

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

**EXPLORING FACTORS AFFECTING SOME NURSING TRAINEES'
PROJECT WORK COMPLETION AT THE COLLEGE OF
COMMUNITY HEALTH NURSING, WINNEBA**

DORINDA BOAMPONG-KONAM



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8180210028



**A thesis in the Department of Educational Administration and
Management, Faculty of Educational Studies, submitted to the
School of Graduate Studies in partial fulfillment**

**of the requirements for the award of the degree of
Master of Philosophy
(Educational Administration and Management)
in the University of Education, Winneba**

DECEMBER 2021

DECLARATION

Student's Declaration

I, Dorinda Boampong-Konam, declare that this thesis, with the exception of quotations and references contained in published works which have all been identified and duly acknowledged, 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.

Signature:

Date:

Supervisors' Declaration

I hereby declare that the preparation of this thesis was supervised in accordance with guidelines for the supervision of thesis laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.

Name: Judith Bampo (PhD)

Signature:

Date:

DEDICATION

To my husband Dr. Killian Boampong-Konam and my children Kimberly, Kalista and Kimora.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My appreciation goes to all parties whose diverse contribution enabled me complete this thesis successfully. I am particularly grateful to my supervisor Dr. Judith Bampo for her thoughtful and comprehensive contributions, suggestions, and directions for this study right from the beginning to the end.

I am deeply grateful to the Management and students of College of Community Health Nursing, Winneba for making this work a success and to all the lecturers at the Department of Educational Administration and Management, for their enormous contributions to make this work a reality.

I also wish to record my appreciation to my husband, Dr. Killian Boampong-Konam for his financial support and fruitful suggestions and encouragement.

Finally, I wish to extend my heartfelt gratitude to all my learned colleagues for their advice and moral support.

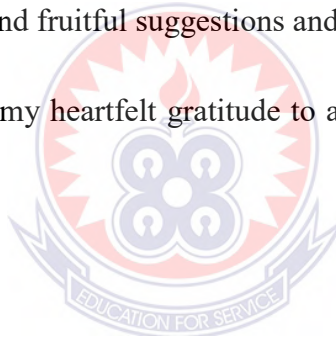


TABLE OF CONTENTS

| Contents | Page |
|--|-------------|
| DECLARATION | iii |
| ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS | v |
| TABLE OF CONTENTS | vi |
| LIST OF TABLES | x |
| LIST OF FIGURES | x |
| ABSTRACT | xi |
| CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION | 1 |
| 1.1 Background of the study | 1 |
| 1.2 Statement of the problem | 3 |
| 1.3 Purpose of the study | 6 |
| 1.4 Objectives of the study | 6 |
| 1.5 Research questions | 7 |
| 1.6 Significance of the study | 7 |
| 1.7 Delimitations of the study | 8 |
| 1.8 Limitations of the study | 9 |
| 1.9 Organization of the study | 9 |
| CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW | 11 |
| 2.0 Introduction | 11 |
| 2.1 Conceptualizing Research | 11 |
| 2.2 Importance of conducting research | 13 |
| 2.3 Factors influencing undergraduate student completion of research | 16 |
| 2.3.1 Student-related factors | 17 |



| | |
|--|----|
| 2.3.2 Supervision–related factors influencing students’ completion of research | 24 |
| 2.3.2.1 Student-supervisor relationship | 31 |
| 2.3.2.2 Teaching and learning of research methods | 31 |
| 2.4.3 Institutional-related factors influencing students’ writing of research | 32 |
| 2.4 Theoretical underpinning of the study | 34 |
| 2.4.1 Self-efficacy Theory | 35 |
| 2.4.2 Functionalism theory | 36 |
| 2.5 Conceptual framework | 41 |
| 2.6 Related previous studies | 42 |
| 2.7 Summary of Literature Review | 62 |
| CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY | 64 |
| 3.0 Introduction | 64 |
| 3.1 Research paradigm | 64 |
| 3.2 Research approach | 65 |
| 3.3 Research design | 67 |
| 3.5 Population of the study | 69 |
| 3.5 Sample size and sampling techniques | 69 |
| 3.6 Research Instrument | 70 |
| 3.7 Sources of data | 71 |
| 3.8.1 Trustworthiness of the interview data | 72 |
| 3.8.2 Credibility | 73 |
| 3.8.3 Dependability | 75 |
| 3.8.4 Transferability | 76 |



| | |
|---|------------|
| 3.8.5 Conformability | 78 |
| 3.9 Data Collection Procedures | 79 |
| 3.10 Data Analysis Procedures | 80 |
| 3.11 Ethical considerations | 81 |
| 3.12 Chapter summary | 82 |
| CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS | 83 |
| 4.0 Introduction | 83 |
| 4.1 Analysis of interview data | 83 |
| 4.1.1 Research question one | 84 |
| 4.1.2 Research Question Two | 90 |
| 4.1.3 Research Question Three | 98 |
| CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS | 111 |
| 5.0 Overview | 111 |
| 5.1 Summary of key findings | 112 |
| 5.3 Conclusion | 113 |
| 5.4 Recommendations | 113 |
| 5.5 Suggestions for Future Research | 115 |
| REFERENCES | 116 |
| APPENDIX | 128 |

LIST OF TABLES

| Table | Page |
|--|------|
| 1: Trend Analysis of the rate of completion of project work from 2016-2020 | 5 |



LIST OF FIGURES

| Figure | Page |
|---|------|
| 1: Conceptual framework on challenges students face during their research | 41 |



ABSTRACT

The main purpose of this research was to explore factors affecting nursing trainees' project work completion in the College of Community Health Nursing, Winneba. The philosophical and theoretical perspectives or assumptions underpinning this study was interpretative worldview or constructivist epistemology. A five year trend analyses of the number of past students who could complete their project work was reviewed. The study adopted a qualitative research approach and phenomenological research design. The target population for this study consists of all nursing students at the College of Community Health Nursing in Winneba. A sample of ten (10) final year nursing trainees writing their project work were sampled through purposive sampling procedure. The instrument used in the data collection was semi-structured interviews. Data were analyzed thematically. The study revealed that institutional-related factors contributing to nursing trainees' inability to complete their research work were ill-equipped libraries on campus, inadequate computer and poor Internet accessibility at the computer labs, school calendar instability and lack of transparency in assessment of project work. Student-related factors contributing to nursing trainees' inability to complete their research work were identified as poor time management, inadequate finance, lack of commitment and motivation to do the research, lack of training and experience in research methods and failure to meet regularly with the supervisor. It was discovered that irregular accessibility to supervisors, long delays in providing feedback on project work, little guidance and direction from supervisors and work load of supervisors were supervision-related factors contributing to nursing trainees' inability to complete their research work. Finally, it was discovered through the respondents' comments that well-equipped libraries on campus, adequate computers and good internet accessibility at the computer labs, regular workshops to train students in research methods and effective communication between supervisors and students were some of the mechanisms can be put in place to alleviate the challenges nursing students face concerning their research work. The study recommended that there is a need to review research methods courses offered in the college, in terms of contents and teaching approaches. If this is properly done, the weaknesses indicated by students are likely to be minimized. Secondly, the college should strive to subject all students to academic writing training, with a special focus on how to write research reports. The Government, in collaboration with the Ghana Education Service, should see to the provision of adequate computers and LCD projectors for the College of Community Health Nursing in Winneba. These facilities should not only be sufficient in number, but should also be of good quality.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

Research is conducted all over the world to solve problems or to answer questions of significance to humanity (Mahammoda, 2016). Recent trends in higher education policy towards developing human capital and building research capacity place particular emphasis on students' research as the incubator of a knowledge-based workforce that will drive a nation's research and development and stimulate economic growth (Baldwin, 2015). Globally, one cannot complete a higher education degree without completing a research work because it is a fundamental requirement of every higher education institution. Taskeen, Shehzadi, Khan and Saleem (2014) allude to the fact that employability in the current century is increasingly linked to skills and attributes that are acquired through research. Therefore, research project is considered a valuable component of 'scientific learning' in higher education, because it teaches empirical investigation, practical skills and concept formation (Rajasekar, Philominathan & Chinnathambi, 2013).

Researchers must therefore be meticulous in embarking on a research project. In other words, they must allocate enough of time to complete each stage of the project, work in the library for a number of hours per week, take more time to plan in order to meet deadline because there are some task that take more time than what is planned, and there are some stages in research work that are more tedious than what the researcher anticipate. In a nutshell, there are unexpected challenges and problems that a researcher battles with while conducting a study and these may lead to academic failures (Alshehry, 2014).

Mapolisa and Mafa (2012) conducted a study to explore challenges that undergraduate students encounter in conducting research at Zimbabwe Open University. Questionnaire, document analysis and focused group discussion were used in their study. The findings of the study showed that students faced three categories of challenges, namely supervisor, relationship with supervisor, and students' challenges. Supervisor's challenges included little or no interest in research, absence of supervisor from work, and not coming to work punctually. Challenges related to students comprised of unavailability of money, problems related to time, library references, and problems connected to family. Moreover, there were also challenges connected to college such as unavailability of the Internet, no library resources, no computer knowledge, no workshop, unavailability of course related to research. All these challenges influenced negatively on students' abilities to conduct research.

In Ghana, little is known about the challenges nursing trainees' offering diploma programmes in the various Health Training Institutions go through during their research work. The country's policies on health education requires health trainees going through diploma programmes in various fields in the Health Training Institutions to conduct research as part of their academic curriculum. For many students, the undergraduate research project especially at the diploma level is their first opportunity to experience independent research and supervision in tertiary education. At the diploma level, tuition and supervision skills as a process of support provided to students undertaking research work forms basis of students' perceptions and experiences in the study of research as a course in higher institution. Therefore, it is important to give much attention to the study of research at the diploma level as a foundation.

In addition, effective research supervision is relevant to the successful completion of students' research work, yet they find it difficult to comprehend the 'research' teaching-learning process (Mahammuda, 2016). This situation can be linked to various factors such as inexperienced or overburdened supervisors, inadequate preparation of students, poor planning and management, methodological difficulties, personal problems outside the research setting, inadequate financial support for students, poor relationship between the student and supervisor, and an overall ineffective infrastructural support for research work (Thondhlana, Mawere & Weda, 2011).

At the College of Community Health Nursing, Winneba, one of the requirements of every student offering diploma programme is to conduct and complete a research work before graduating. This is in line with the government policy on health education. Considering the fact that research is an integral part of the diploma curriculum in the colleges, the researcher deems it important to conduct a study to explore the factors affecting nursing trainees' project work completion in the College of Community Health Nursing, Winneba at the diploma level.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Academic writing or writing to report research is not easy because it requires adequate background knowledge, interest, motivation and hard work (Safia & Noura, 2017). Todd, Smith and Bannister (2006) found that some of the challenges students face with their research work are time management, how to choose and then narrow down a research topic. The most challenging problem that students might face is time management. Students tend to allocate everything to the last stage where they find it difficult to accomplish their research on time.

Dombeck and Wells-Moran (2006) claim that time management skills boil down to organization, commitment and awareness and may be applied to a number of tasks in life that one might decide to take on. In the context of student researchers, this might mean that they have to become conscious to write down everything, to stay focused especially when something more momentarily interesting occurs, and to be committed to keeping to a set schedule. Another challenge that students face, in terms of research writing, is that they may not know their areas of interest. Furthermore, they may find it difficult to identify an appropriate scope for the topic under investigation. They often need to narrow down the topic if it is to be accomplished in the time given for the completion of the research. In terms of research writing, students find it hard to connect and organize ideas and to write in their own words (Mahammoda, 2016).

Baldwin (2015) reported on the difficulties faced by students in structuring and arguing their research writing in a balanced and consistent manner. Moreover, Bitchener and Basturkmen (2006) looked at students' difficulties in writing research and highlighted challenges with the language, and how to express and link ideas. They also identified that these problems sometimes go beyond the stipulated time given for accomplishing the research.

The current writer's personal interactions with some of the tutors at College of Community Health Nursing, Winneba revealed that a lot of their students lack experience and knowledge about research. Concerning the students' knowledge and experience about research, tutors pointed out that the majority of students have no idea of how to search for information on their own. They also indicated that students have some problems with identifying the area of interest, choosing a topic, formulating

research problems and writing literature review. They also have difficulties collecting and analyzing data with the most challenging obstacle being research writing.

Furthermore, the increase in the number of students in the college has essentially led to the increase in the number of students a tutor is given to supervise. Some of the students the researcher interacted with stated that there are some tutors at the College of Community Health Nursing, Winneba who have more than fifteen students to supervise their research works at both certificate and diploma levels and makes it difficult for their supervisors to have adequate time for them. The increasing number of students seems disproportionate to the number of supervisors available in the college. With such a great number of students, it would be difficult for the supervisors to pay attention to all students and read their works critically. As a result, the students' research reports become substandard. The researcher also observed that among the difficulties that some students of the College of Community Health Nursing, Winneba have is their difficulty to express themselves in their own words as a results they copy information from different sources, some of which may not be relevant to their topic hence delaying the completion of their project work on time.

Table 1.1 presents statistics on rate of completion of project work by final year diploma students at College of Community Health Nursing Winneba from 2016 to 2020.

Table1.1: Trend Analysis of the rate of completion of project work from 2016-2020

| Variable | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 |
|---|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Total number of final year students | 159 | 160 | 155 | 169 | 164 |
| No. of student who completed on time | 64 | 71 | 62 | 58 | 51 |
| Percentage of completion | 40.3% | 44.4% | 40% | 34.3% | 31.1% |
| No. of student who could not complete on time | 95 | 89 | 93 | 111 | 113 |
| Percentage of non-completion | 59.7% | 55.6% | 60% | 65.7% | 68.9% |

Source: Statistics Office, College of Community Health Nursing, Winneba (2021)

A study of the above trend of rate completion of project work from 2016-2020 revealed that, for instance in 2016, out of a total of 159 students who wrote their project work, only 64 (40.3%) completed on time, majority of the students 95 representing (59.7%) could not complete on time. The year 2017 saw a marginal 4 % points improvement, out of a total of 160 students wrote their projects, 71(44.4%) completed on time while 89 students representing (55.6%) could not complete on time.

In 2018, the results indicated that the non-completion rate increased to 60% from 55.6% recorded the previous year. In 2019, completion rate dropped to 34.3% compared to 40% recorded 2018. Also in 2020, there was not any improvement in students' project work completion rate, it dropped from 34.3% to 31.1%. A careful examination of the results revealed that over the periods under review, the rate at which students have been completing their project works have reduced significantly.

In view of this, the researcher set out to investigate the challenges nursing students face with their research work in the College of Community Health Nursing, Winneba.

1.3 Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study to explore the factors affecting nursing trainees project work completion in the College of Community Health Nursing, Winneba,

1.4 Objectives of the study

The study was guided by the following objectives, to;

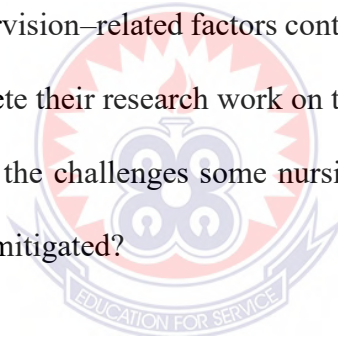
1. find out institutional–related factors contributing to some nursing students' inability to complete their research work on time.
2. find out student–related factors contributing to some nursing students' inability to complete their research work on time.

3. identify supervision–related factors contributing to some nursing students’ inability to complete their research work on time.
4. examine ways of alleviating the challenges some nursing students face concerning their research work on time.

1.5 Research questions

The following research questions provide guidance to the study:

1. What are the institutional–related factors contributing to some nursing students’ inability to complete their research work on time?
2. What are the student–related factors contributing to some nursing students’ inability to complete their research work on time?
3. What are the supervision–related factors contributing to some nursing students’ inability to complete their research work on time?
4. In what ways can the challenges some nursing students face concerning their research work be mitigated?



1.6 Significance of the study

This study was timely as the findings were envisaged to enlighten both students and academic staff in higher learning institutions on issues related to thesis and dissertation writing. This study is significant from the aspect of practical implications as it will provide impetus to the management of college as to what are the factors contributing to nursing students’ inability to complete their research work and how this can be managed.

Once management have knowledge and information about these factors they can take corrective measures to help eliminate these factors from the academic life of students.

It is hoped that the findings of the current study will add more to the literature and help

practitioners, teachers, and curriculum designers develop their teaching methods with regard to research.

It is also hoped that this study will make a great contribution to the field of language teaching and learning in higher education. Specifically, the findings were expected to serve as baseline information for making recommendations on how best the challenges of writing theses and dissertations facing postgraduate students could be overcome in the information this study will provide is going to benefit students in Ghana to improve on the completion rate of their research project work.

Finally, to other researchers exploring such topics can help identify the major difficulties which impede students from conducting good research, provide guidance on how to deal with these difficulties and generate solutions to overcome these obstacles.

1.7 Delimitations of the study

According to Simon and Goes (2011), the delimitations of a study are those characteristics that arise from limitations in the scope of the study defining the boundaries of the study and by the conscious exclusionary and inclusionary decisions made during the development of the study plan. Examples of these exclusionary and inclusionary decisions are the choice of objectives and research question(s), variables of interest, the choice of theoretical perspectives that will be used, the methodology, and the choice of participants.

The study was restricted to factors affecting nursing trainees' project work completion in the College of Community Health Nursing, Winneba. The study also could have looked at a larger sample size by putting them into focused groups. This would have

given room to involve a lot of respondents which would have imparted on the final analysis. The study was purely qualitative and involves ten (10) nursing students. Data was collected from final year nursing students who are undertaking their project work at college of community health nursing, Winneba.

1.8 Limitations of the study

Limitations of a study are those conditions beyond the researcher's control that are likely to place restrictions on the findings or conclusion of the study and the generalizations of the findings (Ravitch & Riggan, 2017). Some students were reluctant in taking the questionnaire to fill. Most of them also shunned away from the interview as well even though they were not going to be identified. This made collecting of the data a bit difficult. Notwithstanding, some of them were incredibly accommodating. But the researcher assured them that the information provided was to be used for research purposes only and that their identity was not to be disclosed. The interference of unplanned school activities was a draw back. These notwithstanding, the effect of this problem did not affect the research so much as to render it unreliable or not representative since the objective of the research was achieved.

1.9 Organization of the study

The study was organized into five chapters: Chapter One comprises of background of the study, statement of the problem, purpose and objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study, delimitations of the study, limitations of the study and organization of the study. Chapter Two looks at review of literature, where various ideas from different authors relating to the study were reviewed. Chapter Three methodology, which includes research paradigm, research approach, research design, population, sample and sampling techniques, research instruments, validity of research

instrument, reliability of research instrument, trustworthiness of the study, data collection procedures, data collection procedures and ethical considerations.

The Chapter Four covers the research findings via data presentation and analysis.

Lastly, the fifth chapter consists summary, conclusion and recommendations and suggested areas for further research



CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

Review of literature is a broad, comprehensive in-depth, systematic and critical review of scholarly publications, including unpublished scholarly print materials, and personal communications. It analyses, critically evaluates sources, theories, methods, gaps in research; synthesizes the researcher's own theme/argument of position and outline the parameters of one's own research (Creswell, 2014). Hammond and Wellington (2013) state that reviewing the literature entails researchers to establish an overview of what has already been studied in the field or area under intention of the investigation. This section reviews relevant studies related to challenges and difficulties facing students while conducting their research.

2.1 Conceptualizing Research

Research is a way of thinking: examining critically the various aspects of your day-to-day work; understanding and formulating guiding principles that govern a procedure; and developing and, testing new theories that contribute to the advancement of your practice and profession. It is a habit of questioning what you do, and a systematic examination of clinical observations to explain and find answers for what you perceive, with a view to instituting appropriate changes for a more effective professional service (Kumar, 2016). Neville (2007) states that research is a remarkable characteristic of any degree course because it provides students with an amount of control and independence on what they learn. Research also offers students a chance to approve, explain, follow and find out new features of a topic they are keen on. Pandey and Mishra (2015, p. 7) suggest that the word "Research" is comprised of two words. It means to search again.

So, research means a systematic investigation or activity to gain new knowledge of the already existing facts.” Research can also be defined as rational and methodical search for new and beneficial information about a certain topic (Rajasekar, Philominathan & Chinnathambi, 2013). Neville (2007, p. 1) defines research as “a process of enquiry and investigation; it is systematic, methodical and ethical; research can help solve practical problems and increase knowledge.” Research has been defined as a “systematic investigation, including research developments, testing and evaluation, designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge”.

It also aims to establish facts and reach new conclusions. The Cambridge English dictionary defines research as a “detailed study of a subject, especially in order to discover (new) information or reach a (new) understanding”. However, research often goes beyond the subject going from the sub-molecular level to the study of gigantic structures, in order to develop new ideas,

Confirm or reject old theories and search for hypotheses. The basic tenet of research includes the gathering of data, information and observations to advance our knowledge. The evolution of the human race and technological advancement seen over the last couple of decades is a direct consequence of our increasing interest and dependence on research. While the human race is estimated to be 200,000 years old, most of our progress has occurred in the last 10,000 years.

This advancement can be attributed to a better understanding of research methodologies research has been defined as a “systematic investigation, including research developments, testing and evaluation, designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge”.

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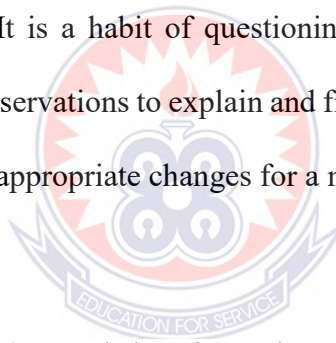
Research encompasses a large area of intervention and observation aimed at improving the quality of life of populations. Research has been defined as a “systematic investigation, including research developments, testing and evaluation, designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge”. It also aims to establish facts and reach new conclusions. The Cambridge English dictionary defines research as a “detailed study of a subject, especially in order to discover (new) information or reach a (new) understanding”. However, research often goes beyond the subject, going from the sub-molecular level to the study of gigantic structures, in order to develop new ideas, confirm or reject old theories and search for hypotheses. The basic tenet of research includes the gathering of data, information and observations to advance our knowledge. The evolution of the human race and technological advancement seen over the last couple of decades is a direct consequence of our increasing interest and dependence on research. While the human race is estimated to be 200,000 years old, most of our progress has occurred in the last 10,000 years. This advancement can be attributed to a better understanding of research methodologies.

2.2 Importance of conducting research

According to Rajasekar et al., (2013) research is significant in scientific and unscientific fields. In this world, different problems, activities, and methods happen

daily. Scientists carry out research to find out causes, answers and justifications. Thus, research helps us comprehend nature and normal phenomena. Research is also important because it offers strategies and guidelines for finding solutions. In addition, social research assists us to discover solutions for social problems because it describes social phenomena and searches for answers to social problems. Research also creates a new way and style of life and makes it enjoyable. Research on current theories and notions can assist us in recognizing and finding out the applications of these theories.

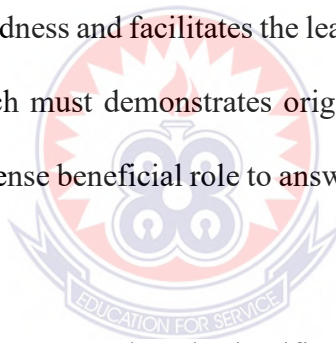
Research is a way of thinking, examining critically the various aspects of your day-to-day work; understanding and formulating guiding principles that govern a procedure; and developing and, testing new theories that contribute to the advancement of your practice and profession. It is a habit of questioning what you do, and a systematic examination of clinical observations to explain and find answers for what you perceive, with a view to instituting appropriate changes for a more effective professional service (Kumar, 2016).



Pandey and Mishra (2015) stated that the main purposes of research are to inform action, gather evidence for theories, and contribute to developing knowledge in a field of study. For students who value learning, doing research equips them with knowledge about the world and skills to help them survive and improve their lives. Among researcher, finding an interesting topic to discuss and/or to write about should go beyond personal experience. Determining either what the general public may want to know or what researchers want others to realize or to think about can serve as a reason to do research. Thus, research is an essential component in generating knowledge, and vice-versa.

According to DeVellis, (2016) knowledge is commonly described as a factual proposition in the mind of an individual. It essentially refers to facts based on objective insights and/or study findings processed by the human brain. It can be acquired through various means, such as reading books and articles, listening to experts, watching documentaries or investigative shows, conducting scientific experiments, and interacting with other people, among others. Facts collected during research can be checked against other sources to ensure their truthfulness and accuracy.

Boateng (2014), acknowledges the importance of research in building knowledge. Thus, research is necessary to ascertain whether one's ideas are supported by previous studies or if these ideas still need further proof to be considered knowledge. Research generates scientific mindedness and facilitates the learning of how to identify a research problem. Quality research must demonstrate originality and contribute knowledge. Quality research has immense beneficial role to answer society needs, nation needs and global needs.



Today there is no doubt that research and scientific production are the criterion for the superiority of nations and societies. Universities play a key role in national development and advancement of knowledge, science and technology and are the mainstay of thought and research in any society. The growth of graduate education has been one of the most important strengths of higher education in the past two decades, which has witnessed a remarkable development with regard to its double importance of research-based education than other programs. Postgraduate students go through a lot of research-based education during their studies and they need to present a thesis for their degree. Hence, they are deeply involved in research and play a wider and more important role in the production of science and knowledge (Fazlollahi, 2012). It would

be impossible to develop students' creative talents in science production and participation in the development of the country without involving students with research in their daily lives and activities (Entwistle, 2002). Although specific and accurate statistics on the contribution of postgraduate students to the production of research activities are not clear, few conducted studies have shown that graduate students have a large share in scientific production. For example, Refahi and Refahi (2000) found that 55% of medical research was based on graduate and postgraduate dissertations. Therefore, attention to research activities of this scientific community of the country can lead to scientific progress of the country in various fields of science. Understanding the needs and concerns of these students, providing material and spiritual support, creating a suitable framework, providing tools and other research facilities are among the measures that can provide the ground for the development of students' talents (Behzadi, 2013).

2.3 Factors influencing undergraduate student completion of research

Undergraduate students are required to carry out a research as a part fulfillment of their degree. The research provides an avenue for students to gain in-depth experience learning and conducting with a topic related to their specific field of study. The students are exposed to how and why research is developed to help solve problems that currently do not have answers. Typically, undergraduate students are not exposed to conducting research until their final year. Undergraduate research also provides an opportunity for research advisors to guide the students on their path to becoming professionals and help them explore career opportunities that may not otherwise be available. Research by its nature is a challenging task for any learner irrespective of the level of study but even more so for undergraduate students who for the most parts are first time researchers. This is because every research is distinct in its own way and requires rigorous efforts

in researching the problem or phenomenon. Research by undergraduate students is especially difficult for many because it is mostly carried out by a single student whereas it requires approval by many; supervisors, defense panel, faculty members, etc. research also requires the understanding of the different aspects of it and how to arrange them in a manner that is meaningful to all concerned. Every research requires in depth study of the subject matter, adequate planning, and care, hence the reason why a lot of undergraduate students find it challenging.

According to Baldwin (2015) most researches on student research work tend to focus more on individual issues like low pass rate, none and/ or late submission of research projects and also on the role and challenges of the research project supervisor yet these issues are an indication that students are facing challenges in undertaking their research projects. Efforts to ease the challenges have tended to target the supervisor yet challenges affecting students when undertaking research projects need a more holistic approach that is, focusing on the system as whole (institution, student and supervisor).

Research can be a challenging task for students (Magwa, Makuvaro & Ngara, 2015) and is influenced by student-related, institution-related and supervisor related factors (Azila-Gbettor, Mensah & Avorgah, 2015).

2.3.1 Student-related factors

Student-related challenges are factors specific to students that impact either positively or negatively on the conduct and completion of a research work. A number of factors have been identified from the perspective of students. Among them are failure to define a research problem (Pearson and Kayrooz, 2004) which can lead to students frustration (Mapolisa, 2013); lack of training and experience in research methods (Thomas and Nelson, 2001; Creswell, 2003); failure to prepare a clear and precise research proposal

(Dysthe et al., 2006) and poor time management (Thondhlana et al., 2011). According to Cone and Foster (1993), students should spend at least 20 hours per week on their research projects. Other influences include inability to write well-organized, logical and coherent papers, lack of personal drive to complete the project and failure to consult supervisors regularly (Cone & Foster, 1993; Mouton, 2001; Majoni & Chidakwa, 2004); lack of finance, physical space to do uninterrupted writing (Cone & Foster, 1993; Phillips & Pugh, 2000; Majoni & Chidakwa, 2004); lack of commitment and motivation to do the research, lack of adequate theory in the area being researched on, students' failure to meet regularly with the supervisor, family problems/commitments (Bell, 2000; Sidhu, 2001; Pearce, 2005; Anderson, Day & Laughlin, 2006) and increasing proportion of the undergraduate student from previously disadvantaged backgrounds with limited experience of library facilities and independent research work

Azila-Gbettor, Mensah and Avorgah, (2015) found that inadequate funding, students lack commitment and motivation to write, limited library skills, and poor time management are critical concern areas to students in the conduct and completion of dissertations (Bell, 2000; Phillips & Pugh, 2000; Majoni & Chidakwa, 2004; Pearce, 2005; Thondhlana et al., 2011). The cost dimension is very significant because the progress of students hinges on it. Majority of the activities students undertake involves cost. This ranges from money spent on searching of relevant materials in a web domain, to printing of draft copy of chapters for lecturers' review, travelling expenses in terms of data collection, etc. Students on the other hand, do not have the financial means to subscribe to either internet services, e-journals and buy personal computers" because they are heavily dependent on their parents. It is therefore very important that the institution enters into agreement with relevant corporate institutions interested in the work of polytechnic graduates to support them financially to lessen the financial burden

on them. Similarly, the lack of motivation among students boils down to inadequate information on the benefits of writing dissertation. Regular seminars must be organized for these students where supervisors and past students share their experience with their colleagues. Regular presentation on each stage of the project must also be encouraged. This procedure will drive students to work hard to meet deadlines and eventually improve the quality of their work.

Baldwin (2015) argues that most students encounter some hindrances when doing research such as issues related to ethics, knowing how to invest the time required and finding resources they need. Among the difficulties that some students have is their difficulty to express themselves in their own words. So, they copy from other works and represent it as their own writing without acknowledging the sources. Furthermore, some students do not have any background in research. Taskeen et al. (2014) state that majority of novice researchers copy related studies and some advisors do not have enough experience in different methodologies. Thus, they allow their students to copy from studies which are conducted by other researchers. Moreover, some students are hesitant in selecting a topic and they take a lot of time for that. This can be attributed to a lack of training in research, less confidence about the topic they want to write about and not reading widely. Thus, selecting a topic is not easy because the student researchers are not very aware of how to choose a topic and on what standards or basis they have to select it. Hence, choosing a topic depends on the researchers' interests in the field of study that he/ she intends to write about but because of insufficient or no experience and inadequate background about selecting their topic, the students spend most of the time selecting useless and uninteresting topics (Taskeen et al., 2014).

Students' completion of project work could be influenced by personal factors such as research skills, interest and availability of time among others. Olibie, Agu and Uzoechina (2015) observed that many of the students experienced a large array of problems related to writing and information retrieval skills and presenting original work. Ho, Wong and Wong (2010) pointed out poor knowledge of data related processes, lack of understanding of the thesis writing process, and student-supervisor personal qualities could be major determinants to thesis completion. Some students combine work with their studies which limit the availability time to concentrate in their thesis/dissertation writing. Etika and Hasibuan cited in Santi et al. (2020) averred that the problems experienced by students in writing thesis/dissertation could include; lack of writing ability, inadequate academic ability, lack of interest in conducting research, the difficulty in proposing ideas for research, the difficulty in finding relevant literature, limited funds, anxiety when approaching the supervisor, insufficient and poor time management, and feeling tired and lazy. Some of the students who fail graduate on stipulated time due to day in their research work abandon the programme

According to Bass et al. (2018), the students-related challenge identified personal issues in the student's lives that could affect their level of research, such as financial issues, motivation/commitment, and lack of knowledge.

Research problem definition: undergraduate students like other researchers struggle with defining their research problem but even more so with undergraduate students. They make the mistake of having either a too broadly defined problem or a narrowly defined problem. Both pose issues for researchers. Kikula and Quorro (2007), Kombo and Tromp (2011), and Repoa (2007) have consensus that among the many crucial problems' students face while they are writing their research proposals in Tanzania, a

common mistake was broad titles with no clear and focused content. The statements of the problems were not stated clearly to guide the readers and writers were not able to identify the correct research techniques due to this broad problem definition.

Akparep et al. (2017) identified the following challenges that students are saddled with regarding their project work;

1. Time management: Time also is an issue, both with balancing the research supervisor's and the student's course schedule. Undergraduate students juggle a lot of things together; taught modules, assignments, tests and exams together with research project. Proper time management becomes a challenge to them as many of them struggle to keep up.
2. Confidence issues; undergraduate may lack the confidence to carry out research or feel they are incapable of doing it. This becomes a challenge to them as they struggle even more with self-doubt. Yiu (2009) posits that the two most dominant challenges were for undergraduate students in Saudi Arabia are the difficulty in expressing ideas and the inability to develop confidence in conveying academic voice.
3. Quantity of literature; students are challenged by the sheer amount of literature out there. They struggle to read through literatures to get secondary data that is meaningful to their own study. Review of literature can be daunting to most profession researchers and is terrifying for undergraduate.
4. Working with deadlines: Undergraduate students struggle with the deadlines given for the research project. Most times they have six months from the start to finish for the research and this can be quite challenging for the students who also must combine research with classwork and other activities.

Data collection; one of the major factors undergraduate students encounter in research is having access to enough data. Another challenging factor is deciding on the best data collection tool or procedure to use to solicit for the needed data. This challenge is further compounded by the fact that many targeted respondents are skeptical about giving information to young people because they fear that it might be misused by them.

5. Interpreting literature and data; Inability to interpret literature and finding and fit in to their research study is another challenge faced by undergraduate researchers. Undergraduate student struggle with identifying gaps in literature and fitting their work into the existing body of knowledge. Students face the challenge of knowing how to make sense of the data collected. A researcher has to connect his /her finding with the existing research, compare the methodology of the books read, analyze the data using the right software and see whether the finding answers the researcher's questions and hypothesis, biases and whether the result can be generalized or not. This often times require careful and measured interpretation and writing in which they are to synthesize and bring together all materials used. Doing this can be quite challenging for them.

Rooij, Fokkens-Bruinsma and Jansen (2019) observed that high dropout rates delay, and dissatisfaction among postgraduate students are common problems in tertiary institution. A delay in thesis/dissertation completion is undesirable for postgraduate students and also detrimental to universities (Schoot, Yerkes, Mouw & Sonneveld, 2013). It could results to attrition which constitute educational wastages in terms of time, energy and financial resources expended by the students during the programmes. Schoot et al added that it is also a loss of valuable time and resources because of all the training and supervision invested in the candidates. Akparep et al (2017) averred that

this is a source of worry not only to continuing students, the institution and supervisors but prospective applicants as it breeds apathy on their part of not willing to apply to study at universities for fear of abandoning their programme or not graduating on record time.

Mentor-student factors: The mentor-student factor comprised the level of engagement between the advisor and student, advisor availability, and student interest in the topic.

1. Lack of scientific training; this is major challenge faced by the students. Undergraduate students do not have the experience or training for scientific research. Though many would have taken a course in research methodology, oftentimes they have a ‘transfer-of-learning’ challenge where they struggle with putting theoretical knowledge of research into practice. Research methodology employed varies from research to research and when students are not well grounded in all methodological aspects, they find research challenging. •

Supervision factors; students can face the problem of poor communication from supervisors or poor guidance. It is important that undergraduate students especially have adequate guidance. It should be noted that undergraduate students have little to no background in their assigned research area, making it necessary for the supervisors to teach them enough about the topic to get them productive early in the process while still maintaining their excitement.

2. Pacing of content: This can be an issue for undergraduate research; too slow, and they can get bored or disinterested; too fast, and it can seem like too much and they may become overwhelmed or disinterested. It is important that the supervisors strike a

balance. 4 According to Bass et al (2018), to solve requires granting ownership of processes to the students, once they were learned, kept them motivated in the research.

2.3.2 Supervision–related factors influencing students’ completion of research

Every undergraduate student or post graduate student is assigned a supervisor to provide the necessary guidance and professional advice during the research work. The roles of a supervisor include to help student identify a researchable topic, mentoring, monitoring, technical support, read the manuscript on time and offer constructive criticism. A supervisor is expected to be accessible, respectful, understandable, eager to interact with the students, good listener, patience, open-mindedness and counsellor. Among other qualities of a good supervisor include; reliability, ability to listen, ability to encourage and share information and have free interaction with the supervisee (Ndayambaje, 2018).

A good supervisor is also expected to sufficient knowledge of research topic and the research methodology, ensuring continuous supportive and prompt feedback. Supervisors’ interpersonal relationship with supervisees and availability are important during research work. Deane and Peterson (2011) noted that a very basic factor in supervision is the supervisor’s availability, where availability does not only refer to frequent physical presence, but also to having frequent meetings with the student, and providing timely answers to questions and feedback on the student’s written work. However, some supervisors are inaccessible to their supervisees. Some supervisors are rare seen on campus; they instructed their supervisees never to call them on phone and could only meet on appointment. It seems that some supervisors are overloaded with much works that limit the available time to supervise the students’ research work.

Akparep et al. (2017) observed that some supervisors are not trained on the newest research methods that could help them in guiding their students in the postgraduate studies which results in their inability to apply and transfer the appropriate skills and research expertise to their supervisees. The relationship between some supervisors and students are not cordial which make it difficult for them to engage in meaningful interaction that would enhance of thesis/dissertation completion.

Azila-Gbettor, Mensah and Avorgah, (2015) found that students have difficulties with unavailability of supervisors and long delays in providing feedback on dissertations. These findings also concur with the previous literature. For example, on feedback, within a postgraduate context, inaccessibility and provision of poor feedback were identified as some of the causes of unsatisfactory supervision (Grant and Graham, 1999). Similarly, Wadesango and Machingambi (2011) studied postgraduate students' experiences with research supervisors in South Africa and found lack of supervisory support and poor feedback in relation to their research work as some of the challenges the students faced. Also on accessibility of supervisors, a study of Ezebilo (2012) involving three Swedes and four internationals in Sweden found that inaccessibility of supervisors was a major challenge the students faced. Supporters of feedback contend that the earlier corrective information is provided, the more likely that work will be done within schedule. For example, Sassenruth (1972) contends that immediate feedback encourages proactive response once participants commit themselves to act correctly. Similarly, Kulik and Kulik (1988) reported that immediate feedback is more effective than delayed feedback. It is therefore important maximum attention is devoted to determining the length of time the work of student should be kept with a lecturer to navigate this challenge. Also individual students must also be assigned second

supervisors who may provide second opinion on students' work in case the substantive supervisor is indisposed.

According to Chabaya, Chiome and Chabaya (2009) in conducting research, some students may face problems with their supervisor. For example, they may not know who to select and after some time they tend to change their supervisors for unknown reasons. In addition, some supervisors may not be interested in working with students who choose less interesting topics or students who are not active and not motivated to cooperate with his/ her supervisor. Some supervisors do not frequently follow up with the students because they are not available all the time in the college. Another obstacle is that when students ask for help or advice from the supervisor, the supervisor does not always offer or give any help or direction. As a result, he/ she lets the students work most of the time on his/ her own without even having a look at the student's work. And even if they give any comments some students find it difficult to understand and meet the requirements. Some students do not know how to write their project and most of the time depend on their supervisor to do the work for them. All these problems make it very hard for learners to conduct good research and he or she will end up with a very poor piece of work.

According to Nyawaranda (2005), Shumba (2004), and Pearce (2005), some learners encounter hindrances with their advisor when writing their research. Some of these obstacles include: supervisors do not see their students regularly, the supervisors are not interested in their students, they do not give so much guidance and direction to their students, they do not return the students' work on time and they do not give the students much practical help. Concerning the gathering information from different sources, some students face some difficulties. One of these challenges is that the Internet is not

always accessible to some students. When the students need some sources for the research he/she usually uses the Internet, but this is not the case for all students. When students search for any information, they cannot find anything because of the slow and weak internet connection at home or college which delays the completion of their research.

Furthermore, some supervisors impose topics on their students which in turn influence their interest and success in writing a research paper (Mawere & Weda, 2011). Other problems related to students include: not enough time, lack of or not adequate resources in the library, little or no motivation in writing research, not meeting the supervisor every time, not having any knowledge about theory related to research (Mapolisa & Mafa, 2012; Mahammoda, 2016).

On the other hand, Mapolisa and Mafa (2011) conducted a study which sought to explore the experiences of supervisors in the supervision of postgraduate students' research. Among the main findings of the study, it was revealed that most students had limitations in the development of proposals. The problems ranged from not knowing what to include in the proposals to the ethical considerations. However, the study did not investigate challenges the candidates faced in writing their theses or dissertations after conducting their studies. In addition, Bitchener and Basturkmen (2006) conducted a study which, among other issues, focused on student difficulties in writing the discussion of results section (DRS) of the thesis. The findings showed that students did not have an adequate understanding of the function of the discussion results sections of their theses (Bitchener & Basturkmen, 2006). This situation could be attributed to the following issues: First, given the trend of higher education students' enrolments in both undergraduate and postgraduate programs, this observation would not be surprising

because the number of students pursuing postgraduate programs has increased tremendously in recent years (Wang & Linda, 2008).

The increase in the number of students has essentially led to the increase in the number of students a supervisor is given to handle. At the College of Community Health Nursing, Winneba, where the study is being conducted, there are some tutors in the institutions who have more than fifteen students to supervise their research works at both certificate and diplomas levels. In other words, the increasing number of students seemed to be unproportional to the number of supervisors available in the institutions. With such a great number of students, it would be difficult for the tutors (supervisors) to pay attention to all students and read their works critically. As a result, the students' research reports become substandard. The supervisors have numerous works such as teaching conducting exams and marking the scripts of both postgraduate and undergraduate students. Due to these numerous tasks, they have insufficient time to guide and provide prompt feedback on students' works. It also makes it difficult for supervisors to have face-to-face meetings with supervisees to discuss way forward in their research work.

Challenges in undergraduate research supervision arise in providing adequate support to nurture autonomy while recognising that many students may be unprepared for independent learning (Todd, Bannister & Clegg, 2004). Thus both student and institution factors influence the challenges supervisors face in undergraduate research supervision and this eventually impacts on the student's progress. Supervisors also possess varying research exposures and experiences but to ensure the success of research projects, the quality of supervisions should be given attention (Yeoh & Doan, 2012). A good supervisor should, thus, have a good track record as a scholar, experience

in supervisory practices, interest in the research topic, time for supervision and treat the student as a peer and an equal Mouton (2001) as cited in Azila-Gbettor, Mensah and Avorgah (2015). Research project demands a lot from students intellectually in terms of defining a research problem, selecting a topic, preparing a clear and precise research proposal, time management, good verbal and written communication skills, (Bogdan & Bilken, 1992)

Such demands may influence students' self-efficacy and progress as Pearce (2005) notes that some students are scared of carrying out research and that anxiety often affects the students in applying the concepts in practice (Papanastasiou & Zembylas, 2008). These issues are not only rooted in the students' intellectual capabilities but they are also related to institutional issues as in most cases students are rarely prepared earlier on for the research project (Healey, Lannin, Stibb & Derounian, 2013). Student's individual characteristics such as socio-economic status, past performance and personality traits also influence final research project completion (Dupont, Galand & Nils, 2014). These student characteristics tend to influence access to computers and the technical competence required to access and use ICTs necessary for the successful completion of the research project (Musingafi et al., 2015)

A research conducted by Claudius (2016) found that the challenges of writing thesis include inappropriateness in presenting different chapters of the reports and lack of academic writing skills. Therefore, students need a lot of study and practice in order to develop learners' writing skill (Oshima & Hogue, 1999). There were problems faced by students in thesis writing. a research conducted by Matin and khan (2017) found that the problem in general identified were lack of students' knowledge, experience, commitment in thesis work, lack of found, inadequate and irregular meeting with

supervisor. Beside that, Al Fadda (2012) found that the main challenges ESL students encounter are differentiating between written and spoken words and phrases, reviewing grammar including subject-verb agreement and joining sentences together to make a coherent paragraph.

In addition Lee and Tajino (2008) argue that two separate concepts of difficulties students face in writing their thesis that is related to the linguistic structure of the language and psychological matters. Furthermore, Research conducted by Sariyanto, Supardi and Husin (2015) concluded students problem with psychological problem, such low of motivation, anxiety, low of confident. Next, Paltridge and Starfield (2007) explain that there are a lack of confidence, and fear of failure and rejection, or its counterpart perfectionism is the factors of difficulties in writing thesis. Furthermore, linguistic problem faced by students in writing thesis is linguistic problem. Levine (2002) mentioned the language problems in writing are poor vocabulary, awkward phrasing and unconventional grammar, difficulty with sentence structure and word order. Besides that, Brown (2007) believes to identify the errors was put in the students levels of language (phonology, lexicon, grammar and discourse) that should be considered. Regarding the problems previous study, there were some previous related studies to this matter.

A research conducted by Dwihandini (2013) the finding of the research showed that the main cause of students' difficulties in writing thesis in the psychological factor was self-esteem. Furthermore, the main cause of students' difficulties in writing thesis in the linguistic factor was found in domain and extent error analysis. Similarly research conducted by Puspita (2019) the data showed significant finding there are 82% or 40 students have difficulties in personality factors. Second, here are 83% or 41 students

have difficulties in sociocultural factors. The last there are 86% or 42 students have difficulties in linguistic factors.

2.3.2.1 Student-supervisor relationship

Student-supervisor relationship is an important component of the research project because it affects students' progress in research project (Azila-Gbetteor, Mensah & Avorgah, 2015). The student-supervisor relationship may hence determine whether research project goals are achieved or not thus it is important for the supervisor to find ways and plans of managing the relationship and differences in student-supervisor perceptions of the overall experience have an effect on students' progress in research project work. Thus differences in student and supervisor expectations indicate a clash of student and supervisor interests, experiences and challenges. The student and supervisor expectations need to be communicated so that unrealistic expectations are not set to the detriment of student progress

2.3.2.2 Teaching and learning of research methods

Another important factor with potential impact on students' dissertations is teaching and learning of research methods. Armstrong (2013) study on UK dissertation supervision, found considerable variation in how research methods are taught. Whilst some departments offer it as a stand-alone course, others include it as training within another module such as market research or provide it as additional, non-credit workshops that students can attend if they choose. Some students are required to submit and pass a research proposal assessment before they undertake the dissertation. Other students are also allowed to proceed with their dissertations having failed their research proposals (Armstrong, 2013). In their comprehensive review of the literature on teaching research methods in the social sciences, Wagner et al., (2011) found that a

wide range of approaches are advocated, including exercises, problem-based approaches, collaborative and group work methods, simulations, and experiential learning. In furtherance of teaching method argument, Edwards and Thatcher (2006) suggest that supervisory staff can benefit from refresher training and more specific teaching resources in addition to the traditional research methods textbooks to help overcome the challenges associated with teaching the subject to their students. Other notable challenges identified include; intellectual challenges students face in choosing and then narrowing down a topic for research and difficulties students have in being analytical and critical in their work (Todd et al., 2006); difficulties in writing up the discussion section. Especially difficulties in expressing and linking ideas (Bitchener and Basturkmen, 2006); identify and clarifying research problem (Zuber-Skerritt & Knight, 2010); writing of effective research proposal (Baker, 2000).

2.4.3 Institutional-related factors influencing students' writing of research

Aside the student-related and tutor-related challenges, several other authors suggest that students capacity to conduct research is also constrained by institutional factors. (Mouton, 2001; Nyawaranda, 2005; Pearce, 2005). The task of writing research is not a simple one as it involves hard work and effort. It also needs much time and good background knowledge. There are many obstacles they encounter during their research. One of the biggest challenges is the lack of resources in their institutions library. Students spend their time searching for the books they need but most of the time they do not find what they want. Hence, this tends to delay the completion of their project and make them less encouraged to proceed in their work (Taskeen, Shehzadi, Khan & Saleem, 2014). According to Taskeen, Shehzadi, Khan and Saleem (2014) some libraries are not organized systematically and students spend most of their valuable time searching for books and reports instead of looking for related information

from these books. Some catalogues in the library are not available in the colleges and universities and researchers find the data related to their topic by looking at each item one by one which wastes the researchers' time and make it very hard for them to focus on the basic theme of the research.

Undergraduate research is influenced by institutional factors such as lack of quality faculty, financial support, infrastructure as well as poor governance (Yizengaw, 2008). Universities have however used the large enrolments to generate funds for the institutions (Biggs & Tang, 2007) and have also resorted to admitting less qualified students (Mohamedbhai, 2008). Higher education has therefore ceased to be elitist in nature and so the quality of students that many higher education institutions enroll has changed over time. The environment under which most institutions operate thus provides a cocktail of challenges for both students and lecturers during the research project course.

According to University of Dar es Salaam (2013) students also encounter some challenges with regard to college such as unavailability of the internet, students are not exposed to computers and there is a lack of materials related to research. When students search for any information, they cannot find anything because of the slow and weak internet connection at home or college which delays the completion of their research. Factors related to the institution involved lack of material and books in the library, students' incapability of conducting research, unavailability of open assessment system of research and little or no research assisted environment.

Azila-Gbettor, Mensah and Avorgah (2015) found that lack of internet services, lack of exposure to computers, research material, electronic database and increasing number of students, giving students three to six months within which to submit

their research projects as institutional factors militating against timely submission of research projects by students. These findings appear to support the commonly held view that higher education institutions in developing countries are inadequately resourced with scholarly material to facilitate teaching and learning. According to Divsar, (2018) the institution-related challenges stemmed from overcoming hurdles like lack of research materials and workshops to help foster a student's computer literacy.

1. Poorly equipped library: Students face the challenge of wasting a lot of time and energy on tracing appropriate books, journals and reports with very little help from the libraries which are often times poorly equipped. Al-Qaderi (2016) identified the lack of well-equipped library with open access to resources and websites as a major challenge facing undergraduate research students.

2. Lack of access to resources: another source of challenge for undergraduate students is lack of resources. Undergraduate research are most times not funded by institutions unlike graduate students and students can face the challenge of lack of funds.

Institution challenges aside, Mapolisa and Mafa (2012) found that the common theme of spending dedicated time between the mentor and student was critical to maintain enthusiasm in the research and to provide a positive research experience.

2.4 Theoretical underpinning of the study

According to educational researcher Smyth (2004), theoretical frameworks, are structured from a set of broad ideas and theories that help a researcher to properly identify the problem they are looking at, frame their questions and find suitable literature. Most academic research uses a theoretical framework at the outset because it helps the researcher to clarify his research questions and aims. Also, a theoretical

framework is a tool researchers use to guide their inquiry; it is a set of ideas used to structure the research, a sort of map that may include the research questions the literature review, methods and data analysis. Researchers use a theoretical framework to guide their data collection and analysis.

A theoretical framework is therefore used to limit the scope of the relevant data by focusing on specific variables and defining the specific viewpoint (framework) that the researcher will take in analyzing and interpreting the data to be gathered, understanding concepts and variables according to the given definitions, and building knowledge by validating or challenging theoretical assumptions.

2.4.1 Self-efficacy Theory

This study was informed by Bandura's self-efficacy theory. Bandura (1995) defined self-efficacy as the belief that one possesses the capabilities to organise, plan and carry out the courses of action required to manage situations at hand. This probably explains why some students tend not to face difficulties in some courses but in research projects. According to Schunks (2012) students may believe that a positive outcome will result from certain actions but also believe that they lack the competence to produce those actions. When relating these beliefs (outcome expectations and efficacy expectations) to the challenges and effects of the challenges on students' progress in research projects; a student may have the belief that meeting with the supervisor regularly will help him achieve the intended goals and also meet the deadlines in research projects but that same student may not be able to effectively perform that required behavior (meeting with the supervisor on a regular basis) due to various challenges on the part of the student.

In general, high-ability students feel more efficacious about learning compared with low-ability students; In other words, it is possible for a high ability student to have low efficacy in a particular situation for example when undertaking research project work. Students who feel efficacious about leaning generally expand effort and persist longer than students who doubt their capabilities, especially when they encounter difficulties (Schunsk, 2012). Distinguishing between self -efficacy and ability also helps to explain why those students who are cognitively privileged may face difficulties when undertaking the research project. It is important to recognise that self-efficacy does not only apply to students but to teachers as well (Schunks, 2012). Schunks further defines instructional self-efficacy as personal beliefs about one's capabilities to help students learn. Instructional self-efficacy therefore influences teachers' activities, effort, and persistence with students; teachers with low self -efficacy may avoid planning activities they believe exceed their capabilities, not persist with students having difficulties, expend little effort to find materials, and not reteach content in ways students might understand better (Schunks, 2012). Teachers with higher self-efficacy are more apt to develop challenging activities, help students succeed, and persevere with students who have problems learning. These motivational effects on teachers enhance student achievement as teachers with higher self- efficacy also show stronger commitment to their work and address students' needs. In terms of the undergraduate research project, supervisor self-efficacy is therefore a significant predictor of student achievement.

2.4.2 Functionalism theory

The functionalism approach highlighted the correlation of elements with each other and the integrity of the whole with components require the survival of the whole, the efficiency of components, and the participation of each element in the survival of the system construction, as if it were constructed as a machine or mechanical device with

the emergence of functionalism insight. It is claimed that societies are interconnected systems that include a very diverse social structure that contributes to the overall preservation of the system in mutual interactions. On the other hands, Parsons, a constructivist theorist of functionalism, points out in his systemic attitude to the influence of sub-systems on methods and objectives and views the social system consisting of four subsystems:

1. A system or subculture system that combines ideas and thoughts, and beliefs.
2. Social system.
3. Personality system.
4. Environmental system.

If all sub-systems enjoy equilibrium, the social system can function properly and the system's equilibrium requires four major conditions:

1. Relationships between these four subsystems in mutual interaction;
2. Input and output rates;
3. Input and output proportionality;
4. When the three above conditions reach the desired level. A state of equilibrium is put forward in the interrelationship between the systems. According to Parsons, each sub-system or system performs specific functions in the community (Parsons, 1951).

Accordingly, if we consider student research activities as a subsystem, this subsystem is routinely associated with other subsystems in the university and the general system of the society. The positive or negative functioning of this subsystem depends on the coherence and disproportionality of the subsystems and the lack of fitness of other

subsystems of the community. It requires the function of other elements and their impact in relation to other elements and the whole system (Abdollahi, 1993). The result of this discussion is that research activities are formed within the two major cultural and natural systems and grow in the process of work in interaction with other sub-systems and the overall system of research activities. In the functionalism approach, especially structural functionalism, Merton argued that social construction is united with the institution of science in various ways by providing a functional analysis of the dependence of science on social structure (Merton, 1973). This alliance of two independent worlds results in scientific progress and prevents the free and independent development of a science (Ghanei-rad, 2005, p. 35).

Based on this approach, more recent thinkers are more concerned with the contribution of social construction to the advancement of science. McGinn points to the progress of science after dividing the factors influencing science into micro and macro contexts into major underlying sub-systems (including cultural, economic, political, and environmental subsystems) (McGinn, 1991, p. 53). In his view, the cultural sub-system consists of beliefs, ideas, ideals, values, motives, states, orientations and trends, notions of meaning, personality norms, patterns and behaviors, tastes, tastes, styles, dreams, cravings and imaginations. Most of these elements are the major areas of scientific development that Robert McGinn calls them the immediate factors of science and technology. For example, if the motive for outstanding achievement work is dominant in society rather than the motive for obtaining material welfare with the slightest struggle and the shortest legitimate or unlawful means, then the people of this class will provide a more favorable ground for creative and successful scientific progress at the university. However, if the motive is not dominant, the market for unhealthy

competition will flourish and the scientific work will stay out of customers and mighty ones (McGinn, 1991:55).

The social (economic and political) sub-system includes components such as structures, forms and patterns of system group relations (groups, circles, classes) in economic relations, roles and centers, institutions, organizations, hierarchies, power relations and control methods. For example, the political structure and its priorities, and the amount of socio-political support, freedom of action and financial support that university professors and university students receive for research activities affect their success rate and the effectiveness of their activities. Considering the environmental sub-system (Physical-Material), McGinn believes that research activities and scientific growth do not occur in a social and physical vacuum. The environmental context is also in interaction with scientific activities, as proposed in other areas. In brief, the environmental subsystem, building equipment, facilities, construction, processing, and techniques all contribute to scientific development (Razeghi, 1996, p. 48).

According to McGinn (1991), the backgrounds of the cultural and environmental system are combined and lead to a general cultural environment. This cultural-environmental combination includes social, intellectual, personality, behavioral and material sub-systems is having a counter-action with the sub-systems and the general system. The result shows that research activities are developed within sub-systems and the two major cultural and natural systems, and they grow in the interactive process of work of sub-systems with each other and with the overall system of research activities. We will face a reduction in research activities in case of imbalances in these sub-systems (ibid., p. 50). Based on this theoretical approach, structural factors and various subsystems including cultural, economic, political, and environmental subsystems can

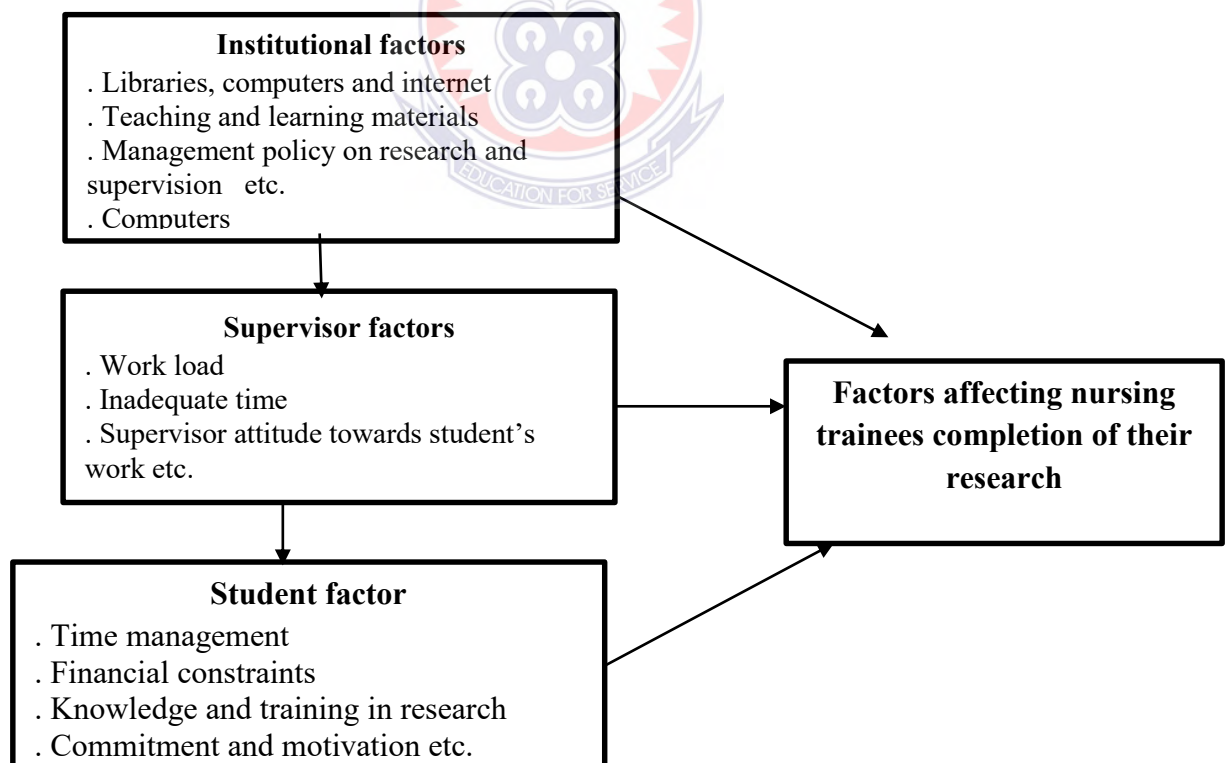
play an important role in the research activities of university graduate students. In Collins's view, interaction rituals are the elements that play an essential role in the production of science and technology. Interactive rituals are interactions that limit individuals in a moral community and creates symbols through which members view their world through them. Individuals attending an interactive event are filled with emotional energy based on the intensity of interaction, and they find passion for moving towards symbolic goals.

The level of formal and informal interactions and communication and the participation and membership in scientific centers and continuous relations inside and outside scientific centers increase the interaction level between individuals and enhances their emotional energy. In fact, the common attention space among individuals increases their collective sense belonging. When students are influenced by the emotional energy of their teachers, the teaching changes from an instrumental relationship between the teacher and the students to an ethical relationship which is not bound to the class context. Collins (2009) believes that scientific success is dependent on continuous personal contacts because scientists can exchange their implicit knowledge during direct interaction. For Collins, face-to-face interaction structures have been the source of emotional energy throughout human life, and the field of science are effective (Collins, 2009). The personal relationship between prominent supervisor and students creates a chain of interactions throughout generations. Therefore, the path of scientific action depends on where individuals are in the social structure of science (interaction network). In the case of this study, the research work is a development process where these students attain certain skills and abilities to prepare them for the world of work. The point is that by their interaction with the various systems available (e.g., supervisor, peers, institution's library), students develop these competencies. Hence, it can be

argued that scientific interactions between supervisor and students are considered as an important source in the research activities of students

2.5 Conceptual framework

A conceptual framework is an assemblage set of research concepts combined with variables together with their logical relationships often represented in the form of diagrams, charts, pictographs, flow-charts, organ gram or mathematical equations. Conceptual research framework unveils studies phenomenon of concepts and variables into simple set of relations that can be easily understood, modeled and studied (DeVellis, 2016). In order to investigate the research problem of this study which is to explore the challenges nursing students face with their research work in the College of Community Health Nursing, Winneba, some variables were examined in the model below;



Source: Author (2021)

Figure 2.1 shows the conceptual framework on challenges students face during their research.

The diagram suggests factors affecting nursing trainees completion of their project work, which are student-related, institution-related and supervisor related (Azila-Gbettor, Mensah & Avorgah, 2015). For a student to finish his/her project work, the main focus is on the institution, the student and the supervisor. When all these variables are correlated positively, it will make the completion of the project work simple and within the time frame set. Each variable must have an impact on the other variable.

2.6 Related previous studies

This section reviews relevant studies related to challenges and difficulties facing students while conducting their research. Several studies have been undertaken to identify the factors that influence the accomplishment and progress of students in research work. These factors have been categorized into three main challenges namely tutor-related, student-related and institution-related. Student-related challenges are factors specific to students that impact either positively or negatively on the conduct and completion of a research work. A number of factors have been identified from the perspective of students. Among them are failure to define a research problem (Pearson & Kayrooz, 2004) which can lead to students frustration (Mapolisa, 2013); lack of training and experience in research methods (Cresswell, 2013); failure to prepare a clear and precise research proposal (Dysthe et al., 2006) and poor time management (Thondhlana et al., 2011). According to Mouton (2001), students should spend at least 20hours per week on their research projects. Other influences include inability to write well-organized, logical and coherent papers, lack of personal drive to complete the project and failure to consult supervisors regularly (Mouton, 2001; Majoni & Chidakwa, 2004); lack of finance, physical space to do uninterrupted writing (Majoni & Chidakwa, 2004); lack of commitment and motivation to do the research, lack of adequate theory in the area being researched on, students' failure to meet regularly with

the supervisor, family problems/commitments (Pearce, 2005; Anderson, Day & Laughlin, 2006) and increasing proportion of the undergraduate student from previously disadvantaged backgrounds with limited experience of library facilities and independent research work. Aside the student-related challenges several other authors suggest that students capacity to conduct research is also constrained by institutional factors. (Mouton, 2001; Nyawaranda, 2005; Pearce, 2005). Sharp and Howard (1996) identified imposing research topics on the student and giving students three to six months within which to submit their research projects as factors militating against timely submission of research projects by students. Other issues include lack of exposure of tutors to research skills, lack of internet services, lack of exposure to computers, research material, electronic database and increasing number of students.

Mapolisa and Mafa (2012) conducted a study to explore challenges that undergraduate students encounter in conducting research at Zimbabwe Open University. Questionnaire, document analysis and focused group discussion were used in their study. The findings of the study showed that students faced three categories of challenges, namely supervisor, relationship with supervisor, and students' challenges. Supervisor's challenges included little or no interest in research, absence of supervisor from work, and not coming to work punctually. Challenges related to students comprised of unavailability of money, problems related to time, library references, and problems connected to family. Moreover, there were also challenges connected to college such as unavailability of the Internet, no library resources, no computer knowledge, no workshop, unavailability of course related to research. All these challenges influenced negatively on students' abilities to conduct research.

In addition, Mahammoda (2016) examined factors that influence the quality of undergraduate research at the University of Bahir Dar in Ethiopia to find out the difficulties faced by teachers in supervising their students' research. The result of the study showed that students faced academic problems which included students' inability to understand the research course, advisors showing no commitment, students not having any analytical skill and low motivation in their topic of research. The finding also showed that students faced some social and personal factors which included little or no relationship between students and supervisors, no skill for time management and lack of financial support. Factors related to the institution involved lack of material and books in the library, students' incapability of conducting research, unavailability of open assessment system of research and little or no research assisted environment. All these factors were the main obstacles and challenges that supervisors faced during research supervision.

Moreover, Safia and Noura (2017) found that Libyan teachers' attitudes towards their students' work were negative due to several factors such as weak background knowledge about research, lack of motivation and lack of resources in the library. Based on the result of this study, it can be inferred that Libyan students encounter a lot of shortcomings in doing research because they are not sufficiently aware of the importance of research and conducting research is regarded as a laborious and daunting task for them. Consequently, those learners will produce a very poor-quality research. To help learners overcome such obstacles, teachers must encourage their students to read widely to enrich their knowledge and students should take intensive writing courses to help them write accurately and correctly. Moreover, learners should also be involved in doing real empirical studies and new and more advanced research courses should be taught in Libyan universities. Furthermore, efforts should be made to promote

the practicality of the steps of research in the classroom. It is recommended that more emphasis should be given to the investigation of difficulties of research writing in the Libyan context to find out the area of research in which students have weaknesses.

Dwihandini, Marhaeni and Suarnajaya (2013) conducted a study to investigate the factors influencing undergraduate students in writing research at the University of Mahasaraswati in Indonesia. The result of the study revealed three main factors that influenced students' writing of research. The first factor is the psychological one that included little or no confidence in choosing a title of the research, having poor prior knowledge of the research topic and research writing. The second factor is the sociocultural factor which involves students' ability to understand and meet the demands and standards of academic communicative practices. The last factor is the linguistic one, which included problems in diminishing grammatical errors and difficulties in knowing when to delete, replace and reorder grammatical items. A study was carried out by Alshehry (2014) to examine the challenges that female undergraduate students and their teachers face at Najran University in Saudi Arabia. The researcher conducted a semi structured interview with 20 students and 4 lecturers. The result of the study revealed that students faced some difficulties including time, looking for resources and creative procedures. The findings of the study also showed that students encounter obstacles in research writing such as having no time to conduct research and issues related to ethics. Students found it hard to decide on appropriate topics with adequate references. Moreover, they had difficulty in finding libraries where they can search for books. Students in some towns had a very weak internet connection and some books that students need were not available in the library.

There have been some worldwide concerns from higher education stakeholders, including external examiners and education quality assurance officers, on the quality of theses and dissertations written and submitted by postgraduate students. Most of the concerns have suggested that the quality of the research reports is low (Wang & Li, 2008; Bitchener & Basturkmen, 2006; Holbrook et al., 2004; Lessing & Schulze, 2003).

Taskeen, Shehzadi, Khan and Saleem (2014), found that the review of external examination reports of four universities in Tanzania revealed that one of the recurring comments by the examiners in the reports was on candidates' weaknesses in presenting different chapters of the theses and dissertations. The weaknesses seemed to be evenly spread into the areas of scope, significance and contribution of the theses and dissertations. Taskeen, Shehzadi, Khan and Saleem (2014), indicated that as members of academic staff in one of the Tanzanian universities, they have been involved in teaching, supervising undergraduate and postgraduate students at both Master's degree and PhD levels, and serving as an external examiners for a good number of students' theses and dissertations in different universities. According to the authors in the process of interacting with the undergraduate and postgraduate students and examining their research reports, it has become evident that the writing of project work, theses and dissertations has not been an easy task for the majority of the students. Therefore, the fact that students have been facing challenges in writing their theses and dissertations is indisputable. In spite of the existence of such challenges, there are limited studies which have been conducted to investigate the nature and scope of this phenomenon. Most of the studies conducted worldwide on postgraduate training have focused on issues of supervision (Mapolisa & Mafa, 2011; Taylor & Beasley, 2005; Murray, 2002; Hartley & Jory, 2000). The limited studies on challenges of writing theses or dissertations (Wang & Li, 2008; Bitchener & Basturkmen, 2006; Lessing & Schulze,

2003) have focused on international students pursuing their studies in either the UK or elsewhere, outside the African continent.

Safia and Noura, (2017) stated that undergraduate training introduces students to coursework and research writing. Whether the students pass their coursework, they ought to conduct research and write a report for submission before the registered degree is awarded. So it is important for students at this level to acquire the basic skills in research work for further studies at the postgraduate. For instance, Brailsford (2010) underscored that a post graduate research report is expected to indicate that the student has demonstrated a mastery of the subject area that has been researched. According to Lessing and Schulze (2003, p. 159), “postgraduate research pose three problem areas, namely the research design, the data collecting and processing and the report writing”. The writing phase of the research report, be it a dissertation or thesis, has been posing a lot of challenges to students. This concurs with what Huang (2007, p. 30) writes that “to the vast majority of students, the dissertation is by far the most challenging piece of academic work”.

The motives for students to pursue postgraduate studies are varied. For instance Ho et al. (2012) found that students held several motives for studying postgraduate studies. The motives could be classified into categories related to qualifications, current career, potential future career, interest, perpetual students and professional and social networks. In the same light, a study by Brailsford (2010) revealed that improving career prospects, personal development, and intrinsic interest in their discipline were the motives cited by most of the study participants. A similar study was also conducted by Teowkul et al., (2009), who found that the majority of postgraduate students enrolled into the programs in order to gain more respect and compensation, and be able to easily

change jobs and make transition into new careers smoothly. However, these motives and aspirations can only be realized upon the successful completion of their studies. One of the requirements for completing the studies is writing a thesis or dissertation.

The available literature indicates that a good number of studies have been conducted worldwide on either postgraduate supervision or thesis writing challenges. For example, Wang and Li (2008) conducted a study to explore the thesis writing experiences of a small group of international postgraduate research students at one Australian university. In this study, the author sought to identify, among others, the challenges the students faced in their thesis writing process. The findings indicated that the students faced a lot of challenges in their thesis writing which might have emanated from pedagogical shortfalls and lack of intercultural sensitivity in the supervision of students.

Another similar study was conducted by Cadman (2016) in which it was revealed that the main cause of the challenges that students faced in writing their theses and dissertations could be attributed to different epistemologies in which the students had been trained and in which their identities as learners were rooted.

Challenges that students face in undergraduate research may lead to non-completion of the research project and studies. Completion of research projects is influenced by many factors though Kangai and Mapolisa (2012) and Hussain (2011) tend to blame poor supervisory for non-completion and non-submission of research. Chabaya, Chiome, and Chabaya (2009) acknowledged that the institution, supervisor and students all contribute to lack of progress in research projects and consequently non-submission of the research project reports. Studies by Kangai and Mapolisa (2012) and also by Chabaya, Chiome and Chabaya (2009) indicated that the quality of the research product

as a result of poor supervision processes was one of the challenges. While quality research supervision is necessary if quality student research output is to be obtained, it is not the only ingredient required particularly undergraduate research as other non-supervisor related challenges lead to poor quality students' research projects. It is therefore in the interest of universities to address the challenges that are faced by undergraduate students in carrying out research projects so as to improve the quality of the research output and also improve their images. Hussain (2011), but challenges that are faced by students during the research project are a possible contribution.

Muhammad Idris in 2013, conducted research entitled "The Difficulty level of students of art education study program of the faculty of arts and design state University of Makassar in Writing Thesis". This study aimed to describe the difficulties students of the Faculty of Arts Education Arts and Design University of Makassar in writing thesis. The population and sample includes all students who have been preparing the thesis in 2012 to 2013. After doing so many steps and processes in this study, he concluded that, students generally experience a relatively high degree of difficulty, experienced difficulties caused by internal factors, and external factors. One of the factor is students difficult choosing a topic and difficult narrowing topic into title.

Furthermore, there is a research which was constructed Ike Trisnawati in 2017, conducted research entitled "The Students' Process in Writing Thesis". This study was aimed to investigate what are the students' process in writing thesis and how is the process of writing thesis based on students score of thesis on eight semester finished the thesis examination in 2016 at Stain Curup. The population were 66 students who have constructing thesis in 2016. The sample were 32 students. After long process and

steps based on the research result researcher can conclude the different process used by students influence the result.

Challenges in undergraduate research supervision arise in providing adequate support to nurture autonomy while recognizing that many students may be unprepared for independent learning (Todd, Bannister & Clegg, 2004). Thus both student and institution factors influence the challenges supervisors face in undergraduate research supervision and this eventually impacts on the student's progress. Supervisors also possess varying research exposures and experiences but to ensure the success of research projects, the quality of supervisions should be given attention (Yeoh & Doan, 2012). A good supervisor should, thus, have a good track record as a scholar, experience in supervisory practices, interest in the research topic, time for supervision and treat the student as a peer and an equal Mouton (2001) as cited in Azila-Gbettor, Mensah and Avorgah (2015). Research project demands a lot from students intellectually in terms of defining a research problem, selecting a topic, preparing a clear and precise research proposal, time management, good verbal and written communication skills, (Bogdan & Bilken, 1992)

Such demands may influence students' self-efficacy and progress as Pearce (2005) notes that some students are scared of carrying out research and that anxiety often affects the students in applying the concepts in practice (Papanastasiou & Zembylas, 2008). These issues are not only rooted in the students' intellectual capabilities but they are also related to institutional issues as in most cases students are rarely prepared earlier on for the research project (Healey, Lannin, Stibb & Derounian, 2013). Student's individual characteristics such as socio-economic status, past performance and personality traits also influence final research project completion (Dupont, Galand

and Nils, 2014). These student characteristics tend to influence access to computers and the technical competence required to access and use ICTs necessary for the successful completion of the research project (Musingafi et al., 2015)

Undergraduate research is affected by institutional factors such as lack of quality faculty, financial support, infrastructure as well as poor governance (Yizengaw, 2008). Universities have however used the large enrolments to generate funds for the institutions (Biggs & Tang, 2007) and have also resorted to admitting less qualified students (Mohamedbhai, 2008). Higher education has therefore ceased to be elitist in nature and so the quality of students that many higher education institutions enroll has changed over time. The environment under which most institutions operate thus provides a cocktail of challenges for both students and lecturers during the research project course.

According to University of Dar es Salaam, (2013) students also encounter some challenges with regard to college such as unavailability of the internet, students are not exposed to computers and there is a lack of materials related to research. When students search for any information, they cannot find anything because of the slow and weak internet connection at home or college which delays the completion of their research. Factors related to the institution involved lack of material and books in the library, students' incapability of conducting research, unavailability of open assessment system of research and little or no research assisted environment.

Azila-Gbettor, Mensah and Avorgah (2015) found that lack of internet services, lack of exposure to computers, research material, electronic database and increasing number of students, giving students three to six months within which to submit their research projects as institutional factors militating against timely submission

of research projects by students. These findings appear to support the commonly held view that higher education institutions in developing countries are inadequately resourced with scholarly material to facilitate teaching and learning.

Research, by its nature, is a critical challenging task requires in depth knowledge of the subject matter, planning, care, and hard work. The study explored various and common challenges/difficulties during writing the research proposals and projects such as: difficulty in deciding the topic for research, lack of good knowledge of the methodology, inability of finding modern, specialized and related references, lack of interest in research, lack of understanding of the subject matter, lack of time, and research guiding.

Manchishi, Ndhlovu and Mwanza (2015) investigated the mistakes and challenges faced by postgraduate students in the school of education. Around 100 participants took part in the study among them 80 students and 20 lecturers at the University of Zambia. The study explored that student's mistakes in writing proposals include broad and unclear topics, failure in methodology, terminologies of research, and problems in reporting the literature review. Most importantly, the challenges faced students in writing research proposals were absence of standard format, lack of knowledge in identifying clearly relevant literature review, lack of good, adequate, and regular feedback from supervisors, lack of materials related to selected topics, and finally the time arranged for writing proposals was not adequate.

Al-Qaderi (2016) also examined the challenges facing undergraduate students in Ibb University, Yemen when they write their graduation research projects. English in Yemen taught as Foreign Language (FL) and it is found that the predominant problems the students encountered were broadly (1) the weak academic level of the students

might in English as medium of instruction and research or in specialization (2) the lack of well-equipped library with open access to e. resources and websites, and (3) students' difficult circumstances and their negative attitudes towards research projects. Kikula and Quorro (2007) and Kombo and Tromp (2011), have consensus to find many crucial problems students face while they are writing their research proposals in Tanzania. Some common mistakes include writing broad titles with no clear and focused content in the introduction. The statements of the problems were not stated clearly to guide the readers and writers were not able to identify the correct research techniques. The literature reviews were not adequate and the research methodology including research questions were not formed well. It is shown that the results were not presented well. Ahmed and Mahboob (2016) presented an indispensable contribution work to analyze the research proposals and challenges faced by a set of 32 postgraduate students in the Department of medicine, Lady Reading Hospital in Pakistan. In this study, they found many challenges including: research methodology, formulating research questions and hypotheses, setting the background and introduction section, gathering information and data collection, objectives and references citation. In this study, the quantitative ground theory approach was implemented. The study concluded that a high rate of graduate students had challenges in preparing research proposals, particularly the lack of proper guiding and supervision, and suggests some points to strengthening supervision and guiding skills.

Many genuine steps and proposed studies have been done towards developing students' skills in formulating their proposals and research projects in effective way in their early stage of writing research proposals/ projects in Saudi Arabia. Alfakih (2017) investigated the impact of a training program on enhancing postgraduate students' research skills in preparing a research proposal. After designing a training program for

improving skills of writing research proposals, questionnaire was used to given for the participants. Pre-test and post-test tool were used to get clear results for examining students skills. The results showed improvement and effectiveness of the training program in enhancing the student's skills and this was clear from the participants' performance between pre-test and post-test. The study recommended that students should acquire specific knowledge to prepare research proposals. The courses designers and supervisors should have practical insight and clear identification of the students' skills and attempt to develop students' research proposals through courses content and activities in research methodology. Many interesting works are available in the literature which show clearly the good steps of writing research proposals/projects and can useful for supervisors and student in the early stage of writing research, Walsh and Wiggins (2003), Kothari (2004), Tayie (2005), Baron (2008), Rumsey (2008), Hinkel (2011), Kombo and Tromp (2011), and Bell (2014).

In recent times, issues surrounding the length of time used by university students in completing their research work both at the postgraduate and undergraduate levels have been a concern for stakeholders in education (Lessing & Schultze, 2012; Amehoe, 2014). For Botha (2016), the high proportions of students who, due to research work frustrations, terminate and drop out of their studies in most Ghanaian universities is worrying. Akparep, Jengre and Amoah (2017) also added that a reasonably large number of undergraduates conducting research as a requirement for their studies are not able to graduate on time such that some stay up to twice the number of years they should have stayed on the programme or even terminate their studies. In the traditional (regular) mode of university education, research work supervision is a good platform for students to conduct their research under a close direction by an on-campus lecturer. It should be pointed out that conducting research work as a distance education student

takes a slightly different form. Students are assigned supervisors and are required to meet their respective supervisors at the study centres (Ankoma-Sey et al., 2019). Ordinarily, meetings are scheduled by both parties (students and supervisors) on weekends during face-to-face sessions. In some instances, supervisors do their supervision through some online means like emails and WhatsApp. After a successful completion of the research work, students present their work and a grade is assigned to them so they are able to graduate (Project Work Unit, College of Distance Education-University of Cape Coast, UCC, 2019). With this approach to research supervision, it is expected that supervisors might have some difficult times during the entire research process due to infrequent face-to-face contacts. It must be acknowledged that even in the regular stream, most students have problems in successfully conducting and writing their research work, as earlier discussed. By extension, it can only be anticipated that the distance education students would also have some challenges, perhaps in different areas.

In their study, Botha (2016) revealed that one of the key reasons for delayed graduation (or even drop out) among postgraduate students in the University of Ghana was the distance from campus and supervisors. Botha (2016) further elaborated that most postgraduate students move away from campus during their second year and as result, they have less frequent contact hours with their supervisors which in turn impedes the progress of the work. This is not so different from what distance education students experience when writing their project work.

In another study, Akparep et al. (2017) investigated the ‘blame-game’ in the delayed completion of students’ research work and the subsequent termination of programmes by some students. A key finding of their research was that university students in Ghana,

especially, at the postgraduate level combine their studies with work. This was found to reduce the time they had to work on their research works resulting in deferred completion and certification by their institution. This element is also found among distance education students who also work and study simultaneously. Most people engaged in fulltime employment prefer distance education irrespective of how busy they are (Ankoma-Sey, Quansah & Aheto, 2018). It is obvious that time would be a concern when they are conducting their research work which is a mandatory requirement. While the conduct of research/project work by distance education students is quintessential, studies have reported other challenges university students, in general, face.

From the standpoint of Mapolisa and Mafa (2016), these challenges emanate from the students themselves, their supervisors and the institutions within which they find themselves. In particular, it has been reported by Pearce (2005) using samples from New York that students are scared of carrying out research works because they see it as high above them. Similarly, Bell (2000) and Nzama (2013) found that supervisors in open and distance learning institutes, in Kenya and the United Kingdom, do not get the chance to be involved in baseline Conducting Research Work as a Requirement for University Undergraduate Studies research which makes them lack the necessary experience to supervise students' work. Other supervisor-related challenges as reported by Mapolisa and Mafa (2016) in Asia include lack of interest in research and delayed feedback from supervisors to students. Other scholars have also reported delays from supervisors and, in some instances, these supervisors were found not to spend quality time with the students they supervise (Nyawaranda, 2005; Shumba, 2004).

Student challenges such as inadequate funding, computer illiteracy, family and time problems also affect the conduct of their research work (Manchishi, Ndhlovu, Phiri & Thomson, 2018; Mapolisa & Mafa, 2016). Again, institutional-related challenges including lack of internet services, the inadequacy of research course content, and inadequate library resources negatively impact the undergraduate students' ability to conduct research (Alsied & Ibrahim, 2017; Mapolisa & Mafa, 2016). Thondhlana, Mawere, and Weda (2011) also reported in Zimbabwe that institutional factors such as lack of research materials and imposing research topics on students affect distance education students' conduct of research work. Besides, there are also few meetings with students, little interest in students' research issue, and little or no direction from the supervisors. These failings have been found as challenges students face in writing their research work/projects (Bell, 2000; Anderson, Day & MacLaughlin, 2006; Mapolisa & Mafa, 2016). Judging from the research literature on the challenges of distance undergraduates in conducting their research/ project work, it is evident that several studies have been conducted in Asia, the United Kingdom and other parts of Africa such as Kenya and Zimbabwe. However, it appears in the empirical literature, especially in Ghana, that the challenges students face in conducting their research work have not been fully explored. A study of this nature is essential, particularly, due to the differences in the way distance education is run in various countries. The way and manner in which distance education, and for that matter research supervision, is carried out in Ghana deviates from other countries where previous studies have been conducted. It is also worthwhile to highlight that research work supervision in distance education is carried out concurrently with weekend face-to-face interactions. This might increase the workload of distance education students, particularly those who are actively employed and married with children- this category of people form a larger

proportion of distance education students' population (Ohene & Essuman, 2014; Agbofa, 2012). It is not surprising that each year the proportion of students who are capable of completing their research on time keeps decreasing. Data from the project work unit of the College of Distance Education, University of Cape Coast, showed that about 41% of the students complete their research work on time, an additional 16% are able to meet deadline extensions, and the rest of them normally have delayed graduation. For some students, they terminate their programme because of their inability to complete their research/project work (Project Work Unit, College of Distance Education- University of Cape Coast, UCC, 2019). This is a concern, and as such, a study of this nature would provide comprehensive knowledge of the situation. In this study, we explore the challenges that affect these students in conducting their research work.

The development of undergraduate distance education students includes attaining competencies and skills in conducting and writing a research report. In addition to this, the frustrations distance education undergraduate students go through in writing their research work also have a significant impact on their psychological state and completion of the programme. A study of this nature is significant with regards to providing some understanding of the challenges of the undergraduate distance education students' face in this stage of their education. The findings of the study would be beneficial to stakeholders in education to enable them to know of the various challenges that undergraduate distance education students face in the conduct of their research. These challenges when known would serve as a policy guideline for stakeholders of education and especially authorities of distance education in the country to devise a means to address these challenges. The findings of the study would also

inform supervisors and institutions of the need to put mechanisms in place to assist students in conducting and facilitating their research projects.

The study of Nnebedum and Obuegbe (2021) showed that students' related factors contribute to the delay of postgraduate students' completion of their thesis/dissertation in federal and state universities, south east, Nigeria. The students' related factors that contribute to the delay of postgraduate students' completion of their thesis/dissertation include poor interest in research works, untimely submission of corrections, difficulty in getting research topic, poor research skills, difficulty in combining work and research, insufficient funds to conduct a research and insufficient access to literature. This agreed with the finding of Akparep et al., (2017) which reported that students contributed almost equally to the delay in the completion of thesis. The finding supported that of Mohammad and Mohammad (2017) which revealed that inadequate knowledge and experience in research, insufficient time and financial resources to conduct a study contribute to challenges in students' thesis/dissertation completion. This also corroborated the finding of Agu and Oluwatayo (2013) which showed that job, family, lack of training; personal and academic problems with supervisor, lack of funds, lack of discipline, inadequate knowledge of the field and the type of research, difficulties in consulting with the supervisor and progress review, academic culture, low self-esteem and knowledge, dislike for the writing process, difficulty in concentrating, and fear of the evaluation of their work are students' related factors that contribute to the delay in completion of their thesis. The possible explanation for the agreement between the findings is that the two studies were conducted in the same country.

For supervisor related challenges, Rajasekar et al. (2013) found that students believed that (1) supervisors provided little/no practical help and (2) supervisors also offered little direction on the work. From the results, one thing is clear; support from the supervisors on what to do and which path to take were deemed by the students as insufficient. Supporting this, Rajasekar et al. (2013) emphasised that although supervisors are obliged to offer professional direction and suggestions to students, this scarcely happens. Rajasekar and colleagues explained that this is due to the workload of supervisors as most of them hardly get time for the students. This was also confirmed by Nyawaranda (2005) who also found that supervisors failed to spend quality time with the students they supervised, thereby, giving them little support. In the view of Alsied and Ibrahim (2017), other supervisors have a negative attitude towards the supervision of students' research work. The study also found that the duration for conducting research work, accessibility of resources, and inadequacy of research resources at the university's library serve as the topmost challenges from the institutions Nyawaranda (2005), for instance, mentioned that the time element in conducting research is particularly essential. And for Shumba (2004) the duration for conducting a research work/project, for many students, is limited due to supervisors and/or students delays in the process. In line with the findings of this study, Alsied and Ibrahim (2017) also revealed that distance education students face challenges such as deficiency of library resources, the inadequacy of the number of research courses, and inaccessibility of internet services on campuses. It must be said that when institutions fail to ensure these basic mechanisms, students will be handicapped in conducting their research.

The available literature indicates that a good number of studies have been conducted worldwide on either undergraduate and postgraduate supervision or project work or

thesis writing challenges. For example, Wang and Li (2008) conducted a study to explore the thesis writing experiences of a small group of international postgraduate research students at one Australian university. In this study, the author sought to identify, among others, the challenges the students faced in their thesis writing process. The findings indicated that the students faced a lot of challenges in their thesis writing which might have emanated from pedagogical shortfalls and lack of intercultural sensitivity in the supervision of students. Another similar study was conducted by Cadman (2016) in which it was revealed that the main cause of the challenges that students faced in writing their theses and dissertations could be attributed to different epistemologies in which the students had been trained and in which their identities as learners were rooted.

On the other hand, Mapolisa and Mafa (2011) conducted a study which sought to explore the experiences of supervisors in the supervision of postgraduate students' research. Among the main findings of the study, it was revealed that most students had limitations in the development of proposals. The problems ranged from not knowing what to include in the proposals to the ethical considerations. However, the study did not investigate challenges the candidates faced in writing their theses or dissertations after conducting their studies. In addition, Bitchener and Basturkmen (2006) conducted a study which, among other issues, focused on student difficulties in writing the discussion of results section (DRS) of the thesis. The findings showed that students did not have an adequate understanding of the function of the discussion results sections of their theses. While Bitchener and Basturkmen's study focused on student difficulties in writing the discussion of results section, the current study explored challenges which students in the College of Community Health Nursing, Winneba faced in writing all sections of their project work.

2.7 Summary of Literature Review

It is worth noting that writing a research project or thesis is not an easy task. It is essentially the product of effective training and proper guidance. As pointed out in the, in the literature review, the candidates students seemed to face numerous challenges in writing their research reports. Most of the observed challenges seemed to have pedagogical orientations, Secondly, the observation could also be attributed to the candidates' poor backgrounds in research report writing skills, which is also attributable to shortfalls in the contents and teaching of research methods courses at undergraduate levels. If the research methods courses were effectively taught, it was likely that some of the observed challenges would have been minimized.

Effective research supervision is relevant to the successful completion of students' research work, yet they find it difficult to comprehend the 'research' teaching-learning process (Mahammuda, 2016). This situation can be linked to various factors such as inexperienced or overburdened supervisors, inadequate preparation of students, poor planning and management, methodological difficulties, personal problems outside the research setting, inadequate financial support for students, poor relationship between the student and supervisor, and an overall ineffective infrastructural support for research work (Thondhlana, Mawere & Weda, 2011).

Students also encounter some challenges with regard to college such as unavailability of the Internet, students are not exposed to computers and there is a lack of materials related to research. Finally, the literature also revealed that some learners encounter hindrances with their advisor when writing their research. Some of these obstacles include: supervisors do not see their students regularly, the supervisors are not interested in their students, they do not give so much guidance and direction to their

students, they do not return the students' work on time and they do not give the students much practical help concerning the gathering information from different sources.



CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

The chapter presents the various techniques used in collecting and analysing data in a study. These include research paradigm, research approach, research design, population, sample and sampling techniques, research instruments, validity of research instrument, reliability of research instrument, trustworthiness of the study, data collection procedures, data collection procedures and ethical considerations.

3.1 Research paradigm

A research paradigm describes the assumptions and beliefs with regards to how the world is perceived, and becomes the theoretical framework that guides the conduct of the researcher (DeVellis, 2016). An important academic research of this nature deserves to lay claim to theoretical frameworks and philosophical perspectives regarding knowledge on the assumption on how we will study what we intend to learn as paradigm embedded in the research methodology (Goldkuhl, 2012). The philosophical and theoretical perspectives or assumptions underpinning this study was interpretative worldview or constructivist epistemology which argues that, meaning is constructed not discovered, so subject construct their own meaning (Kusi, 2012). This is linked to the nominalist ontological position which posits that knowledge of the world is socially constructed, understood and interpreted by the individual participants based on their experiences of the world in which they live and work (Kusi, 2012). Interpretive paradigm is chosen because the purpose of the study is to explore a phenomenon. Interpretive research acknowledges the feelings, experiences and viewpoints of the researched as data (Kusi, 2012). According to Sureepong (2010), the

interpretivist uses open-ended research questions and also focus on qualitative data, from which the researcher will interpret meanings.

Interpretive paradigm was chosen for this particular study for three reasons. Interpretive paradigm allows the researcher to access the experiences and viewpoints of the research participants, recognizes the role of the researcher and the research participants in knowledge construction and is useful in an attempt to understand a phenomenon in all its complexity in a particular socio-cultural context (Kusi, 2012). It also said that the interpretivist studies often use small numbers of participants. This is because the purpose is not to generalize, but to explore the meaning which the participant place on the social situation under investigation. The approach is interested in understanding the view of the participants, rather than predicting what the individual will say. This approach does not consider the knowledge generated from the study to be permitted but accepts it as relative to the time, context or culture in which the study is conducted. This approach also allows the researcher to interact more with the participants, making the researcher active in the research. The study adopted interpretive research paradigm to investigate factors affecting nursing trainees' project work completion in the College of Community Health Nursing, Winneba

3.2 Research approach

According to Boateng (2014), researchers are free to choose between qualitative, quantitative and mixed method for their study. This indicates that there are three different kinds of research methods available for a researcher to choose for a problem under study. Undoubtedly, the selected method should be appropriate for the design of the study. The study adopted a qualitative research approach.

Qualitative research deals with the exploratory field visits focusing on in-depth understanding of the social world through detail examination of participants' perceptions and how they subjectively make sense of their contextual experiences (Bryman, 2012). The aim of qualitative research is to collect naturally occurring data by entering the life world of the participants (Johnson & Christiansen, 2012). In such research, the researcher becomes immersed in the everyday life of the setting chosen for the study, and seeks participants' perspectives and meanings through ongoing interaction (Creswell, 2013; Cohen, Manion & Morison, 2011).

More so, qualitative approach helped the researcher explore participants' different perceptions and understanding of the problem under study (Ziebland & McPherson, 2006). The nature of the questions gave the participants the ability to evoke responses that are rich in explanatory in nature, unanticipated by the researcher. This approach also helped the researcher to get a better understanding of the issues being explored, through first-hand experience, truthful reporting and quotations of actual conservation, it also helps to understand how the participant drive meaning from their surrounding and how their meaning influences their behavior. In addition, Creswell (2012) opines that a qualitative research method is used in exploring people's lives, lived experiences, behaviors, emotions and feelings as well as organizational functioning, social movement, cultural phenomena and interactions between nations. The researcher conducted interviews for 10 students at College of Community Health Nursing to ascertain their views about factors affecting their project work completion in the College of Community Health Nursing, Winneba.

3.3 Research design

According to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2012), a research design is a plan or guide for data collection and interpretation, with sets of rules that enable the researcher to conceptualize and observe the problem under study. A phenomenological study was used to explore factors affecting nursing trainees' project work completion in the College of Community Health Nursing, Winneba

Phenomenology, broadly defined for the purpose of encompassing the varied phenomenologies, is the study of or inquiry into how a person's conscious experience with things—with phenomena—provides deeper and more truthful understandings of those things and ultimately of the self and of the world. The basic unit of analysis in phenomenology is phenomena, not people (Shaduk, 2018). The purpose of the phenomenological approach is to illuminate the specific, to identify phenomena through how they are perceived by the actors in a situation Lester (1999).

The considerations that warranted the adoption of this design include the nature of the research questions, the data required to answer them and the philosophical assumptions underlying the entire research.

Phenomenology, then, is a design to researching and understanding more deeply our everyday lived experiences, a method of taking what is commonplace and ordinary and looking at it so that it becomes new, unique, and extraordinary Shaduk (2018).

Phenomenological research that focuses on mining lived experiences results in a more truthful way of being in and with the world Shaduk (2018). In the human sphere this normally translates into gathering 'deep' information and perceptions through inductive, qualitative methods such as interviews, discussions and participant observation, and

representing it from the perspective of the research participant(s) Lester (1999). Phenomenological methods are particularly effective at bringing to the fore the experiences and perceptions of individuals from their own perspectives, and therefore at challenging structural or normative assumptions. Adding an interpretive dimension to phenomenological research, enabling it to be used as the basis for practical theory, allows it to inform, support or challenge policy and action Lester (1999). The data collected in a qualitative study includes more than words; attitudes, feelings, vocal and facial expressions, and other behaviors are also involved.

3.4 Research Setting

The research was carried out at the College of Community Health Nursing, which is a public tertiary health institution located at the Effutu Municipal District in the Central Region, Ghana. Originally it was formerly part of the then larger Awutu/ Effutu/ Senya District in 1988, until the southwest part of the district was spilt off by a decree of president John Agyekum Kufuor on 29th February, 2008 to create Awutu Senya District; thus the remaining part was elevated to municipal district assembly status to become Effutu District in that same year. The municipality is located in the southeast part of Central Region and has Winneba as its capital town.

College of Community Health Nursing is situated at Low-cost, a suburb of Winneba, and by the Trauma and Specialist hospital which happens to be the Regional hospital.

The school started in the year 1980 as Community Health Nursing Training School, but was made a college in 2020. The college offers both Certificate and Diploma courses in Community health nursing, and also has Information Technology added to its curriculum. Standard of education at the college is very high and practical oriented.

3.5 Population of the study

The population includes all elements that meet certain criteria for inclusion in a study (Berg & Lune, 2012). Kusi (2012) defines population as a group of individuals or people with the same characteristics and in whom the researcher is interested. According to (Pandey & Pandey, 2015), the target population defines those units to which the findings of a study are meant to apply. In addition, Pandey and Pandey (2015), posits that the target population of a study is the entire set of subjects or population for which the study is to be used to make inferences. The target population for this study consists of all nursing students at the College of Community Health Nursing in Winneba. The accessible population for this study consists of all final year nursing students who are undertaking their research project work. The accessible population is estimated at 182 students.

3.5 Sample size and sampling techniques

Babbie (2012, p. 87) defined a sample as “a small subset of a larger population whose selection is based on the knowledge of the elements of a population and the research purpose” (p.183). Creswell and Creswell (2018) refer to sample as the population that is selected for the investigation. With this sampling technique, the final year students were purposively selected. Malterud et al. (2016), explain that a study aiming at exploring a phenomenon is best achieved using a sample size of 5-20 participants. In addition, Rallis and Rossman (2014) is of the view that with a qualitative research, a sample as small as 5 and as large as 30 can be used. Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, (2012) asserted that a sample of 5-10 interviewees for qualitative studies may be sufficient to enable development of meaningful themes and useful interpretations. Creswell and Creswell, (2018) also suggested that a range of eight and fifteen respondents. These assertions are premised on the claim that in qualitative studies,

samples are typically small and based on information needs (Yakubu, 2015). In line with the above assertions, a sub-sample of ten (10) final year nursing students writing their project work were sampled through purposive sampling for interview.

Hesse-Biber and Johnson (2015) that purposive sampling is a judgmental sampling that involves the conscious selection by the researcher of certain participants to include in the study. Purposive sampling is more appropriate for qualitative study as it allows the researcher to sample participants who are more knowledgeable about the phenomenon under study (Creswell, 2013). According to Tashakkori, Johnson and Teddlie (2021) purposive sampling is typically used in qualitative study, this method allows the researcher to carefully select the sample based on the purpose of the study with the expectation that each participant will provide unique and rich information which are of value to the study. Again, purposive sampling is where a researcher selects a sample based on a purpose, hence the name, and participants are selected according to the needs of the study, it can also be called deliberate sampling. Purposive sampling was used to select ten (10) final year nursing students who are writing their project work.

3.6 Research Instrument

Research instruments are tools used to collect data to answer the research questions (Zohrabi, 2013). The instrument used in the data collection was interview guide. The researcher designed an interview guide to investigate College of Community Health Nursing students views about the challenges they face with their research project work Ravitch and Riggan (2017) affirm that, when assessing the scope of the guide, it is important to review whether it allows respondents to give a full and coherent account of the central issues and incorporate issues they think are important. The interview guide was in four sections. Section one sought information institutional–related factors

contributing to nursing students' inability to complete their research work. Section two focused on student-related factors contributing to nursing students' inability to complete their research work. Section three touched on supervision-related factors contributing to nursing students' inability to complete their research work and finally section four aimed at identifying ways of solving the challenges nursing students face concerning their research work (see Appendix A).

The interview allowed for cross-examining students' views they expressed. According to DeVellis, (2016) interviews are more like conversations than formal predetermined response categories, where the researcher explores a few general topics to aid the participants in expressing their views but respects the participant's response. The interview method was chosen because it afforded the researcher the opportunity to moderate the proceedings and the participants amongst themselves. This gave the researcher better insight into the thoughts of the students as it could reveal respondents' body language and how they answered certain questions. This allowed for merging the views from the participants with the researcher being less predominant (Cohen et al., 2011).

3.7 Sources of data

Primary and secondary sources of data were collected and used for this study. Primary data refers to data observed or collected directly from firsthand experience (Johnson & Christiansen, 2012). For the purpose of this research, primary data is obtained through unstructured interview guides.

Secondary data refers to existing data used by the researcher in answering his/her research questions (Joppe, 2000). For the purpose of this research, previous research materials available on similar topics are relied upon. These serve as an input into the

study. Other forms of gathering secondary data are visiting the World Wide Web, both published and unpublished journals, periodicals, theses, dissertations etc. Besides, articles, books, and internet sources were used to review literature.

3.8 Positionality

The researcher is an insider, within the setting of the study. However, the researcher remained objective to data gathering and data analysis. Results were also not manipulated to suit the researcher.

3.8.1 Trustworthiness of the interview data

Guba and Lincoln (1985) were of the opinion that the words reliability and validity can be replaced with the term trustworthiness when conducting qualitative research. Morse, Barrett, Mayan, Olson and Spires (2002) also opined that steps to ensure rigor in a qualitative study should be carried out during the research process, and outlined the following strategies, among others: ensuring methodological coherence, researcher responsiveness, ensuring appropriateness of sample, and active analytical stance. McMillan and Schumacher (2010) described validity in qualitative research as the extent to which interpretations of data collected have the same meaning for the researcher and participants.

Qualitative research is trustworthy when it accurately represents the experiences of the study participants (Merriam, 2009). To ensure trustworthiness in this study the researcher adhered to the constructs proposed by Guba (1981), namely credibility, dependability, transferability and conformability, which some authors (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Merriam, 2009; Creswell & Creswell, 2017) opined correspond to

internal validity, external validity, reliability and objectivity respectively, in quantitative research. The manner of doing this is discussed next.

3.8.2 Credibility

Credibility in qualitative research deals with the extent to which the findings from the study measure reality (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). According to Kusi (2012), it implied “how we ensure rigour in the research process and how we communicate to others that we have done so” (p. 95). In essence, it deals with the methods of ensuring that the researcher has analysed the data correctly. Strategies to ensure this, as proposed by Guba and Lincoln (1985) and buttressed by Yin, (2011) include:

1. Prior familiarisation with participants to gain adequate understanding and build a relationship of trust
2. Ensuring honesty in the reports of participants by informing them of their right to voluntary participation and withdrawal. This ensures that only those genuinely interested are involved, thus guaranteeing accuracy of their responses
3. Member checking with participants, by returning the data to them after analysis
4. Peer checking, which involves a panel of experts or experienced colleagues reviewing or reanalysing the data
5. Regular debriefing sessions between the researcher and the supervisor. Through such discussions the researcher is kept abreast of impending flaws and notified when his/her biases begin to creep into the data
6. The degree of congruence between findings from previous studies with similar focus and the present one.

Based on these, to ensure credibility, the researcher became familiar with the informants by building a rapport with them at the beginning of each interview session

and presented to them an informed consent form which explained in detail the essence of the study and their right to voluntary participation and withdrawal. The researcher also included direct quotations from the text in the presentation of the findings, which according to Kusi (2012) also reflected the credibility of a study. Also, throughout the period of the study there were regular discussions between the researcher and the research supervisor, and during these sessions, we deliberated on the best approach and methodology for the study as well as the instruments for data collection. At the end of the transcription process, the data also presented to the research supervisor for him to add his expert knowledge to it.

Cropley (2019) assert that the results of qualitative research are credible or believable from the perspective of the participant in the research. As qualitative research explores people's perceptions, experiences, feelings and beliefs, and it is believed that the respondents are the best judge of whether or not the research findings have been able to reflect their opinions and feelings accurately.

Creswell (2013) posits that respondent validation is where the result of the research is submitted to the respondents for confirmation as a means of establishing credibility. Bryman (2012) also holds the view that the establishment of credibility of findings demands that the research is carried out according to good practice and by submitting it to the social world that were studied for confirmation that the researcher understood that social order correctly. Guba and Lincoln (as cited in Kumar, 2016) suggested that prolonged engagement is a technique to ensure credible and interpretation of findings. To achieve credibility in this study, the researcher engaged in prolonged engagement by spending 2 months in the field collecting data. Also, the researcher took the research findings to those who participated in the research for confirmation, congruence,

validation and approval. It is noted that the higher the agreement of the respondents with the findings, the higher the validity of the study (Kumar, 2014).

3.8.3 Dependability

Dependability corresponds to reliability of findings in qualitative research (Kusi, 2012). According to Guba and Lincoln (1985), dependability “seeks means for taking into account both factors of instability and factors of phenomenal or design induced changes”; this means taking note of the changes in data and those made by the researcher during the process of data analysis (p. 299). In other words, it means description of the research process, to allow for replication (Creswell and Creswell, 2017), even though the intent is not to generate the same results (Tom, 2017). Ensuring dependability of the study implies that the researcher would take cognisance of the extent to which necessary research ethics and practices are observed (Tom, 2017).

To ensure dependability, interpretive researchers must provide adequate details about their phenomenon of interest and the social context in which it is embedded in order to allow readers to independently authenticate their interpretive inferences (Bhattacharjee, 2012).

In this study, dependability was established through the establishment of appropriate enquiry decision. This included review of interviewer bias to resist early closure and at the same time prevent the provision of unreliable data due to boredom on the part of the respondents because of prolonged interview sessions. In addition, information from literature assisted the researcher to develop questions that elicit appropriate responses to answer the research questions that are formulated to guide the study. There was a systematic data collection procedure that reached the point of saturation, the extensive documentation of the data (transcriptions of interview narratives), methods and

decisions in the memo are steps in proving the dependability of the data. Thesis supervisors assessed the work to find out whether or not the findings, interpretations and conclusions are supported by the data.

Additionally to achieve dependability for the study, the researcher needs to provide detailed description of the research process vis-à-vis the design, data gathering and methods used (Tom, 2017). In view of this, the researcher planned in clear terms the instruments to be used for data collection, and the method and general design for the study at the beginning of this chapter. To ensure research ethics, the researcher obtained clearance for the study from the Head of Educational Administration and Management Department of University of Education, Winneba, as well as permission from the Principal of College of Community Health, Winneba; these gave the researcher a nod to proceed with the research and access to the college.

3.8.4 Transferability

Transferability is equivalent to generalizability of findings in qualitative study (Kusi, 2012). This refers to the degree to which the results of qualitative research can be generalized or transferred to other contexts (Bhattacharjee, 2012). According to Creswell and Creswell (2017), this implied the extent to which the findings from a particular study can be applied to wider situations. DeVellis (2016) however, contended that since qualitative studies consider only a small population, it is difficult to say that their findings can be applied to wider situations. Berg and Lune (2012) posited that the findings can only be applied when the situations and populations are considered to be similar to those used in the study. To determine this, Yin (2011) suggested that the researcher provided adequate information on the general design and approach of the research, so as to guide readers to make informed decisions on its

transference. In line with this, Yakubu (2015) proposed that there should be a clear description of the context, sample and sampling procedure, processes of data collection and analysis, as well as explicit and intense presentation of findings of the research, which may be done by way of inserting direct quotations from the transcribed data into the research report.

The researcher also achieved transferability in this study by extensively and thoroughly describing the process that was adopted for others to follow and replicate. Thus, the researcher will keep all relevant information and documents regarding the study. Also, in this study, the research context, and methodological processes was provided. These could enable other researchers to apply the findings of this study to similar settings of their choice thereby regarding the findings in this study as answers in their chosen contexts. Furthermore, there was adequate background information about the respondents; the research context and setting that allow others to assess how transferrable the finding is. The researcher kept accurate record of all the activities while carrying out the study. These include the raw data (transcripts of interviews) as well as details of the data analysis.

In view of this, earlier in the chapter, the researcher provided details of the context, sample, sampling technique, data collection and analysis of the study, which made it easy for the reader to decide on its transferability. Also, the researcher included direct quotes from the transcribed text, so as to add to the richness of the findings that was presented. While the researcher stated as part of the limitations of the study that its findings may not be generalized to other situations, as suggested by Creswell and Creswell (2017), the steps as proposed guided the reader to determine the transferability or otherwise of the study.

3.8.5 Conformability

Conformability of qualitative research means ensuring that the findings reflect the experiences of the participants and not the prejudices or bias of the researcher (Berg & Lune, 2012). In other words, findings should represent, as far as is (humanly) possible, the situation being researched rather than the beliefs, pet theories, or biases of the researcher (Kusi, 2012). This construct assumes that the strength of the research findings lie in the ability of the researcher to link together the data, process of analysis and findings in such a way that gives room for confirmation of the accuracy of findings (Merriam, 2009). Thus, in ensuring conformability:

1. Merriam, (2009) suggested the use of a variety of data collection sources, methods and perceptions (triangulation)
2. The research report should provide a justification for the chosen method, assumptions and approach used, as well as a statement of the weaknesses of such techniques (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). In addition, the researcher should adopt reflexivity, by stating the assumptions that undergird the framing of the research questions and presentation of findings (Merriam, 2009)
3. The researcher should provide an audit trail by documenting and providing step-by-step details of the entire research process (Guba, 1981).

Going by these suggestions, the researcher ensured that she puts aside her opinion in the analysis of the data by reading the transcripts over and over again, such that the researcher became familiar with the ideas therein, which was evident in the description of the data analysis process, which was presented in the report. Also, the researcher ensured that it that she provided a justification for the methodology used for the study by referencing appropriate authors and gave a clear description of the manner in which the data was collected and analyzed, such that the reader finds it easy to decide on the

acceptability of the findings. Furthermore, since interpretive research rejects the notion of an objective reality, conformability is demonstrated in terms of "inter-subjectivity", i.e., if the study's participants agree with the inferences derived by the researcher. In order to establish conformability, the researcher after coding and transcribing the audiotapes, interview questions, and all other relevant information and documents regarding the study, it was given back to the participants to confirm the responses. The researcher effected changes where necessary and give the transcribed data back to the participants again for them to authenticate the inferences derived by the researcher. The researcher then took the final transcribed data from the participants as a true record of what the respondents factually provided.

3.9 Data Collection Procedures

An introductory letter was obtained from the University of Education, Winneba to seek permission from the principal of college and accordingly inform selected students for their cooperation and assistance during the data collection. The data was personally collected by the researcher. In the process, the researcher explained verbally the purpose of the study and the demand of each section of the interview.

Interviews were conducted for 10 students. The sample for the interviews were based on data saturation. Face-to-face interviews were used and this allowed the researcher to listen empathetically to the views of the interviewees and establish rapport. The advantage of individual face-to-face interviews over group interviews is that in group interviews, participants may be influenced by others and may feel the need to conform. In group interviews it is not always possible to observe confidentiality or prevent the adverse effects that group participation may have on certain individuals.

During the interview participants were given ample time to respond to the questions. Each interview lasted between 30 - 40 minutes. The researcher used two month to interview the participants of the study. There was no time table for interviewing the participants each day. The researcher met the participants depending on their schedules. The sessions were audio-taped with a recording device and later transcribed for data analysis. This helped to maintain the original data for analysis.

3.10 Data Analysis Procedures

The interview data which were collected through interview was analyzed manually through the thematic approach. Creswell and Creswell (2018), explains that, thematic analysis involves the search for and identification of common trends that extend throughout an entire interview or set of interviews. Themes are usually quite abstract and therefore difficult to identify. Often the theme does not immediately jump out of the interview but may be more apparent if the researcher steps back and considers. The researcher transcribed the tape-recorded interviews, then read and reread the interviews in their entirety, reflecting on the interviews as a whole. Then, the researcher summarized the interviews, keeping in mind that more than one theme might exist in a set of interviews. Again, recorded interviews with related items or ideas were grouped under the same theme. Once identified, the themes that appeared to be significant and concepts linking substantial portions of the interviews were written down and entered on computer (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Data analysis was done thematically with the aid of Atlas ti 7.5.18 version, qualitative research data analysis software and described them in line with the sub-themes to correspond with the research questions posed for the study. The results of the analysis evidently form the basis of the discussion of findings, conclusion and recommendations.

3.11 Ethical considerations

Ethical issues arise from the kinds of problems that social scientists investigate and the methods used to obtain valid and reliable data. Ethical considerations were pertinent to this study because of the nature of the problem, the methods of data collection and the kind of persons serving as research participants. While carrying out this study, ethical procedures were followed suggested by Bryman (2012).

Bryman (2012) advised that, researchers should ensure that participants are protected from any physical or psychological harm that may arise from research procedures. In line with international best practices in education, the researcher revealed the intentions of the study to the participants and sought informed consent for their participation. The researcher verbally assured the participants of anonymity of their identities and confidentiality of the data that would be obtained from them. The researcher also promised to assign them pseudonyms during the writing of the report. All the participants to be interviewed agreed before the commencement of the study. In addition, with regard to the ethical issue of confidentiality, the researcher stored all information from the study safely. Hard copies were locked in a cabinet and soft copies stored in files protected with a password, which was only accessible to just the researcher. Plagiarism is defined as the verbatim copying, near-verbatim coping, or paraphrasing portions of another person's published document without proper acknowledgement (Fetters, 2020). All relevant journal articles and books from which secondary information was drawn shall be properly cited. In respect to this, the researcher will make use of in-text citations and references in the study to avoid any form of plagiarism.

3.12 Chapter summary

In summary, this chapter extensively talked about how the study was conducted. Thus, how data was collected on the field, analyzed and interpreted. It presented researchers philosophical assumptions, research approach, research paradigm, research design, population, sample and sampling techniques, instruments, sources of information, data trustworthiness and ethical issues.



CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the results from the analysis of the data collected during the field work. It focuses on presentation and discussion of the findings from data gathered from interviews conducted. The purpose of this section was to lay bare the factors affecting nursing trainees' project work completion in the College of Community Health Nursing, Winneba, that is institutional-related factors contributing to nursing students' inability to complete their research work, student-related factors contributing to nursing trainees' inability to complete their research work, supervision-related factors contributing to nursing students' inability to complete their research work and to alleviate the challenges nursing students face concerning their research work.

Ten students from the College of Community Health Nursing, Winneba were involved in the study. The researcher therefore presents the results of the study as derived from the themes that emerged from the data and research questions.

4.1 Analysis of interview data

The interview data were transcribed based on the code for each research interview. The thematic contents were formulated based on the research questions and the data gathered were grouped together and analyzed under each thematic content and then discussed with the findings of other related studies. Participants' verbatim responses were also used where necessary. Participants were also assured of protection of their identity so that they remained anonymous. In attributing quotations to the interviewees, the participants were given the serial numbers R1 – R10 (where R stands for Respondent).

4.1.1 Research question one

What are the institutional–related factors contributing to nursing students’ inability to complete their research work?

The first question sought to find out from the study participants, the institutional–related factors contributing to nursing students’ inability to complete their research work. The theme discussed below assisted to find answers to this question.

It was discovered through the respondents’ comments that ill-equipped libraries on campus, inadequate computer and poor Internet accessibility at the computer labs, school calendar instability and lack of transparency in assessment of project work were the key institutional–related factors contributing to nursing students’ inability to complete their research work.

a. Ill-equipped libraries on campus

The following explanations were given by some respondents to back this proclamation.

For example, one respondent said:

In my opinion I think the college is not having a well-equipped library so that students will get an upgraded books to complete their research work. When the research is done some information are gathered and then such places one of them is the library. So if the college is not having a well-equipped library with upgraded books that will aid the research work, it will hinder the students completing on time. [R: 1].

Further, respondent 5 said:

We will be in class for the whole day from morning to 5:00 clock in the evening. By the time you will close, the library too they have close. Maybe it is the time you will close will be the time that you will have enough time for yourself and go and conduct certain research at the library. Then they too they will close around that time so you will not get the access to go to the place to use or select the required books that will help you get certain information that you will need. [R: 5].

Besides, one respondent said:

The way the books have been arranged too is a problem. For instance the time that you spend to go through all the books one by one for you to get a particular book that you want, to help me for my research too is another problem. The research books are not much [R: 3].

Emphatically, respondent 7 said: the college libraries are not well equipped with new upgraded textbooks to facilitate their project research.” [R: 7].

Again, respondent 2 said:

My challenge has to do with my department library. It does not merit the status of a department library. I always complain to the librarian and some tutors as well. The books are out-dated. Sometimes my friends and I go to the faulty library at north campus UEW [R: 2].

Moreover, one respondent said:

Non-availability of some recommended research books at the library is one of the challenges confronting we the students. Coming by quality research in education books is not an easy task. The college need funds to acquire the needed books and materials for the library. Some of the books are really old we need current ones [R: 9].

It is evident from the comments given by these respondents that their libraries are not well equipped. According to the students, some books that they need to help them gather information for their research work are not available at the library. They cannot access the library after 5pm. A few of them said they resort to the faulty library at north campus University of Education, Winneba. According to Adeyemi (2010) a well-equipped library provides assortment of material resources like books, journals and CD

ROM. Thus, the library is a reference source for any school and a point of individual studies in schools where relevant information from primary and secondary sources can be extracted. Adequacy of library resources and their usage by students will help students to complete the project work on time. It is quite unfortunate that the students do not have access to adequate library resources at the college.

Furthermore, the findings support that of Azila-Gbetteh, Mensah and Avorgah, (2015) who are the view that lack of material and books in the library is one of the institution factors which delays the completion of their research.

b. Inadequate computer and poor internet accessibility at the computer labs

Comments from respondents also suggest that there are inadequate computer and poor internet accessibility at the computer labs. The following declarations were made by some respondents to support this claim.

For example, one respondent said: students need more computers and high speed internet to aid in project research which most institutions lack. [R: 1].

Moreover, respondent 3 said:

“The computer lab is not all the time that you are permitted to be there like on campus yet you pay for it but you can just walk in and say I want to use the computer for my research or search certain information’s on the net or something. Unless maybe a particular tutor want you to go and meet there for your lectures that is when you are permitted to go there or you are going there to have your exams but it is not a walk in place that you can just walk in anytime and say I want to use the computer for my research as at when you want to.” [R: 3].

Also, respondent 2 said: “We lack resources like computer labs with available internet in all the labs. Those that have internet there is poor connectivity. Sometimes I even use the internet on my phone. It is even faster than that of the lab [R: 2].

As well, respondent 5 said:

I have a problem with my laptop so I rely on our computer lab. Hmm trust me some of the computers are not working and as for the internet it is on and off and this negatively affects my project work [R: 5].

Additionally, respondent 10 said:

The number of final year students who are writing their projects are over 250 and the colleges' computer lab capacity is about 60. So most of the time the place is always full, some students complain about this situation but management is doing little to solve the problem [R: 10].

In fact, these data from respondents attest to the fact that there are inadequate computer and poor internet accessibility at the College's computer labs. Students require good internet connectivity and accessibility to be able to search for literature and other related information for their project work. If students do not have access to good internet it become difficult for them to gather information from different sources to complete their work on time. Concerning the gathering information from different sources, Adeuji (2017) found that some students face some difficulties. One of these challenges is that the Internet is not always accessible to some students. When the students need some sources for the research he/she usually uses the Internet, but this is not the case for all students. When students search for any information, they cannot find anything because of the slow and weak internet connection at home or college which delays the completion of their research.

The findings run parallel with Heyneman's (2014) findings. In his assessment students also encounter some challenges with regard to college such as unavailability of the internet, students are not exposed to computers and there is a lack of materials related to research. When students search for any information, they cannot find anything because of the slow and weak internet connection at home or college which delays the completion of their research.

c. School calendar instability

Views of respondents also revealed that unstable school calendar was a challenge to the successful completion students' project work. The subsequent statements were made by some respondents. For example, one respondent said: changes in research submission dates are sometimes not consistent which delays the project work making it difficult to meet the dead line." [R: 5].

Again, one respondent said:

The time frame given to the student at times is limited. The period that is given to the students is less than six (6) months ultimately but you will see that at times they will retract their words and start demanding for the research work unexpectedly. So some of the students will not even be done with their project work because the research takes time so time bound too is another problem [R: 4].

Moreover, respondent 3 also said:

Students do not get ample time to do the project work. They will do project work in addition to their academic work, research is also part of academic. You are doing academic work and also doing research work too at the same time. So at times the time given to students to finish their work is not enough. [R: 3].

Also, one respondent said: last semester for instance our exams delayed and you cannot concentrate on project work at the expense of exams. if we had finished the exams on time, I would have finish my project work too on time [R: 9].

It is clearly visible from these comments that interruption on the school calendar delayed the successful completion students' project work. There are instances where tutors go on strike and one can tell it ripple effects on the academic calendar. In such instance, tutors may not be available to help assess students' project work.

d. Lack of transparency in assessment of project work

Respondents indicated that lack of transparency in assessment of project work in the college was one of the institutional-related factors contributing to nursing students' inability to complete their research work. For example, one respondent said:

Apart from your supervisor no one else can assess your project work. Whatever your supervisor says is final. This had become a challenge since you can have a very difficult supervisor who will not be pleased with whatever you do[R: 7].

Further, respondent 3 said:

My friend was frustrated by her supervisor to the extent that she almost reported him to administration. I think we should not be supervised by only one tutor. There should be an open system so that your fate will not lie in the hands of only one supervisor [R: 3].

More so, one respondent said:

Personally my tutor wanted to have an affair with me when I came first year which I did not agree but unfortunately during my final year, I was assigned to him as my supervisor and that was when he started making the advances again. It was very difficult but God saw me through [R: 4].

Respondent 1 also said:

Some of the male tutors take advantage of their female students when they are supervising them. I know a friend who was sleeping with her supervisor and you should see the kind of work she did but the supervisor signed the work for her. I think the college should have a system where after the student has finished his or her work, a different tutor should also go through the work [R: 1].

It could be realized from these comments that some of the female students at the college were have personal challenges with their supervisors. Some were frustrated by their supervisors. The third respondent was of the view that students should not be supervised by only one supervisor. The first respondent disclosed her friend was sleeping with her supervisor and so even though her work was nothing to write home about her supervisor appended his signature to it.

The finding corroborates with University of Dar es Salaam (2013) study that found that unavailability of open assessment system of research and little or no research assisted environment as institutional factors militating against timely submission of research projects by students.

4.1.2 Research Question Two

What are the student–related factors contributing to nursing students’ inability to complete their research work?

The second research question had the primary intents of identifying student–related factors contributing to nursing students’ inability to complete their research work. It emerged from the study that poor time management, inadequate finance, lack of commitment and motivation to do the research, lack of training and experience in research methods and failure to meet regularly with the supervisor.

a. Poor time management

It was revealed through the respondents’ comments that poor time management contributed to students’ inability to complete their research work on time. The succeeding clarifications were given by some respondents to affirm this assertion.

One respondent said:

At times time management, that one is very stressful because maybe when you contact the person on the time that you have to meet with the person and conduct the interview and find out certain things, maybe the person wouldn’t be around and the time that the person will be around too you wouldn’t be around. So the time management too is another problem on its own. [R:1].

Respondent 2 emphatically said: Most students lack the ability to manage their time calendar which tends to affect project submission deadline. Research itself is difficult and requires a lot of time to sit up [R: 2].

One other respondent also said: I think time is another challenge. Time in the sense that we are given a time frame to complete our project work which is about less than six month and four month is already gone and I have not even completed my chapter 3. [R: 6].

Respondent 4 further said: time is not on my side at all, I am far behind I will have to spend up. I have to apportion my time for work and family well otherwise I will not be able to finish my work” [R: 4].

It could be deduced from these comments that with regards to time, almost all the respondents have issues with their time management. Some students have the impression that research work is very difficult and time consuming. This impression discourages them from taking up the challenges of completing their research work on time. The sixth respondents said that he has less than six month to complete the project and four month is already gone and he has not even completed his chapter 3. The first respondent had challenges with the appropriate time to meet her respondents for data collection. The last respondent is faced with making time for family responsibility and her project. The finding supports Thondhlana et al., (2011) who opine that number of factors have been identified from the perspective of students regarding their inability to complete their project work on time one of the being poor time management. According to Cone and Foster (1993), students should spend at least 20hours per week on their research projects.

b. Inadequate finance

Conferring to the interview data, many of the respondents were of the view that inadequate finance appeared of the themes. According to the interview data, most of the respondents emphasized that inadequate finance could account for delay in the completion of their project work. A respondent shared her experience by saying that;

“I think that lack of funds is one of the hitches that come with project work because a lot of us go through it and at times too resources will be limited and funds as well. Sometimes even money for just printing the work is a problem” [R: 3].

Respondent 2 also shared her views by saying:

“The money my parents give me is not even enough for my upkeep so how can I save some for my project work. The printing and binding cost is high. I buy data almost every two or three days to search for information for my project work” [R: 2].

Besides, respondent 1 said:

“I need money to buy laptop so that I can finish my work on time because most of the time our computer lap is filled with a lot of students but I don't money. My cousin has promised to buy me one though [R: 1].

Further, respondent 5 said:

“Money is the challenge confronting me as a student and parent because I have to buy textbooks, exercise books, school uniforms and other things for my child. And here I am also paying my fees and other expenses including hostel fees and project work printing. I know this problem of money will cut across other students” [R: 5].

Emphatically, respondent 8 said:

“I am really suffering financially. I have spent a lot on my project work. Even travelling to collect data is very costly. My supervisor is always identifying problems in my work so I keep printing and printing the work” [R: 8].

The comments from the respondents signify that they are faced with financial challenges. This ranges from money spent on searching of relevant materials in a web domain, to printing of draft copy of chapters for lecturers' review, travelling expenses in terms of data collection. Funds are required to conduct a research, in the College of

Community Health, Winneba where this study is being conducted; students are rarely render financial assistant or research grants to conduct a study. Majority of the activities students undertake involves cost. Funds are very significant because the progress of students hinges on it. Inadequate funds to conduct the study contribute to the delay in students' completion of their research work. The finding gives credence The Azila-Gbettor, Mensah and Avorgah, (2015), (Bell, 2000), Phillips and Pugh, (2000), Majoni and Chidakwa (2004), Pearce, (2005) and Thondhlana et al., (2011) who contend that inadequate funding is one of the critical concern areas to students in the conduct and completion of dissertations

c. Lack of commitment and motivation to undertake the project work

Another major concern that appeared from the interview data was related to respondents' lack commitment and motivation undertake the project work. Firstly, the data suggested that some of the respondents were not motivated to conduct their research and were only doing it because is mandatory. One of the respondents articulated that:

Doing project work is not easy at all. Hmm the motivation is not there at all. At times to when you are doing something and you are not motivated it pushes you back. I am not good at reading and writing so you can imagine me coming up with about 50 pages. I don't know when I will finish and if you don't finish you will not graduate so someone is helping me small [R: 2].

Another respondent commented.

The truth is someone is helping me to do my project work and it is not me alone doing that. I have not done such a work before. Even the way we are taught research methods, I don't understand it well so it does not encourage me to do the work. [R: 5].

One respondent expressed her experience that;

I don't find the project work interesting but it is one of the requirement for graduation. It is very difficult and needs a lot of commitment which I am found

wanting. Sometime for about 2 month I have not added any information to my project work. [R: 8].

Another respondent added; please if you are not really committed to your project work then it will delay. So I am trying my best but it is not enough. I have to be more committed. [R: 10].

The interview data presented also suggested that some of the respondents have contracted others to do their project work for them because they are not motivated to it on their own. The fifth respondent affirmed that she has a problem with way research methods are taught in the college. Some of them are also not really committed to the project work. They lack the personal drive to complete their project work.

The finding is in agreement with the studies (Bell, 2000; Sidhu, 2001; Pearce, 2005; Anderson Day and Laughlin, 2006) that concluded of lack of commitment and motivation to do the research is one of the main factor affecting undergraduate students.

d. Inadequate knowledge, training and experience in research methods

Among the themes which emerged from interview data was inadequate knowledge, training and experience in research methods. According to the interview data, some of the respondents have little or no idea has to how to go about their project work. On inadequate knowledge, training and experience in research methods, one of the respondents articulated:

Project work involves a lot of research one requires knowledge and skills in research methods to be able to carry out a good research. It is unfortunate most students including myself lack these skills to do a good work. [R: 1].

One of the respondents commented:

Students most often find it difficult in choosing of topics that will help in their project work because their knowledge is little. This affects their ability to submit their research work on time to supervisors. [R: 4].

Another respondent also expressed:

I will say students lack fair ideas and knowledge on how to tackle research work. I am struggling with my project work. I wish our tutors will organize a workshop and train us on how to conduct effective research. [R: 9].

A respondent stated:

It is also good as students to have knowledge in research because lack of understanding in research will lead to poor research. A lot of us are at a loss when it comes to research. [R: 7].

A respondent expressed herself:

To be honest with you my knowledge in research is very limited I I don't have any experience I research, this is my first time oo. Even getting the topic was a problem. When I am searching for information on the internet, I just copy and paste. My supervisor is even suspecting that my work is a copied work [R: 3].

The data presented suggested that almost all the respondents do not have inadequate knowledge, training and experience in research methods. It appears they did not have a strong in research some even have challenges with selecting a suitable topic for their project work. The last respondent was honest to admit that she is copying her work from the internet.

The finding is in line with Baldwin (2015) who argues that most students find it difficult to express themselves in their own words. So, they copy from other works and represent it as their own writing without acknowledging the sources. Furthermore, some students do not have any background in research. Taskeen et al., (2014) also state that majority of novice researchers copy related studies and some advisors do not have enough experience in different methodologies. Thus, they allow their students to copy from studies which are conducted by other researchers. Moreover, some students are hesitant

in selecting a topic and they take a lot of time for that. This can be attributed to a lack of training in research, less confidence about the topic they want to write about and not reading widely. Thus, selecting a topic is not easy because the student researchers are not very aware of how to choose a topic and on what standards or basis they have to select it. According to Taskeen et al., (2014) students spend most of the time selecting useless and uninteresting topics. More so, Safari et al., (2015) also found in his study that lack of research experience affected the level of interest and participation of students in research activities.

e. Failure to meet regularly with supervisor

Conferring to the interview data, it was revealed that some of the students fail to meet with their supervisors on regular basis. The following explanations were given by some respondents to back this proclamation. For example, one respondent said: sometime my supervisor will be calling me to bring the work but because I am finding it difficult to do what he has asked me to do, I cannot go and meet him. [R: 7].

A respondent articulated: My supervisor gave me the topic herself so she is very interested in my work and she is always on my neck. She says I should come with my chapter four but I have not finish so how can I go even though the time she gave me has elapsed. [R: 1].

Another respondent commented: Hmmm instead of me chasing my supervisor, he is the one chasing me and calling for the work. He says I am not serious but it is not my fault. The problem is the one helping me is delaying me. [R: 4].

More so a respondent stated; It is not easy ooo for almost two month now I have not gone to see my supervisor even though he has asked to see what I have done so far. I want to go but I am not sure of the work I have done. [R: 6].

Respondent 4 added that my supervisor spoke to me in way I did not like. And because of that I don't feel like going to him. I wish they will change him for me because his human relations is poor. [R: 3].

The data revealed that clearly the respondents are not meeting their supervisors as regularly as they should and that is delaying the completion of their project work. In the case of the first and fourth respondents their supervisors are the ones demanding for their project work which they are not making available. This is quite interesting because one would have taught that a student would rather be the one chasing his or her supervisor for feedback. The finding supports that of Majoni and Chidakwa, (2004) who also found that some students' do not meet with their supervisor's regularly due unpreparedness. There are situations where students find themselves busy with other engagement and are unable to meet their project work deadlines.

Other problems related to students include: not enough time, lack of or not adequate resources to do research, little or no motivation in writing research, not meeting the supervisor every time, not having any knowledge about theory related to research (Mapolisa & Mafa, 2012; Mahammoda, 2016).

4.1.3 Research Question Three

What are the supervision–related factors contributing to nursing students’ inability to complete their research work?

The objective of this question was to explore supervision–related factors contributing to nursing students’ inability to complete their research work. It was discovered through the respondents’ comments that they had information about supervision–related factors contributing to nursing students’ inability to complete their research work. They pointed to irregular accessibility to supervisors, long delays in providing feedback on project work, little guidance and direction from supervisors and work load of supervisors

a. Irregular accessibility to supervisors

In relation to irregular accessibility to supervisors, the subsequent statements were made by some respondents to confirm this declaration: Respondent 2 intimated that; as for my supervisor the moment he finishes teaching you will not find him on campus again. I am sure he is doing part in another college. He is the one delaying my project work [R: 2].

Once more, respondent 8 said: the whole of this semester I have seen my supervisor once. When I go to him then he will tell me to come another day and when you go you will not meet him [R: 8].

Again, respondent 5 said: it is sometimes difficult to see my supervisor especially during week days. There are times we have to arrange to meet on Saturday or Sunday” [R: 5].

More so, respondent 10 said: my supervisor said he is doing his PHD so he is very busy. He told my to do all chapters 1 to 5 so that when he gets time he will assess it for me” [R: 4].

Respondent 6 all added: I am praying that my supervisor will make time for me because it been a while since we met for discussion. I really need her assistance because I was stuck [R: 6].

In furtherance, respondent 1 said: some of the supervisors are not on campus, some are outside campus. So communicating with them, meeting them one on one at times becomes a problem. My supervisor is not on campus and meeting him is not easy at all. [R: 1].

In general, comments by the respondents suggest that they supervisors are not making enough time to examine their project. According to them their supervisors are very busy. The fourth respondent mentioned that his supervisor is pursuing his Doctor of Philosophy programme and so he is unable to meet with him regularly. It is reasonable to assert that when supervisors are unable to meet their students on regular basis it has the potential to demotivate their students because they may not know whether they are making progress with their work or not.

The findings support Nyawaranda (2005), Shumba (2004), and Pearce (2005), assertion that some learners encounter hindrances with their advisor when writing their research. Some of these obstacles include: supervisors do not see their students regularly and the supervisors are not interested in their students.

b. Long delays in providing feedback on project work

Long delays in providing feedback on project work emerged as one of the themes in the interview data. The following comments were declared by some respondents to support this claim: respondent 2 stated that; I sent my chapter one about a month ago and till date I have not heard a word from my supervisor and I am wondering when I will finish” [R: 2].

One respondent also said: “It took so long before I got a feedback from my supervisor. So, all the necessary measures that must be put in place should be there to ensure that the supervisors do not cause unnecessary delays” [R: 5].

Respondent one had this to share: till now my supervisors has not responded to me. When I try calling him, he replies with a message that he will get back to me” [R: 8].

Again, respondent 6 said I sometimes even lose interest in the project work I am doing, because it looks like the supervisor does not care. He does not mine me at all” [R: 6].

Besides, a respondent lamented;

“The administration should talk to our tutors to support their students’ project work. Some of us feel like giving up because of the attitude of some of the supervisors toward their students’ project work. They delay in providing feedback, we know they are busy but they should try for us” [R: 10].

It could be realised from the comments by some respondents that their supervisors delay in providing feedback on their students project work. Some expressed frustrations and disappointments because of the attitudes of some of the supervisors towards their work. Supervisors are supposed to work hand in hand with their supervisees and offer comments and suggestion to put their students on track. If they fail to provide feedback on their students work, it will retard the progress of the student’s project and consequently delay the completion of the work.

The finding is similar to that of Nyawaranda (2005) and Shumba (2004), who found that some supervisors do not return the students’ work on time and they do not give the students much practical help.

c. Little guidance and direction from supervisors

It was further revealed by the comments from students that they receive little guidance and direction from supervisors. It was realised from the comments some of the students made. For instance, respondent 5 said:

“With the supervision the little that I can say is at times the supervisor that you will be assigned to, at times some of them have inadequate knowledge in the

topic or the research that you are conducting. So when it happens like that, the supervisor cannot do much to help you” [R: 5].

Similarly, Respondent 2 also said:

“Is not all of them that have adequate knowledge on the topic that at times you will choose because with the tutors, some have done certain programs and others have not, so I think at times particular people go much into it than other people. So is not all of them that have adequate knowledge for the research that you are conducting.” [R: 2].

Further, respondent 3 said:

“Some supervisors impose topics on student. Me for instance my supervisor give me a topic to do but I told him. I have my own topic and I think because of that he was not guiding me enough so it delayed my work” [R: 3].

One respondent also said:

“At times the information the supervisor will be using to assess the work sometimes it will be outmoded, there are few supervisors who would be upgrading themselves from time to time. So if the supervisor haven’t upgraded his or her self at that particular time and is using that outmoded information to assess your work, when you get to certain level and maybe you are going to meet the final panel or something then you find yourself wanting. So that is what I can say about the supervisors” [R: 4].

Moreover, a respondent said: I think maybe motivation or lack of motivation pushes the supervisors back as far as guiding their students on the research work is concern. [R: 4].

These comments from some of the students indicate that they were not guided enough by their supervisors. Some ascribed this situation to inadequate knowledge on the part tutors. Some supervisors have insufficient research skills to guide the students during their writing of their work. After reading the supervisees’ works, some supervisors make comments such as revisit and recast instead of explain to the students what they are required to do to enhance the completion of their project work. These insufficient skills make it difficult for them to help and guide students on how to identify researchable topics and search related literature to timely complete their studies.

The third respondent stated that her supervisors tried to impose a topic on her which she rejected the last respondent seem to suggest that some of the tutors are not motivated to give so much guidance and direction to their students. If this is case then management of the college should put in place motivational strategies for tutors so that they can provide the needed support, guidance and direction for their students. It is worth noting that writing a research project or thesis is not an easy task. It is essentially the product of effective training and proper guidance. In line with the finding Nyawaranda (2005), Shumba (2004), and Pearce (2005), noted that some learners encounter hindrances with their advisor when writing their research. Some of these obstacles include: supervisors do not give so much guidance and direction to their students, they do not return the students' work on time and they do not give the students much practical help concerning the gathering information from different sources.

In furtherance Mawere and Weda, (2011) opine that some supervisors impose topics on their students which in turn influence their interest and success in writing a research paper.

d. Work load of supervisors

Again, comments from students signify that their tutors are overburdened when it comes to supervision. The following comments by some students were advanced to imply that. One of the students said:

“You know the supervisors they are tutors as well, they teach and they support students during their research project. So I think the work load on the supervisors are so plenty that they cannot get the maximum time for their students. And supervisors one way or the other will be busy during their schedules outside school schedules I means so, this one also delay them as far as supervising the students are concern” [R: 1].

Also, another respondent said:

“And the stress of supervising a lot of people at a time, in most times there will be one supervisor supervising or will be assigned to about (20) twenty people. So the supervisor have to attend to all these students and with the research is not an easy task, even going through all the literature review, all the chapters is a whole lot of tedious work.” [R: 5].

Moreover, respondent 4 said:

“It is not every student that can bring out a work and the supervisor will be ok with, certain people don’t meet up with the task so the supervisor have to take time and go through each and everyone’s work to see if everything is ok. And this is a situation that the supervisor has to go through this work load and this too is another stress on the supervisor’s part” [R: 1].

It is obvious from the comments from students that their tutors who also double as supervisors have a lot of work to do. They are to prepare hand out, provide tuition, and supervise students’ project work and other responsibility. Some of the tutors have huge amount of work their desk. One of the respondents acknowledged that tutors having to perform all these duties are likely to be stressed up. When supervisors are overburden with a lot of work, they will not have adequate time to assess their students’ work well enough and this will affect the quality of work students do. The increase in the number of students has essentially led to the increase in the number of students a supervisor is given to handle. At the College of Community Health Nursing, Winneba, where the study is being conducted, there are some tutors in the institutions who have more than fifteen students to supervise their research works at both certificate and diplomas levels. In other words, the increasing number of students seemed to be unproportional to the number of supervisors available in the institutions.

Generally, the findings are in conformity with Nnebedum, and Obuegbe, (2021) study which found that the supervisors related factors that contribute to the delay of postgraduate students’ completion of their thesis/dissertation include; insufficient research skills, Inaccessibility when needed, delay in reading submitted works,

imposing of topics on supervisees, poor knowledge of topics undertaken by students, frequent changes of the research topics, failure to keep to time scheduled for discussion of research work, poor interpersonal relationship with the supervisors and improper guideline on written works. This is in line with the result of Ndayambaje (2018) which revealed that supervisors are contributing factor to students' completion of thesis/dissertation. This is also supported by the finding of Rooij, Fokkens-Bruinsma and Jansen (2019) which indicated that supervisors' characteristics, academic support, personal support, autonomy support, availability, high expectations and relationship are supervisors' related factors that influence students' thesis/dissertation completion. The agreement between the findings could be due to the fact that the supervisors in different geographical locations display similar attitude.

The finding further support Armstrong, (2013) who found that students enrollment increase each year in some universities and colleges. With such great number of students, lecturers are overburdened as some supervise more than 40 students.

4.1.4 Research Question Four: In what ways can the challenges some nursing students face concerning their research work be mitigated?

The objective of the last research question was to identify what mechanisms can be put in place to alleviate the challenges nursing students face concerning their research work. It was discovered through the respondents' comments that well-equipped libraries on campus, adequate computers and good internet accessibility at the computer labs, regular workshops to train students in research methods and effective communication between supervisors and students were some of the mechanisms can be put in place to alleviate the challenges nursing students face concerning their research work.

a. well-equipped libraries

For example, respondent 2 said:

Government, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and religious bodies and even the community should come to our aid. They can also provide various facilities that could be used for our research. For example, provision of libraries and ICT laboratories” [R:2].

Respondent 3 also said: “government should come in to provide us with more research work since we are in need of them [R: 1].

Furthermore, one respondent said: this is a college a tertiary institution just like the university so we need a standard library with all the facilities that come with it [R:3].

Another respondent said: Other stakeholders of education should provide funds so that the furniture at the library can be replaced because they are so old [R: 4].

Additionally, respondent 4 said: I think the principal of college should do everything possible provide a well-equipped library with updated and upgraded books that will help the students, so that whenever the need arises for students to get some books for their research they can easily get them. [R: 4].

It could be realised from these comments that the college’s libraries are not well equip and are therefore calling on Government, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) their principal and religious bodies to help find immediate solution. School libraries need to be fully equipped and have effective library services to support the teaching and learning process. School libraries provide access to a wide range of sources. School libraries are regarded as hubs that provide learners with reading and learning materials that are made available in different formats in order to support their reading needs. Todd (2006) stresses that school libraries are hubs for discovery, inquiry, thinking and creativity in students. Furthermore, Equal Education (EE) (2010) reiterates

that libraries provide access to the much-needed information and resources that will enable learners to explore the world of learning. According to the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) (2000:12), the importance of libraries, especially school libraries, is to instil in learners the love for reading and to develop an adult who will become a responsible information user. According to a study by Todd and Kuhlthau (2005), 99 percent of students indicated that the school library had helped them in their school work as well as outside the school. There is a need to improve the provision of library services to the extent that they are able to supplement the textbook. There is also a need to increase understanding of how school libraries can form the basis or foundation of information searching.

b. Adequate computers and good internet accessibility at the computer labs

The comments from students also suggested that provision of adequate computers and good internet accessibility at the computer labs would help in writing their project work. The following comments by some students were advanced to imply that. One of the students said: if we have better internet on campus, I will not spend much on data for my project work. The management of the school should fix the internet problem at the lab. [R: 2].

Also, another respondent said: I think the government should provide as with more computers at the lab. How much is a computer that the government cannot afford. [R: 7].

Moreover, respondent 5 said: I don't have a laptop so I go to the computer lab. Sometime you go and the place is full and some of the computers too are not working. [R: 5].

Again, respondent 3 and 9 shared similar thought: we pay school fees so government cannot deny us quality education that they are always talking about. The matter is simply we have the computer or better still they can provide us with a personal laptop to aid our research [R: 3; R: 9].

Conclusively respondent 6 added that as students at this level why should we have poor internet connection on campus. The government is not being fair to us at all. Government must take urgent step to solve the problem [R: 6].

It could be deduced from the data analysis that majority of the respondents emphasized the need for government to provide adequate computers and good internet accessibility at the computer labs for the college. Computers and internet help to facilitate students' learning; the computers and Internet help teachers to teach and guide students. The Internet has myriad websites to facilitate students learning also help teachers and student to exchange ideas, obtain information, and find free animations and simulations to enliven their interactions. Tutors also need computers to write lesson plans, prepare materials for teaching, record and calculate students' grades, and communicate with other tutors. As such, computers have become a routine tool for helping teachers and student in teaching and learning (Asamoah, 2018).

The college's computer laboratory can be linked to any Internet-based library. It will be appropriate for the government to install learning resources on all computers in the college's computer laboratories, it will help in achieving expanded access as well as improve teaching and learning.

c. Regular workshops to train students in research methods

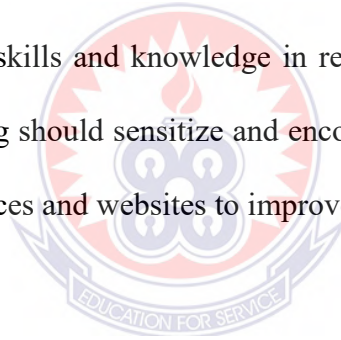
Again, comments from students signify that they require regular workshops to train them in research methods. The following comments by some students were

advanced to imply that. One of the students said: students should also be given a distinctive approach to research methods and the guidelines to tackle research work through training [R: 8].

Also, another respondent said: the way we are doing the research is problematic some of us don't understand it so we just copy from the internet. Our tutors have to bring in expert from the university to teach and train us more" [R: 2].

Moreover, respondent 4 said: the school management should organize research training work shop for us every month so that we can upgrade our skills and knowledge in research and be able to write good project work" [R: 1].

The comments from respondents connote that students should be trained in research methods to upgrade our skills and knowledge in research and be able to write good project work. The training should sensitize and encourage students and supervisors to use the online free resources and websites to improve access to literature.



d. Effective communication between supervisors and students

Effective communication between supervisors and students further emerged as one of the themes in the interview data as means of assisting students to finish their project work on time. For instance one of the students said: there should be proper, quality and effective communication between students and the supervisors. So that students can work on their research project effectively" [R: 4].

Once more, respondent 8 said:

"Communication is very important between a supervisor and a student because they are work together. If the student is not sending his or her work to the supervisor on time, he or she should communicate the challenges he is having to the supervisor" [R: 8].

Again, respondent 1 said: “If you are not communicating with your supervisor or your supervisor is not communicating with you. How can you do the work well?” [R: 1].

More so, respondent 10 said:

The interview data presented suggested that communication is very important my supervisor complained that I have not been calling him. So now I have changed, we have been talking almost every week.” [R: 4] between a supervisor and a student. Supervisors and students should establish good lines of communication right from the beginning and work on continued and open communication, they should schedule regular meetings and try and keep their scheduled meetings. Students should express their needs, roadblocks, and intentions in writing – while supervisors assist their student to process and clarify their intentions which, in turn, will allow the supervisor to give more thorough feedback. Students should not avoid their supervisors, they should communicate about factors (family, illness, etc.) that may take them from their work.

Delamont et al. (2004) points out that it is very crucial for students to maintain communication with their supervisors throughout the study tenure. As pointed earlier, the supervisors have the task of guiding the students through the postgraduate journey. Delamont et al, (2004) noted that guiding students can be easily attained if there is good communication between students and supervisors. According to Delamont et al., (2004) communication, supervisor- student relationship, access to literature, plagiarism, and poor writing skills among some students are some of the key challenges facing students and supervisors in writing dissertations/theses. The paper recommends that communication between students and supervisors need to be strengthened through both parties abiding by professionalism. Strengthening the use of progress reports and arrangement of supervision seminars more frequently would

minimize problems related to miscommunication. Students are encouraged to maximally utilize online sources of literature. The use of internet would also reduce unnecessary delays of supervisors' feedback.

Students must be clear about their responsibilities, follow instructions meet and deadlines. Supervisors need to help student to conduct research with the highest standard of ethical and scientific practice. It will assist students to provide reasonable evidence of satisfactory research progress. Students must prepare a research plan and timeline in consultation with their supervisor, give serious consideration to supervisor's advice and criticisms and inform the supervisor of any changes that might affect the progress of their work.



CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Overview

This is the final chapter, which comprises an ephemeral overview of the study, emphasising on the major findings to draw conclusions. This chapter also dealt with the recommendations of the study and suggested areas for future research. The main purpose of this research was to explore the factors affecting nursing trainees project work completion in the College of Community Health Nursing, Winneba.

To achieve this purpose, the following objectives were formulated:

1. Investigate institutional-related factors contributing to nursing trainees' inability to complete their research work.
2. Determine student-related factors contributing to nursing trainees' inability to complete their research work.
3. Identify supervision-related factors contributing to nursing trainees' inability to complete their research work.
4. Examine ways of alleviating the challenges nursing trainees' face concerning their research work.

The philosophical and theoretical perspectives or assumptions underpinning this study was interpretative worldview or constructivist epistemology. The study adopted a qualitative research approach and phenomenological research design. The target population for this study consists of all nursing students at the College of Community Health Nursing in Winneba. A sample of ten (10) final year nursing trainees' writing their project work were sampled through purposive sampling procedure. The

instrument used in the data collection was semi-structured interviews. Data were analysed thematically.

5.1 Summary of key findings

The following findings emerged from the study:

1. Institutional–related factors contributing to nursing trainees’ inability to complete their research work were ill-equipped libraries on campus, inadequate computer and poor Internet accessibility at the computer labs, school calendar instability and lack of transparency in assessment of project work.
2. Student–related factors contributing to nursing trainees’ inability to complete their research work were identified as poor time management, inadequate finance, lack of commitment and motivation to do the research, lack of training and experience in research methods and failure to meet regularly with the supervisor.
3. It was discovered that irregular accessibility to supervisors, long delays in providing feedback on project work, little guidance and direction from supervisors and work load of supervisors were supervision–related factors contributing to nursing trainees’ inability to complete their research work.
4. Finally, it was discovered through the respondents’ comments that well-equipped libraries on campus, adequate computers and good internet accessibility at the computer labs, regular workshops to train students in research methods and effective communication between supervisors and students were some of the mechanisms can be put in place to alleviate the challenges nursing students face concerning their research work.

5.3 Conclusion

It is worth noting that writing a thesis or dissertation is not an easy task. It is essentially the product of effective training and proper guidance. As pointed out in the previous chapter, several factors seemed to affect the completion of trainees project work. Most of the observed factors seemed to emanate from institutional–related factors, student–related factors and supervision–related factors. A synthesis of all these factors indicate that research demands discipline, dedication, enthusiasm and hard work both on the part of supervisors and students. Foundations of successful research have to be laid down early on by fostering understanding and mutual respect between students and supervisors at the start of the research work. The study also concludes that some concerns of students are genuine and need to be listened and addressed. The study has established that the management of the college is making efforts to address all these issues although it may take some time to accomplish such a goal.

Further, some trainees' at College of Community Health Nursing, Winneba are not committed into writing their project work. They need a clear understanding of research so as to avoid copying other people's work from the internet. Tutors at the college are overburdened with regards to supervision of students project work.

5.4 Recommendations

In view of the observed factors, the following recommendations are made:

1. There is a need to review research methods courses offered in the College of Community Health Nursing, Winneba, in terms of contents and teaching approaches. If this is properly done, the weaknesses indicated by students are likely to be minimized.

2. The Management of College of Community Health Nursing, Winneba should organize annual workshops on research for tutors to enable them exchange ideas and acquire requisite competencies that will promote timely completion of students' supervisees' project work.
3. The Management of College of Community Health Nursing, Winneba should design an operational policy that mandate supervisors to read and return supervisees' project work within two weeks of submission.
4. The Management of College of Community Health Nursing, Winneba should ensure supervisors/supervisee adhere strictly to policy of project work supervision through proper monitoring and reinforcement mechanism.
5. The study also encouraged students to devote the needed time, commitment and motivation to complete their research work on time.
6. The Tutors of College of Community Health Nursing, Winneba should strive to subject all students to academic writing training, with a special focus on how to write research reports.
7. The Government, in collaboration with the Ghana Education Service, should see to the provision of adequate computers and LCD projectors for the College of Community Health Nursing in Winneba. These facilities should not only be sufficient in number, but should also be of good quality.
8. The internet network system within College of Community Health Nursing, Winneba should be made stronger enough for students to effectively utilize it to search for information. This could be done by expanding the internet network infrastructure.
9. School calendar must be made to favor students in terms of consistency. Students must be educated on time management in order to meet project time

line. Supervisors must avail themselves to enhance proper communication between students when needed most with their school project work.

10. Health education should also be made attractive through the provision of incentives such as accommodation for tutor, maintenance allowances to cover boarding and lodging, payment of allowances for nursing trainees, teaching and learning materials and other amenities. These would motivate more people to be trained as tutors and nurses.

5.5 Suggestions for Future Research

This present study sought to explore the factors affecting nursing trainees' project work completion in the College of Community Health Nursing, Winneba, using a qualitative research approach. Future studies should consider employing mixed method designs and increase the sample size to enhance the generalization of the findings. A mixed methodological approach, will provide a deeper understanding of these factors. With this approach being employed in future studies, it is expected that very direct mechanisms can be put in place to address the paramount factors affecting nursing trainees project work completion in the College of Community Health Nursing, Winneba.

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APPENDIX 1

Interview Guide for Students

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

FACULTY OF EDUCATIONAL STUDIES

**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION AND
MANAGEMENT**

TOPIC:

**CHALLENGES NURSING STUDENTS FACE WITH THEIR RESEARCH
PROJECT WORK AT THE COLLEGE OF COMMUNITY HEALTH
NURSING, WINNEBA**

Introduction

This interview schedule is aimed at gathering information for my academic research purposes. The information will therefore be used purposely for academic work only. Data gathered will be handled confidentially and your identity will be handled with maximum confidentiality. Kindly feel free and give your candid opinion.

SECTION ONE

1. Institutional–related factors contributing to nursing students’ inability to complete their research work

- a. When conducting your project work the library is one of the places you can visit to search for information. How will you describe the library services offered by your college?
- b. Do you have enough computers at the computer labs to assist with your research?
- c. Are the computers connected to the internet? If yes
- d. Are you satisfied with the internet services and why?

- e. Has the college organized workshops for students on research training?
- f. What is the duration given by the college's management for completion of project work?
- g. Will you be able to complete your project work within the stipulated time?
- h. Are there any challenge relating to the college that affect the progress or delay of your work that you like to share?

SECTION TWO

2. Student-related factors contributing to nursing students' inability to complete their research work.

- a. What is your own opinion about project work?
- b. What is your level of commitment and motivation to undertake your project work?
- c. What is your level of knowledge, training and experience in conducting research?
- d. Conducting a research involves cost. How have you been coping with your finances?
- e. Do you meet with your supervisor on regular basis for feedback? If not why?

SECTION THREE

3. Supervision-related factors contributing to nursing students' inability to complete their research work.

- a. Do you have regular access to your supervisor for discussion on your project work on regular basis?
- b. How often does your supervisor provide you with feedback on your project work?
- c. Are you satisfied with the assistance you received from your supervisor concerning your project work and why?

- d. Are there any concerns about your supervisor you would like to share?

SECTION FOUR

4. **Ways of alleviating the challenges nursing students face concerning their research work.**

- a. What should be done by the college to help solve the challenges you face concerning your project work?
- b. What should be done by the government to help solve the challenges you face concerning your project work?
- c. How can your supervisor contribute to the successful completion of your project work?
- d. Are there other ways or means that can help you finish your project work on time

