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The Perception and Attitudes of Students of St. Ambrose College of Education Towards the Study of English Literature

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ABSTRACT

The study examined the perception and attitudes of students of St. Ambrose College of Education towards the study of English Literature. Data was collected by means of interview from 10 students and 3 Tutors from the study area, and analyzed thematically in relation to the research questions of the study. The study revealed that the majority of the students had little knowledge about the English Literature course on the basis of not offering the course in their pre-tertiary level of education. Hence, it made it difficult for them to understand a particular literary text that was taught. Again, the findings of the study from the Tutors' perspective revealed that students lacked a well-laid-down foundation for the course, which resulted in their difficulty in developing new vocabulary and making different meanings to life through literary texts. The study further revealed that students had negative perceptions and attitudes towards the study of English Literature due to the following factors; the cultural background of literary books which prevented students from enjoying Literature, non-availability of reading materials and resources at the school library, poor environmental background of students, poor internet connections and lack of conducive learning environment. All these factors prevented students from actively attending and participating in class activities, which ultimately had a negative impact in their learning process, and consequently affecting their academic performance. From the results, it was advocated that students may develop a positive attitude towards the study of English Literature if most of the literary texts they studied were situated within the African or Ghanaian contexts rather than the European (Classical or Shakespearean contexts), and if the school authorities and other stakeholders would provide preventive measures regarding this situation, it would help in preventing further damages in students' academic performance.

INTRODUCTION

The study of English Language and Literature plays a significant role in Ghana's development. English Language is widely used internationally and is commonly called the Queen's language. English Language and Literature are used extensively in education. If an individual does not effectively use the language, they may become greatly handicapped. The English language can be classified into four categories, namely; speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills, including Literature. Language theorists suggest that individuals should learn these skills in a specific order, starting with listening, speaking, reading (Literature), and then writing. The attitude and actions of teachers towards reading can have a significant impact on their students' reading habits and abilities, according to a study. The Colleges of Education aim to inspire their students to become committed readers and promote the culture of reading among themselves. Teachers' lack of professional knowledge of Literature can have severe consequences for students, particularly those from minority groups, without a stimulating home literacy environment. Literature provides an avenue for students to learn about their own cultural heritage and the cultures of others. Poor reading and lack of good reading culture are serious educational hindrances hampering students' academic performance. English Literature is a

course offered to trainee teachers to teach and impact the necessary pedagogy in their students. Teachers with less experience lack some knowledge in the teaching and learning of Literature. A detailed study of the reading-related characteristics of students and teachers, as well as their existing reading habits and expertise, is required to achieve a full and positive impact on students of Literature. The study seeks to examine and address the negative perception that students of St. Ambrose College of Education have towards the study of English Literature and measures or factors that will help curb this perception.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this research are to:

1. Examine the perceptions and attitudes of students toward the study of English Literature at St. Ambrose College of Education.
2. Identify some factors that hinder students' interest in the study of English Literature.
3. Address the perception of students towards the study of English Literature.

Research Questions

The study is guided by the following questions:

1. What are the perceptions and attitudes of students

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of St. Ambrose College of Education toward the study of English Literature?

2. What factors hinder the students' interest in the study of English Literature?

3. How can these perceptions of students toward the study of English Literature be addressed?

LITERATURE REVIEW

This section reviews literature related to students' perceptions and attitudes toward studying English Literature. This includes the importance of Literature in the language and literacy classroom. It also discusses learners' perceptions and attitudes, attitudes and performance in literature, factors that affect students' attitudes towards literature, and identifies the research gap.

Importance of Literature in the Language and Literacy Classroom

Collie and Slater (1990) identified four major reasons for using literature in language classrooms, as cited in Karakaya and Kahraman (2013). They argued that literary works provide authentic materials, enrich cultural knowledge, enhance language proficiency, and encourage personal involvement. These works provide learners with a valuable source of authentic material that connects them to real-life issues, making it easier for them to understand key concepts. Karakaya and Kahraman (2013) further explained that literary works are not specifically created for language teaching and learning purposes, but rather to showcase the culture of a people. As a result, learners can gain insight into the belief systems, occupations, and settlements of the target language speakers. Lazar (1993) suggests that literary works provide more realistic narratives than pseudo-narratives found in course books, enlightening learners on fundamental human issues. Literary works also help learners identify uncommon language use, exposing them to various functions of the written language, including aesthetics and persuasion. Studying literary works can help students become more sensitive to the overall features of the target language and improve their oral skills. Additionally, literary works contain figurative expressions and elaborate language that help learners appreciate and enjoy them.

In language classrooms, literature is often used for four main reasons, as identified by Collie and Slater (1990) and cited by Karakaya and Kahraman (2013). These reasons include the provision of authentic materials, the enrichment of cultural knowledge, the improvement of language proficiency, and the encouragement of personal involvement. Literature provides learners with materials that are connected to real-life situations, which makes it easier for them to grasp key concepts. Literary works are not created specifically for language teaching, but for showcasing the culture of a people. Therefore, they enable learners to gain insights into the belief systems, occupations, and settlements of the target language speakers. Lazar (ibid.) asserts that literary works provide

more realistic narratives compared to those found in course books. Additionally, literary works help learners identify uncommon language use, exposing them to the various functions of the written language, including aesthetics and persuasion. Studying literary works can help students become more sensitive to the overall features of the target language and improve their oral skills. Lastly, literary works contain figurative expressions and elaborate language that make them enjoyable to read and appreciate.

As observed by Lazar, studying Literature can help students to become more sensitive to some of the overall features of English language. Also, literary works help to improve oral skills of the students. This means that as the learner summarizes a chapter or depicts a character, his or her oral skills improve steadily. Furthermore, it helps in deepening the intermediate or advanced language of learners' understanding of the language. Moreover, literary works contain elaborative language and figurative expressions which help learners to appreciate and enjoy these literary works.

Conclusively, literary works are frequently employed for four main reasons in language classrooms, as stated by Collie and Slater (1990) and referenced by Karakaya and Kahraman (2013). These reasons include the provision of genuine materials, the enhancement of cultural understanding, the improvement of language proficiency, and the encouragement of personal engagement. Literature provides learners with materials that are linked to real-life situations, making it simpler for them to comprehend key ideas. Literary masterpieces are not specifically designed for language teaching, but for showcasing the customs of a community. As a result, they enable learners to gain insight into the beliefs, occupations, and settlements of the target language speakers. According to Lazar, literary works provide more realistic stories compared to those found in course books. Furthermore, literary works help learners identify unusual language use, exposing them to the various functions of written language, including beauty and persuasion. The study of literary works can assist students in becoming more sensitive to the target language's general features and improve their speaking abilities. Lastly, literary works contain figurative expressions and elaborate language that make them enjoyable to read and appreciate.

Learners' Attitude or Perception

Attitudes are crucial to learning and achieving goals in any learning context. According to Winston *et al* (2002), attitudes have three components: cognitive, affective, and behavioral. Cognitive attitude refers to the beliefs or opinions that we hold. Affective attitude is related to our emotions or feelings towards something. Behavioural attitude is the intention to act in a certain way towards someone or something. They argue that all three components affect students' performance. Our beliefs and opinions (cognitive component) influence our emotions (affective component), which in turn affect our

actions (behavioral component). Therefore, if we have positive beliefs towards something, we are more likely to feel positively about it and behave positively towards it, and vice versa.

Attitudes play a crucial role in learning and achieving goals across all learning contexts. Therefore, it can be deduced from the above that attitudes consist of three parts: cognitive, affective, and behavioral. Cognitive attitude refers to the beliefs or opinions we hold, while affective attitude relates to the emotions or feelings we have towards something. Behavioral attitude is the intention to act in a certain way towards someone or something. Notably, all three aspects contribute to students' performance. Our beliefs and opinions influence our emotions, which in turn affect our actions. Therefore, if we hold positive beliefs, we are more likely to feel positively and behave positively, and vice versa.

Attitudes and Performance in Literature

Jefferson (2005) argues that a student's success is closely tied to their attitude, suggesting that attitudes greatly affect performance. Wale-Adegbite (1996) builds on this idea, stating that success is 80% attitude and that a student's grades are a result of their attitude. Ariffin (2007) suggests that a student's learning style can impact their academic achievement and that this style is influenced by environmental factors such as educational support from peers and teachers. Although previous studies found a positive relationship between a student's interest in an academic subject and their performance, classroom environment and existing knowledge on the subject also play a significant role (Rhoda, *et al*, 2011; Arham, Mesir & Mohammad, 2006; Zainudin, *et al*, 2007). Popham (2005) emphasizes the importance of students' attitudes or interests to educators, as affective dispositions are powerful predictors of students' subsequent behaviours. Regardless of the learning environment, attitudes play a significant role in learning and achieving goals. Winston *et al* (2002) explain that attitudes are comprised of three elements: cognitive, affective, and behavioural. Cognitive attitudes relate to our beliefs and opinions, while affective attitudes relate to our emotions and feelings towards something. Behavioural attitudes refer to our intention to act in a certain way towards someone or something. All three elements contribute to a student's performance, as our beliefs and opinions influence our emotions, which in turn affect our actions. Therefore, positive beliefs can lead to positive feelings and behaviors, and vice versa.

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Factors That Affect Students' Attitude Towards Literature

Cultural Background

The background of students from different cultures can affect their ability to understand and appreciate a literary work. Additionally, the unfamiliarity of the culture portrayed in the text may lead students to have a negative attitude towards it, causing them to lose interest in reading it. Therefore, educators and curriculum designers must

remove any cultural barriers that prevent students from fully comprehending and enjoying literature. There have been several proposed solutions to address this issue. For example, Alptekin (2006) suggests that overcoming cultural barriers in literature can be achieved by adapting some literary elements to the learner's own culture, while maintaining the linguistic and rhetorical content of the original text. This can make it more relatable and understandable for language and literature students. Another effective way to help students with the cultural aspect of literature is by selecting works that reflect their daily lives, meet their expectations, and provide them with meaningful experiences. Floris (2004) also recommends including literary texts produced by ESL or EFL authors, as this can motivate students to read literature that is more familiar to their own culture and experiences. The themes in these texts are often highly relevant to their lives and can encourage a positive attitude towards literature.

Students' Home Background

The impact of a student's home background on their attitude towards Literature has been a topic of interest for many researchers. According to several studies, students who grow up in households where reading is a common activity tend to develop a liking for Literature in all its forms. For instance, in a survey conducted by Davis *et al* (1992), 175 undergraduate students of French and Spanish in three colleges in the US were given a Likert-scaled questionnaire to gauge their attitudes towards foreign Literature. The objective was to identify variables that could influence their attitudes towards Literature. The survey revealed that students who derived pleasure from reading in the target language had a positive attitude towards Literature in a foreign language.

Davis *et al* (1992) further assert that students who spend more time reading in the target language tend to have better attitudes towards Literature. The study also found that family background plays a significant role in shaping students' attitudes towards literary study. Those whose parents read more, spent more time being read to, and had access to a greater variety of books at home, showed better attitudes towards literary study. Interestingly, students who believed they had more knowledge of the target culture had a more negative attitude compared to those who rated their cultural knowledge lower. However, other variables such as exposure to the target language, exposure to literary study in the students' first language, and teaching methods did not have significant correlations to students' attitudes towards foreign literary study. Kaur and Thiyagarajah (1999) conducted a survey on university students majoring in English language and Literature where they found out that reading literary texts was a major problem for those who did not come from homes where reading is a common culture. About 48.6% of the participants who were studying the language for the first time expressed that they were not efficient and confident enough to read literary texts. However, in another study, Shukor (2001) found out that even though secondary

school students considered their low proficiency level a constraint, it did not negatively influence their attitudes towards literature due to their home background.

Geographical Location

The geographical location of schools can have an impact on students' attitudes towards Literature. Students who study in urban areas usually have a better command of the English language than those in rural areas. A study conducted by Rosli and Jayakara (1994) compared the performance of rural and urban students and found that most urban students scored high grades while the majority of rural students obtained average grades due to less exposure to the language and insufficient practice. As a result, lower proficiency levels lead to frustration and lack of motivation, especially among students from remote rural areas who do not see the relevance of English in their daily lives.

Students' Attitude Towards Teaching Approaches

The role of teachers in shaping students' attitudes towards the study of Literature is very important. Researchers have explored how teachers' approaches can help students develop positive attitudes towards the study of Literature in English. The study of teaching methodology in Literature identifies two categories: teacher-centred and learner-centered. In the past, language teaching in second language classrooms was teacher-centered, but in the early 1980s, there was a shift towards learner-centered approaches. This change began earlier when Noam Chomsky challenged the behaviourists' view of language learning in 1957, arguing that language acquisition is not a kind of habit formation but rather an innate ability that all human beings possess. This shift led to a new paradigm in language teaching, from teacher-centered to learner-centered approaches.

In the approach that focuses on learners, they are considered as active participants in the process of learning instead of being passive recipients. As a result, learners are accountable for their own learning. As per Larsen-Freeman (1987), contemporary methodology emphasizes a learner-centric approach to teaching. This means that a teacher only acts as a facilitator in the learning process, while learners need to take responsibility for directing their own learning and are ultimately responsible for the amount of learning achieved.

According to Taylor (2002), the traditional roles of teachers and students are changing, with a move towards more learner-centered approaches. Calvo (2007) notes that this new style of teaching prioritizes the needs and characteristics of individual learners, and it is becoming increasingly popular in second language classrooms.

The new teaching methodology focuses on developing learning practices that prioritise the learner over the teacher. This approach is based on understanding how learning takes place and how it can benefit learners. The primary goal of teaching should not be limited to imparting knowledge or providing access to information,

but also to equip learners with the skills needed to apply their knowledge. In the context of literature, the teaching and learning process should aim to develop both linguistic and communicative competence of the learner, which is why it is important to adopt a learner-centered approach to teaching.

Research Gap

Most students develop some negative perceptions and attitudes towards the study of English Literature due to certain weak foundation they came across while studying the course. According to Karakaya and Kahraman (2013), in order to encourage students to study Literature, teachers should encourage them to read literary works in their native language. This will motivate them to read literary works in the target language and take advantage of the benefits Literature offers such as improving vocabulary, comprehension, and literary techniques that enhance one’s communicative competence. Research also suggests that teachers with less experience lack knowledge in teaching and learning Literature, which indicates that recently trained teachers had less exposure and involvement in Literature-informed curriculums, particularly in teacher preparation programs (Cremin, *et al* 2008). Consequently, students’ perception and attitude towards their reading and learning skills of English Literature is quite poor and these have potential consequences for teacher education programmes. To ensure that Literature students benefit fully and positively, it is important to understand the reading-related traits, habits, and knowledge of both students and teachers. Unfortunately, students at St. Ambrose College of Education appear to lack many of these traits, which is reflected in their academic performance. As academic tutors at the college, the researchers have observed this and believe that addressing these negative attitudes and perceptions towards English Literature is crucial. Therefore, a study is needed to examine and tackle these issues.

METHODOLOGY

The study employed the qualitative research design, where specifically, descriptive research was utilized. Descriptions based on the study was obtained from the respondents within the selected institution. This was done by using interview to get information from the respondents, regarding certain problems that students faced with respect to the study. The target population of the study comprised all Tutors of English and all second and third-year students studying English Literature at St. Ambrose College of Education. These students and Tutors served as the population to which the researchers intended to use to generalize the findings of the study but since the researchers was not be able to access all these students and Tutors to interview, an accessible population was sampled for the study. In this sense, purposive sampling approach was adopted in selecting the students and Tutors for the study. The sample size was thirteen

(13) respondents out of the total population of English language and Literature students as well as Tutors from the selected College. The sample size used in this study was selected as follows:

Table 1: Sample Size

Respondents	Number
Second year students	5
Third year students	5
English Tutors	3
Total	13

The researchers used the simple-random sampling technique to select students and Tutors for the study. There are four-year groups of English language/ Literature students at St. Ambrose College of Education - first, second, third and fourth years, with each year group currently having twenty-two (22), fifteen (15), seventeen (17) and twenty (20) students respectively. The researchers however, randomly selected five (5) students each, from the second- and third-year groups and three (3) English Tutors from the College, making a total of thirteen (13) respondents. The purposive sampling was used to get the selected students and Tutors because these were people who are believed to be relevant and knowledgeable in the subject area, to ensure relevant and credible information concerning the perception and attitudes of students of St. Ambrose College of Education towards the study of English Literature.

Data Collection Procedure

The researchers in this study opted for unstructured interviews to allow for more flexible questioning. The interview method was chosen as it allowed both the researchers and respondents to openly discuss the topic at hand and saved time by providing complete information that could be adapted to meet the respondents’ intelligence, understanding, or beliefs. The researchers conducted face-to-face interviews with selected tutors and students and documented the interaction using modern digital audio tape.

Data Analysis and Presentation

The researchers used the qualitative method to analyze the data that was collected. By qualitative approach, it involves the thematic description of the recorded interview about the perception and attitudes of students of St. Ambrose College of Education towards the study of English Literature. The data collected from the interviews was analyzed using content analysis. The researchers first examined the field notes, transcribed the recordings, and carefully reviewed them for common themes and ideas that emerged from the responses of the participants. The participants’ information or speeches were then categorized to facilitate analysis. In some cases, the exact words of the participants were used within the context of the discussion’s theme.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data collected and analyzed was to examine the perception and attitudes of students of St. Ambrose College of Education towards the study of English Literature. Using interview as the primary data collection tool, the data were summarized and organized through descriptive analysis. The analysis of the interviews was also reported in prose as well as verbatim, from the respondents to reflect the themes in the study. The discussion is divided into three various sections based on the objectives. They include; examining the perception and attitudes of students towards the study of English Literature, some factors that hinder these perception and attitudes among students and how these factors are addressed.

Background Information of Respondents

Table 2: Gender of respondents (students)

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	5	50%
Female	5	50%
Total	10	100%

Source: Field Data (2021).

Since the researchers used the unstructured form of interview to gather information and purposively sampled the respondents from the total population, the researchers focused on only their gender, disregarding their age and other characteristics. The above table (2) however shows that five (5) of the respondents representing fifty (50%) percent were males while the other five (5) respondents, also representing fifty (50%) percent were females. This reveals that the data gathered for the analysis of the study were equally collected from both sexes. This was to prevent any form of biases and to ensure a judicious analysis of students' perception and attitudes towards the study of English Literature.

Table 3: Gender of respondents (Tutors)

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	3	100%
Female	0	00%
Total	3	100%

Source: Field Data (2021).

Table 3 also reveals that three (3) respondents representing hundred (100%) were male Tutors while zero (0) respondents representing 0.0% were female Tutors meaning, no female tutor was involved in the interview process. The implication of this to the study is that the English language department of the college is dominated by male Tutors. These Tutors were included in the study in order to solicit their views on how they perceive the attitudes and performance of students towards the study of English Literature.

Perception and Attitudes of Students Toward the Study of English Literature

This section discusses the outcome of the analysis of students' perception, attitude and knowledge towards English Literature at St. Ambrose College of Education as the first objective sought to investigate. Specifically, the analysis is based on how students view the study of English Literature and the knowledge they have about it; how Literature has impacted their academic performance with respect to reading, understanding and analysis of texts, how Literature affects the students' affective domain and whether Literature has had any significance impact or not, in their personality and academic development. In response to the interview on the attitude and knowledge of Literature, three (3) third year students, constituting 80% commented that Literature is a body of written works and accompanying illustrations produced in order to broaden one's mental faculty. It also involves critical thinking to enable one understand a specific text. However, due to the fact that they have little knowledge about the course on the basis of not offering the course in their pre-tertiary level of education, they find it difficult to understand a particular text or reading materials being taught. A student commented that;

I didn't offer the course when I was in SHS. I came here and had to offer it due to the course combination we had to choose from, so I find it quite difficult to understand certain things taught. I believe it will take some time for me to adjust. It would be a gradual process...

The other two (2) or 20% of the students had a different opinion since they had a fair idea because it was part of the courses they studied in school. One of them remarked: Literature covers a wide range of works, including acknowledged classics of world Literature, picture books and easy-to-read stories written exclusively for Literature, and fairy tales, lullabies, fables, folk songs, hence I find it quite interesting and able to relate when our Tutor is teaching us a particular literary text.

Three (3) respondents from the second-year group, representing 80% were of the view that Literature entails an in-depth reading of imaginative works that takes time for better comprehension, hence they are always lacking behind. A student noted;

The books we need to read entails a lot, sometimes classical books whose language is so archaic, making it difficult to analyze some literary elements that ought to be interpreted.

The other two (2) students, representing 20% claim that they love Literature because it improves their reading and imaginative skills and as well help them in their critical thinking and developing creativity. One of the students commented by saying;

For the fact that I had prior knowledge about it before coming here, has made me develop more interest in it because of how my Tutor takes one topic at a time and by taking time to explain things in details. It has helped me to develop my thinking capabilities and making me to be more creative.

The researcher interviewed the selected Tutors on the significance of Literature and how their students related to the course. From their responses, they stated that due to majority of students not having a well laid-down foundation of the course, they find it difficult to develop new vocabulary and make different meaning to life and make life more real and meaningful by thinking deep and critically upon reading pictures and words interpreted in literary texts. One of the Tutors said;

They lack proper foundation, so my students mostly find it difficult to develop their vocabulary. They also struggle to make deeper meaning than just an ordinary meaning from literary texts, therefore they are not able to distinguish between connotation and denotation meaning in Literature.

The above analysis shows that majority of the students selected for the study have less positive attitude and knowledge towards the study of English Literature due to the above-mentioned reasons.

Factors That Hinder Students' Perception and Attitudes Towards English Literature and Measures Put in Place to Address These Factors

This section discusses analysis on the factors affecting the perception and attitude of students towards the study of English Literature and how these negative perceptions have been addressed. Students' responses on the factors that affect their attitudes towards Literature are interpreted by their actual reading frequency of Literature. The cultural knowledge of Literature was interpreted with the focus on both authors and titles of books. The findings indicated that the cultural background of Literature books prevented students from enjoying Literature and this included the cultural contents of literary text. Culture which is beyond students' competence hinders their understanding and enjoyment of any literary text and in view of this, students develop negative attitude towards Literature if they find any element in the target language/ Literature book uncomfortable.

From the responses the researchers sought from the respondents that were selected for the study, they were of the view that the cultural background of both the author and the books they learn affect their attitudes towards the study of Literature. Looking at the African, specifically Ghanaian background of the students, most of the texts they study such as drama and poetry are classical books, Shakespearean books for that matter, which have complex interpretation of its contents and language, making it difficult for the students to comprehend. Both third- and second-year students as well as Tutors had similar experiences and their responses were almost the same. One student remarked;

Madam, we are in Ghana and we are being asked to read Shakespearean books like Romeo and Juliet, and Julius Caesar. These are classical books and the type of language used is so old-fashioned and complex so I really find it difficult to read and understand, not to talk of analyzing certain literary elements in them. If the curriculum will

focus on only books within our African context, I think it will really help us.

Another student commented;

It is okay to learn other peoples' culture but the manner in which it is portrayed is questionable. We do learn African poems which are very much okay because the language is easily understandable. The foreign and classical books can also be understood and enjoyed if the language was simple and straight forward but that isn't the case so to be honest, I hardly perform well when we are asked to analyze these classical poems.

A response from one of the Tutors concerning this issue about cultural background of literary texts and how it affects students' attitudes towards Literature wasn't much different from what the students said. He stated;

If you take a cursory look at the kind of literary books recommended for these students to read, you will realize that they perform much better when the books are culturally set in the African context. However, when they are to read classical books, poems or prose, their performance in this particular area is not in any way encouraging, it's really worrisome, and we need to constantly motivate them to take their lessons seriously. So, considering their background, students should be made to read literary texts or books set in the African context.

From the interview, the respondents made mention of other factors that affected students' perception, attitudes and performance towards the study of English Literature. Some of these factors included; non-availability of reading materials and resources at the school library, the poor environmental (rural) background of students and the lack of conducive learning environment. All these factors prevented students from actively attending and participating in class activities, which in return negatively affect the teaching and learning process of these students. One of the students remarked;

The books and learning materials recommended to us are not available at the school library, we are not able to get access to them at the bookshops too with the excuse that they are out of stock. Most of these books are the classical texts and we can't find them anywhere to buy which makes learning very difficult for us. If the school authorities make necessary arrangements to stock the library with enough learning materials, it will be of great help to us.

Another student commented;

I was brought up in an environment where you go to the farm immediately you return from school because that was the only way you will get food to eat. Our local dialect was the only language spoken at home because you won't find anyone speaking English, not to talk of reading any material, so I find it difficult to adjust to this new environment of learning and reading.

Another student further stated;

We don't really have a conducive learning environment; the lecture rooms are very few with poor internet connections. Most of us find it difficult to search for

information online when we are given assignments due to these internet problems. When you go to the lecture rooms to learn too, they will be occupied by other students because they are not enough. We really want to learn, but all these problems and factors are preventing us from doing so. The authorities must try and do something about it because it is really affecting our academic performance.

From the response coming from one of the Tutors with respect to the above-mentioned factors, all these problems they are encountering are affecting how they also teach because they lack the resources needed to make teaching and learning enjoyable to students, hence they advocated for the school authorities and other stakeholders to quickly step in to prevent further damages in students' academic performance. He commented that;

Our students are really lacking behind if you compare them to other colleges of education. When you give them any quizzes or assignment, the type of English you will read is very heart-breaking. They really need help; we are trying our best but it is not good enough. Our authorities really need to intervene in this situation because our students' academic performance is dwindling and if care is not taken, we will end up producing poor teachers when they go out there.

From the analysis, it is obvious that the relevance previous knowledge of students, the cultural background of authors and literary texts, the non-availability of reading materials and resources at the school library, the poor environmental (rural) background of students and the lack of conducive learning environment are some factors that negatively affect students' perception and attitudes towards the study of English Literature. It was recorded from the interview sections that students' relevance previous knowledge in the course is a key factor when good results are needed, however when they lack this background, it becomes difficult for them to produce good results. This implies that most of the respondents did not have much idea about Literature, hence, their negative attitude towards its teaching and learning. The cultural background of book authors and the literary text itself was a problem for the students. Students were more familiar with African texts rather than classical works which affected their performance.

To further probe how students' background affected their attitude towards the study of English Literature, the researcher recorded from the interview sections that students with poor background complained that their background sometimes influenced their attitude towards the teaching and learning of Literature since they did not have the fundamentals from their previous senior high schools. Although some of them had the experience from their previous schools, the negatives outweighed the positives. The availability of teaching and learning materials, Literature books, and a proper conducive learning environment, with good internet services have a deeper knowledge in making students to develop interest in the course and as well help them in understanding and

teaching of the subject, but here is the situation where they lack these backgrounds and amenities, preventing them to develop any positive attitude towards the study of English Literature. If the necessary measures are put in place to rectify these problems, students will eventually develop a positive attitude towards the study of English Literature.

Summary

This research was conducted to examine the perception and attitudes of students of St. Ambrose College of Education towards the study of English Literature. The study sought to find out students' attitude towards English Literature focusing on three major objectives; students' perception about the study of Literature, factors that affect or hinders students' attitudes towards Literature, and how these factors were addressed. In the study, ten (10) students and three (3) Tutors were sampled. This sample summed up to thirteen (13) participants, making the total population for the study. Qualitative design was adopted to descriptively present the findings through the process of using interview. The data collected were analyzed using both prose and verbatim form, from the respondents to reflect the themes in the study.

The findings from students concerning their perception and knowledge towards the study of Literature showed that majority of them had little knowledge about the course on the basis of not offering the course in their pre-tertiary level of education hence, it made it difficult for them to understand a particular literary text that was being taught. Few of them acknowledged the fact that they had prior knowledge about the course before enrolling in the college, and Literature helped them to improve their reading and imaginative skills and as well helped them in their critical thinking and creativity development. Findings from one of the Tutors' responses concerning how they viewed students' perception towards the study of Literature revealed that students' lack of a well laid-down foundation of the course, resulted in the difficulty to develop new vocabulary, making different meaning to life and making life more real and meaningful by thinking deep and critically, upon reading picture books and words interpreted in literary texts.

The findings of the study further revealed that students have negative perceptions and attitudes towards the study of English due to the following factors; the cultural background of literary books prevented students from enjoying Literature and this included the cultural contents of literary text. It was explained that most of the texts they studied such as drama and poetry were classical books, Shakespearean books for that matter, which had complex interpretation of its contents and language, making it difficult for the students to comprehend. Other factors included; non-availability of reading materials and resources at the school library, the poor environmental (rural) background of students, poor internet connections and the lack of conducive learning environment. All these factors prevented students from actively attending

and participating in class activities, which in the long run negatively affected the teaching and learning process of these students. Tutors also shared the same grievances of students since they believed that the above-mentioned factors were causing more harm than good to the students. These also affected how they taught because they lacked the resources needed to make teaching and learning enjoyable to students, hence they advocated for the school authorities and other stakeholders to quickly step in to prevent further damages in students' academic performance.

CONCLUSION

The latest research study corroborates earlier findings and offers additional proof that students' outlook and opinions towards English Literature, reading level, and knowledge are negative. The study identified personal and environmental factors contributing to the unfavorable perception of St. Ambrose College of Education students towards English Literature. Environmental factors were found to have a more significant impact on the students' negative attitude towards Literature. The analysis further revealed that most of these students originated from a background where comprehending and reading English Literature texts were not easily within their reach. The cultural background of both authors and titles of literary texts was also a barrier. Both tutors and students lacked the motivation to teach and learn due to the fact that the college lacked the basic amenities needed for extensive tuition. They included; the non-availability of reading materials, text books and other resources at the school library, poor internet connections and the lack of a conducive learning environment. From the results, it was advocated that students may develop a positive attitude towards the study of English Literature if most of the literary texts they studied were situated within the African or Ghanaian contexts rather than the classical or Shakespearean contexts, and if the school authorities and other stake holders will quickly step in to provide preventive measures regarding this situation, it will help in preventing further damages in students' academic performance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This study is significant because it attempts to suggest measures that will enable students have a positive perception and attitudes towards the study of English Literature, it will also encourage both Tutors and students to constantly improve upon their methods of teaching and learning. This will further aid curriculum developers and policy makers to set educational goals and standards by adopting Literature books that will promote and motivate the students to have positive attitudes toward the teaching and learning of Literature.

The main results of the study have considerable consequences for teaching English Literature in schools. Throughout their Senior High School days, only few of the students had a feeling of Literature but not all the

dimensions. Teachers in Senior High Schools should therefore concentrate on educating students in all facets of Literature so that when they opt for it in their tertiary level of education, they wouldn't encounter so many problems.

The researchers that the college chosen for the study had a lack of literature books and learning materials in the library, which resulted in abstract teaching methods since teaching and learning materials were not readily available. The study suggests the need for better teaching and learning materials to make the study of English Literature more engaging for students. Additionally, the study recommends improving the physical learning environment, which can be achieved through collaboration between the government, stakeholders, the principal, tutors, and communities to build more facilities that can aid effective teaching and learning of English Literature.

Finally, Tutors of Literature must not only be concerned with teaching Literature towards only examinations purposes but for use in their daily lives since Literature is the representation of real-life experiences. This will help the students to relate the stories in Literature to real life and boost their understanding in the study of English Literature.

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