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Factors Influencing Students' Academic Performance: The Case of Pre-Service Teachers at Dambai College of Education in Ghana

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Abstract

Academic success is the assessment of a learner's ability in a variety of academic areas. Classroom performance, graduation rates, and standardised test results are commonly used by teachers and education administrators to assess student accomplishment. This study, on the other hand, was conducted to assess the factors influencing students' academic performance at a College of Education in Ghana. The research design employed was the quantitative research method, specifically, a cross-sectional descriptive survey research design. It mainly focused on level 200 pre-service teachers pursuing the B. Ed programme and level 300 pre-service teachers offering the Diploma in Basic Education programme as they are the seniors in their individual programmes. A total of 100 pre-service teachers participated in the study with 51 being females and 49 being males. From the results, some of the factors that influence the pre-service teacher's academic performance were parents, friends, instructors and the use of teaching and learning materials.

Keywords: Academic Performance, Pre-Service Teachers, Colleges of Education, Degree and Diploma Programmes

1. Introduction

Academic performance plays a critical role in creating the greatest graduates who go on to become excellent leaders and employees of the country, as well as being responsible for the country's economic and social development (Norhidayah et al., 2009). In higher education, academic performance has a significant impact on a student's self-esteem, motivation, and perseverance. (Jayanthi et al., 2014). Education does not only focus on skills, abilities, and knowledge among students but also can lead to the overall progress and growth of individuals,

societies, nations, and the world. Someone who is educated is not only seen to be focused, ambitious, and accomplish his goals but also able to serve or contribute positively to the improvement and development of their society or country. This has huge impacts on how they attain knowledge and produce back the knowledge they attained which goes ahead to reflect in their academic performance. A key element in making one an effective student is to develop skills in reflective thinking and practices. Reflective practice helps to reconsider one's actions so as to engage in continuous learning in order to improve practice (Finlay, 2008).

The academic performance of students may likely determine their future goals and objectives. This includes career opportunities they will take up, educational courses they will pursue in university, the university they will apply to, and so on. The academic performance of a student is determined by their performance in test, examinations, assignments, projects, class participation, homework, etc. Schools are developing brilliant ideas to improve the academic performance of students due to pressure coming from parents or guidance to teachers and school administrations. Paterson and Chapman (2013) assert that a person who reflects throughout his or her practice is not simply looking back on previous actions and events, but is consciously looking at emotions, experiences, actions, and responses and using that information to add to his or her existing knowledge bases, reaching a higher level of understanding. Teachers, parents or school counsellors need to find the reason for a child's poor academic performance to make helping them easier. These strategies include the use of technologies in classrooms, rewarding of students, motivating students, extra classes for students after school, weekend classes, and instructional methods. It also includes the implementation of rewards for students on a good performance by teachers motivating the student and even his mates to do better to achieve a reward.

2. Statement of the problem

Schools are established to impart knowledge and skills to those who go through them, thus enhancing their academic performance (Hoyle, 1986). Academic performance or how students satisfy these institutional standards are used to evaluate success in educational institutions. Examinations or continuous assessment are the most common ways to assess academic performance of students in Ghana as grades are considered first when defining academic performance. This usually happens when students are ranked by Grade Point Average (GPA) and awarded special designation to students who graduate with first and second class. It is believed that good academic performance provides more career choices and job security.

However, students in the process of acquiring knowledge and skills from educational institutions face conditions that sometimes influence their academic performance. Poor performance of students in education can adversely affect them (Oladebinu et al., 2018). Students' academic performance is largely influenced by numerous factors both within and outside the school. Some of these conditions may be related to students', parents, school facilities, and the mode of teaching. A study conducted by Ali et al. (2013) revealed that students' academic performance could be influenced by parents' social-economic status, age of students, and daily study hour of students. The passage of Act 847 in 2012 converted Teacher Training Colleges from post-secondary non-tertiary institutions to tertiary institutions and designated as Colleges of Education with a mandate to train teachers for the basic education level. Since the passage of the Act, the college curriculum, mode of teaching and learning, and management practices have changed. This study seeks to explore the factors that are influencing students' academic achievements in colleges of education.

3. Research Question

The research sought to answer the following questions:

1. What are the factors that influence the academic performance of students?
2. What are the differences between degree and diploma pre-service teachers on the factors that influence their academic performance?
3. What are the gender variations in characteristics that influence academic success among students?

4. Literature Review

4.1. Conceptual Framework

4.1.1. The Concept of Academic Performance

According to Narad and Abdullah (2016), Academic performance refers to the knowledge obtained as measured by a teacher's marks or by educational goals set by students and teachers to be met over a period of time. The authors argue that ongoing assessment or examination outcomes are used to measure these aims and objectives. The psychological characteristics of individual students and their immediate psychological settings, according to Walberg's theory of educational accomplishment, influence educational results; cognitive, behavioural, and attitudinal factors all play a role (Reynolds & Walberg, 1992). Walberg identified nine critical elements that influence educational results, including student ability/prior achievement, motivation, and age/development level, as well as the quality of teaching, classroom, home environment, coevals, and outside-of-faculty media exposure (Walberg et al., 1986).

Gqweta (2012) asserts that academic performance is the evaluation of a student's academic achievement in multiple subjects. Classroom performance, graduation rates, and standardized test results are commonly used by teachers and educational administrators to assess achievement. Olajire (2022) also mentioned how one of the major concerns that parents have for their children is low academic performance. This is so because, a child's low educational performance will have negative implications, such as a grim future, youth unemployment, and so on. This is one of the main reasons why most parents engage home tutors for their children.

4.2. Empirical Framework

4.2.1. Motivation of Teachers

According to Cooper (2019), everything you do in the classroom, including your general attitude, has an unparalleled rippling impact as a teacher. Excellent teachers are driven by a desire to help students learn. It does not matter if it is an elementary school class or a college workshop, motivation is essential to a successful classroom. Barberos et al. (2021) indicate that what takes place in the classroom is determined by the teacher's ability to keep pupils' attention. As a result, teachers are crucial in bringing about changes in the classroom. To have motivated students in the classroom, we must first grasp the importance of being motivated in performing our work properly. Learning will be much easier when students are motivated. A successful classroom requires a motivated instructor (Impact Teachers, 2017). They go on to say that motivation aides in energising, directing, and long-term maintenance of positive behaviour.

It is not just about piquing students' interest in studying right now; it's also about cultivating the underlying objectives and aspirations that drive their academic work. Research Clue (2021) stated that teachers should be sufficiently prepared, valued, remunerated, and empowered to participate in choices impacting their professional lives and teaching environments at all levels of the educational system.

4.2.2. Effects of Teachers' Teaching on Students

Careful planning, preparation, and the methods employed in disseminating the content of a course all contribute to successful teaching and learning. Before this can be accomplished, the instructor or tutor must have a thorough understanding of the subject matter as well as numerous teaching strategies (Heggart, 2016). The efficiency of the teaching and learning process is primarily determined by the teacher's technique of instruction. The success of a teaching approach, according to Munawaroh (2017), is mirrored in the teaching-learning processes outputs, such as marks, grades, and average scores. Muwaya (2018) opine that effectiveness of the teacher's technique of instruction plays a big role in the teaching and learning process.

Muzenda (2013) analysed the effects of lecturers' competences on the academic performance of students among higher education and training students in private institutions Gauteng Province, South Africa. Using a descriptive survey and correlational designs, questionnaire was used to collect data from 115 students, comprising of 77.4% females and 22.6% males for purposes of ascertaining the influence of lecturers' distinct teaching dimensions on students' academic performance. The teaching dimensions were teaching skills, subject knowledge, and lecturer attitude and attendance. Based on model 4 stepwise regression analysis, the study found that about 88% of the overall variation in students' academic performance was accounted for by the lecturers' teaching dimensions (Muzenda, 2013). The study further indicated that all the dimensions of lecturer competence had statistically positive impacts on students' academic performance. The study noted that the dimensions that had the highest positive impact on students' academic performance were lecturers teaching skills (39.6%), subject knowledge (30.3%), lecturer attendance (27.7%) and lecturer attitude (16.7%).

Shaari et al. (2014) conducted a study to identify the relationship between lecturers teaching style and students' academic engagement at a University in Malaysia. Through a survey questionnaire the researchers collected data from 266 students. Results of descriptive statistical analysis of the data indicated a significant but moderate relationship between the teaching styles of the lecturers' and the academic engagement of the students.

4.2.3. Teaching and Learning Materials

According to Mosha et al. (2007), all the items that teachers and students do or use to attain certain goals in a classroom scenario, such as maps, models, and boards, are considered teaching and learning resources. Those materials assist pupils in seeing, hearing, smelling, and tasting, allowing them to conceive abstract knowledge, practice skills, and make conclusions from what they are touching. Teaching materials can be auditory, printed in textbooks, or non-printed in the form of physical items. Researchers have assessed the impact of using teaching and learning resources to teach on the academic performance of students. For instance, Edoho et al. (2020) carried out a study to determine the effect of instructional materials on students' academic performance in mathematics in Calabar Local Government Area of Cross State in Nigeria. The sample consisted of 190 students. Results of an independent t-test statistics revealed that teaching with instructional materials has a significant effect on students' academic performance in Mathematics. Stressing on the importance of teaching and learning materials, Olumirin et al. (2010) assert that instructional materials help teachers to teach conveniently and the learners to learn more easily without any problem of understanding.

4.2.4. Parental factors which contribute to academic performance

Studies have shown that parental participation in their children's education has a favourable impact on their children's academic success. McNeal (2014), for example, discovered that parental participation has a direct impact on students' behaviour and attitudes, but has an indirect impact on their academic performance. Chowa et al. (2013) proposed that parental participation in their children's academic success can be divided into two categories: home-based and school-based parental involvement. Their research found a positive association between home-based parental participation and their children's academic achievement, but a negative relationship between school-based parental involvement and academic success. Similarly, Mante et al. (2015) found that parental participation has an impact on their students' academic achievement, however the direction of the impact was not mentioned. Mwirichia (2013) also noted that parental involvement in a student's academic performance takes several forms. He discovered that parents participate in educational activities at school, communicate with their children's teachers, and participate in academic activities at home. The study found that parents' involvement in home academic activities has a direct impact on their children's academic performance; parents' involvement in school academic activities has an indirect impact on academic performance; and parent-school communication does not appear to be a strong predictor of academic performance. Parents should arrange home-school tutorials for their children and establish guidelines to manage their children's study behavior in the house, according to the study. Caro (2011) discovered that contact between parents and schools has a favourable impact on their children's education.

According to Martinez (2015), pupils who have a high level of parental involvement in their academics score much better than students who do not have any parental involvement in English Language Arts and Mathematics. Topor et al. (2010) established a statistically significant link between parental participation and ward academic success using a multiple mediational analysis. Rafiq et al. (2013) found the same results in Pakistan. They underlined the importance of parental involvement in helping students improve their academic performance. Mutodi and Ngirande (2014) discovered that parent-teacher communication, family and home support, as well as parenting, are all associated to academic performance in South Africa. The researchers came to the conclusion that family and home support are the most important predictor of academic performance. Parents' engagement has been shown to have a favourable impact on their children's academic achievement. Naite (2021) explored the impact of parental involvement on the academic achievement of students at Crescent International School and to determine whether the demographic variable of parents has an effect on their involvement in their children's education. Twelve parents whose children are enrolled in secondary level constituted the sample for the study. The main finding of the study indicated that students with highly involved parents had better academic performance and higher test scores in all the subjects compared to students whose parents were not involved in their education (Naite, 2020).

4.2.5. Gender and academic performance

For the past decades, there has been a lot of research into the relationship between gender and academic achievement (Eitle, 2005 as cited in Farooq et al., 2011). There is a difference in cognitive capacities between boys and girls, according to Ghazvini and Khajehpour (2011). They discovered that girls' learning tasks are more adaptable than that of boys. According to Omwirhiren and Anderson (2016), there is a statistically significant gap between male and female academic performance in Chemistry. They came to the conclusion that boys outperformed girls. Farooq et al. (2011), on the other hand, discovered that female students outperform male pupils. Marić and Sakač (2014) also found that girls perform better in school than guys. Girls outperform boys in terms of academic performance, according to Dev (2016). Nnamani and Oyibe (2016) came to the same conclusion. They discovered that females outperform males in social studies. Boys outperform girls in the areas of mathematics, English, and aptitude (Eshetu, 2014). In terms of mathematics, Manoah et al. (2011) claim that gender has no statistically significant impact on performance. Adigun et al. (2015) discovered no statistical differences, but concluded that boys outperform girls.

A study conducted in Nigeria to assess gender differences in academic performance of students in Economics as a subject at the secondary school level, there was no statistical difference in the academic performance of boys and girls in Economics in the 2006/2007 Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination (SSCE), but there was a statistical difference in the academic performance of boys and girls in Economics from 2008 to 2010. Males generally outperformed females in economics, according to the findings (Amuda et al., 2016). Gender's impact on academic success is still a subject of debate. Goni et al. (2015) found no statistical difference between gender and academic achievement using the Aptitude Test as a measure of academic success in Nigeria's Kashim Ibrahim College of Education. Also, Attah and Ita (2017) examined the influence of gender on academic achievement of senior secondary school English students in Calabar Municipality in Nigeria. Results of the study revealed that gender has no significant influence on academic achievement of students in English Language.

4.2.6 Peers and students' academic performance

Lavy and Schlosser (2007) state that, for many students, friendships are critical interpersonal vehicle that move them towards the psychological growth and maturity, allowing social compassion which influences the development of self-evaluation. In view of the critical role of peers relative to the academic performance of other students, various studies have investigated the extent to which peer groups influence academic performance in schools. Filade et al. (2019) investigated the influence of peer group on academic performance of undergraduate students in selected departments at Babcock University, Ogun State. Questionnaire was administered to 116 students. Results of data analysis found that peer group has significant influence on the academic performance of students. Also, Uzezi and Deya (2017) examined the relationship between peer group influence and academic achievement of secondary school chemistry students in selected secondary schools in Jalingo metropolis in Taraba

State. The results of the study revealed a significant difference between those who belonged to peer groups and those who do not belong to peer groups academic achievement. Specifically, the study found a positively significant relationship between peer group influence and students' academic achievement.

5. Method

The research design employed was the quantitative research method, specifically, a cross-sectional descriptive survey research design was applied to attain the research objective and answer the research questions. The sample for the study was 100 students consisting of 33 level 300 diploma pre-service teachers and 67 level 200 B.Ed. pre-service teachers in the selected college of education. The level 300 and level 200 pre-service teachers were selected because they have spent 3 and 2 years respectively in the college. Moreover, they are also running different programmes within the same institution in spite of the fact that they have similar entry requirements.

A self-administered questionnaire of close and open-ended questions was designed for the pre-service teachers regarding the factors that influence Students' Academic Performance. The questionnaire consists of five sections, including section A that asks questions relating to demographic information of students. The demographic information included the gender, age range, marital status, educational level, residential status, and the programme of study (i.e. degree or diploma) of the students. Section B contained statements that collected information about the parental influences on students, Section C collected information on peer influences, and Section D requested students to provide information on teaching quality and effectiveness of tutors. Section E of the questionnaire collected information from the students on the effective use of instructional materials.

6. Results and Discussion

6.1. Demographic Description of the Sample

The demographic characteristics of the respondents are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of the study sample

Characteristics	Category	N (%)
Gender	Male	51 (51)
	Female	49 (49)
Age Range	18 - 22 years	46 (46)
	23 - 27 years	48 (48)
	28 - 32 years	4 (4.0)
	Below 18 years	2(2.0)
Marital Status	Married	6 (6.0)
	Single	94 (94)
Level of Education	200	67 (67)
	300	33 (33)

Majority of the students who participated in the survey were between the ages of 23 and 27 years accounting for 48% of the total respondents, while those below 18 years and those between ages 28-32 years were fewer and accounted for 2.0% and 4.0% of the sample respectively. The respondents were made up of 51 males representing 51%, as against 49 females who represented 49% of the respondents. An overwhelming majority (94%) of the respondents were unmarried.

Research Question 1: What are the factors that influence the academic performance of students?

The study assessed the extent to which parents, peers, effectiveness of tutors teaching and effective use of instructional materials influence the academic performance of pre-service teachers.

Table 2: Parental influence on pre-service teachers

Level	N (%)
Always	45 (45)
Occasionally	18 (18)
Sometimes	37 (37)

Table 2 presents results of descriptive statistics of the number of parents who encourage their wards to study. The students were to indicate the frequency at which their parents encourage them or get involved in their academic work at three levels: always, occasionally and sometimes. Out of the 100 respondents, 45% of them indicated their parents have always been encouraging them to study hard. Eighteen (18) percent of them indicated they are occasionally encouraged by their parents to study, while 38% of respondents also reported that their parents sometimes encourage them to study. Parental involvement in their ward's education has been identified as a major factor that is greatly related to children increased academic performance (Hara, 1998). Students, irrespective of their levels, need positive learning experiences and support in all forms or kinds as well as motivation and quality instruction to perform well in school. Research has also shown that most students who perform well or achieve success in their academic pursuit have strong academic support from their parents (Sheldon, 2009). From the results in Table 2, it is revealed that a good number (45%) of parents of the students influence their wards to study always at home. Though the number of parents who show much support to their wards to study is encouraging, it fell below half of the total number of the respondents. The sum of the respondents who indicated their parents occasionally (18%) and sometimes (37%) encourage them to study is more than those who always encourage them. This revelation is disturbing because students who are not self-disciplined may also not take their studies serious, especially when they have peers who do not also motivate them to study.

Table 3: Peer influence on pre-service teachers

Number	Characteristics	Category	Frequency	Percent
1.	Do your friends encourage you academically?	Always	23	23
		Never	14	14
		Occasionally	15	15
		Sometimes	48	48
2.	Do you study with friends?	Always	15	15
		Never	14	14
		Occasionally	21	21
		Sometimes	50	50
3.	Do your friends encourage you to study?	Always	24	24
		Never	12	12
		Occasionally	22	22
		Sometimes	42	42

4.	Are your friends always present in class?	Always	40	40
		Never	1	1
		Occasionally	9	9
		Sometime	50	50

From Table 3, nearly half (48%) of the respondents indicated that their friends sometimes encourage them on their academic activities. Only 23% of the respondents reported that their friends always encourage them academically. Also, half (50%) of the respondents indicated that they sometimes study with their friends, with only 15% of the respondents indicating they always study with their friends. Fourteen percent and 21% reported that they have never and occasionally studied with their friends respectively. It is a well-known fact that peers have a lot of influence on each other either positively or negatively. In this regard, they may influence themselves by either encouraging each other to study or otherwise. To this end, the respondents were asked to indicate the frequency at which their friends encourage them to study. As indicated in Table 3, only 23% of the respondents indicated their friends always encouraged them to study. Rather, 42% indicated that their friends sometimes encouraged them to study. Some also indicated that their friends occasionally (22%) and never (12%) encouraged them to study.

The results on whether or not their friends have always been present in class revealed that, sometimes (50%) of their friends are present in class. Less than half (40%) indicated their friends were always in class for lectures. Only 1% and 9% of the respondents indicated their friends are usually never and occasionally present in class. This is surprising because Bassey (2020) opined that peers can influence either positively or negatively. Thus, peer influence can mobilise students' energy and motivate for success. Peers can act as positive role models. If a student is influenced negatively, it affects his or her academic performance. Stronger students do have some impact on their peers and improves the overall academic performance.

Table 4 presents results of the influence of the respondents' tutors (lecturers) on the academic work of the pre-service teachers in the college.

Table 4: Tutors role in students' academic performance

Characteristics	Category	Frequency	Percent
Communication skills of lecturers	Good	76	76
	Poor	2	2.0
	Very good	20	20
	Very poor	2	2.0
Mastery in subject Area	Good	67	67
	Poor	33	33
	Very good	3	3.0
	Very poor	0	0.0
Encouragement of students by lecturers	Good	66	66
	Poor	16	16
	Very good	8	8
	Very poor	0	0
Content delivery of lessons	Good	84	84
	Poor	2	2.0
	Very Good	14	14
	Very poor	0	0

Table 4 presents results from the perspective of the students (respondents) on the performance of lecturers (tutors) in teaching and how it affects their academic performance. This was assessed in four main areas: communication skills, mastery of subject area, lecturers' encouragement of students and the content delivery of the lessons. A significant majority (76%) of the respondents reported that the lecturers have good communication skills, also 20% indicated that the lecturers have very good communication skills. A few of the respondents reported that the communication skills of the lecturers were poor (2%) and very poor (2%). This implies that, generally, an overwhelming majority of the students are of the opinion that the lecturers communicate well when teaching. Similarly, Muzenda (2013) conducted a study that found lecturers teaching style as a significant contributing factor to the academic achievement of university undergraduate students.

On mastery of content in the subject area, majority (67%) of the respondents claimed that, the lecturers have good mastery of their subject areas, followed by 33% who asserted that the lecturers' mastery of content in the subject area is poor. Three percent of the respondents reported that the lecturers' mastery of the subject area is very good. This finding aligns with the findings of a study by Muzenda (2013) when he found that lecturers' subject knowledge was the second highest lecturing dimension that had significant impact on the academic performance of students.

Lecturers are also expected to influence their students by encouraging them on their academic work. Therefore, the respondents were to indicate, in their opinion, the extent which their lecturers have been encouraging them on their academic work. The results in Table 4 indicated that a substantial number of the respondents (66%) reported that the lecturers' encouragement is good. In addition, 8% rated the encouragement to be very good. But, a few (6%) rated the encouragement to be poor, while none of the respondents rated it very poor. The conclusion therefore is that the lecturers have had positive influence on the academic work of the respondents by way of encouraging them.

A major way lecturers may influence students positively on their academic work is to deliver adequately the content of the courses they teach during lessons. From the perspective of the pre-service teachers who served as the respondents, an overwhelming majority (84%) rated the delivery of content to be good. Additionally, 14% also indicated the content delivery of lessons by the lecturers are very good. Only 2% of the pre-service teachers indicated the content delivery of lessons by the lecturers are poor. None of the pre-service teachers rated the lecturers' content delivery to be very poor. This is a clear manifestation that the lecturers exert great influence positive influence on the pre-service teachers' academic performance. This finding affirms the outcome of Muzenda (2013) study that indicated that students rated the lecturers' subject knowledge as one of the highest distinct dimensions of a lecturer that influences their academic achievements. Muwaya (2018) asserts that the effectiveness of the teacher's technique of instruction plays a big role in his teaching and learning process.

Table 5 presents results of the effects of the use of various instructional materials by lecturers on the academic performance of the students.

Table 5: Effects of lecture materials on students' academic performance

Questions	Options	N (%)
Do you use handouts/ textbooks?	Always	8 (8.0)
	Never	4 (4.0)
	Occasionally	42 (42)
	Sometimes	46(46)
Are instructional materials really available when needed?	Always	9 (9.0)
	Never	7 (7.0)
	Occasionally	28 (28)
	Sometimes	56 (56)
Are the materials provided easy to understand?	Not at all	5(5.0)

	Not Really	60 (60)
	Very Easy	34 (34)
	Kind of	1 (1.0)
Do you think the instructional materials provided are helpful and effective?	Yes	59 (59)
	No	41 (41)

Teaching and learning resources and other relevant course reading materials are important in effective teaching and has been found to facilitate the understanding of students during teaching. The study sought to elicit information from the pre-service on how the instructional materials really impacts their academic work. As presented in Table 5, nearly half (46%) of the respondents indicated that they sometimes use handout and text books, 42% indicated they occasionally use handout and other reading materials, while only few students indicated they always (8.0%) and never (4.0%) use handout or text books for their studies. This presupposes most of the pre-service teachers do not use course reading materials in the various courses for their study. This certainly may not help them to perform well in the various courses. It also implies that the course really materials are not having a major influence on their academic work.

The next question sought to elicit information from the respondents whether course materials are readily available when needed. More than half (56%) responded that course reading materials are sometimes available. This is followed by 28% of them who indicated the instructional materials are occasionally available when needed. For 4% of the respondents, they categorically stated that reading materials are never available when needed. A disappointing 9% indicated the course reading materials are always available. This is a really disturbing revelation because reading materials are very essential for students to reference and use in their studies and academic work. So, as it is revealed that they are mostly not readily available when needed it could influence the students' academic endeavour negatively. This also may be the reasons why most pre-service teachers do not use hand-outs and other reading materials.

Majority (60%) of the respondents claimed that, the test books and other course reading materials provided are not really easy to understand, while 34.7% states that the materials are very easy to understand. Just 1% of the respondents indicated the course reading materials that are provided are kind of easy to understand. Only 5% claimed the course reading materials are very difficult to understand. The respondents were to choose between yes or no on whether in their opinion instructional materials that are provided are helpful and effective to their studies. The majority (59%) responded in the affirmative, while 41% responded that the materials are not effective and do not help them in their academic work. Accordingly, Mosha et al. (2007), indicated that all the items that the teacher and students do or use to attain certain goals in a classroom scenario, such as maps, models, and boards, are considered teaching and learning resources.

Research Question 2: What are the differences between degree and diploma pre-service teachers on the factors that influence their academic performance?

There were 51 male and 49 female pre-service teachers who responded to the questionnaire. An independent-samples t-test was run to determine if there were differences on factors that influence academic performance between the pre-service teachers offering degree in the B. Ed programme and pre-service teachers offering diploma in basic education programme. There were no outliers in the data, as assessed by inspection of a boxplot. Scores for factors affecting academic performance for the two categories of pre-service teachers were normally distributed, as assessed by Shapiro-Wilk's test ($p > .05$), and there was homogeneity of variances, as assessed by Levene's test for equality of variances ($p = .089$). There was no difference on factors that affect academic performance in relation to programme of study of the pre-service teachers in terms of those offering degree ($M = 3.89$, $SD = 1.17$), and diploma ($M = 3.84$, $SD = 1.16$) pre-service teachers, $p = .079$. Thus, there is no significant difference in relation to the factors that influence the academic performance of the pre-service teachers relative to the programme of study of the respondents. This finding confirms the outcome of the study conducted by Attah

and Ita (2017) on the influence of gender on academic achievement senior secondary school English students in Calabar Municipality in Nigeria. Results of the study revealed that gender has no significant influence on academic achievement of students in English Language. This finding also corroborates the finding of a study by Goni et al. (2015) which also found no statistical difference between gender and academic achievement using the Aptitude Test as a measure of academic success in Nigeria's Kashim Ibrahim College of Education.

Research Question 3: What are the gender variations in characteristics that influence academic success among students?

There were 51 male and 49 female pre-service teachers who responded to the questionnaire. An independent-samples t-test was run to determine if there were differences on factors that influence academic performance between male and female pre-service teachers. There were also no outliers in the data, as assessed by inspection of a boxplot. Scores for factors affecting academic performance for the male and female pre-service teachers were normally distributed, as assessed by Shapiro-Wilk's test ($p > .05$), and there was homogeneity of variances, as assessed by Levene's test for equality of variances ($p = .112$). There was no difference on factors that affect academic performance in relation to male ($M = 3.25$, $SD = 0.86$) and female ($M = 3.36$, $SD = 0.89$) pre-service teachers, $p = .098$. Researchers have reported different research outcomes on gender variation and its influence on students' academic performance. The findings of this study contradict research studies that have reported that males outperform girls in school (Omwirhiren & Anderson, 2016). It also contradicts those studies that found girls outperforming girls in academic achievement in various studies (Farooq et al., 2011). The findings of this study confirm the outcome of studies that found no statistically significant impact of gender on the academic achievement of students (Manoah et al., 2011; Adigun et al., 2015; Goni et al., 2015).

7. Conclusion

This study assessed the factors that influence pre-service teachers' academic performance in a college in Ghana. The study identified parents, peers, tutors, use of relevant teaching materials as some of the factors that influence pre-service teachers academic performance. The factors could be very helpful in making students' progress in their academic activities, and vice versa. Students should be given all the encouragement, motivation and the necessary materials to help them excel in their academic activities. As seen in the analysis, very few parents actually check up on their wards schooling and motivate them to study. Parents can have great positive influence on their wards if the ward get to know that he or she is always being checked on and also encouraged to study. Again, it was seen that peers also have great influence on the academic performance of students. Students who surround themselves with peers who may not exhibit good morals and attitude towards education may have negative influences on students, and vice-versa. Colleges and educational institutions apart from providing a safe and conducive environment to improve academic performance of students, must also be interested in other factors that may not be directly under the purview of the college or school but exert influence on the academic performance of students.

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