.41$, $p=0.03$), and time that lights in the dormitories are turned off at night ($X^2=17.32$, $p=0.04$).

Table 7: Chi-square tests for the influence of school environmental factors on academic performance

Factor	Academic performance			
	Students (N=208)		Tutors (n=51)	
	X ²	p-value	X ²	p-value
There are adequate number of classrooms	138.79	0.47	9.20	0.42
Classrooms are spacious	141.16	0.41	18.28	0.03*
Items written on marker/chalk boards can be seen clearly from afar	143.16	0.99	9.18	0.42
There is a library in the school	166.48	0.05*	1.42	0.70
There is easy access to the school's library	113.22	0.94	7.97	0.24
The library is well resourced.	153.80	0.17	14.41	0.03*
The library is spacious	145.06	0.32	13.05	0.04
The school has internet connectivity for students' use	170.01	0.04*	6.66	0.35
There is easy access to the internet to do research	182.08	0.04*	5.16	0.52
The school has a school laboratory	139.20	0.46	3.44	0.94
There is easy access to the school's laboratory	188.18	0.03*	6.23	0.40
The laboratory is able to accommodate a class at a time	132.41	0.62	7.18	0.62
Equipment in the skills laboratory is appropriate for learning	114.59	0.93	6.98	0.64
Lights in dormitories/hostels are put out too early in the night.	142.13	0.39	17.32	0.04*
Mock examinations organized by the school prior to the licensing examinations are not satisfactory	138.95	0.46	8.09	0.52

Source: Field work, (2018) *Significant at p<0.05

Based on the variables that were significant, descriptive analyses were conducted to understand the nature of the influence. From Table 8, it was realized that there was actually the availability of libraries in the various

schools (strongly agree=59.2%, agree=37%). The schools, however, did not have internet connectivity (strongly disagree=41.8%, disagree=19.7%) to ensure effective research. In the instances where the internet was available, it was not easily accessible (strongly disagree=45.2%, disagree=26%). Classrooms were also not spacious (disagree=88.2%, strongly disagree=17.8%), and the lights in the dormitories/hostels put out too early in the night (agree=72.5%, agree=2%).

Table 8: Specific school environmental factors influencing academic performance

Variable	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Students (N=208)				
There is a library in the School	123(59.2)	77(37.0)	4(1.9)	4(1.9)
The school has internet connectivity for students use	29(13.9)	51(24.5)	41(19.7)	87(41.8)
There is easy access to the internet to do research	29(13.9)	31(14.9)	54(26.0)	94(45.2)
there is easy access to the school's laboratory	42(20.2)	76(36.5)	53(25.5)	37(17.8)
Tutors (N=51)				
Classrooms are spacious	1(2.0)	4(7.8)	45(88.2)	1(2.0)
The school's library is well resourced	3(5.9)	32(62.7)	16(31.4)	-
Lights the dormitories/hostels are put out too early in the night	1(2.0)	37(72.5)	7(13.7)	6(11.8)

Source: Field work, (2018)

The school environment has been recognized as either encouraging, or impeding a positive learning experience for professional nurses (Frankel, 2009). According to Entwistle et al. (2008), the influences of teaching-

learning environments on the quality of the learning outcomes start from extensive observation of current structures and practices. This would then lead to conceptualization of the influences on outputs, collaborative thinking about realistic possible changes, discussions with the main groups in the organization who are likely to be involved in any changes, implementation of agreed changes, and evaluation of their effects.

In the present study, availability of library in the school, classroom space, the level of resources in the library, internet connectivity for students' use, access to the internet connectivity, access to the school's laboratory, and time that lights in the dormitories are turned off at night were school environmental factors which influenced academic performance.

Consistent with findings in the present study is the argument that school environmental factors provide a concrete basis for developmental learning and thereby making learning more permanent. Similarly, teaching they provide experiences not easily secured in other ways and hence contribute to the depth and variety of learning. Kieffer (1965), finally states a sound learning environment which includes the availability of a well-equipped library, add much to the growth of understanding thereby making learning more permanent.

Lau (2003) established that school environmental factors such as internet connectivity easily convey course and teaching materials to students in a visual and graphic form which could help to clarify abstract concepts. Lua (2003) added that access to the internet provides effective attention-gathering tools and can be used to enrich and complement classroom teaching and

learning and may reinvent subject matter. Lau (2003) the concluded that using appropriate ICT technologies, students can visualize the concepts in their minds and are better able to absorb the material.

In which way do student indiscipline affect academic performance of RGN diploma students in Ashanti Region

Regarding students' discipline factors, statistically significant relationships were established between academic performance and statements that "students who serve more time spent on punishment are likely to perform poorly in academics" ($X^2=180.02$, $p=0.01$), and "students who frequently absent themselves from school perform more poorly than their counterparts" ($X^2=252.68$, $p<0.001$).

Table 9: Effects of students' discipline factors on academic performance

Variable	Academic performance			
	Students (N=208)		Tutors (n=51)	
	X ²	p-value	X ²	p-value
Students who don't miss class are more likely to get good grades	130.59	0.66	13.68	0.13
Students who are punctual to Prep are more likely to get good grades	178.92	0.59	12.91	0.17
Students who go on suspension are more likely to perform poorly in academics	183.25	0.50	7.46	0.28
Students who serve more time spent on punishment are likely to perform poorly in academics	180.03	0.01**	7.95	0.79
Students who frequently absent themselves from school perform more poorly than their counterparts	352.68	<0.00***	1.94	0.93
The poor performance of some students is due to the ill preparedness of some tutors in the college	127.34	0.73	13.99	0.12
Lack of professional work ethic of some teachers in the college affect students' academic performance negatively	145.58	0.31	13.12	0.16

Source: Field work, (2018)

Specifically, in relationship to the disciplinary factors influencing academic performance, the students generally agreed that students who serve more time spent on punishment are likely to perform poorly in academics (agree=43.3%, strongly agree=24.5%). Majority of the students were also in agreement to the statement that students who frequently absent themselves from school perform more poorly than their counterparts (agree=45.2%, strongly agree=25.5%).

Table 10: Specific student discipline factors influencing academic performance

Variable	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Students (N=208)				
Students who serve more time spent on punishment are likely to perform poorly in academics	51(24.5)	90(43.3)	53(25.5)	14(6.7)
Students who frequently absent themselves from school perform more poorly than their counterparts	53(25.5)	94(45.2)	49(23.5)	12(5.8)

Source: Field work, (2018)

More time being spent on punishment and student absenteeism were student discipline factors which statistically influence academic performance. This confirms arguments by Morrison et al. (2001) that students with indiscipline records had lower GPAs than students without indiscipline in their records. Roeser, Eccles, and Sameroff (2000) also observed that student's

indiscipline really affects their academic performance in middle schools. In using a Likert discipline scale to examine academic performance and indiscipline behaviours. It was also observed that the discipline scores demonstrated a negative correlation with grades.

Various studies have for instance shown that the poor academic performance of indiscipline students is usually as a result of time spent on serving punishments which keeps them out of class (Scott & Barrett, 2004; Putnam, Handler, & O'Leary-Zonarich, 2003; Putnam, Handler, Rey, & O'Leary-Zonarich, 2002). These studies, however, indicated that when punishment times are reduced and students spend more time in class, their performance improves. The emergence of the zero-tolerance disciplinary paradigm has to some extent linked the use of school suspension and expulsion with the philosophical approach of zero tolerance (Skiba & Peterson, 1999; Skiba & Rausch, 2006). Skiba and Rausch (2006) have argued that there are assumptions to the use of suspension and expulsion that are universal to all disciplinary approaches; for example, one would expect that any effective disciplinary procedure would have among its goals to ensure the safety of students and teachers, and create a climate conducive for learning. There are also, however, assumptions connected with zero tolerance that appear to be unique to that approach. Zero tolerance policies and procedures presume, for example, that removing a student from school will have a deterrent effect on future misbehaviour for the offending student and his/her peers (Ewing, 2000) and that the removal of certain students will yield a more

productive learning climate for those students that remain (Public Agenda, 2004).

Ehiane (2014) observed that effective discipline helps in achieving goals, expectations and responsibility of students. This also creates a good image of the school and parents are likely to enroll their children in schools with good discipline, which often leads to better academic performances. However, studies have shown that disciplinary policies in schools have different effect on students behaviour (Schoonover, 2009; Chen, 2008; Verdugo & Glenn, 2002). Nichols (2004) also indicated that suspensions do not prevent students from being indisciplined in the future. Indiscipline on the part of the teachers also accounts for poor academic performance of students (Ehiane, 2014). For example, teachers who are always absent from school, present ill-prepared lessons, and lack of professional work ethic. Birkett (2004) argued that lack of respect and discipline among teachers is a major factor that hinders teaching and learning in the classroom.

In which way do the teaching style of tutors affect the academic performance of students in the RGN diploma nursing institutions

On the influence of teaching style on academic performance, Table 11 shows that there is a significant relationship between the academic performance of students and tutors' professional relationship with students ($X^2=169.05$, $p=0.04$) and tutors' demonstration of high levels of knowledge in their subject areas ($X^2=183.39$, $p=0.01$).

Table 11: Influence of teaching style of tutors on academic performance (N=208)

Variables	Academic performance	
	X ²	p-value
Tutors are qualified and experienced at their work	137.11	0.51
Students receive detailed feedback from tutors on their work and written assignments	139.98	0.44
Tutors are fair and unbiased in their treatment of individual students	165.13	0.06
Tutors relate to students professionally appropriate	169.05	0.04*
Tutors demonstrate a high level of knowledge in their subject area	183.39	0.01**
Tutors make appropriate use of modern technology and audio-visual aids to enhance learning	119.64	0.87
Tutors make an effort to understand difficulties students have with their coursework	119.09	0.88
Tutors make their subjects interesting	118.14	0.89
The quality of instruction received from tutors is good and helpful	121.67	0.84
Tutors are able to complete the syllabuses of the various courses	131.42	0.64
End-of-semester examinations set by tutors are comparable to past question of the licensing examinations.	162.81	0.07

Source: Field work, (2018) Significant at **p<0.01, p<0.001

A closer look at the tutor-based factors which were statistically related to academic performance reveals that tutors actually related professionally appropriate with students (agree=58.7%, strongly agree=29.8%) and that tutors demonstrated high levels of knowledge in their respective subject areas (agree=51.4%, strongly agree=42.8%).

Table 12: Specific teaching style of tutors influencing academic performance (N=208)

Variable	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Students (N=208)				
Tutors relate to students professionally appropriate	62(29.8)	122(58.7)	17(8.2)	7(3.4)
Tutors demonstrate a high level of knowledge in their subject area	89(42.8)	107(51.4)	9(4.3)	3(1.4)

Source: Field work, (2018)

According to Agina-Obu (2005) effective teachers are those who achieve the goal they set for themselves or was set by them for others. Al-Fattal and Ayoubi, (2013) points out that, educational achievement depends on individual differences in ability and performance. In addition to the nature and conditions of learning, growth and development also affect the academic performance of children. An important factor identified is the quality of instruction. It is true that there are differences in pupil's entry behaviour, so these are the need for the teacher to explain the prescribed subject matter thoroughly.

The present study revealed that tutors' professional relationship with students and their demonstration of high levels of knowledge in their subject areas statistically influenced students' academic performance. In relation to this finding, a comprehensive study by Wilson, Wood and Gaff (1974) found that exceptional and effective teachers are those who: work one-on-one with

students, who need special attention; are accessible to students outside the classroom; design leaning activities so that the student can become capable learners; and provide timely and consistent feedback to students. Thus, the relationship of the tutors with the students are excellent and this promotes the students' learning efforts.

Nursing students need the appropriate knowledge and skills to enable them to deliver safe and competent care to their patients (Leufer, 2007). Tutors are thus challenged to provide learning experiences for students that are as authentic as possible, in order to represent the complex and dynamic nature of contemporary patient care settings (DeBourgh, 2008). The learning environment in which students receive these knowledge and skills would contribute to their learning experiences and to how much they retain. The tutors should as well develop good relationship with the students so they can feel confident and approach them for help (Leufer, 2007).

Summary of Findings

Concerning the academic performance of the students, it was realised that 47.1% of the students were in the 2nd class upper division at the time of the study. While 15.9 percent were first class students, 5.3 percent were in the 3rd class division. Entry aggregate ($X^2=89.189$, $p=0.030$) and occupation of mother ($X^2=74.587$, $p=0.047$) were the socio-demographic characteristics which influenced the academic performance of the students.

School environmental factors which influenced the academic performance as argued by students were; availability of library in the school

($X^2=166.484$, $p=0.049$), Internet connectivity for students' use ($X^2=170.010$, $p=0.043$), access to the Internet ($X^2=182.081$, $p=0.039$), and access to the school's laboratory ($X^2=188.182$, $p=0.034$). Among tutors, the factors which statistically influence the academic performance of students were classroom space ($X^2=18.284$, $p=0.032$), the level of resources in the library ($X^2=14.409$, $p=0.025$), and time that lights in the dormitories are turned off at night ($X^2=17.317$, $p=0.044$).

On students' discipline factors, statistically significant relationships were established between academic performance and statements that "students who serve more time spent on punishment are likely to perform poorly in academics" ($X^2=180.022$, $p=0.009$), and "students who frequently absent themselves from school perform more poorly than their counterparts" ($X^2=252.680$, $p<0.001$).

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter outlines the summary of the major findings of the study. Conclusions are then drawn based on the major findings made. Based on the major findings made, recommendations are also made for policy and practice. Suggestions are then made for further research on academic performance of nursing students.

Overview of the Study

Academic performance plays an importance role in the quality of graduates produced by a country. Previous studies found factors such as income of parents, contribution of parents in the study of their children, the area to which they belong, the educational background of the parents, behaviour of teacher in the class among others influence the academic performance of students. It was evident that certain academic and non-academic variables could play a very important role in prediction of the academic performance of the students.

The Nurses and Midwifery Council (NMC) of Ghana and the various school academic affairs have noted that some students perform highly well and others do not perform well. This notwithstanding, it appears there is a literature gap on this subject matter in Ghana. It is not yet known why some students fail to attain the standards expected of them. This study therefore examine the factors that affect academic performance of RGN diploma students in Ashanti Region.

The study adopted the cross-sectional research design to help identify the factors that affect the academic performance of nursing students. Based on the positivist perspective of research, a questionnaire with Likert scale questions, multiple response and open-ended questions was used as the instrument for data collection. A sample size of 214 students and 88 tutors making a total of 302 respondents was used for the study.

Key Findings

The main findings of the study relate to socio-demographic factors influencing academic performance, school environmental factors influencing academic performance, effects of students' discipline factors on academic performance, and the influence of teaching style of tutors on academic performance.

The study observed that a comparative majority of the respondents were in 2nd class upper division at the time of the study. It was further observed that entry aggregate and occupation of mother were the socio-demographic characteristics that influences the academic performance of students.

It was also found that availability of library in the school, classroom space, the level of resources in the library, internet connectivity for students' use, access to the internet connectivity, access to the school's laboratory, and time that lights in the dormitories are turned off at night were school environmental factors which influenced academic performance.

The study also found that more time being spent on punishment and student absenteeism were student discipline factors which statistically influence academic performance. This suggests that when punishment times are reduced and students spend more time in class, their performance improves.

The study also showed that tutors' professional relationship with students and their demonstration of high levels of knowledge in their subject areas statistically influenced students' academic performance. Thus, the relationship of the tutors with the students are excellent and this promotes the students' learning efforts.

Conclusions

The following conclusions are drawn based on the key findings of the study. Majority of the students were academically good and were in the 2nd class upper division. The socio-demographic characteristics that influences the academic performance of students were entry aggregate and occupation of mother.

The study also concludes that various environmental factors such as availability of library in the school, classroom space, the level of resources in the library, internet connectivity for students' use, access to the internet connectivity, among many others affect the academic performance of students. This shows that with a conducive academic environment, students are able to perform better in their academics. Facilities such as the library, internet

connectivity makes it easier for students to research for their academic works and as such encourage good academic performance.

The study further concluded that for good academic performance of students, there should be a good relationship between tutors and students. This would enable students to be able to approach their tutors for further clarification on issues they might not have understood in class. It also creates a friendly environment for students to be able to interact with their tutors in relation to their studies.

This study has revealed that for better academic performance of nursing students, much has to be done with relation to the facilities schools have to make the academic environment conducive. Teacher student relationships also have to be improved to encourage interaction between tutors and teachers. Teachers must also demonstrate knowledge of their subject areas.

Recommendations

Based on the above observations, the study therefore recommends that:

1. Heads/Principals of Nursing Training Institutions should put in measures to ensure that the nursing training institutions has a conducive learning environment. This should include the provision of library in the school, classroom space, the level of resources in the library, internet connectivity for students' use, and access to the internet connectivity, access to the school's laboratory.

2. Nursing training institutions should develop new means of punishment or measures to correct students that will be devoid of students being absent from the classroom.
3. The Ministry of Health should examine tutors before they are employed. This will ensure that tutors that demonstrate high level of knowledge with regard to their subject area will be employed.
4. Tutors must also demonstrate high levels of knowledge in their subject areas. This will boost the confidence students have in their tutors. It also goes further to motivate some students to aim to be like those tutors. Some students might even go an extra mile in taking such tutors as their academic mentors.

Suggestion for Further Research Work

A study should be conducted qualitatively to explore the experiences of teachers and students to determine how the various factors influence the academic performance of nursing students in Ghana.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENTS

**UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST
INSTITUTE FOR EDUCATIONAL PLANNING AND
ADMINISTRATION
QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENTS**

Hello, I am a student of the University of Cape Coast and collecting data for a research on **Factors Affecting Academic Performance among Registered General Nursing (RGN) Diploma Students in Nursing Training Colleges in Ashanti Region of Ghana**. The research forms part of my academic work, as such data collected will not be disclosed to people who do not deserve access to it. You have the right to withdraw from the study at any point. You may also decide not to answer any questions which infringe on your privacy or which you don't feel comfortable answering. Thank you for accepting to be part of this study.

Section A: Socio-demographic Characteristics

1. Sex
 - Male
 - Female
2. Age (In completed years)
3. Ethnicity
 - Akan
 - Ewe
 - Guan
 - Mole-Dagbani
 - Ga-dangme
 - Other (Specify)
4. Religion
 - Christianity
 - Islam

- Traditional African Religion
- 5. GPA:
- 6. Marital Status
 - Married
 - Never married
 - Divorced
 - Widowed
- 7. Academic Year
 - a. 1st year b. 2nd year c. 3rd year

Section B: Student related factors

- 8. Entry aggregate:.....
- 9. Course read at SHS:
- 10. Occupation of Father:
- 11. Occupation of mother:.....
- 12. Level of education of Mother:.....
- 13. Level of education of Father:.....
- 14. Religion of mother:.....
- 15. Religion of father:.....

Kindly indicate your agreement to the following, as student related factors affecting academic performance in licensure performance of nursing students.

Note: SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, D = Disagree, SD = Strongly Disagree.

No	Factors	SA	A	D	SD
16.	I finance my nursing education sufficiently.				
17.	My parents/relatives finance my nursing education sufficiently.				
18.	My partner/spouse finances my nursing				

	education sufficiently.				
19.	The only source of finance available to me is the allowance I receive from government.				
20.	I combine my studies with part-time job.				
21.	Getting admission into the nursing profession is a dream come true.				
22.	I was influenced into nursing programme because of the possibility of a good salary after completion.				
23.	I chose nursing because I could not gain admission into my original choice of programme.				
24.	I constantly feel stressed/anxious during end-of-semester examinations.				
25.	I am frightened by the licensing examinations.				
26.	I find it easy to understand the content of the courses in the nursing programme.				
27.	Guidelines meant for clinical sessions are easy for me to understand.				
28.	The coursework in the nursing programme is beyond my expectation.				
29.	The clinical aspect of the nursing programme is the easiest part of my training				
30.	The relevance of the coursework in the nursing programme is questionable.				
31.	Family responsibilities help to improve my performance in the nursing programme.				

32.	Church/other social roles help to improve my performance in the nursing programme.				
33.	I fraternize a lot with my friends while semester is in session.				
34.	I enjoy attending entertainment activities organized in town.				
35.	I have drawn a personal time table for my private studies outside class hours.				
36.	I belong to a study group that meets regularly to discuss our academic work				
37.	I have a habit of summarizing my lecture notes when I am studying on my own.				
38.	I take notes on my own in class during lectures				
39.	I am able to answer past questions of the licensing examination.				
40.	I am punctual to classes every day				
41.	I read ahead of class each day				
42.	I visit the library each day for further reading				
43.	Others, please specify: _____ _____ _____				

Section C: Tutor-based factors

Kindly indicate your agreement to the following, as tutor-based factors affecting academic performance in licensure performance of nursing students

Note: SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, D = Disagree, SD = Strongly Disagree.

No	Items	SA	A	D	SD
44.	Tutors are qualified and experienced at their work				
45.	Students receive detailed feedback from tutors on their work and written assignments				
46.	Tutors are fair and unbiased in their treatment of individual students				
47.	Tutors relate to students professionally.				
48.	Tutors demonstrate a high level of knowledge in their subject area				
49.	Tutors make appropriate use of modern technology and audio-visual aids to enhance learning				
50.	Tutors make an effort to understand difficulties students have with their coursework				
51.	Tutors make their subjects interesting				
52.	The quality of instruction received from tutors is good and helpful				
53.	Tutors are able to complete the syllabuses of the various courses.				
54.	End-of-semester examinations set by tutors are comparable to past question of the licensing examinations.				
55.	Others, _____ please specify: _____ _____ _____				

Section D: Environmental factors

Kindly indicate your agreement to the following, as school-based factors affecting licensure performance.

Note: SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, D = Disagree, SD = Strongly Disagree.

N o	Factor	SA	A	D	SD
56.	There are adequate number of classrooms				
57.	Classrooms are spacious				
58.	Items written on marker/chalk boards can be seen clearly from afar				
59.	There is a library in the school				
60.	There is easy access to the school's library				
61.	The library is well resourced.				
62.	The library is spacious				
63.	The school has internet connectivity for students' use				
64.	There is easy access to the internet to do research				
65.	The school has a school laboratory				
66.	There is easy access to the school's laboratory				
67.	The laboratory is able to accommodate a class at a time				
68.	Equipment in the skills laboratory is appropriate for learning				
69.	Lights in my dormitory/hostel are put off too early in the night.				

70.	Mock examinations organized by the school prior to the licensing examinations are not satisfactory				
71.	Others, please specify: _____ _____ _____				

Section D: Discipline factors

Kindly indicate your agreement to the following, as school-based factors affecting licensure performance.

Note: SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, D = Disagree, SD = Strongly Disagree.

		SA	A	D	SD
70	Students who don't miss class are more likely to get good grades				
71	Students who are punctual to Prep are more likely to get good grades				
72	Students who go on suspension are more likely to perform poorly in academics				
73	Students who serve more time spent on punishment are likely to perform poorly in academics				
74	Students who frequently absent themselves from school perform more poorly than their counterparts				
75	The poor performance of some students is due to the ill preparedness of some tutors in the college				
76	Lack of professional work ethic of some teachers in the college affect students' academic performance negatively				

APPENDIX B

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TUTORS
UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST
INSTITUTE FOR EDUCATIONAL PLANNING AND
ADMINISTRATION

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TUTORS

Hello, I am a student of the University of Cape Coast and collecting data for a research on **Factors Affecting Academic Performance among Registered General Nursing (RGN) Diploma Students in Nursing Training Colleges in Ashanti Region of Ghana**. The research forms part of my academic work, as such data collected will not be disclosed to people who do not deserve access to it. You have the right to withdraw from the study at any point. You may also decide not to answer any questions which infringe on your privacy or which you don't feel comfortable answering. Thank you for accepting to be part of this study.

Section A: Socio-demographic Characteristics

1. Sex
 - Male
 - Female
2. Age (In completed years)
3. Ethnicity
 - Akan
 - Ewe
 - Guan
 - Mole-Dagbani
 - Ga-dangme
 - Other (Specify)
4. Religion
 - Christianity
 - Islam
 - Traditionalisl

5. Years of teaching experience?

- 1-5 years 11-15 years
 6-10 years 16+ years

6. Marital Status

- Married
 Never married
 Divorced
 Widowed

7. Number of years in nursing

- 0-5 years 6-10 years 11-15 years 16-20 years above
 20 years

Section B: Tutor-based factors

Kindly indicate your agreement to the following, as tutor-based factors affecting academic performance in licensure performance of nursing students

Note: SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, D = Disagree, SD = Strongly Disagree.

N o	Items	SA	A	D	SD
8.	Tutors are qualified and experienced at their work				
9.	Students receive detailed feedback from tutors on their work and written assignments				
10.	Tutors are fair and unbiased in their treatment of individual students				
11.	Tutors relate to students professionally.				
12.	Tutors make appropriate use of modern technology and audio-visual aids to enhance learning				

13.	Tutors make an effort to understand difficulties students have with their coursework				
14.	Tutors make their subjects interesting				
15.	The quality of instruction received from tutors is good and helpful				
16.	Tutors are able to complete the syllabuses of the various courses.				
17.	End-of-semester examinations set by tutors are comparable to past question of the licensing examinations.				
18.	Others, _____ please specify: _____ _____ _____				

Section C: Environmental factors

Kindly indicate your agreement to the following, as school-based factors affecting licensure performance.

Note: SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, D = Disagree, SD = Strongly Disagree.

N o	Factor	SA	A	D	SD
19.	There are adequate number of classrooms				
20.	Classrooms are spacious				
21.	Items written on marker/chalk boards can be seen clearly from afar				
22.	There is a library in the school				
23.	There is easy access to the school's library				

24.	The library is well resourced.				
25.	The library is spacious				
26.	The school has internet connectivity for students' use				
27.	There is easy access to the internet to do research				
28.	The school has a school laboratory				
29.	There is easy access to the school's laboratory				
30.	The laboratory is able to accommodate a class at a time				
31.	Equipment in the skills laboratory is appropriate for learning				
32.	Lights in my dormitory/hostel are put off too early in the night.				
33.	Mock examinations organized by the school prior to the licensing examinations are not satisfactory				
34.	Others, please specify: _____ _____ _____				

Section D: Discipline factors

Kindly indicate your agreement to the following, as school-based factors affecting licensure performance.

Note: SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, D = Disagree, SD = Strongly Disagree.

		SA	A	D	SD
34	Students who don't miss class are more likely to get good grades				
35	Students who are punctual to Prep are more likely to get good grades				
36	Students who go on suspension are more likely to perform poorly in academics				
37	Students who serve more time spent on punishment are likely to perform poorly in academics				
38	Students who frequently absent themselves from school perform more poorly than their counterparts				
39	The poor performance of some students is due to the ill preparedness of some tutors in the college				
40	Lack of professional work ethic of some teachers in the college affect students' academic performance negatively				