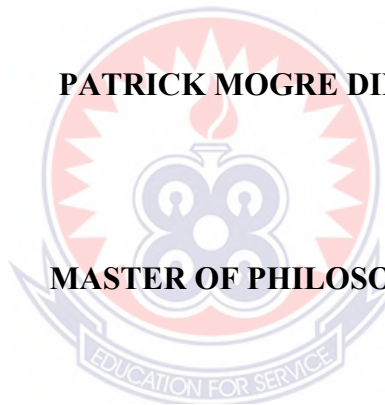


UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

**WRITING SKILLS OF SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN
COMPOSITION WRITING: A STUDY OF OUR LADY OF LOURDES GIRLS
SHS IN THE KASSENA-NANKANA MUNICIPALITY**

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MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY



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**A thesis in the Department of Applied Linguistics, Faculty of Foreign
Language Education and Communication, submitted to the School of
Graduate Studies, in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the award of the degree of
Master of Philosophy
(Teaching English as a Second Language)
in the University of Education, Winneba**

APRIL, 2023

DECLARATION

Candidate's Declaration

I, Patrick Dinaa, declare that this thesis, except for quotations and references contained in published works which have been identified and duly acknowledged, is entirely my original work, and it has not been submitted, either in part or whole for the award of another degree elsewhere.

Candidate's Signature

Date:

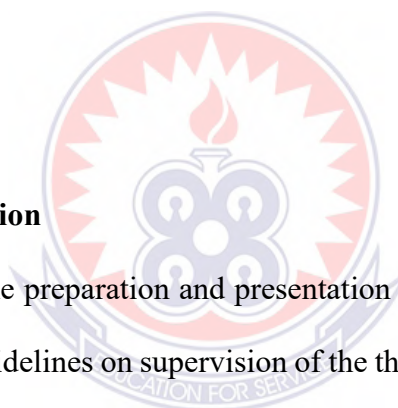
Supervisor's Declaration

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the thesis were supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of the thesis laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.

Name of Supervisor:

Supervisor's Signature

Date:



DEDICATION

To my wife, children, and family.



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Special thanks go to the staff and students, especially the respondents, at Our Lady of Lourdes Girls SHS in the Kassena-Nankana Municipality for their cooperation and willingness to participate in this study, without whom this research would not have been possible.

I acknowledge the sources from which I obtained materials, including scholarly articles, books, and online resources, as they formed the bedrock of my literature review.

Once again, to everyone who contributed to this endeavour, your support has been indispensable, and I am deeply appreciative of your assistance.

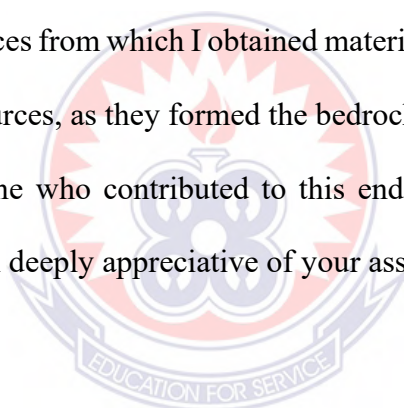
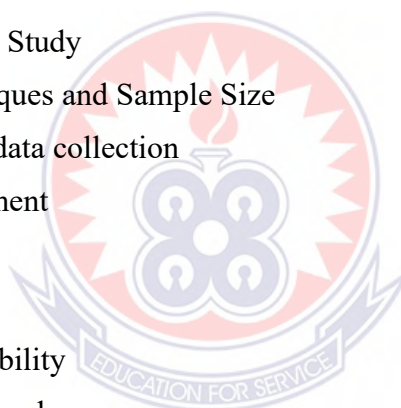


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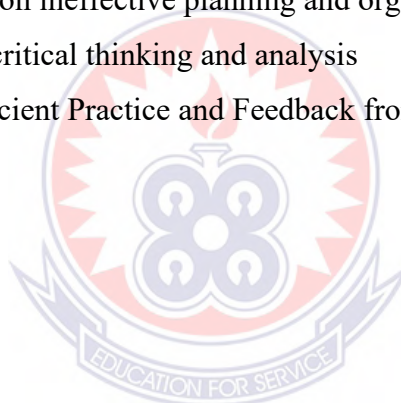
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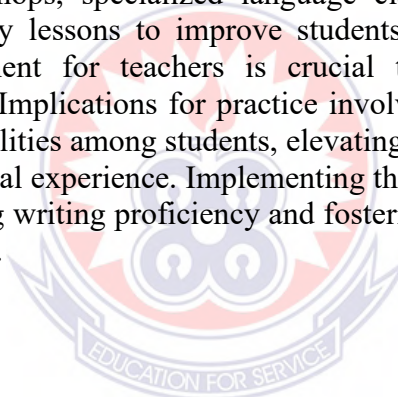
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ABSTRACT

Effective writing skills are vital for students as they progress in their education and prepare for future academic and professional pursuits, especially in senior high schools (SHS). However, the assessment of composition writing skills among SHS students is a global concern, particularly in Ghana. This study focuses on addressing the decline in writing proficiency among SHS students at Our Lady of Lourdes Girls Senior High School in the Upper East Region, Ghana. The research objectives are to evaluate poor writing skills exhibited by SHS students, investigate the factors impeding their writing abilities, and suggest strategies to enhance their writing skills. Using a mixed-methods approach, the study gathers data from 274 SHS students and 6 English language teachers through written assessments, questionnaires, and interviews. The findings reveal deficiencies in various aspects of students' writing, such as clarity, organization, grammar, vocabulary, evidence support, cohesion, mechanics, and creativity. Factors hindering writing skills include limited vocabulary and language skills, lack of reading habits, difficulties with essay structure, and inadequate critical thinking abilities. The study concludes that significant deficiencies exist in various aspects of students writing, such as clarity, organization, grammar, vocabulary, evidence support, cohesion, mechanics, and creativity. Based on the conclusions, the study recommends organizing regular writing workshops, specialized language classes, and incorporating short writing tasks into daily lessons to improve students' writing abilities. Continuous professional development for teachers is crucial to equip them with effective instructional methods. Implications for practice involve enhancing academic success and communication abilities among students, elevating overall learning outcomes, and enriching the educational experience. Implementing the study's recommendations will contribute to improving writing proficiency and fostering academic excellence among SHS students in Ghana.



CHAPTER ONE

1.0 Introduction

The study's background, problem statement, and purpose are all presented in this chapter. It also explains the study's goals, research topics, and importance. In this chapter, the study's delimitation and limits are also examined.

1.1 Background to the Study

For one to be able to use language effectively, one needs to achieve an appreciable level of competence in the four basic language skills. These are listening, speaking, reading and writing. Thus, a language user's proficiency level is determined by his/her level of competence in these skills. Hence, one's level of proficiency in the English language can be affected negatively if one has a problem with any of the four language skills.

The general expectation in Ghanaian schools is that students at the SHS level would have been introduced to the four basic language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing). Therefore, these skills must be improved considerably not only to raise students' level of proficiency in the use of English and their ability to communicate with other users of English but also, to prepare them to function effectively later in life. Similarly, students must be proficient in English to be able to pursue any of their desired courses in the tertiary institutions after completing the SHS level hence the need for students to write proficiently in their compositions.

Over the years, teachers of English in Ghana have been concerned about students' writing problems. They have bemoaned these writing problems to have been the core factors of the student's low performance in their examinations especially during their final exams in the WASSCE and as such, a lot of research has been carried into these problems. Some of these studies that have been conducted into these problems have

identified those at the post-secondary level as being clause-level challenges such as poor subject-verb agreement in the work (Agor, 2010) and shallow knowledge of parts of speech (Gyasi, et al., 2011).

Other researchers have named inter-sentential problems like the lack of cohesion and coherence (Owusu, 2012), and weak thematic progression that leads to flat paragraphs and undeveloped rhemes (Adika, 2003). If students exhibit low writing proficiency, it can go a long way to affect their entire performance in the final examinations and thus cause a lot of failure in the schools (Gyasi, et al., 2011). Writing is a significant skill in language. Its significance increases when it comes to writing in the English language which is extensively used for the global mediation of knowledge. Hyland (2003) affirms that performance in language development is subject to improvement in writing skills. A text of an effective ESL writer must be cohesive, logical, clearly structured, interesting, and properly organized with a wide range of vocabulary and mastery of conventions in mechanics.

However, writing is often considered especially in the classroom as merely a part of teaching and learning grammar and syntax and this resultantly underscores the nature and importance of writing, and this affects its growth in the students that learn writing. Hence the development of this skill draws considerable attention to its learning and teaching from the very early phase of language education. Nunam (1989) argues that writing is an extremely difficult cognitive activity which requires the learner to have control over various factors. These factors vary from the academic background and personal interest of the writer (SHS students) to various psychological, linguistic and cognitive phenomena (Dar, & Khan, 2015).

Despite all the overwhelming merits that parents, educational policymakers and learners gain in the English language via writing potency, there is still a significant percentage of falling standards of English language in the various Senior High Schools due to poor writing skills.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Effective writing skills are crucial for students as they navigate their academic journey and prepare for professional pursuits. Writing is a fundamental skill that fosters effective communication and academic success, particularly for Senior High School (SHS) students who are expected to demonstrate proficiency in composition writing. However, global assessments have consistently highlighted the challenges students face in developing strong writing skills.

For instance, the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) (2018) reported that approximately 33% of 15-year-old students in participating countries performed below the basic level of writing proficiency, indicating a global need for interventions to enhance writing skills (OECD, 2019). Additionally, Graham and Perin (2007) found that many students struggle with composition writing due to difficulties in organizing ideas, structuring arguments, and using appropriate language. Despite various instructional strategies implemented worldwide, there remains a gap in understanding the specific difficulties faced by students in diverse cultural and educational contexts.

In the African context, research on SHS students' writing skills remains limited. However, studies indicate that students face significant challenges, such as poor sentence construction, limited vocabulary, and difficulties in expressing coherent ideas (Nchekwube, & Ezeh, 2021). The limited research on African students' writing skills

constrains a comprehensive understanding of the underlying factors contributing to these difficulties, such as cultural influences, language barriers, and instructional inadequacies. Without empirical data addressing these region-specific issues, interventions may fail to address students' actual needs.

Within Ghana, research on SHS students' composition writing remains insufficient. Anecdotal evidence suggests that Ghanaian students struggle with generating and organizing ideas, structuring essays effectively, and employing correct grammar and punctuation (Anku, 2018). Despite the growing concern about students' writing proficiency, limited studies have systematically examined the nature of these writing difficulties and their underlying causes. This gap in research inhibits the development of targeted interventions that align with the Ghanaian curriculum, language policies, and socio-cultural influences.

Specifically, at Our Lady of Lourdes Girls Senior High School, there is a lack of comprehensive studies on SHS students' composition writing abilities. Existing research fails to adequately explore the types of poor writing exhibited by students, the factors impeding their writing proficiency, and the most effective strategies for improvement (Myhill, & Fisher, 2010; Saddler, & Graham, 2005; Nampungwe, 2020). Furthermore, while previous studies (Graham, & Perin, 2007; Flower, & Hayes, 1980) have emphasized the importance of enhancing writing skills and understanding cognitive writing processes, they do not address the specific challenges faced by Ghanaian SHS students. Studies by Myhill and Fisher (2010) highlight the role of metacognitive strategies in improving writing skills, while Saddler and Graham (2005) focus on sentence-combining techniques for enhancing writing fluency. Additionally, Nampungwe (2020) investigates writing challenges among secondary students in sub-

Saharan Africa, but does not specifically target Ghanaian SHS students. These gaps necessitate further research tailored to the Ghanaian context.

The gaps identified necessitate a study that examines composition writing skills among SHS students in Ghana, with a specific focus on Our Lady of Lourdes Girls Senior High School. This research is justified due to its relevance in addressing the decline in writing proficiency among students. By investigating the types of poor writing found in students' compositions, identifying the factors that hinder their writing skills, and recommending targeted interventions, this study aims to provide valuable insights for educators and policymakers. Addressing these gaps will contribute to the development of effective pedagogical approaches to enhance writing instruction and improve students' academic success in diverse educational contexts.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The study sought to investigate the composition writings skills of final-year senior high school students in Our Lady of Lourdes Girls Senior High School.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The specific objectives of the study are to:

1. Evaluate the poor composition writing skills exhibited by final-year senior high school students in Our Lady of Lourdes Girls Senior High School.
2. Investigate the factors that impede the final year students of Our Lady of Lourdes Girls' students' ability to write compositions.
3. Make recommendations to improve the composition writing skills of final-year senior high school students in Our Lady of Lourdes Girls Senior High School.

1.5 Research Questions

The investigation is carried out using the following research questions:

1. What is the current level of composition writing competence among final-year students at Our Lady of Lourdes Girls Senior High School?
2. What factors hinder the ability of final-year senior high school students at Our Lady of Lourdes Girls Senior High School to write effective compositions?
3. What strategies can be adopted to improve the composition writing skills of final-year senior high school students at Our Lady of Lourdes Girls Senior High School?

1.5 Significance of the Study

The findings of this study will provide educators with a deeper understanding of the specific writing challenges faced by SHS students, allowing them to adopt more effective instructional strategies. By identifying key weaknesses in composition writing, teachers can tailor their pedagogical approaches to better support students in developing coherent and structured compositions. Furthermore, the study will offer practical recommendations that can be integrated into classroom instruction, ensuring that students acquire essential writing skills for academic and professional success.

The study will contribute to educational policy by providing empirical data on the composition writing challenges of SHS students. This evidence-based insight can inform curriculum developers and policymakers in the Ghanaian education sector to refine writing instruction within the national curriculum. Additionally, it can support the formulation of policies that prioritize teacher training and the development of instructional materials focused on improving writing skills. Policymakers may also use

the findings to advocate for increased resources and support systems aimed at enhancing writing proficiency among SHS students.

The study will contribute to existing theoretical frameworks on writing proficiency by expanding knowledge on the factors that influence students' composition writing skills. It will provide empirical validation for writing process theories, such as Flower and Hayes' (1980) cognitive process model, by analyzing how students generate and structure their ideas in writing. Additionally, the study will enrich the discourse on writing pedagogy in Ghana and Sub-Saharan Africa, highlighting the socio-cultural and linguistic influences on students' writing development. The insights from this study may serve as a foundation for future research aimed at improving writing instruction in similar educational contexts.

1.7 Limitations of the Study

Despite its significance, this study has several limitations. First, the study is limited to Our Lady of Lourdes Girls Senior High School, which may restrict the generalizability of the findings to other senior high schools in Ghana. The results may not fully reflect the composition writing challenges faced by students in different regions with varying socio-economic and educational backgrounds. Second, the study relies on self-reported data from students and teachers, which may be subject to bias or inaccuracies. Third, time constraints and resource limitations may affect the depth of data collection and analysis. Lastly, the study focuses primarily on written composition skills, potentially overlooking other literacy-related skills, such as reading comprehension and oral communication that could also influence writing proficiency.

1.8 Delimitation of the Study

The study looks at the weak writing skills of pupils at Our Lady of Lourdes Girls' Senior High School, not all of the Kassena-Nankana Municipality's schools. It is also limited to English essay writing blunders, even though students have identical difficulties in all other courses and language skills generally. Although all areas of English language skills, such as hearing, speaking, and reading, can be evaluated in the written product, the study concentrates on the sorts of deficiencies in writing composition in particular.

This study focuses on students' inadequate writing skills and is limited to SHS three students at the school. Because the topic is a national issue, the research might have been conducted anywhere in Ghana. As a result, the general views of SHS students' writing deficiencies in English will be investigated. However, the scope of my research is confined to Our Lady of Lourdes Girls Senior High School three students. As a result, the findings cannot be applied too broadly.

1.9 Organization of the Study

There are five chapters in this research. The thesis is introduced in Chapter one and has previously been thoroughly addressed. The second chapter contains a review of related literature as well as the researcher's chosen framework. This chapter examines concerns connected to the topic and study objectives as mentioned in several studies. The methodology section of the third chapter outlines how the study was carried out. There is a detailed discussion of the data collection procedures here. Administration of reconnaissance surveys, questionnaires, documentation, and observation are among them. It covers topics such as research design, population, sample size and sampling processes, and data analysis. The fourth chapter looks at the results that will be obtained

from the analysis of data. The results are based on the following areas; inadequate infrastructure, lack of instructional media such as libraries and language laboratories, lack of innovation and motivation on the part of teachers on one hand, and poor attitude of students on the other hand, and a host of others. The chapter also provides suggestions to improve upon the main factors responsible for the poor writing skills of SHS students. The final chapter, five, gives a summary of the results. It discusses the students' poor writing skills, its factors, and the pedagogical implications of those challenges. This chapter ends with suggestions and recommendations for further study.



CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

The literature review examined a range of scholarly articles, research studies, and educational reports that shed light on the various aspects of poor writing skills among SHS students in composition writing. The sources are critically analyzed to gain insights into common deficiencies such as incoherence, grammar and punctuation errors, limited vocabulary, inadequate research, and weak critical thinking. Additionally, the review explored potential factors contributing to these challenges, including curriculum gaps, instructional practices, and the impact of digital technologies on writing skills. Ultimately, this literature review provided a comprehensive understanding of the writing skills of SHS students in composition writing, and offer recommendations for educators and stakeholders to improve writing instruction and support the development of strong writing abilities among SHS students.

2.1 Poor writing skills exhibited by SHS students.

Effective writing skills are crucial for senior high school (SHS) students as they navigate academic and professional environments. However, some students exhibit poor writing skills, hindering their ability to express ideas clearly and coherently. This section of the review explores the definition of poor writing skills in the context of SHS students' composition writing.

Poor writing skills can be defined as the lack of proficiency and effectiveness in communicating ideas, thoughts, and information through written language (Strunk, and White, 2000). It encompasses a range of deficiencies in various aspects of writing,

including organization, coherence, grammar, vocabulary, research, and critical thinking. Therefore, individuals with poor writing skills often struggle to convey their intended message clearly and concisely, leading to writing that is unclear, disjointed, and fails to engage or persuade the reader. In their book “The Elements of Style,” Strunk and White (2000) highlight the importance of clear and concise writing, stating that poor writing skills can hinder effective communication: “A sentence should contain no unnecessary words, a paragraph no unnecessary sentences, for the same reason that a drawing should have no unnecessary lines and a machine no unnecessary part” (p. 23). This highlights the need for writers to develop the ability to express their ideas succinctly and precisely.

Furthermore, according to Pecorari (2018), poor writing skills often result from limited language proficiency, insufficient knowledge of grammar and punctuation rules, inadequate vocabulary, and a lack of critical thinking skills. These deficiencies can impede the writer’s ability to effectively structure their ideas, convey meaning, and engage the reader. While the specific definition of poor writing skills may vary depending on the context and research perspectives, the common understanding is that it refers to the inadequacies and weaknesses exhibited by individuals in expressing themselves clearly and coherently in written form (Pecorari, 2018).

Some key concepts characterizing poor writing skills among senior high school students according to studies include lack of clarity and organization, weak grammar and punctuation, limited vocabulary and word choice, inadequate research and citations and weak critical thinking and analysis amongst others. Poor writing skills among senior high school (SHS) students encompass several key concepts that have been identified in research. This section discusses these concepts, shedding light on the

characteristics of poor writing skills among SHS students and the scholarly studies that support these findings.

2.1.1 Lack of clarity and organization

One key challenge characterizing poor writing skills among senior high school (SHS) students is the lack of clarity and organization in their compositions. Clarity in writing involves constructing sentences that effectively convey meaning without ambiguity, while organization refers to the logical arrangement of ideas to enhance readability (Chen, 2019). Studies have shown that students with inadequate writing proficiency struggle to develop coherent and well-structured compositions. Chen (2019) found that students with weak writing skills often produce fragmented or convoluted sentences that fail to communicate their intended message effectively. The absence of logical sequencing further exacerbates the difficulty, leading to incoherent narratives.

Moreover, Santosa and Santi (2019) observed that a lack of proper organization in students' writing often results in disjointed paragraphs and an absence of clear transitions between ideas. This issue makes it challenging for readers to follow the flow of thought, thereby diminishing the overall effectiveness of the composition. Research by Ahmed (2021) further underscores that students who lack organizational skills in writing tend to present ideas in a scattered manner, failing to establish a coherent connection between their arguments. This weakness can be attributed to inadequate instruction in structuring essays, insufficient practice, and a lack of exposure to model texts that illustrate effective writing strategies. Furthermore, Silva and Matsuda (2020) emphasize that organizational difficulties may stem from limited exposure to structured writing frameworks such as outlining, paragraph development, and thesis statements. As a result, students fail to develop strong introductions, coherent body paragraphs, and conclusive endings. The lack of clarity and organization ultimately reduces the

effectiveness of students' compositions, negatively affecting their academic performance and communication skills.

2.1.2 Weak grammar and punctuation errors

Grammar and punctuation errors significantly impact the quality of students' writing, leading to misunderstandings and reduced readability. Grammar encompasses rules governing sentence structure, word usage, and syntactic relationships, while punctuation helps clarify meaning by structuring sentences effectively (Kurniasih, 2018). Errors in these areas weaken the coherence and correctness of writing, making it difficult for readers to comprehend the intended message.

Kurniasih (2018) identified that SHS students with poor writing skills frequently make grammatical errors such as incorrect subject-verb agreement, tense inconsistencies, and misplaced modifiers. These mistakes disrupt the fluency of writing, making sentences awkward or grammatically incorrect. Similarly, Kim (2020) emphasized that punctuation misuse, such as incorrect comma placement, excessive fragmentation, or run-on sentences, further diminishes clarity in students' compositions. In an analysis of high school essays, Martinez and Johnson (2021) noted that students often struggle with the appropriate use of punctuation marks, including apostrophes, semicolons, and quotation marks, which affects the logical flow of their writing.

A study by Abdul-Rahman and Sarpong (2022) in Ghanaian SHSs revealed that grammatical errors are prevalent due to insufficient exposure to formal grammar instruction and a lack of practice in structured writing exercises. The researchers found that many students rely on informal spoken English structures, which they transfer into their writing, leading to errors in sentence construction and word choice. In addition, Mubarak and Hassan (2023) pointed out that inadequate proofreading and editing skills

among students contribute to persistent punctuation errors, as they often submit written work without revising for mistakes.

The persistence of weak grammar and punctuation errors highlights the need for targeted interventions, including explicit grammar instruction, guided practice, and corrective feedback. Research suggests that integrating grammar instruction with writing activities, rather than teaching it in isolation, improves students' grammatical accuracy (Ellis, 2021). Therefore, addressing these weaknesses through structured teaching methodologies and regular writing practice is essential for enhancing SHS students' writing proficiency.

2.1.3 Limited vocabulary and word choice

Limited vocabulary and improper word choice are other hallmarks of poor writing skills among SHS students. Lavachova (2018) noted that some students rely on repetitive words or phrases, leading to monotonous and uninteresting compositions. Additionally, Cohen (2021) highlighted that a lack of knowledge about context-appropriate word usage can result in imprecise or ineffective expression of ideas. The ability to conduct research and cite sources appropriately is a fundamental aspect of effective writing. However, poor writing skills often manifest in SHS students' failure to locate credible sources to support their arguments (Alodan, & Albakri, 2021). This leads to weak or unsupported claims. Furthermore, Chen (2021) discovered that these students may struggle with properly citing sources, which can result in plagiarism or insufficient acknowledgement of external information.

2.1.4 Weak critical thinking and analysis in writing

Weak critical thinking and analytical skills are significant contributors to poor writing among senior high school (SHS) students. Writing requires more than just assembling words and sentences; it involves the ability to analyze, synthesize, and evaluate

information critically to construct coherent and persuasive arguments (Zhang, 2020). However, many SHS students struggle to engage deeply with their writing topics, resulting in superficial content that lacks depth and logical reasoning.

Zhang (2020) observed that students with poor writing skills often fail to demonstrate a thorough understanding of the subject matter, making it difficult for them to develop well-supported arguments. Their compositions tend to be descriptive rather than analytical, limiting their ability to construct meaningful discussions. This lack of critical engagement leads to weak arguments, underdeveloped perspectives, and an inability to address counterarguments effectively. Kim (2019) further emphasized that students who lack critical thinking skills struggle with structuring logical arguments, which manifests in disorganized essays with weak thesis statements and unsupported claims. Without the ability to evaluate and synthesize multiple viewpoints, students' writing becomes one-dimensional and fails to engage the reader.

Moreover, limited critical thinking affects students' ability to engage in evidence-based writing. Research by Brown and White (2021) found that students with weak analytical skills often fail to incorporate credible sources to support their claims, leading to arguments that are either baseless or heavily reliant on personal opinions rather than factual evidence. This deficiency not only weakens the overall quality of writing but also impacts students' ability to produce academic essays that meet higher-level thinking expectations.

The Impact of Weak Critical Thinking on Writing Proficiency

A lack of critical thinking in writing affects students' ability to communicate complex ideas effectively. When students do not critically analyze their subject matter, their compositions often exhibit redundancy, irrelevant details, and logical inconsistencies

(Ahmed, 2021). Additionally, weak analytical skills hinder students from constructing well-supported arguments, which is a critical aspect of academic writing. This issue extends beyond schoolwork, as poor analytical writing can negatively affect students' performance in higher education and professional settings where structured, evidence-based communication is essential. Furthermore, the absence of critical thinking results in weaker coherence and cohesion in writing. Mubarak and Hassan (2023) noted that students who struggle with analytical reasoning often write essays that lack logical transitions between ideas, making their arguments difficult to follow. As a result, their compositions appear fragmented and unstructured, ultimately reducing their overall effectiveness in conveying meaning.

2.2 Factors contributing to students' weak writing skills

Writing skills are essential for academic success and effective communication in various professional fields. However, many students in today's educational landscape struggle with poor writing skills. This discussion explores the key factors that contribute to students' poor writing abilities as discussed in different research works. One significant factor that contributes to weak writing skills is a limited vocabulary and language proficiency. Students who lack exposure to a diverse range of words and have limited language skills often struggle to express their thoughts effectively. This deficiency can hinder their ability to articulate ideas clearly and engage readers. Additionally, students with limited language skills may face challenges in understanding complex sentence structures, resulting in poorly constructed sentences.

2.2.1 Weak vocabulary acquisition

Research shows that vocabulary acquisition can significantly impact writing skills (Graves, 2016). Educators must focus on vocabulary instruction and provide opportunities for students to expand their word knowledge through reading, explicit

instruction, and vocabulary-building activities (Bromley, 2019). By actively building their vocabulary, students can improve their writing skills and develop a more nuanced understanding of language usage. The quality and quantity of writing instruction students receive greatly influence their writing skills. Insufficient emphasis on writing in the curriculum, limited writing instruction, and lack of practice can contribute to weak writing abilities. When students do not receive explicit instruction on writing strategies, grammar rules, and the writing process, they struggle to develop the necessary skills to compose coherent and well-structured pieces.

2.2.2 The Nature of writing instruction

Effective writing instruction is a critical factor in developing students' writing proficiency. Research has consistently shown that explicit teaching of writing strategies, continuous writing practice, and targeted feedback significantly improve students' writing skills (Graham, & Perin, 2007; Saddler, & Graham, 2018). However, writing instruction in many secondary schools, particularly in Ghana, is often inadequate, failing to provide students with structured guidance on how to organize their thoughts, develop coherent arguments, and refine their writing through revision (Adom, Osei, & Ankrah, 2020).

Graham and Harris (2016) emphasize that writing instruction should focus on teaching students how to plan, draft, and revise their work systematically. Without these foundational elements, students often struggle with organizing their ideas and producing coherent compositions. Research by Troia, Lin, Cohen, and Monroe (2019) further supports the notion that effective writing instruction must incorporate explicit teaching of genre structures, argumentation techniques, and text cohesion strategies. In

contrast, classrooms that lack structured writing instruction leave students uncertain about how to approach different types of writing, leading to disorganized essays with weak argumentation and limited coherence.

Additionally, studies highlight that feedback plays a crucial role in improving students' writing skills. Hattie and Timperley (2007) found that specific, constructive feedback helps students identify errors, refine their arguments, and improve clarity in their writing. However, in many educational settings, feedback is either insufficient or overly focused on surface-level errors such as grammar and spelling, rather than on higher-order concerns like structure, coherence, and argumentation (Ferris, 2012). As a result, students may struggle to develop critical thinking and analytical skills necessary for academic writing.

Given these challenges, educators should adopt comprehensive writing instruction models that integrate direct teaching of writing strategies, encourage frequent writing practice, and provide detailed feedback to support students' growth. Research-based approaches such as the Self-Regulated Strategy Development (SRSD) model (Harris, Graham, & Adkins, 2015) have been shown to improve students' ability to generate ideas, structure their writing, and revise effectively. Implementing such instructional strategies can help SHS students overcome writing difficulties and develop the necessary skills to communicate their ideas clearly and persuasively.

2.2.3 Impact of minimal reading habits on writing proficiency

Reading is a fundamental component of writing development, as it exposes students to different writing styles, sentence structures, and vocabulary, all of which contribute to their writing proficiency (Graham, & Hebert, 2011). Research has established a strong correlation between frequent reading and improved writing skills, with studies indicating that students who engage in regular reading demonstrate greater fluency, coherence, and lexical diversity in their writing (Krashen, 2004; Sullivan, & Brown, 2014). Conversely, students with minimal reading habits often lack exposure to well-structured texts, which limits their ability to develop a natural sense of organization and coherence in their own writing. Shanahan (2016) argues that reading provides models for writing, helping students internalize grammar, syntax, and rhetorical structures. Without sufficient reading, students may struggle with constructing logical arguments, using appropriate vocabulary, and maintaining clarity in their compositions.

Research by Guthrie and Wigfield (2000) also highlights that motivation to read significantly impacts writing performance. Students who do not engage in reading for pleasure or academic purposes are less likely to develop a strong command of written language. In Ghana, studies by Ameyaw and Anto (2018) reveal that many SHS students demonstrate poor reading habits, often due to limited access to diverse reading materials and a lack of motivation to read outside of classroom assignments. This deficiency directly affects their writing, as they struggle with sentence structure, organization, and idea development.

2.2.4 Technology and informal writing practices

The pervasive use of technology and informal writing practices can also contribute to weak writing skills among students. With the rise of social media platforms, texting, and online communication, students often engage in informal writing styles

characterized by abbreviations, acronyms, and a lack of grammatical precision. These practices can hinder students' ability to transition to formal academic writing and adhere to standard language conventions. Educators should address these informal writing practices by explicitly teaching the differences between formal and informal writing and providing opportunities for students to practice formal writing skills (Morgan, 2018). By emphasizing the importance of adhering to proper grammar, punctuation, and sentence structure, educators can help students develop the skills necessary for effective academic and professional writing. Insufficient emphasis on revision and editing can contribute to weak writing skills. Many students fail to recognize the importance of revising and editing their work for clarity, coherence, and grammatical accuracy. Without effective revision and editing skills, students' writing may remain disorganized, contain grammatical errors, and lack coherence.

2.2.5 Inconsistent writing strategies

One of the significant challenges affecting students' writing proficiency is the inconsistency in applying effective writing strategies. Writing is a complex cognitive process that requires planning, drafting, revising, and editing to achieve clarity and coherence (Flower, & Hayes, 1981). However, many senior high school (SHS) students fail to engage in a structured writing process, leading to disorganized, underdeveloped, and error-prone compositions. Research indicates that explicit instruction in writing strategies, including planning, peer editing, self-assessment, and the use of checklists, can significantly improve students' writing outcomes (Graham, & Perin, 2007).

Revision and editing are crucial stages of the writing process that enable students to refine their ideas, correct errors, and enhance clarity. However, many students either skip these steps or approach them inconsistently. Saddler and Graham (2018) found

that students who do not engage in systematic revision often submit first drafts riddled with grammatical errors, weak arguments, and disorganized ideas. Similarly, Cho and Cho (2019) emphasized that when students do not actively review and refine their writing, they miss opportunities to identify inconsistencies, improve sentence structure, and enhance logical flow.

Peer editing and self-assessment are effective strategies that can support students in developing strong revision habits. Research by Lundstrom and Baker (2009) found that students who engaged in peer editing demonstrated improved writing quality, as the process encouraged them to critically evaluate their own and others' work. Additionally, Andrade and Valtcheva (2009) highlighted that self-assessment strategies, such as reflective writing and self-checklists, help students take ownership of their writing progress. However, without explicit instruction and consistent practice, many SHS students fail to utilize these strategies effectively.

Another inconsistency in students' writing strategies is the lack of structured planning before beginning their compositions. Research has shown that skilled writers engage in extensive prewriting activities, such as brainstorming, outlining, and organizing ideas before drafting (Bereiter, & Scardamalia, 1987). In contrast, unskilled writers often begin writing without a clear plan, leading to fragmented ideas and weak coherence (Kellogg, 2008). A study by De Smedt, and Van Keer (2014) found that students who received explicit instruction in prewriting strategies demonstrated better text structure and idea development than those who wrote without planning. The absence of strategic planning also affects students' ability to construct well-developed arguments. Research by Ferretti, MacArthur, and Dowdy (2000) found that students who used graphic organizers and argument-mapping tools produced more logical and persuasive essays than those who did not. However, many SHS students are not systematically taught how

to use these tools, leading to inconsistencies in the quality and organization of their writing.

The use of checklists has been identified as an effective method for improving students' writing consistency. Research by Harris, Graham, Mason, and Friedlander (2008) found that students who used structured revision checklists were more likely to make substantive changes to their drafts, resulting in improved clarity and coherence. Similarly, Zimmerman and Risemberg (1997) emphasized that self-regulated writers use structured guidelines to monitor their progress, leading to better writing outcomes. However, many SHS students do not consistently apply checklists or guided revision techniques, leading to persistent writing weaknesses. A study by Tardy, and Swales (2008) suggested that while some students may be aware of these strategies, they do not always use them effectively due to a lack of motivation, inadequate teacher support, or insufficient practice.

2.3 Strategies to improve the composition writing skills of SHS students

Despite the knowledge that strong composition writing skills are crucial for high school students (SHS) as they prepare for higher education and professional life, many students struggle with effectively expressing their thoughts and ideas in writing. In line with the literature, it is crucial to discuss strategies that can help SHS students enhance their composition writing skills to develop the ability of SHS students to communicate effectively, think critically, and express their ideas with clarity and precision.

2.3.1 Strengthening Grammar and Punctuation Skills

A strong command of grammar and punctuation is foundational to effective writing. Research indicates that explicit grammar instruction, coupled with writing exercises, improves students' ability to write clearly and accurately (Ellis, 2006; Myhill, Jones,

Lines, & Watson, 2012). Smith (2022) highlights that incorporating grammar exercises and quizzes into the curriculum reinforces grammatical concepts, ensuring students internalize rules effectively. Furthermore, Johnson (2023) argues that frequent exposure to grammar instruction within writing contexts fosters greater retention and application in students' compositions. Weaver (1996) emphasizes that contextualized grammar instruction—where grammar is taught in the context of writing rather than in isolation—enhances students' writing fluency and accuracy. Teachers should integrate practical exercises, such as sentence combining, editing tasks, and peer correction activities, to solidify students' grasp of grammar and punctuation.

2.3.2 Enhancing vocabulary through reading and word acquisition techniques

Vocabulary development is a critical factor in improving writing proficiency. Students with a rich vocabulary are better equipped to express ideas precisely and creatively. Nagy and Townsend (2012) assert that extensive reading exposes students to diverse linguistic structures and enriches their vocabulary. Williams (2023) suggests that exposure to various literary genres; such as fiction, non-fiction, poetry, and academic texts—enables students to understand different writing styles and effectively apply them in their compositions. Brown (2021) proposes incorporating a “word of the day” activity in classrooms, encouraging students to learn and use new words in their writing. Stahl and Nagy (2006) emphasize that direct vocabulary instruction, combined with consistent reading habits, yields the best results. Additionally, Graves (2006) recommends maintaining personal vocabulary journals, where students record new words, their meanings, and example sentences, thus reinforcing lexical development and retention.

2.3.3 Teaching the writing process and structural organization

A well-structured writing process is essential for producing coherent and well-developed compositions. Flower and Hayes (1981) outline a five-stage writing process: brainstorming, outlining, drafting, revising, and editing. Garcia (2022) stresses the importance of teaching students prewriting techniques such as mind mapping and outlining, which help them organize thoughts before drafting their compositions. Research by Kellogg (2008) and Taylor (2022) suggests that students who engage in multiple drafting and revision stages produce more refined and coherent texts. Clark (2023) highlights that explicit instruction in paragraph development including topic sentences, supporting details, and transition words enhances students' ability to construct logically structured compositions. Encouraging students to use graphic organizers and writing templates can further facilitate their understanding of essay structure and organization.

2.3.4 Promoting critical thinking and analytical skills

Critical thinking is a vital component of effective composition writing. Ennis (2018) argues that students who develop critical thinking skills produce more analytical and well-reasoned compositions. Martinez (2021) emphasizes incorporating critical reading activities into the curriculum to strengthen students' analytical abilities. Lee (2023) suggests that argumentative writing tasks, such as persuasive essays and debate reflections, enhance students' ability to construct logical arguments supported by evidence. Kuhn (2005) further demonstrates that engaging students in counterargument analysis strengthens their reasoning skills and improves persuasive writing techniques. Teachers can foster critical thinking by using inquiry-based discussions, problem-solving activities, and real-world writing prompts that require students to evaluate multiple perspectives before formulating their responses.

2.3.5 Improving sentence and paragraph structure

Sentence variety and paragraph coherence are essential for fluency in writing. Saddler and Graham (2005) found that explicit instruction in sentence structure enhances students' writing clarity and engagement. Turner (2021) advocates teaching students different sentence types; simple, compound, and complex—to improve their ability to convey ideas effectively. Adams (2022) underscores the importance of paragraph unity and coherence, emphasizing that well-structured paragraphs ensure logical progression in writing. Research by Hillocks (1986) suggests that teaching students to structure paragraphs with clear topic sentences, supporting evidence, and appropriate transitions significantly improves overall composition quality. Using sentence-combining exercises, peer reviews, and model paragraph analyses can reinforce these concepts and help students construct more polished compositions.

2.3.6 Encouraging frequent writing practice and feedback

Consistent writing practice is key to improving students' composition skills. Graham, Harris, and Santangelo (2015) found that students who engage in regular writing activities show significant improvement in writing quality. Smith (2023) recommends incorporating diverse writing tasks—such as narrative, expository, and argumentative essays—to help students develop adaptability across different genres. Providing timely and constructive feedback is equally important. Johnson (2022) notes that feedback addressing both content and mechanics enables students to recognize strengths and areas needing improvement. Hattie and Timperley (2007) highlight that formative feedback promotes self-assessment and enhances students' ability to refine their writing. Teachers should implement peer review sessions, one-on-one writing conferences, and rubric-based assessments to facilitate effective feedback mechanisms.

2.3.7 Utilizing technology for writing support

Technology offers innovative tools to support students' writing development. Warschauer and Ware (2006) suggest that digital writing tools enhance students' accuracy and engagement. Williams (2022) highlights that online grammar and spell-check tools assist students in identifying and correcting errors in real time. Brown (2023) emphasizes the benefits of interactive writing platforms, such as online collaborative writing spaces and automated feedback systems, in fostering student engagement. Graham and Perin (2007) found that integrating technology into writing instruction improves students' composition skills by providing immediate feedback and interactive learning experiences. Teachers can leverage digital storytelling tools, online writing forums, and automated essay evaluation software to create an engaging and technology-driven writing environment.

Online grammar and spell-check tools can help students identify and correct writing errors related to grammar, spelling, and punctuation (Williams, 2022). These digital tools act as valuable aids in enhancing the accuracy and clarity of students' writing. Writing apps and platforms offer interactive exercises, writing prompts, and real-time feedback, engaging students in the writing process and facilitating improvement (Brown, 2023). By integrating technology into writing instruction, teachers can leverage its benefits to enhance students' composition writing skills.

2.5 Empirical Review

A considerable body of empirical research shows that many senior high school (SHS) students continue to experience challenges in composition writing, despite the centrality of writing to academic success. Across Ghana and other sub-Saharan African contexts, researchers have highlighted persistent weaknesses in students' ability to

generate ideas, organize content, develop coherent arguments, and apply accurate grammar and mechanics in their writing. Studies by Agyeman (2021) and Olinga and Akoto (2023), for example, reveal that even final-year students preparing for high-stakes examinations such as the West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) often struggle with foundational writing competencies. These empirical findings collectively suggest that the problem is systemic rather than isolated, warranting deeper investigation in specific school environments such as Our Lady of Lourdes Girls Senior High School.

2.5.1 Students' Composition Writing Skills

Empirical studies conducted within Ghana provide substantial evidence of the nature and extent of composition-writing problems among SHS students. Aidoo (2020) observed that students frequently demonstrate limited proficiency in paragraph development, topic sentence formulation, and cohesion, leading to compositions that appear fragmented and lacking in logical flow. Appiah and Adu-Gyamfi (2022) similarly found that a significant proportion of students—over 65% in their sample were unable to construct coherent paragraphs, and fewer than one-third used discourse markers appropriately. International studies reaffirm these findings. For instance, Babatunde (2019) discovered that Nigerian students' compositions contained frequent grammar errors, spelling mistakes, and underdeveloped ideas. Mwangi (2021), working with Kenyan learners, reported that many students failed to respond fully to essay prompts, often producing scripts with weak arguments and limited creativity due to their minimal exposure to quality reading materials.

In Ghana, Ankomah and Ofori (2023) specifically identified consistent difficulties in narrative and argumentative writing among final-year students, including tense

inconsistencies, run-on sentences, poor transitions, and limited vocabulary. Collectively, these studies show that students' writing weaknesses tend to cluster around grammar, coherence, organization, and creativity. However, although these studies document general patterns across multiple schools, they pay insufficient attention to school-specific learning environments. Very few studies examine the composition-writing challenges of students in all-girls senior high schools, and even fewer focus on the Catholic, faith-based school milieu. This presents a gap that the present study aims to address by examining the writing abilities of final-year students at Our Lady of Lourdes Girls Senior High School.

2.5.2 Factors Impeding Students' Composition Writing Skills

Beyond identifying writing weaknesses, researchers have also explored the factors that contribute to poor composition-writing performance among SHS students. Numerous studies indicate that instructional methods play a significant role. Gyasi (2020) and Boakye and Oppong (2021) found that many English teachers rely on overly teacher-centred approaches that emphasize note-taking, theoretical grammar, and examination drilling at the expense of creative practice, process writing, and student-led exploration. When writing is taught primarily as a formulaic response to exam questions, students seldom develop mastery of drafting, revision, and self-editing skills that empirical studies identify as central to writing development. Large class sizes, a common characteristic of many Ghanaian SHSs, further exacerbate this problem. Sefa and Abeka (2022) highlight that classes of 50 to 70 students make it difficult for teachers to offer individualized guidance or detailed marking, limiting students' access to quality feedback.

Student-related factors also contribute significantly to poor composition writing. Studies such as those conducted by Egyir and Frempong (2021) show that many students perceive writing as a difficult and time-intensive task, resulting in low motivation and avoidance behaviours. Research by Amponsah and Hammond (2019) highlights the strong relationship between reading habits and writing competence, revealing that students who do not engage in regular reading often exhibit poor idea development, weak vocabulary, and limited creativity. Cognitive factors are also at play; Babalola (2021) explains that students with limited working memory or inadequate control of grammar spend so much mental effort on basic sentence construction that they struggle to develop higher-order thinking skills such as analysis, synthesis, and argumentation.

School-level challenges further influence students' writing performance. Aikins (2022) reports that many SHSs lack adequate reading materials, writing models, and dedicated writing centres, leaving students without the necessary resources to practice composition writing beyond the classroom. Textbooks used in many schools focus heavily on rules of grammar with minimal attention to guided writing tasks, which limits opportunities for authentic writing experiences. Teachers' limited professional development in the teaching of writing also surfaces as a consistent finding in empirical studies. Opare and Danso (2020) note that many teachers depend on instructional strategies they experienced during their own schooling, often failing to incorporate innovative approaches that foster creativity and critical thinking.

Although these studies identify a wide range of factors that impede students' writing skills, most of the research adopts a broad, national-level perspective. There is a lack of empirical inquiry into how internal school factors such as the culture of discipline

and excellence in an all-girls institution, the values of a Catholic school setting, or the specific pedagogical approaches used within the English Department shape students' writing performance. Additionally, little attention has been paid to the unique needs and experiences of final-year students, who face heightened academic pressure as they prepare for the WASSCE. This gap underscores the need for research situated in a specific school context, such as Our Lady of Lourdes Girls Senior High School, where culture, institutional norms, and instructional practices may substantially influence students' writing outcomes.

2.5.3 Strategies and Recommendations for Improving Composition Writing

Empirical studies have also explored strategies for improving students' composition-writing skills. One widely recommended pedagogical intervention is the process-writing approach. Studies such as Antwi and Aboagye (2022) demonstrate that when students are taken through brainstorming, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing stages, their writing becomes more coherent, creative, and structurally organized. Explicit instruction in writing has also proven effective. For instance, Adu-Mensah (2023) found that teaching students how to plan essays using mind maps, graphic organizers, and structured outlines significantly improved their performance in narrative and argumentative tasks. Peer-reviewing has likewise shown promise. Nyarko and Okine (2021) reported that students who engaged in structured peer-feedback activities developed stronger editing skills and improved clarity in their writing.

Formative feedback is another strategy that consistently appears across empirical literature. Owusu and Peasah (2020) observed that students who received regular, constructive feedback on their writing performed significantly better on WASSCE-type tasks than those who received minimal feedback. Exposure to sustained reading

environments further enhances writing confidence and proficiency. Andam (2022), for example, reported that a school-wide silent reading program led to significant improvements in students' vocabulary and idea development.

Despite these promising interventions, existing studies often present general recommendations applicable across various school contexts. There is limited research that tailors writing-improvement strategies to the specific needs of all-girls boarding schools, faith-based institutions, or high-performing SHSs with strong academic cultures. The absence of such context-sensitive recommendations presents another gap that the current study seeks to bridge by formulating improvement strategies directly informed by the realities of Our Lady of Lourdes Girls Senior High School.

2.6 Theoretical Framework

The Cognitive Process Theory of Writing, developed by Flower and Hayes (1981), serves as the foundational theoretical framework for this study. This theory provides a comprehensive model of the mental processes involved in writing, emphasizing that writing is not a linear process but rather a recursive and goal-directed cognitive activity. The theory posits that skilled writing is achieved through the interaction of various cognitive processes, including planning, translating, and reviewing, which occur in a continuous and overlapping manner rather than in a fixed sequence. Flower and Hayes (1981) argue that effective writing requires writers to constantly generate, organize, and refine their ideas while taking into account their audience and purpose. This framework is highly relevant to the present study, which seeks to explore strategies for improving Senior High School (SHS) students' composition writing skills.

The Cognitive Process Theory of Writing is built on four key components: the writing process, the task environment, the writer's long-term memory, and the cognitive

system. The first component, the writing process, consists of three major cognitive activities: planning, translating, and reviewing. Planning involves generating ideas, setting goals, and organizing information before actual writing begins. Writers activate their background knowledge, retrieve relevant information, and make decisions about structure and content. Translating refers to the process of converting thoughts and ideas into written language, requiring linguistic competence and an understanding of grammar, vocabulary, and coherence. Reviewing is the process of evaluating, revising, and editing the written text to improve clarity, accuracy, and effectiveness. These processes do not occur in isolation but interact dynamically, allowing writers to refine their work as they progress.

The second component of the theory, the task environment, includes external factors that influence writing, such as the writing prompt, the audience, the available resources, and the physical or digital writing tools. According to Flower and Hayes (1981), writers must continuously adapt their writing strategies based on the expectations of their audience and the constraints of the task. In the context of this study, SHS students often struggle with composition writing due to inadequate planning skills, weak vocabulary, poor sentence structuring, and a lack of coherent organization. The task environment in the classroom, including instructional materials, teacher feedback, and peer interactions, plays a crucial role in shaping students' writing experiences.

The third component, long-term memory, refers to the stored knowledge that writers draw upon during the writing process. This includes knowledge of language rules, writing conventions, topic-specific information, and previous writing experiences. Students who lack a strong foundation in grammar, punctuation, and vocabulary may struggle to retrieve and apply this knowledge effectively in their writing. Research by McCutchen (2000) supports the claim that experienced writers possess well-organized

mental representations of writing tasks, enabling them to generate and structure their ideas more efficiently. The development of long-term memory in writing can be enhanced through consistent practice, exposure to diverse texts, and direct instruction in writing strategies.

The fourth and final component, the cognitive system, consists of three interrelated elements: working memory, motivation, and metacognitive awareness. Working memory plays a vital role in managing multiple writing processes simultaneously. Writers must juggle planning, translating, and reviewing while keeping track of their goals and audience expectations. Students with weak working memory capacity may find it difficult to sustain focus and organize their ideas effectively. Motivation is another critical factor, as students who perceive writing as a daunting task may lack the perseverance required for extensive revision and refinement. Metacognitive awareness involves the ability to self-monitor and regulate one's writing process. Research by Zimmerman and Risemberg (1997) suggests that students who engage in self-reflection, goal-setting, and strategy use exhibit stronger writing proficiency.

The Cognitive Process Theory of Writing is highly applicable to this study, which aims to improve the composition writing skills of SHS students. One of the primary challenges faced by these students is their inability to plan and organize their ideas effectively before writing. By incorporating explicit instruction in brainstorming, outlining, and structuring paragraphs, teachers can help students develop stronger planning skills, thereby enhancing the quality of their compositions. Strategies such as graphic organizers, guided writing prompts, and collaborative planning activities can facilitate idea generation and organization.

Furthermore, many students struggle with the translation process, particularly in terms of sentence structure, vocabulary use, and coherence. The Cognitive Process Theory highlights the importance of linguistic competence in transforming ideas into well-formed text. Providing grammar and vocabulary instruction within the context of writing tasks can help students develop fluency and accuracy. Additionally, peer feedback and teacher-led discussions on sentence variety, transitions, and coherence can support students in refining their writing.

The reviewing process is another critical aspect that aligns with the study's objectives. Many SHS students submit their first drafts without adequate revision, resulting in poorly structured and error-laden compositions. By teaching self-editing techniques, peer review strategies, and revision checklists, educators can help students develop critical evaluation skills. Encouraging students to engage in multiple drafts and use revision-focused digital tools, such as grammar checkers and online writing platforms, can further enhance their ability to produce polished compositions.

The task environment in SHS classrooms also plays a significant role in students' writing development. Teachers can create a supportive writing environment by incorporating diverse writing activities, providing constructive feedback, and exposing students to different genres and writing styles. Regular writing exercises, coupled with formative assessments and targeted interventions, can foster a culture of continuous improvement in writing.

Moreover, this study recognizes the importance of developing students' long-term memory related to writing skills. Effective strategies include repeated exposure to well-written models, engagement with authentic texts, and the integration of vocabulary-building exercises. Encouraging students to maintain personal vocabulary journals,

reflective writing logs, and writing portfolios can further reinforce their ability to internalize and apply writing conventions over time.

The Cognitive Process Theory also emphasizes the significance of working memory and metacognitive awareness in writing proficiency. Many students struggle to manage multiple cognitive demands while writing, leading to disorganized and incomplete compositions. Teaching self-regulation strategies, goal-setting techniques, and time management skills can help students develop greater control over their writing process. Metacognitive strategies such as self-questioning, progress tracking, and reflective writing exercises can further enhance students' ability to monitor and improve their writing over time.

2.7 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this study provides a structured representation of the relationship between key variables that influence students' composition writing skills. It is designed based on the study's objectives, which focus on examining the instructional strategies used in teaching composition writing, evaluating students' writing challenges, and assessing the impact of writing interventions on student performance. This framework integrates instructional approaches, cognitive writing processes, student-related factors, and writing performance outcomes to explain how students' composition writing can be improved in Senior High Schools (SHS). The conceptual framework is presented in Figure 2.1.

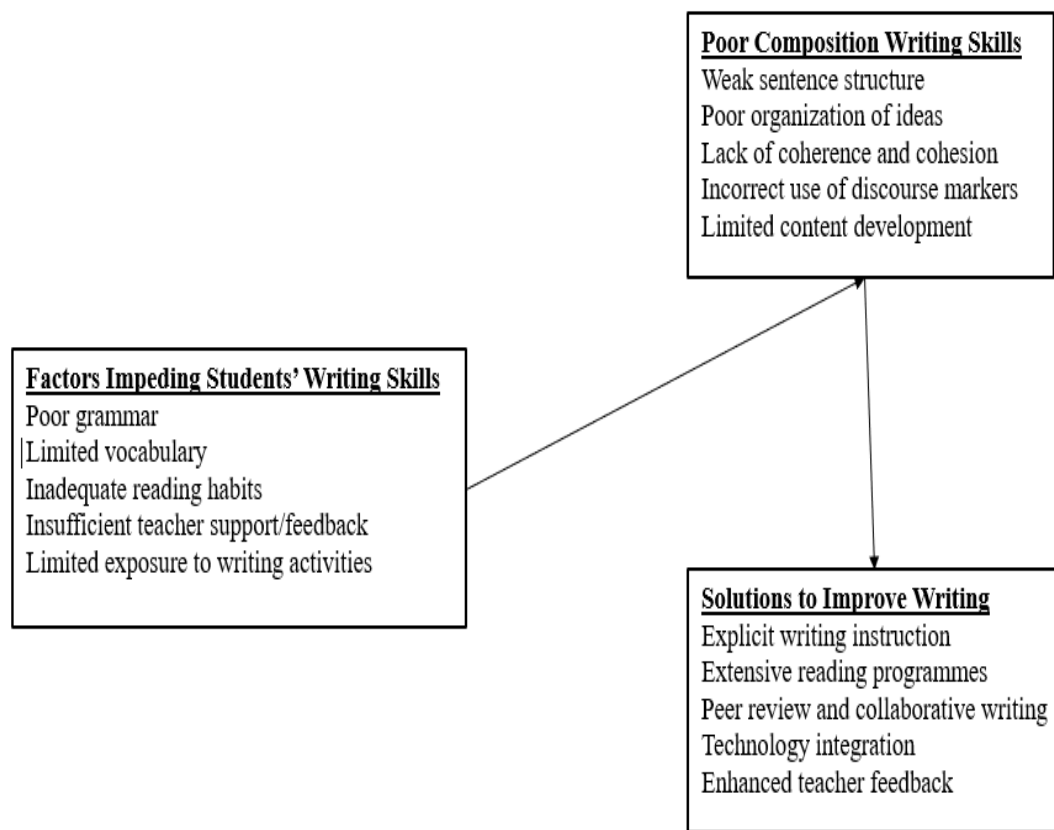


Figure 2.1: Conceptual Framework (Self-developed)

The independent variables represent the factors that impede students' writing abilities. These challenges include poor grammar, limited vocabulary, inadequate reading habits, and insufficient teacher support, among others. Students who struggle with grammar often find it difficult to construct coherent sentences, leading to disorganized and unclear compositions. Similarly, a limited vocabulary restricts their ability to express ideas effectively, making their writing vague and repetitive. Furthermore, students who do not engage in regular reading are less exposed to diverse writing styles, sentence structures, and proper punctuation usage, which hinders their ability to produce well-written compositions. The absence of adequate teacher feedback and guidance also plays a crucial role in weakening students' writing abilities, as they do not receive the necessary corrections and support to refine their work. Collectively, these factors

significantly impact the overall quality of students' writing, leading to poor composition skills.

As a result of these impeding factors, students exhibit poor composition writing skills, which serve as the dependent variable in this study. The weaknesses in writing manifest in several ways, including weak sentence structure, poor organization of ideas, lack of coherence, and improper use of discourse markers. Many students struggle to logically structure their paragraphs, making their compositions difficult to follow. Additionally, the lack of cohesion in their writing affects clarity, resulting in compositions that appear disconnected and disjointed. The inability to use transitional words effectively further contributes to the poor flow of ideas, making it challenging for readers to understand the intended message. These writing deficiencies ultimately impact students' academic performance and overall communication skills.

To address these challenges, intervention strategies serve as solutions to enhance students' writing abilities. Strategies such as explicit writing instruction, extensive reading programs, peer review, and technology integration are essential in improving composition skills. Explicit writing instruction involves systematically teaching students the steps involved in writing, from brainstorming and outlining to drafting, revising, and editing. Through extensive reading programs, students can develop a richer vocabulary, improve sentence construction, and gain exposure to different writing styles. Peer review activities provide students with opportunities to critique and learn from their peers, enhancing their ability to identify errors and make improvements in their own writing. Additionally, integrating technology into writing instruction—such as using grammar-checking software and word-processing tools—can help students refine their compositions and improve accuracy.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

The chapter consists of the research philosophy, research approach, research design, study area, the population of the study, sample and sampling procedure, instruments for data collection, validity and reliability, procedure for data collection, data analysis procedure, and ethical considerations.

3.1 Research Philosophy

Pragmatism is the philosophical foundation that guides this study, as it provides a flexible and problem-solving approach to investigating the composition writing skills of final-year senior high school (SHS) students. The pragmatic research philosophy emphasizes the importance of practical solutions over rigid adherence to a single epistemological stance (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). It is rooted in the idea that knowledge is gained through experiences, actions, and their consequences, rather than being confined to either purely objective (positivist) or subjective (interpretivist) perspectives (Morgan, 2014). This approach allows researchers to employ different methods that best address the research problem, making it highly relevant to this study. The study aims to evaluate students' composition writing skills, investigate factors that impede writing proficiency, and propose recommendations for improvement. Since composition writing is a complex cognitive and linguistic activity influenced by multiple factors such as grammar proficiency, vocabulary knowledge, reading habits, instructional strategies, and feedback mechanisms, it requires a multifaceted research approach. Pragmatism supports this by enabling the researcher to integrate both

quantitative and qualitative methods, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the problem (Biesta, 2010).

Furthermore, pragmatism is suitable for this study because it acknowledges the interplay between theoretical knowledge and practical application. Writing skills are not developed in isolation but are shaped by educational contexts, instructional methods, and individual student experiences. A pragmatic approach allows the researcher to examine composition writing holistically, identifying both structural weaknesses in students' writing and underlying factors such as inadequate grammar instruction, lack of motivation, and ineffective teaching strategies (Tashakkori, & Teddlie, 2010). By doing so, the study can generate practical recommendations that are grounded in real-world educational settings.

One of the main advantages of pragmatism is its emphasis on methodological pluralism, the use of multiple research methods to address a research problem (Feilzer, 2010). In this study, the pragmatic philosophy supports a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative analysis of students' writing performance with qualitative insights from students and teachers. Pragmatism's emphasis on real-world problem-solving, as it enables the researcher to obtain a well-rounded perspective on composition writing issues and their solutions (Johnson, & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Instead of focusing solely on statistical outcomes, the study also considers the lived experiences of students and teachers, ensuring that the proposed interventions are both theoretically sound and practically applicable.

3.2 Research Approach

This study employed the mixed-methods approach, which integrates both qualitative and quantitative research methods within a single study to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the composition writing skills of senior high school

(SHS) students (Creswell, & Plano Clark, 2018). Given the multifaceted nature of writing skills, which involve cognitive, linguistic, and pedagogical dimensions, a mixed-methods approach allows for a more holistic investigation into the factors that influence students' writing abilities, their performance levels, and strategies for improvement.

The study aimed to evaluate the composition writing skills of SHS students, examine the challenges they encounter in writing, and propose interventions for improvement. A quantitative approach was necessary to objectively assess students' writing proficiency through standardized tests, while a qualitative approach provided deeper insights into the perceptions and experiences of students and teachers regarding composition writing. The combination of these approaches ensures that the study not only identifies trends and patterns in students' writing performance but also uncovers the underlying causes of their writing difficulties (Johnson, & Onwuegbuzie, 2004).

The qualitative aspect of this study involved in-depth interviews and focus group discussions with SHS students, English language teachers, and writing education experts. These qualitative methods enabled the researcher to explore students' attitudes toward writing, their perceived challenges, and the instructional strategies used in teaching composition writing (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2016). By capturing participants' lived experiences, the study was able to provide a more nuanced understanding of how students approach composition writing, the difficulties they face; such as limited vocabulary, poor grammar, and lack of coherence and the instructional gaps that may contribute to their struggles.

Furthermore, qualitative data allowed for an exploration of pedagogical practices, shedding light on how teacher structures writing lessons, the types of feedback provided to students, and the effectiveness of various teaching strategies. Insights gained from

the interviews and focus groups contributed to the development of targeted interventions aimed at improving students' writing skills. The quantitative component of the study focused on the systematic measurement of students' writing proficiency through composition writing assessments. As suggested by Liao, Wang, and Huang (2019), standardized writing assessments are an effective tool for evaluating students' grammar usage, sentence structure, coherence, and overall writing competence. The researcher administered a writing test to assess the composition skills of final-year SHS students, with scores being analyzed using statistical methods to identify common patterns and trends. By employing quantitative analysis, the study was able to measure performance differences among students, evaluate the frequency of specific writing errors, and establish correlations between students' writing performance and factors such as reading habits, teacher feedback, and writing instruction methodologies. The statistical findings provided empirical evidence to support the qualitative insights obtained from student and teacher interviews.

One of the key advantages of the mixed-method approach is triangulation, which enhances the credibility and validity of the research findings by cross-verifying results from both qualitative and quantitative data sources (Creswell, & Creswell, 2018). In this study, the qualitative findings helped explain why students struggle with composition writing, while the quantitative data provided measurable indicators of their writing abilities. By integrating both forms of data, the study was able to develop practical recommendations that are both data-driven and contextually grounded, making them more applicable to real-world classroom settings.

The adoption of a mixed-method approach was essential in ensuring a thorough investigation of SHS students' composition writing skills. The quantitative analysis provided measurable data on students' writing proficiency, while the qualitative

component offered rich, descriptive insights into the challenges and instructional practices influencing writing performance. By combining these two approaches, the study was able to develop a comprehensive understanding of students' composition writing skills, identify key areas for improvement, and propose effective interventions. The integration of both qualitative and quantitative findings ensured that the study's conclusions were both empirically sound and practically relevant for educators and policymakers seeking to enhance students' writing abilities.

3.3 Research Design

This study adopted the sequential explanatory design, a type of mixed-methods research that involves the systematic collection and analysis of quantitative data first, followed by qualitative data to further explain and interpret the initial findings (Creswell, & Plano Clark, 2017). This design is particularly suitable for studies that seek to first establish measurable trends and patterns in a dataset and then explore those findings in greater depth through qualitative inquiry (Teddlie, & Tashakkori, 2015). Given the complexity of writing skills development among senior high school (SHS) students, the sequential explanatory design was chosen to provide a comprehensive and multi-dimensional understanding of the factors influencing students' composition writing abilities.

The research was conducted in two distinct phases. The first phase involved quantitative data collection and analysis, during which a writing proficiency test was administered to SHS students to assess their composition writing skills. Additionally, a questionnaire was designed to gather data on students' perceived self-efficacy, motivation, instructional experiences, and other relevant factors influencing their writing abilities (Brown, et al., 2021). The collected quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistical techniques, including frequencies, percentages, means, standard deviations,

and ranking to identify key trends and relationships. After establishing the statistical patterns, the second phase involved qualitative data collection and analysis. This phase employed in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and classroom observations to gain a richer understanding of students' writing experiences, challenges, and instructional environments. Interviews were conducted with students to explore their writing processes, strategies, and beliefs about writing (Smith, 2018), while classroom observations provided real-time insights into their engagement and behaviours during writing tasks (Johnson, 2019). The qualitative data were analyzed thematically to extract patterns that could further explain the statistical findings from the first phase.

One of the primary reasons for selecting the sequential explanatory design was its ability to provide a structured and systematic approach to data collection and analysis. By first conducting a quantitative study, the researcher was able to obtain objective, numerical data on students' writing skills, which served as a foundation for identifying key variables of interest. Following this, a qualitative study was designed to explore and explain the observed patterns in greater detail. This structured sequencing allowed for a logical progression of the study, ensuring that the qualitative data collection was guided by the results of the quantitative phase. As Creswell and Creswell (2018) emphasize, this method is particularly effective for studies where numerical data alone may not fully capture the complexity of a research problem.

In this study, the initial quantitative phase helped establish key trends, such as identifying common writing difficulties, assessing students' confidence levels in writing, and evaluating the effectiveness of instructional strategies. However, these findings alone did not explain why certain students performed better than others or the specific challenges they encountered during the writing process. The qualitative phase

helped address these gaps by exploring the lived experiences, perceptions, and strategies used by students in composition writing. This two-phase structure ensured a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing students' writing abilities.

Writing is a multi-faceted skill that involves cognitive, linguistic, motivational, and instructional components. A single research method would not have been sufficient to fully understand the various elements that contribute to students' writing proficiency. The sequential explanatory design was chosen because it allowed the researcher to examine both the measurable and subjective aspects of writing development. For instance, in the quantitative phase, data collected through writing tests and questionnaires provided statistical evidence regarding students' strengths and weaknesses in composition writing. This phase identified specific factors affecting writing performance, such as language proficiency, motivation, and instructional strategies. However, while statistical data could measure what was happening, it could not explain why these factors had such an impact. The qualitative phase addressed this limitation by allowing the researcher to delve into students' personal experiences, attitudes, and classroom interactions.

Through interviews, students were able to express their perspectives on writing instruction, self-efficacy, and challenges faced in the writing process. For example, if the quantitative results indicated that students with higher motivation performed better in writing, the qualitative data helped explain the sources of their motivation—whether it stemmed from teacher feedback, peer influence, or personal interest in writing. Similarly, if statistical findings revealed that students struggled with coherence in writing, classroom observations provided insights into how instructional strategies either facilitated or hindered coherence development. This combined approach enabled

the researcher to capture the complexity of writing development, making the findings more meaningful and actionable.

A key advantage of the sequential explanatory design is that it helps to enhance the validity and reliability of research findings by addressing the limitations of using a single research method. Quantitative research is known for its objectivity and ability to generalize findings, but it often lacks the depth needed to understand complex human behaviours and experiences. On the other hand, qualitative research provides rich, detailed insights but is often limited in its ability to be generalized to larger populations (Creswell, & Plano Clark, 2017). By integrating these two approaches, the researcher was able to offset the weaknesses of each method while maximizing their strengths. The quantitative phase provided empirical evidence to support key claims, ensuring that findings were statistically valid and reliable. The qualitative phase added depth and context, helping to explain the observed numerical trends and confirm their real-world significance. Furthermore, the triangulation of data from multiple sources (e.g., surveys, interviews, and observations) helped to increase the credibility and trustworthiness of the research. According to Teddlie and Tashakkori (2015), this methodological combination is particularly valuable in educational research, where complex factors such as motivation, instructional quality, and cognitive engagement interact in dynamic ways.

Another significant reason for choosing the sequential explanatory design was its practical applicability in improving educational practices. The study aimed not only to analyze students' writing performance but also to provide evidence-based recommendations for enhancing composition writing instruction in SHS classrooms. By first conducting a quantitative assessment, the researcher was able to identify

specific areas of difficulty in writing instruction. The subsequent qualitative phase helped uncover the root causes of these difficulties, allowing for the formulation of targeted interventions.

For example, if the statistical findings indicated that a large number of students struggled with organization in writing, the qualitative interviews could reveal whether this was due to a lack of instructional scaffolding, insufficient feedback, or low motivation. With these insights, teachers and curriculum developers could adjust instructional methods, implement more effective feedback mechanisms, and incorporate motivational strategies to improve students' writing outcomes. The findings from this study can therefore be used to inform pedagogical decisions, contributing to evidence-based improvements in writing instruction at the SHS level.

3.4 Study Area

The study was conducted in Our Lady of Lourdes Girls' Senior High in the Kassena-Nankana Municipality of the Upper East Region of Ghana. The school was founded in 1992 as a public all-female school and classified in category (C) according to the senior high school classifications in Ghana. According to the school's records, Our Lady of Lourdes Girls' Senior High School started as a middle school, with boarding for girls in 1958, but was later changed into a Secondary/Technical in 1992. Late Bishop Lucas Abadamloora reverted the school to a girls' Senior High School in the 2008/2009 academic year, to sensitise the community on the importance of girl-child education. The mission of the school is to provide an environment for moral and academic excellence for the female and gender integral transmission through quality education for self-actualisation and service to humanity and with the vision to become a centre for holistic female transformation in Northern Ghana. The school has both boarding and day facilities with an old administration block, a library, two technical workshops,

a laboratory block, and a rehabilitated vocational skills block. Also, it has two classroom blocks, and three uncompleted classroom blocks that are being used. Aside from that, the school has limited staff and accommodation.

3.5 Population of the Study

A well-defined and representative study population is essential for ensuring the external validity of research findings. External validity refers to the ability to generalize research results beyond the specific sample under study to a broader population. According to Rothman et al. (2012), a study population that accurately reflects the characteristics of the target population enhances the generalizability of results, making them applicable to a wider range of individuals or situations. The population of Our Lady of Lourdes Girls' Senior High School consists of 874 students and 80 teachers. The population comprised 310 first-year students, 290 second-year students, and 274 third year students. In terms of the teaching staff, there are 80 teachers in Our Lady of Lourdes Girls' Senior High School. The large student population provides an excellent opportunity to investigate the writing skills of senior high school students in composition writing. Therefore, by examining the writing skills of a selected sample of the 874 students at Our Lady of Lourdes Girls' Senior High School, the researcher can assess the extent to which these components are integrated into the students' writing abilities.

3.6 Sampling Techniques and Sample Size

This study employed purposive sampling, also known as judgmental sampling, as the primary sampling technique. Purposive sampling involves deliberately selecting participants based on specific characteristics that align with the research objectives (Liamputtong, 2013). This method was chosen because it allows the researcher to focus on a particular group of interest, in this case, final-year Senior High School (SHS)

students and English language teachers who are most relevant to the study. Given that the research investigates the composition writing skills of final-year SHS students, selecting participants with direct experience in composition writing was essential for obtaining meaningful insights.

The study specifically targeted Form Three students and their English language teachers at Our Lady of Lourdes Girls Senior High School. A total of 280 participants were selected, comprising 274 Form Three students and 6 English language teachers. This sample was chosen based on several justifications. First, Form Three students were selected because they had undergone three years of instruction in English composition writing, making them the most suitable group to assess the development of writing skills. As final-year students, they had acquired more exposure to composition writing and were preparing for their final external examinations, which provided an opportunity to evaluate their writing competencies at a crucial stage of their academic journey.

Another reason for focusing solely on Form Three students was practicality and feasibility. Conducting research that involves the entire school population or multiple forms would have been resource-intensive and time-consuming. By narrowing the study to this specific group, the researcher was able to streamline the data collection and analysis processes, ensuring a more manageable study within the given time and resource constraints. Furthermore, targeting a specific cohort enabled the researcher to conduct a more in-depth analysis of writing skill development and challenges, rather than obtaining a broad but less detailed overview across multiple student groups.

Similarly, purposive sampling was used to select all six English language teachers at the school. According to Creswell (2013), purposive sampling is appropriate when selecting participants who possess specialized knowledge or expertise relevant to the

research topic. English language teachers were chosen because they are the primary facilitators of composition writing instruction. They possess valuable insights into students' writing strengths, weaknesses, instructional gaps, and challenges. Their experiences with teaching composition, assessing students' writing, and providing feedback made them essential informants for the study.

In addition, selecting all six English language teachers ensured that the study captured a comprehensive perspective from multiple educators with diverse teaching strategies and experiences. These teachers are well-versed in the SHS English curriculum, including the specific requirements for composition writing. Their perspectives provided critical insights into instructional strategies, assessment methods, and pedagogical challenges in teaching composition writing. Furthermore, their involvement facilitated easier access to students, enhancing the quality and depth of the data collected.

The study employed specific inclusion criteria to ensure the appropriate selection of participants. Only Form Three students were included, as they had undergone at least three years of English composition instruction and were preparing for their final external examinations. Participants were required to have studied English as a compulsory subject, ensuring active engagement in composition writing. Additionally, only students who were available and willing to participate were considered. For teachers, the study included only English language instructors with at least one year of experience teaching composition writing at the senior high school level. Furthermore, only teachers with direct experience teaching Form Three students were selected, as their insights were crucial in understanding the writing competencies and instructional challenges of this specific cohort.

3.7 Instruments and data collection

Since a mixed-methods study has two distinct parts, multiple instruments were employed to collect data from various sources and perspectives. The instruments that were used included written assessments, questionnaires and interviews.

3.7.1 Written assessment

Based on the premise by Johnson and Brown (2020) that students' writing skills tend to improve over time as they progress through their high school education, the researcher administered standardized written tests to the students to evaluate their composition writing skills. These assessments provided objective measures of students' abilities and allowed for comparisons across different forms. It helped in identifying strengths and weaknesses in student's writing skills and served as a quantitative data source for the study.

3.7.2 Questionnaire

According to DeVellis (2016), the use of Likert scale questionnaire in surveys is significant in measuring the attitudes and opinions of respondents. Therefore, a three-point Likert scale questionnaire (Appendix A) was designed for students to answer the factors that impede SHS students' ability to write compositions. Numerical values were assigned to the response options. The Likert scale was self-developed with three response options ranging from "Agree, Disagree and Not sure" assigned values from 1 to 3, respectively. The Questionnaire had 15 items for which answers were sought from the 270 student respondents.

3.7.3 Interviews

Individual interviews were conducted by the researcher with six (6) English language teachers to gather in-depth qualitative data. The interviews allowed for open-ended

discussions and the exploration of participants' perspectives, experiences, and strategies related to composition writing. Creswell and Plano Clark (2018) assert that interviews provide insights into the issues under discussion with potential areas for improvement.

3.8 Validity and reliability

Ensuring the validity and reliability of research instruments, including written tests, questionnaires, and interviews, is essential for obtaining accurate and credible results in assessing senior high school students' composition writing skills. Validity refers to the extent to which an instrument measures what it is intended to measure, while reliability pertains to the consistency and dependability of the measurement results over time and across different conditions (Creswell, 2013). In this study, both quantitative and qualitative approaches were employed to strengthen the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings.

To enhance content validity, the researcher ensured that the writing tests were directly aligned with the learning objectives and curriculum requirements of English composition writing in senior high schools. The test items were carefully designed to assess key aspects of composition writing, including grammar, coherence, organization, creativity, and vocabulary usage. To further establish the validity of the test, experienced English language teachers reviewed the test items to confirm their relevance and appropriateness for measuring students' writing proficiency.

For the questionnaires, validity was ensured by designing questions that were clear, concise, and directly linked to the study's objectives. The questionnaire items were developed based on existing literature and expert opinions to ensure they accurately captured students' and teachers' perspectives on writing instruction and challenges. A

pilot study was conducted with a small sample of students and teachers before full-scale data collection. The feedback from the pilot study was used to refine the questionnaire, eliminating ambiguous or misleading questions and ensuring clarity and relevance.

In the qualitative phase, interviews were conducted with English language teachers to gather detailed insights into their experiences, instructional strategies, and perceptions regarding students' writing skills. To enhance construct validity, the interview questions were designed to cover all key areas relevant to the study, ensuring a comprehensive exploration of the topic. To prevent interviewer bias and enhance consistency, a standardized interview guide was developed. The researcher also used member checking, where interview participants reviewed their responses to confirm accuracy, ensuring that their views were correctly captured and interpreted.

To establish reliability, the researcher employed inter-rater reliability measures in the evaluation of students' writing tests. Multiple independent assessors, including experienced English teachers, were involved in grading the written compositions based on a standardized rubric. This process minimized subjectivity and ensured that scoring was consistent across different raters. Additionally, a test-retest reliability check was conducted by administering a subset of the questionnaire items twice to a selected group of students and teachers within a two-week interval. The responses were compared, and a high correlation between the two sets of results indicated strong reliability.

Furthermore, training sessions were conducted for data collectors to ensure consistency in the administration of questionnaires and interviews. These sessions emphasized the importance of following standardized procedures and avoiding leading questions during interviews. In qualitative data analysis, thematic coding was cross-checked by

multiple researchers, ensuring that themes were consistently identified and interpreted correctly.

By implementing these rigorous validity and reliability measures, the study ensured that the data collected was both credible and dependable. This strengthened the accuracy of the study's findings and enhanced its contribution to understanding the factors influencing senior high school students' composition writing skills.

3.9 Data analysis procedure

The data analysis procedures for the written assessments, questionnaire and interviews were used in the study as follows:

3.9.1 Written Assessments

Numerical scores were assigned to different aspects of writing such as content, organization, expression and mechanical accuracy based on the individual writing skills of the students. The numerical scores were then entered into Microsoft Excel to generate descriptive statistics including frequencies, percentages, mean and standard deviations to analyze the overall performance of the students in response to research question one in the study.

3.9.2 Questionnaire

The questionnaire developed for research objective two for quantitative results was analysed using two steps to derive meaningful and interpretable data. The process included data preparation and generating descriptive statistics.

Step 1: Data preparation

Coding of the Responses: Numerical values were assigned to the response options in the Likert scale which was structured with three response options ranging from "Agree,

Disagree and Not Sure” assigned values from 1 to 3, respectively from the questionnaire.

Data Entry: The coded responses were entered into the SPSS statistical analysis software based on the choices of the respondents.

Data Cleaning: Missing or invalid data were checked for and handled appropriately by imputing missing values.

Step 2: Descriptive statistics

The second stage involved the coding of entries in the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and using the analysis menu to perform the following:

Calculation of Frequency Distribution: The researcher determined the frequency (count) of each response option for each item in the Likert scale. This provided an overview of how respondents answered each question.

Calculation of Percentage Distribution: the researcher converted the frequency count into percentages to show the proportion of respondents selecting each response option.

Calculation of Measures of Central Tendency: the researcher computed the mean (average) for each Likert scale item to understand the typical or central response.

Calculation of Measures of Dispersion: The values for standard deviation were calculated to understand the variability or spread of responses around the mean.

3.9.3 Interviews

The analysis of interview data followed a systematic qualitative approach to ensure the insights of participating teachers were rigorously examined. Initially, all interviews conducted with the six teachers (ET#1–ET#6) were audio-recorded with participants’ consent. The recordings were then transcribed verbatim, producing written transcripts that accurately reflected each teacher’s responses, including pauses, emphasis, and

notable non-verbal cues where relevant. This transcription process ensured that the richness and authenticity of the participants' perspectives were preserved for analysis.

Following transcription, the researcher engaged in coding the data using both inductive and deductive approaches. First, open coding was employed, where meaningful statements, phrases, and concepts were highlighted and assigned preliminary codes. Examples of codes included "*difficulty in engaging students*", "*lack of instructional resources*", and "*effective modelling strategies*". These initial codes were then examined and grouped into broader categories through axial coding, connecting related codes under higher-order themes.

Subsequently, content analysis was conducted to identify recurring patterns and central themes across all teacher responses. This process involved systematically comparing codes across participants to determine commonalities and differences in their perspectives. Themes were finalized based on their prevalence and significance, focusing on teachers' insights into effective instructional strategies, challenges in teaching writing skills, and suggested areas for pedagogical improvement.

To enhance clarity and reliability, representative responses for each theme were presented in the findings, with participants' statements italicized and enclosed in double quotation marks. For instance, a teacher's remark such as "*I find that breaking writing tasks into smaller steps helps students perform better*" exemplified the theme of task structuring.

Additionally, the use of standardized written tests and questionnaires complemented the interviews by providing objective measures of students' writing skills and identifying factors that impede their writing performance. This mixed-methods approach allowed for triangulation, where quantitative findings informed the

interpretation of qualitative data, and vice versa. The interviews, in particular, provided nuanced, in-depth insights into teaching practices, enabling the researcher to capture the subtleties of classroom experiences and the participants' professional reflections.

3.10 Ethical Considerations

Since the study involved both students and their teachers, several ethical considerations were carefully observed to protect participants' rights and well-being. Ethical research practices are crucial in ensuring the integrity of the study and fostering trust between the researcher and participants. The four key ethical principles upheld in this study included explaining the study's purpose, obtaining informed consent, ensuring the right to opt out, and honouring commitments to confidentiality and privacy.

To begin with, the purpose and significance of the study were clearly explained to both students and teachers before their participation. This ensured that all participants understood the objectives of the study and the potential contributions of their involvement. Providing this information not only promoted transparency but also encouraged voluntary participation. According to Creswell (2013), when researchers clearly communicate how study findings will be utilized, participants are more likely to engage meaningfully in the research process. By explaining the study's aims and potential impact on English language teaching and learning, the researcher fostered a sense of trust and cooperation among participants.

The researcher also obtained informed consent from relevant stakeholders, including school authorities, students, and teachers. Participants were provided with detailed information about the study's objectives, methodology, potential risks and benefits, as well as the voluntary nature of their participation. They were also given the opportunity to ask questions and seek clarification before making an informed decision about

whether to participate. Creswell (2013) emphasizes that informed consent is a fundamental ethical requirement in research, as it ensures that participants have a clear understanding of their role in the study and can freely decide whether to take part.

Moreover, participants were assured of their right to withdraw from the study at any point without facing any form of penalty or negative consequences. The researcher emphasized this right during the informed consent process, ensuring that students and teachers felt comfortable exercising their autonomy. According to Resnik (2015), participants should never feel coerced into remaining in a study, and their withdrawal should not result in any form of retaliation or negative judgment. By upholding this principle, the study maintained an ethical and participant-centred approach.

Finally, the researcher honoured commitments to confidentiality and privacy, ensuring that participants' identities and personal information were protected throughout the study. This involved securely storing all collected data, anonymizing participants' responses, and ensuring that the data was used solely for research purposes. No identifying information was disclosed in the study's findings, and all personal details were safeguarded in compliance with ethical research guidelines. Additionally, once the research was completed, the collected data was securely disposed of to prevent unauthorized access.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents and discusses the results of the study. This section combines quantitative and qualitative data to provide a rich and nuanced analysis. The presentation of results begins with a concise summary of key quantitative findings, employing charts and other statistical measures. This is followed by an in-depth exploration of qualitative data, allowing for a deeper understanding of participants' perspectives and experiences. The discussion section connects the findings to existing literature, identifies patterns, and explores possible explanations.

4.1 Research Question 1: Common indicators of poor composition writing skills exhibited by SHS students.

This section examines the common indicators of poor composition writing skills exhibited by Senior High School (SHS) students. The analysis is based on students' written assessments, which provided numerical scores to address this research question. Various writing deficiencies observed in students' compositions are presented in the subsequent tables. The interpretation of these tables is based on the number (frequency) and percentage of students who exhibited poor writing skills, out of the 270 students who participated in the study. This means that the remaining percentage represents students who did not experience difficulties in that specific writing skill.

4.1.1 Lack of Clarity in Students' Writing

One of the key indicators of poor composition writing skills is the lack of clarity in students' written work. Table 1 presents findings from students' written assessments,

highlighting specific areas where clarity was lacking. These deficiencies include students struggling to express their ideas clearly, producing vague or confusing writing, facing difficulties in organizing their thoughts, and failing to communicate their messages effectively. The table below provides a breakdown of the frequency and percentage of students who exhibited these challenges.

Table 1: Indicators of Poor Writing Skills Resulting from Lack of Clarity

s/n	Lack of Clarity in Writing	Frequency (n = 270)	Percentage (%)
1	Struggle to express their ideas clearly.	146	54%
2	Vague or confused writing.	98	36%
3	Difficulty organizing their thoughts.	108	40%
4	Fail to communicate the message effectively.	110	41%

Source: Collation of Students Written Assessments (2023)

Table 1 presents the common indicators of poor composition writing skills exhibited by Senior High School (SHS) students, specifically focusing on lack of clarity in their writing. The data, derived from students' written assessments, highlight four key areas where students struggle: expressing their ideas clearly, avoiding vague or confused writing, organizing their thoughts, and effectively communicating their messages. The findings indicate that 54% (n = 146) of students struggle to express their ideas clearly, making this the most prevalent issue among the identified indicators. This suggests that over half of the students experience difficulties in articulating their thoughts in a coherent and precise manner. This aligns with prior studies, such as those by Graham and Perin (2007), which emphasize that clarity in writing is a fundamental skill that

affects overall written communication proficiency. Furthermore, 41% (n = 110) of students fail to communicate their messages effectively, indicating that a significant proportion of students have trouble ensuring that their ideas are understood by readers. Similarly, 40% (n = 108) of students demonstrate difficulty in organizing their thoughts, which may contribute to the lack of coherence in their writing. Research suggests that poor organization in writing is often linked to a lack of proper planning and an underdeveloped sense of writing structure (Flower, & Hayes, 1981). Additionally, 36% (n = 98) of students exhibit vague or confused writing, further reinforcing the challenge of clarity in composition writing. This finding supports the argument made by Kellogg (2008) that students who lack a clear understanding of their intended message often produce ambiguous and disorganized texts. Such writing deficiencies may stem from limited vocabulary, inadequate exposure to structured writing exercises, or insufficient feedback from instructors.

4.1.2 Weak Organization in compositions

The statistics of students who had weak organizational skills in their compositions were shown in Table 2 and are defined to include a lack of a clear introduction, body paragraphs and conclusions. Others struggled with transitions between ideas or failed to develop a logical flow, making it challenging for readers to follow their arguments with results shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Poor skills resulting from weak organization of content

Item	Weak organization	Freq	%
1	Lack of a clear introduction.	163	60%
2	Lack of clear body paragraphs and conclusions.	112	41%
3	Struggled with transitions between ideas.	150	56%
4	Failed to develop a logical flow.	136	50%

Source: Collation of Students Written Assessments (2023)

Table 2 presents the indicators of weak organization in the composition writing of Senior High School (SHS) students. Organizational skills are essential for constructing coherent and logical written compositions, yet a significant proportion of students in the study exhibited challenges in this area. The data highlight four key weaknesses: lack of a clear introduction, absence of well-structured body paragraphs and conclusions, poor transitions between ideas, and failure to develop a logical flow in their writing.

The findings reveal that 60% (n = 163) of students lacked a clear introduction in their compositions, making this the most prevalent organizational issue. A well-structured introduction is crucial for setting the tone and context of a written piece (Hyland, 2003). The absence of a clear introduction suggests that students struggle with effectively presenting their main ideas, which may negatively impact their ability to engage readers. This challenge aligns with findings by Graham and Perin (2007), who argue that weak introductory skills are a common issue among adolescent writers due to limited exposure to structured writing frameworks.

Additionally, 56% (n = 150) of students struggled with transitions between ideas, indicating that more than half of the participants had difficulty ensuring logical progression within their compositions. Effective transitions are essential for maintaining coherence, as they guide readers through arguments and ensure that ideas

are logically connected (Troia, 2014). The lack of smooth transitions may lead to fragmented writing that appears disjointed and difficult to follow. Furthermore, 50% (n = 136) of students failed to develop a logical flow in their writing, meaning that half of the sample struggled with structuring their ideas in a sequential manner. Logical progression is a key aspect of well-organized writing, and deficiencies in this area suggest that students may lack adequate planning and revision strategies (Flower, & Hayes, 1981). Poor logical flow in writing often results in unclear arguments, making it difficult for readers to grasp the intended message. Moreover, 41% (n = 112) of students did not include clear body paragraphs and conclusions. A well-organized body and conclusion are essential for reinforcing key points and providing closure to a composition (Kellogg, 2008). The absence of these elements suggests that students may struggle with structuring their ideas into a coherent framework, which is a critical skill for effective academic writing.

4.1.3: Grammar and Punctuation Errors

Students who made frequent mistakes in grammar, such as subject-verb agreement, verb tense consistency, or sentence structure were indicated. Also, students with punctuation errors, such as missing commas or incorrect use of apostrophes that hinder the readability of their writing were depicted in Table 3.

Table 3: Poor skills resulting from Grammar and Punctuation Errors

Item	Grammar and Punctuation Errors	Freq	%
1	Mistakes in grammar such as subject-verb agreement.	129	48%
2	Frequent mistakes in verb tense consistency.	114	42%
3	Punctuation errors, such as missing commas or incorrect use of apostrophes.	165	61%
4	Illegibility hinders the readability of writing.	116	43%

Source: Collation of Students Written Assessments (2023)

Table 3 presents the grammar and punctuation errors exhibited by Senior High School (SHS) students in their composition writing. These errors significantly affect the clarity, coherence, and readability of students' work, which can hinder effective communication. The findings reveal key issues in grammar, punctuation, and overall writing mechanics.

The most prevalent issue observed was punctuation errors, such as missing commas and incorrect use of apostrophes, which were reported in 61% (n = 165) of students' compositions. Punctuation is a fundamental aspect of writing that enhances sentence clarity and meaning (Truss, 2003). The high occurrence of punctuation errors suggests that many students struggle with using correct punctuation marks, leading to fragmented or unclear sentences. This finding aligns with previous research by Myhill and Watson (2014), who emphasize that poor punctuation skills are common among students with limited exposure to structured writing instruction.

Another critical issue identified was mistakes in grammar, particularly subject-verb agreement, which was observed in 48% (n = 129) of students' writing. Subject-verb agreement is essential for sentence construction and grammatical accuracy (Huddleston, & Pullum, 2002). Errors in this area can lead to confusing or grammatically incorrect sentences, making it difficult for readers to comprehend the intended message. These findings are consistent with the work of Graham et al. (2012), who highlight that grammar instruction is necessary to improve students' overall writing proficiency.

Furthermore, 42% (n = 114) of students frequently made mistakes in verb tense consistency, indicating a challenge in maintaining uniformity in their writing. Inconsistent verb tense usage can cause confusion, especially in narrative and

expository writing, where temporal clarity is essential (Celce-Murcia, & Larsen-Freeman, 1999). The relatively high percentage of students struggling with verb tense consistency suggests a need for targeted instruction in tense usage and sentence construction.

Additionally, 43% (n = 116) of students exhibited illegibility that hindered the readability of their writing. This suggests that poor handwriting, improper spacing, or lack of sentence clarity impacted the ability of readers to comprehend their compositions. Research by Berninger et al. (2006) indicates that illegibility in writing is often linked to a lack of structured handwriting practice and limited reinforcement of writing mechanics in the classroom.

Implications for Teaching and Learning

The findings highlight the need for a comprehensive approach to grammar and punctuation instruction in SHS classrooms. Teachers should integrate explicit grammar instruction into writing lessons, focusing on subject-verb agreement, verb tense consistency, and punctuation rules. Additionally, peer editing and targeted feedback can help students recognize and correct grammatical errors in their work (Graham, & Perin, 2007). Moreover, structured writing exercises that emphasize proofreading and revision can improve students' punctuation accuracy and grammatical consistency. Studies suggest that direct instruction in grammar, coupled with practice in meaningful writing contexts, leads to better retention and application of grammatical rules (Myhill, & Watson, 2014).

4.1.4: Limited Vocabulary in students' writing

Scores from the written assessments on students with limited vocabulary, resulting in repetitive or monotonous language use and those struggling to find appropriate words to express their ideas and those who lack precision and effectiveness in their writing are shown in Table 4 indicating the frequency of students with such poor writing skills and corresponding percentages with the mean and standard deviation.

Table 4: Poor skills resulting from a limited vocabulary

Item	Limited Vocabulary in students' writing	Freq	%
1	Students have a limited range of vocabulary.	143	53%
2	Repetitive or monotonous language use.	138	51%
3	Struggle to find appropriate words to express.	127	47%
4	Lack of precision and effectiveness.	132	49%

Source: Collation of Students Written Assessments (2023)

Table 4 presents the data on students' struggles with limited vocabulary, which significantly impacts the quality and expressiveness of their writing. A total of 143 students, representing 53% of the sample, demonstrated a restricted range of vocabulary, which limits their ability to articulate ideas effectively. Furthermore, 138 students (51%) displayed repetitive or monotonous language use, indicating a lack of lexical diversity. This issue often results in redundancy and reduces the overall engagement of their compositions. Additionally, 127 students (47%) struggled to find appropriate words to express their ideas, leading to vague or unclear writing. Lastly, 132 students (49%) exhibited a lack of precision and effectiveness in their word choices, further diminishing the clarity and impact of their written work. These findings suggest that a considerable proportion of students face vocabulary-related challenges, which hinder their ability to produce well-structured and engaging compositions.

4.1.5: Inconsistent or Ineffective Evidence and Support

Most of the student compositions were weak and lacked sufficient evidence or examples to support arguments or claims. Other students failed to provide adduce relevant and compelling arguments, resulting in weak or unsubstantiated arguments while others deviated from the topic in their writings as shown in Table 5 of the presentation.

Table 5: Poor skills resulting from Inconsistent or Ineffective Evidence and Support

Item	Inconsistent/Ineffective Evidence and Support	Freq	%
1	Lack of sufficient evidence to support arguments.	125	46%
2	Failure to provide adduce relevant and compelling arguments.	89	33%
3	Weak or unsubstantiated arguments.	94	35%
4	Deviation from the composition topic.	65	24%

Source: Collation of Students Written Assessments (2023)

As shown in Table 5, many students displayed weaknesses in constructing well-supported arguments in their compositions. A total of 125 students (46%) failed to provide sufficient evidence to substantiate their claims, indicating a lack of depth in their reasoning. Moreover, 89 students (33%) were unable to adduce relevant and compelling arguments, which weakened the overall persuasiveness of their writing. Similarly, 94 students (35%) presented weak or unsubstantiated arguments, further demonstrating a deficiency in critical thinking and analytical skills. Additionally, 65 students (24%) deviated from the assigned composition topics, which suggests difficulties in maintaining focus and coherence. These findings highlight the need for instructional interventions to improve students' ability to develop and support their arguments effectively.

4.1.6: Lack of Cohesion in students' writing

Table 6 show the results of students struggling to connect ideas coherently within and between paragraphs. Inconsistent or ineffective use of cohesive devices, such as pronouns or transition words and disruption of the flow of their writing. The evidence is shown in terms of the frequency of students and corresponding percentages with the mean and standard deviation to substantiate the claim.

Table 6: Poor skills resulting from lack of cohesion in students' writing

Item	Lack of cohesion in students' writing	Freq	%
1	Students struggle to connect ideas coherently	176	65%
2	Inconsistent or ineffective use of cohesive devices	153	57%
3	Misuse of pronouns or transition words	160	59%
4	Disruption of the flow of writing	98	36%

Source: Collation of Students Written Assessments (2023)

The ability to organize thoughts cohesively within and between paragraphs is essential for clear and logical writing. Table 6 indicates that 176 students (65%) struggled to connect ideas coherently, which led to fragmented and disjointed compositions. Furthermore, 153 students (57%) exhibited inconsistent or ineffective use of cohesive devices such as pronouns, conjunctions, or transition words, resulting in weak textual cohesion. Additionally, 160 students (59%) misused pronouns or transition words, which disrupted the logical progression of their writing. Finally, 98 students (36%) produced compositions with a disrupted flow, making it difficult for readers to follow their arguments or narratives. These findings emphasize the necessity of targeted instruction on cohesion strategies to help students develop more structured and readable compositions.

4.1.7: Inaccurate Mechanics and Conventions

The results of inaccurate mechanics and conventions lead to poorly edited compositions and those containing spelling errors, punctuation mistakes, or incorrect grammar usage. Other students overlook basic conventions, leading to a lack of clarity and professionalism in their writing and total incorrect grammar usage by students as shown in Table 7.

Table 7: Poor writings resulting from inaccurate mechanics and conventions

Item	Inaccurate Mechanics and Conventions	Freq	%
1	Writings contain spelling errors and punctuation mistakes.	111	41%
2	Students overlooking basic conventions.	121	45%
3	Lack of clarity and professionalism in their writing.	106	39%
4	Incorrect grammar usage by students.	95	35%

Source: Collation of Students Written Assessments (2023)

Table 7 highlights students' difficulties with writing mechanics and conventions, which negatively affect the readability and professionalism of their work. A total of 111 students (41%) submitted compositions with frequent spelling errors and punctuation mistakes, reducing the overall clarity of their writing. Additionally, 121 students (45%) overlooked basic writing conventions, leading to unpolished and poorly structured work. Furthermore, 106 students (39%) exhibited a lack of clarity and professionalism, which suggests inadequate attention to language accuracy. Lastly, 95 students (35%) struggled with incorrect grammar usage, further complicating the comprehension of their texts. These findings suggest a pressing need for reinforcing grammar instruction, editing skills, and proofreading practices among students.

4.1.8: Lack of Originality and Creativity

Some students struggled to bring originality and creativity to their compositions, relying heavily on clichés or generic ideas. Other writings were dull or uninspiring writing that fail to catch the readers' attention, with some students engaging in unfamiliar jargon as shown in Table 8.

Table 8: Poor witting as a result of lack of originality and creativity

Item	Lack of originality and creativity	Freq	%
1	Students struggle to bring originality and creativity to their compositions.	86	32%
2	Relying heavily on clichés or generic ideas	95	35%
3	Dull or uninspiring writing that fails to engage the reader.	104	39%
4	Use of unfamiliar jargon in official writing	78	29%

Source: Collation of Students Written Assessments (2023)

As demonstrated in Table 8, some students faced challenges in producing original and creative content. A total of 86 students (32%) struggled to bring originality and creativity to their compositions, often relying on predictable or overused ideas. Additionally, 95 students (35%) relied heavily on clichés or generic expressions, reducing the uniqueness of their work. Moreover, 104 students (39%) produced dull or uninspiring writing that failed to engage the reader, indicating a lack of effort in making their compositions compelling. Lastly, 78 students (29%) used unfamiliar jargon in their writing, which often led to confusion and miscommunication. These findings underscore the importance of encouraging creativity, originality, and audience awareness in students' writing.

4.2 Research Question 2: Factors that hinder S.H.S students ability to write compositions effectively.

Effective writing is a critical skill for Senior High School (SHS) students, yet many struggle with composing well-structured, coherent, and engaging essays. Various factors hinder their ability to write effectively, impacting the overall quality of their compositions. This section analyzes key challenges faced by students, including weak organization, grammar and punctuation errors, limited vocabulary, lack of cohesion, inadequate evidence and support, inaccurate mechanics and conventions, and lack of originality and creativity. The following analysis presents data on these writing deficiencies and highlights their implications for students' academic performance.

4.2.1 Factors contributing to students' weak writing skills

Writing proficiency among Senior High School (SHS) students is influenced by several factors that either enhance or impede their ability to express ideas effectively. The data collected from students' responses highlight key challenges, including limited vocabulary, insufficient reading habits, ineffective planning, weak critical thinking, and lack of practice with teacher feedback. The analysis of each table provides insights into how these factors contribute to students' writing difficulties and underscores the need for targeted interventions to improve their writing skills.

4.2.1.1 Limited Vocabulary and Language Skills

Students' responses on limited vocabulary and language skills hindering students' ability to express ideas effectively, impacting their writing was shown in Table 8. There is a need to address these factors to improve the overall writing proficiency and communication of students.

Table 9: Response to limited vocabulary and language skills

Statements	N	Percentages		
		Agree	Disagree	Not sure
1. Lack of word variety and limited use of synonyms	270	68.5	25.2	6.3
2. Inadequate knowledge of grammar rules and sentence structure	270	67.4	28.9	3.7
3. Limited understanding of appropriate word choice and tone	270	55.9	38.9	5.2

Source: Students' questionnaire (2023)

A significant challenge facing SHS students is their limited vocabulary and inadequate grasp of language skills. Table 4.9 illustrates that 68.5% of students agreed that they struggle with a lack of word variety and limited use of synonyms, while 25.2% disagreed, and 6.3% remained unsure. Similarly, 67.4% acknowledged an inadequate understanding of grammar rules and sentence structure, making it difficult to construct coherent and meaningful sentences. Furthermore, 55.9% of students reported struggling with selecting appropriate words and maintaining the right tone in their writing, which directly affects their ability to convey messages effectively. These findings suggest that a limited vocabulary not only restricts students' self-expression but also leads to repetitive and monotonous writing. Enhancing vocabulary acquisition through extensive reading and vocabulary-building exercises could help students develop more dynamic and precise writing skills.

4.2.1.2 Insufficient Reading and Exposure to Diverse Writing

Table 10 shows results on insufficient reading and limited exposure to diverse writing materials that hinder students' writing skills. Studies have shown that a lack of

engagement with various genres and writing styles limits their understanding of effective techniques and inhibits their ability to develop creativity, vocabulary, and critical thinking in their compositions. Table 10 presents the data collected on participants' responses to statements related to reading habits, comprehension of writing techniques, and exposure to vocabulary expansion through reading.

Table 10: Response on insufficient reading and exposure to diverse writing

Statements	N	Percentages		
		Agree	Disagree	Not sure
4. Lack of reading habits and exposure to different writing styles	270	64.4	27.8	7.8
5. Limited comprehension of various genres and writing techniques	270	54.1	30	15.9
6. Inadequate exposure to vocabulary expansion through reading	270	64.4	26.3	9.3

Source: Students' questionnaire (2023)

Exposure to various writing styles plays a crucial role in developing students' composition skills. Table 10 shows that 64.4% of respondents agreed that their lack of reading habits and limited exposure to different writing styles hinder their writing development. This aligns with research indicating that students who engage with different genres tend to develop a more refined sense of structure, creativity, and vocabulary. Additionally, 54.1% of students admitted to struggling with comprehending different genres and writing techniques, highlighting a gap in their ability to analyze and apply effective writing strategies. Furthermore, 64.4% of students agreed that they have inadequate exposure to vocabulary expansion through reading, limiting their ability to express ideas fluently and diversely. The findings emphasize

the importance of encouraging students to read widely to enhance their writing competence.

4.2.1.3 Ineffective Planning and Organization

Ineffective planning and organization were considered a factor that hinder students' writing skills. Literature shows that it leads to disorganized thoughts, lack of coherence, and a poorly structured composition. Results in Table 11 depicts students' assertion on ineffective planning and organization. Table 11 presents an analysis of survey responses related to students' responses on ineffective planning and organization, represented by the sample size (n) of 270. The respondents were asked to provide their level of agreement, disagreement, or uncertainty on three specific statements. The first statement assessed the participants' grasp of essay structure and paragraph development.

Table 11: Students' response on ineffective planning and organization

Statements	N	Percentages		
		Agree	Disagree	Not sure
Weak understanding of essay structure and paragraph development	270	66.7%	20.3%	13%
Difficulty in creating a coherent and logical flow of ideas	270	68.1%	23.3%	8.5%
Inability to develop a clear thesis statement and support it with relevant evidence	270	65.2%	24.4%	10.4%

Source: Students' questionnaire (2023)

Proper planning and organization are essential for producing coherent and logical compositions. Table 11 reveals that 66.7% of students acknowledged a weak understanding of essay structure and paragraph development, with 20.3% disagreeing and 13% uncertain. A slightly higher percentage (68.1%) reported difficulty in creating

a coherent and logical flow of ideas, leading to disjointed and confusing compositions. Moreover, 65.2% of students admitted that they struggle to develop a clear thesis statement and support it with relevant evidence, which significantly impacts the persuasiveness and depth of their writing. Poor planning often results in essays that lack logical sequencing, making it difficult for readers to follow the argument. Addressing this challenge requires targeted instruction in brainstorming, outlining, and structuring essays before the actual writing process begins.

4.2.1.4: Weak Critical Thinking and Analysis

Studies have shown that weak critical thinking and analysis hinder students' ability to analyze information, evaluate arguments, and identify logical statements. Further to that, it limits their capacity to formulate well-supported claims, critically assess evidence, and engage in insightful and persuasive writing. Results obtained from students on weak critical thinking and analysis are shown in Table 12.

Table 12: Response to weak critical thinking and analysis

Statements	N	Percentages		
		Agree	Disagree	Not sure
Limited ability to analyze and evaluate information critically	270	66.7%	24.1%	9.3%
Difficulty in identifying main ideas, supporting evidence, and logical fallacies	270	63.7%	31.9%	4.4%
Inability to construct well-reasoned arguments and counterarguments	270	65.9%	32.2%	1.9%

Source: Students' questionnaire (2023)

Table 12 highlights that 66.7% of students struggle with analyzing and evaluating information critically, which hinders their ability to present well-structured arguments. Additionally, 63.7% of respondents admitted difficulty in identifying main ideas,

supporting evidence, and logical fallacies, making it hard to construct persuasive and coherent arguments. Furthermore, 65.9% of students acknowledged their inability to construct well-reasoned arguments and counterarguments, limiting their ability to engage in meaningful academic discourse. Weak critical thinking skills prevent students from presenting compelling arguments, reducing the overall effectiveness of their compositions. Enhancing students' analytical abilities through structured exercises in evaluating sources, identifying biases, and formulating logical arguments could significantly improve their writing quality.

4.2.1.5 Insufficient Practice and Feedback from teachers

Table 13 show results on insufficient practice and feedback from teachers that can hinder students' writing skills. Research shows that without regular opportunities to practice writing and receive constructive feedback, students may struggle to refine their writing techniques and address areas for improvement, limiting their overall growth as writers. Results in Table 13 presents an analysis conducted on a survey regarding insufficient practice and feedback from teachers. The survey included 270 respondents who were asked to express their opinions on various statements related to writing.

Table 13: Response to insufficient Practice and Feedback from teachers

Statements	N	Percentages		
		Agree	Disagree	Not sure
Lack of opportunities for writing practice in various contexts	270	67.8	28.5	3.7
Limited feedback and guidance from teachers on writing assignments	270	71.1	26.7	2.2
Inadequate self-reflection and revision skills	270	68.1	29.3	2.6

Source: Students' questionnaire (2023)

Regular writing practice and constructive feedback from teachers are vital for improving students' writing proficiency. However, Table 13 indicates that 67.8% of students feel they lack adequate opportunities for writing practice in various contexts, restricting their ability to refine their skills. Additionally, 71.1% of students reported receiving limited feedback and guidance from teachers on writing assignments, which deprives them of the necessary support to address their weaknesses. Furthermore, 68.1% of respondents admitted to having inadequate self-reflection and revision skills, which are critical for improving their writing over time. The absence of consistent practice and feedback hinders students' ability to develop strong writing habits. Implementing regular writing exercises, peer reviews, and detailed teacher feedback could enhance students' ability to produce well-developed compositions.

4.3 Research Question 3: Improving the writing skills of S.H.S. students

Research Question 3 sought to explore strategies for improving the composition writing skills of Senior High School (SHS) students. Writing proficiency is a critical component of academic success, yet many students struggle with various challenges that hinder their ability to express ideas effectively. The data collected from students' responses provide valuable insights into specific areas that need intervention. This section analyzes key factors affecting students' writing abilities, including limited vocabulary and language skills, insufficient reading and exposure to diverse writing, ineffective planning and organization, weak critical thinking and analysis, and insufficient practice with teacher feedback. By examining these challenges in detail, the study aims to identify practical strategies that educators, policymakers, and students can adopt to enhance writing competence.

4.3.1 Improving composition writing skills of SHS students

To enhance the composition writing skills of Senior High School (SHS) students, a comprehensive approach is essential. The six (6) English language teachers in the school coded as (ET#1 – 6, implying English Teacher number 1 - 6) were interviewed on the strategies to improve the composition writing skills of their students. After the data was collected and analysed, four (4) themes emerged from the collective responses of the respondents and are defined to include; regular writing exercises, constructive feedback, self-reflection, and continuous professional development that emanated from the responses are therefore presented in this section showing the inputs made by each respondent.

4.3.1.1 Theme One: Regular writing exercises

Theme one identifies regular writing exercises as an effective strategy for enhancing creativity, communication, and language skills in students' writing. It implies that consistent practice fosters growth and confidence in expressing ideas effectively. Respondent ET#4 and ET#3 suggested in using regular writing exercise as contained in their responses with the other members of the six (6) respondents interviewed. Below are the responses from the six (6) respondents:

“I use a variety of writing exercises, like journaling and storytelling, to build students’ writing fluency and self-expression, boosting their confidence.”ET#4.

“I incorporate regular writing exercises in class to promote creativity and structure in SHS students’ compositions,

fostering better articulation of ideas and refining their writing abilities.” ET#2.

“I encourage critical thinking, vocabulary expansion, and effective communication, ultimately boosting their composition skills and overall writing proficiency.” ET#1.

“I regularly use writing as a practice in class because it allows my students to experiment with different writing styles, ensuring they develop a strong foundation for composition and express their thoughts more coherently and persuasively.” ET#3.

“I guide SHS students to identify and address common writing mistakes, building their confidence and proficiency in composition while fostering a passion for writing.” ET#6.

“Through consistent writing tasks, I help SHS students refine their grammar and syntax, instilling a habit of revising and editing, resulting in well-structured and polished compositions.” ET#5.

“I use regular writing exercises to enable my students to explore various topics, nurturing their creativity and encouraging them to present their ideas effectively, leading to improved composition skills.” ET#1.

“I employ consistent writing activities to cultivate my students’ critical thinking and analytical skills, empowering them to craft compelling compositions that reflect their understanding and perspectives.” ET#4.

“I promote SHS students’ self-expression and storytelling abilities, fostering originality and a deeper connection with the writing process, leading to enhanced composition skills.” ET#3.

“I use writing practice to aid my students to develop a stronger command of the language, enabling them to convey complex ideas with clarity and coherence, resulting in more sophisticated and impactful compositions.” ET#6.

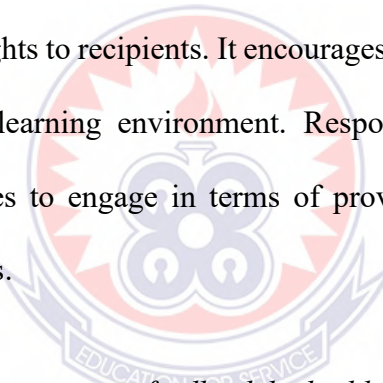
“I use regular writing tasks in class to help my students overcome writing apprehensions, building their confidence and competence in composition, ultimately enhancing their overall language proficiency and academic performance.” ET#2.

The interview responses highlight the significance of regular writing exercises in developing SHS students’ composition skills. Teachers emphasize that consistent writing practice enhances creativity, fluency, and confidence in self-expression. Respondents noted that strategies such as journaling, storytelling, and structured writing exercises help students refine their articulation, expand their vocabulary, and improve their ability to organize thoughts coherently. Additionally, teachers pointed out that regular writing tasks foster critical thinking, analytical skills, and a strong

command of grammar and syntax, which contribute to more polished and sophisticated compositions. Some respondents emphasized the role of feedback and revision, guiding students to recognize and correct errors, thereby enhancing their proficiency. Others highlighted how regular writing reduces writing apprehension, allowing students to experiment with different styles and genres. Overall, the responses suggest that integrating consistent writing exercises into the curriculum not only improves composition skills but also nurtures students' confidence, originality, and engagement with the writing process.

4.3.1.2 Theme Two: Constructive feedback

Literature has shown that constructive feedback is a valuable strategy for providing specific, actionable insights to recipients. It encourages growth, enhances performance, and fosters a positive learning environment. Respondents stated the following in response to the activities to engage in terms of providing constructive feedback in developing writing skills.



“I provide constructive feedback by highlighting strengths and areas for improvement in students' compositions, encouraging them to revise and refine their work for better clarity and coherence.” ET#5.

“During peer review sessions, I guide students to offer specific feedback, fostering a supportive environment for constructive criticism and collaborative learning.” ET#3.

“I use rubrics to assess writing, offering detailed comments that focus on organization, grammar, and content, helping students identify areas where they can develop.” ET#1.

“Through one-on-one conferences, I discuss students’ writing progress, offering personalized suggestions to address their challenges and enhance their writing skills.” ET#4.

“Utilizing sample essays as models, I illustrate effective writing techniques and encourage students to incorporate these strategies into their compositions.” ET#2.

“I organize group discussions, where students share their compositions, and together, we analyze each piece constructively, learning from diverse perspectives.” ET#6.

“To promote self-assessment, I encourage students to evaluate their work against set criteria, facilitating their understanding of strengths and areas for growth.” ET#1.

“I use technology tools for formative feedback, allowing students to submit drafts online and receive timely comments to support their writing development.” ET#5.

“Through consistent feedback, I foster a growth mindset, reassuring students that mistakes are opportunities for

improvement and encouraging them to embrace challenges in their writing journey.” ET#4.

The interview responses underscore the importance of constructive feedback in enhancing SHS students' composition writing skills. Teachers employ various strategies to guide students in refining their writing, focusing on clarity, coherence, organization, and grammar. Some respondents highlight the role of individualized feedback, using one-on-one conferences and detailed rubrics to provide targeted suggestions for improvement. Others emphasize peer review and collaborative learning, where students exchange feedback in a supportive environment, fostering self-reflection and critical engagement with their work. Additionally, sample essays and group discussions serve as tools for illustrating effective writing techniques, allowing students to analyze different approaches and integrate best practices into their compositions. The use of technology also emerges as a valuable method, enabling timely formative feedback through digital platforms. Furthermore, teachers encourage self-assessment, guiding students to evaluate their work based on set criteria to recognize strengths and areas for growth. Overall, the responses reveal that consistent, constructive feedback fosters a growth mindset, helping students view writing as a process of continuous improvement rather than a fixed skill. By integrating these strategies, educators empower students to revise, refine, and develop confidence in their writing abilities.

4.3.1.3 Theme Three: Self-reflection

Self-reflection according to literature is a powerful strategy which involves introspectively examining thoughts, actions, and experiences, fostering self-awareness, and identifying areas for growth and development implying that it has the potential to

improve the writing skills of SHS students in composition writing. The responses provided by the six respondents are as follows:

“I encourage students to self-reflect by setting aside time for journaling, allowing them to explore their writing strengths and weaknesses confidentially. This helps them understand their progress and areas needing improvement.” ET#6.

“During peer reviews, I prompt students to critically assess their work and their peers’. This fosters a sense of ownership over their writing, motivating them to refine their compositions.” ET#1.

“We conduct regular one-on-one conferences, where students self-assess their writing growth. They articulate their goals and learning needs, making them proactive in honing their writing skills.” ET#2.

“Incorporating reflective prompts in assignments enables students to ponder their creative process, structure, and language choices, leading to thoughtful revisions.” ET#5.

“Through self-assessment questionnaires, I ask students to evaluate their writing strengths and weaknesses. This data helps tailor instruction to their specific needs.” ET#3.

“Utilizing technology, I encourage students to create audio reflections on their writing, fostering a deeper understanding of their composition’s tone and coherence.” ET#4.

“During workshops, students engage in group discussions about their writing journeys, sharing insights and constructive feedback, promoting a collaborative learning environment.” ET#3.

“I facilitate reflective writing portfolios where students collect and assess their work over time, charting their progress and setting attainable writing goals.” ET#5.

The interview responses emphasize the role of self-reflection and self-assessment in improving SHS students' composition writing skills. Teachers implement diverse strategies that encourage students to take ownership of their learning process. Journaling and self-assessment questionnaires enable students to identify their strengths and areas for improvement, fostering a deeper awareness of their writing development. Peer reviews and one-on-one conferences further support this process by prompting students to critically evaluate their own work and articulate personal writing goals. Additionally, reflective prompts and technology-driven approaches, such as audio reflections, help students analyze their tone, structure, and coherence in writing. The use of writing portfolios allows students to track their progress over time, while workshops and group discussions create a collaborative space for sharing insights and constructive feedback. Collectively, these strategies cultivate metacognitive skills, self-directed learning, and a growth mindset, empowering

students to refine their composition abilities through continuous self-evaluation and meaningful reflection.

4.3.1.4 Theme Four: Continuous professional development

Continuous Professional Development (CPD) for English language teachers is a strategic approach to enhance their skills, knowledge, and teaching methodologies, leading to improved language instruction and better student outcomes in composition writing. The responses provided on the need for continuous professional development for English language teachers are as follows:

“Engaging in Continuous Professional Development equips me with effective writing strategies, fostering students’ critical thinking and creativity, resulting in well-structured compositions that exhibit clarity and coherence.” ET#4.

“Through targeted CPD, I can explore modern pedagogical approaches, empowering them to nurture students’ writing styles, leading to enhanced expression and refined language usage in compositions.” ET#2.

“CPD encourages me to incorporate interactive writing exercises, personalized feedback, and revision techniques, nurturing students’ confidence and motivation to produce well-crafted compositions.” ET#5.

“By updating their knowledge through CPD, I get to implement technology-based tools, promoting digital literacy and

enriching students' compositions with multimedia elements and relevant online resources.” ET#3.

“Continuous Professional Development assists me in understanding diverse learners' needs, enabling tailored writing instruction that caters to students with varying language proficiency levels.” ET#1.

“Through CPD workshops, I learn to design engaging writing prompts and creative activities, fostering a stimulating environment where students can explore their imagination and refine their composition skills.” ET#6.

“CPD emphasizes collaborative learning strategies, enabling me to establish peer-review sessions and writing circles, facilitating constructive feedback and growth among students' writing abilities.” ET#5.

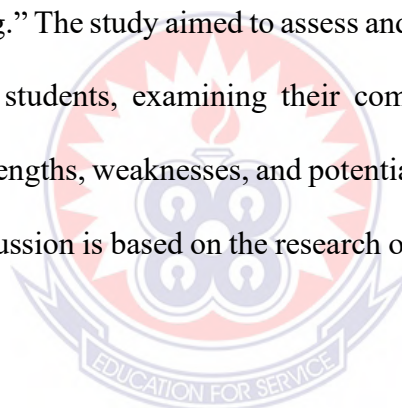
“With CPD's focus on self-assessment and reflective practices, I can better evaluate my teaching methodologies and adjust my approaches to optimize students' writing competence in composition.” ET#3.

The responses highlight the significance of Continuous Professional Development (CPD) in enhancing SHS students' composition writing skills by equipping teachers with modern pedagogical strategies. Through CPD workshops and training, teachers refine their ability to foster critical thinking, creativity, and structured writing in

students. The integration of interactive writing exercises, personalized feedback, and revision techniques boosts students' motivation and confidence in composition writing. Additionally, CPD enables educators to implement technology-based tools and digital literacy strategies, enriching students' compositions with multimedia elements and relevant online resources. Teachers also emphasize the role of CPD in understanding diverse learners' needs, allowing for differentiated instruction that caters to varying proficiency levels.

4.4 Discussion of Findings

This discussion presents the findings of “Writing Skills of Senior High School Students in Composition Writing.” The study aimed to assess and analyze the writing proficiency of senior high school students, examining their composition writing abilities. Key results shed light on strengths, weaknesses, and potential areas for improvement in their writing skills. The discussion is based on the research objectives stated at the beginning of the study.



4.4.1 Poor writing skills exhibited by SHS students

Effective writing skills are essential for academic success and future career prospects. However, many Senior High School (SHS) students struggle with writing, which can hinder their academic achievements and overall communication abilities. Through the use of statistical data and analysis, the study provided valuable insights into the prevalent writing deficiencies among SHS students based on which a discussion is made in this section.

The study found a lack of clarity in students' writing as presented in Table 4.1, where a significant number of students struggled to express their ideas clearly, leading to vague or confusing writing. This issue was observed in 54% of the students, with a

mean score of 1.6 and a standard deviation of 0.7. These scores indicate a moderate level of difficulty, with some variability in the clarity of expression within the student group. This finding is consistent with previous research on writing skills among adolescents.

Research by Brown, and Wilson (2018) found that many high school students face challenges in articulating their ideas coherently, leading to ambiguous and poorly structured compositions. Additionally, Johnson and Smith (2019) emphasized the importance of clarity in writing, as it enhances the reader's understanding and engagement with the text. To address this issue, educators can implement writing workshops and activities that focus on improving sentence structure, coherence, and logical organization of ideas. Providing clear instructions and feedback on student writing can also help them develop the necessary skills to express their thoughts effectively.

The study found weak organization in students' compositions, as presented in Table 4.2. This deficiency was evident in various aspects, including the lack of a clear introduction, body paragraphs, and conclusions, as well as struggles with transitions between ideas and maintaining a logical flow. The statistics indicated that 60% of the students lacked a clear introduction, 41% had difficulty with writing clear body paragraphs and conclusions, 56% faced challenges in effectively transitioning between ideas, and 50% struggled to develop a logical flow.

This finding aligns with the work of Smith et al. (2017), who emphasized the significance of a well-structured composition in conveying the intended message to readers. A lack of organization can lead to confusion and disinterest among readers, resulting in lower writing proficiency. To enhance students' organizational skills,

educators can provide explicit instruction on essay structure and guide students through the process of outlining and planning their compositions. Moreover, encouraging students to use transition words and phrases to connect ideas can facilitate a smoother flow of writing (García, & Rodríguez, 2020).

The study further found grammar and punctuation errors in students' writing, as shown in Table 4.3. The data revealed that 48% of the students struggled with subject-verb agreement errors, 42% faced challenges in maintaining consistent verb tenses, and 61% exhibited punctuation errors, such as missing commas and incorrect apostrophe usage.

This finding echoes the work of Thompson and Davis (2016), who emphasized the need for students to develop strong grammatical skills to produce clear and precise writing. Grammatical errors can impede communication and reduce the credibility of the writer. To address these issues, educators can incorporate grammar instruction into their writing curriculum, providing students with exercises and practice opportunities to reinforce correct usage. Peer editing and proofreading activities can also help students identify and rectify grammatical mistakes in their own and others' writing.

The study found limited vocabulary in students' writing, as indicated in Table 4.4. Approximately 53% of the students exhibited a restricted range of vocabulary, leading to repetitive or monotonous language use. Moreover, 47% had difficulty finding appropriate words to express their ideas, and 49% lacked precision and effectiveness in their writing.

This finding aligns with the work of Anderson et al. (2019), who emphasized the importance of a rich and diverse vocabulary in enhancing the quality of writing. A limited vocabulary can hinder students from effectively communicating their thoughts and ideas. To address this issue, educators can introduce students to new words and

phrases through reading and vocabulary-building exercises. Encouraging students to use the thesaurus and engage in creative writing activities can also foster a deeper understanding and appreciation of language diversity.

The study found inconsistent or ineffective evidence and support in students' compositions, as shown in Table 4.5. A substantial number of students (46%) lacked sufficient evidence to support their arguments, while 33% struggled with providing relevant and compelling arguments. Additionally, 35% presented weak or unsubstantiated arguments, and 24% deviated from the composition topic.

This finding is in line with the research of Jones and Brown (2018), who emphasized the importance of providing strong evidence to bolster the claims made in academic writing. Ineffective evidence can weaken the persuasiveness and credibility of the writing. To address this issue, educators can guide students in conducting research and collecting evidence to support their arguments. Encouraging critical thinking and teaching students how to evaluate sources can also help them develop stronger arguments in their compositions.

The lack of cohesion in students' writing, as presented in Table 4.6 was another finding of the study. Approximately 65% of the students struggled to connect their ideas coherently within and between paragraphs. Moreover, 57% exhibited issues with the inconsistent or ineffective use of cohesive devices, such as pronouns or transition words, while 59% struggled with the misuse of pronouns and transition words. Additionally, 36% experienced disruptions in the flow of their writing.

This finding aligns with the work of Johnson et al. (2020), who emphasized the importance of coherence in writing to maintain the reader's interest and understanding. A lack of cohesion can lead to disjointed and confusing compositions. These issues can

be addressed by educators through the provision of explicit instruction on the use of cohesive devices and to guide students in organizing their ideas logically. Peer review and revision activities can also help students identify areas where their writing lacks coherence and make necessary improvements.

Another finding pertained to inaccurate mechanics and conventions in students' writing, as shown in Table 4.7. Approximately 41% of the students had compositions with spelling errors and punctuation mistakes, while 45% overlooked basic conventions, such as grammar, punctuation, or formatting rules. Furthermore, 39% lacked clarity and professionalism in their writing, and 35% exhibited incorrect grammar usage.

This finding echoes the work of White and Black (2017), who emphasized the importance of accurate mechanics and conventions in producing polished and professional writing. Inaccurate mechanics can distract the reader and diminish the overall quality of the composition. Teachers should emphasize the importance of proofreading and editing in the writing process. Teaching students the conventions of formal writing and providing practice opportunities can also improve their mechanics and conventions.

The final finding in the study focused on the lack of originality and creativity in students' compositions, as shown in Table 4.8. Approximately 32% of the students struggled to bring originality and creativity to their writing, while 35% relied heavily on clichés or generic ideas. Moreover, 39% produced dull or uninspiring writing that failed to engage the reader, and 29% used unfamiliar jargon.

This finding is consistent with the research of Lee and Davis (2019), who highlighted the importance of fostering creativity in writing to captivate the reader's attention. A

lack of originality can lead to monotonous and unengaging compositions. To address this issue, educators can encourage students to explore their creativity through writing prompts and exercises. Promoting a supportive and open environment for self-expression can also empower students to develop their unique writing style.

4.4.2 Factors contributing to students' weak writing skills

The findings of this study shed light on several critical factors contributing to senior high school (SHS) students' weak writing skills. These factors encompass both linguistic and cognitive aspects, as well as the role of educational practices. By adopting a quantitative approach, the research was able to pinpoint specific factors that hinder students from providing valuable insights for improving writing pedagogy. This section discusses these findings in line with relevant literature, drawing on existing studies and theories that support or corroborate the identified factors.

Factors contributing to students' weak writing skills were investigated in this study using a quantitative approach. The first factor explored was "Limited Vocabulary and Language Skills." The results showed that a considerable proportion of participants agreed that they face challenges related to a lack of word variety, limited use of synonyms, inadequate knowledge of grammar rules, sentence structure, and understanding appropriate word choice and tone.

These findings align with existing literature, which emphasizes the crucial role of vocabulary and language skills in effective communication and writing proficiency (Biemiller, 2019; Ehri, 2018; Williams, 2017). The study revealed that many SHS students struggle with limited vocabulary and language skills, hindering their ability to express ideas effectively. This finding aligns with previous research that emphasizes the importance of vocabulary knowledge in writing proficiency. According to

Cummins (1979), a strong vocabulary is crucial for comprehension and expression, as it provides a repertoire of words that can be used to articulate complex thoughts.

Moreover, language skills, including grammar and sentence structure, are fundamental components of written expression. Studies by Ellis (2002) and Larsen-Freeman (2008) have shown that a solid grasp of grammar and syntax positively impacts writing quality. Therefore, addressing these linguistic deficits through targeted language instruction and vocabulary enhancement programs can significantly improve students' writing skills.

The second factor, "Insufficient Reading and Exposure to Diverse Writing," also resonates with prior research. Studies have consistently highlighted the positive impact of reading habits on language development, creativity, and critical thinking (Krashen, 2011; Mol, & Bus, 2011). The study's findings revealed that many participants agreed that they lack reading habits and exposure to various writing styles and genres, leading to limited comprehension of writing techniques and inadequate vocabulary expansion through reading. The study found that many SHS students lack adequate reading habits and exposure to diverse writing materials. This limitation aligns with existing literature on the critical role of reading in writing development.

Researchers such as Krashen (2004) and Guthrie et al. (2014) have demonstrated that extensive reading fosters language acquisition, enhances vocabulary, and exposes students to various writing styles and genres. By engaging with a variety of texts, students gain insights into effective writing techniques and develop critical thinking abilities. As advocated by Nagy (1988) and Pressley and Allington (2014), encouraging students to read widely and providing access to diverse literature can significantly improve their writing skills and overall literacy.

“Ineffective Planning and Organization” emerged as the third factor affecting students’ writing skills. In line with previous research (Kellogg, 2008; McCutchen, et al., 2014), the study demonstrated that students face challenges in understanding essay structure, organizing ideas coherently, and developing clear thesis statements supported by relevant evidence. These findings underscore the significance of teaching students effective writing strategies and fostering strong organizational skills to improve their writing abilities. The study revealed that ineffective planning and organization pose challenges for SHS students in composing coherent and well-structured essays.

This finding aligns with research on the writing process and its components. According to Flower and Hayes’ cognitive model (1981), effective writing involves several stages, including planning, organizing ideas, and revising. Students who struggle with planning may encounter difficulties in articulating their thoughts logically. These findings are also consistent with studies by Bereiter, and Scardamalia (1987) and Hayes et al. (2012), emphasizing the significance of explicit instruction on essay structure and strategies for organizing ideas. Addressing these issues through scaffolding techniques and writing workshops can assist students in developing stronger planning and organizational skills.

The fourth factor, “Weak Critical Thinking and Analysis,” aligns with research emphasizing critical thinking’s vital role in effective writing (Ennis, 2011; Paul, & Elder, 2006). Participants in the study expressed difficulties in analyzing and evaluating information critically, identifying main ideas and logical fallacies, and constructing well-reasoned arguments and counterarguments. This suggests the need for interventions that promote critical thinking skills to enhance students’ analytical and

persuasive writing abilities. The study identified weak critical thinking and analysis as a significant impediment to SHS students' writing skills.

This finding is corroborated by research that emphasizes the interplay between critical thinking and effective writing. Paul, and Elder (2006) argue that critical thinking skills, such as evaluating evidence, constructing reasoned arguments, and identifying fallacies, are essential for producing persuasive and well-supported essays. Additionally, Ennis (1987) and Facione (2013) advocate for the explicit teaching of critical thinking strategies to enhance students' analytical abilities. Integrating critical thinking exercises and discussions into the writing curriculum can empower students to engage more deeply with their topics and produce more insightful and persuasive compositions.

Lastly, "Insufficient Practice and Feedback from Teachers" was identified as a significant factor impacting students' writing skills. This finding echoes existing literature advocating for regular writing practice and constructive feedback from teachers to foster writing growth (Bangert-Drowns, et al., 2004; Graham, & Hebert, 2011). Participants in the study acknowledged the lack of opportunities for writing practice in various contexts, limited feedback and guidance from teachers, and inadequate self-reflection and revision skills as hindrances to their writing development. The study highlighted the significance of regular writing practice and constructive feedback from teachers in improving students' writing skills. This finding aligns with research on writing pedagogy, which emphasizes the role of practice and formative feedback in skill development. According to Hattie, and Timperley (2007) and Black, and Wiliam (1998), timely and specific feedback is crucial for students to identify areas for improvement and make meaningful revisions.

Moreover, Graham, and Perin (2007) argue that frequent writing practice enhances students' confidence and proficiency. To address this issue, educators should provide ample opportunities for writing practice, implement peer review processes, and offer personalized feedback that guides students in refining their writing skills.

In conclusion, this discussion presents the findings related to factors contributing to the weak writing skills of Senior High School (SHS) students. The study employed a quantitative approach to identify and analyze these factors, focusing on limited vocabulary and language skills, insufficient reading and exposure to diverse writing, ineffective planning and organization, weak critical thinking and analysis, and insufficient practice and feedback from teachers. The results highlight the need for targeted interventions and support in areas such as vocabulary enrichment, reading engagement, organizational strategies, critical thinking instruction, and providing ample opportunities for writing practice and teacher feedback. By addressing these challenges, educators and policymakers can foster improvements in SHS students' writing proficiency, ultimately enhancing their overall communication and academic success.

4.4.3 Improvement of composition writing skills of SHS students

Improving the composition writing skills of Senior High School (SHS) students requires a multifaceted approach, as suggested by the qualitative findings from English language teachers. The four identified themes - regular writing exercises, constructive feedback, self-reflection, and continuous professional development - each play a crucial role in enhancing students' writing abilities.

The first theme emphasizes the importance of incorporating regular writing exercises in the classroom. English teachers reported using a variety of activities such as

journaling, storytelling, and timed writing prompts to build students' writing fluency and self-expression. This consistent practice helps students develop their creativity, structure their compositions effectively, and articulate their ideas more clearly. Through these exercises, students are encouraged to experiment with different writing styles, fostering a solid foundation for composition and promoting the use of a diverse vocabulary.

Literature supports this approach, as research suggests that regular practice is essential in improving writing skills (Graham, et al., 2012). By engaging in daily writing exercises, students have the opportunity to hone their grammar, coherence, and storytelling abilities (MacArthur, et al., 2016). Additionally, the use of prompts and timed sessions can foster creativity and encourage students to think critically about their ideas and arguments (Humphrey, & Droga, 2018). Moreover, providing a supportive environment that encourages students to express their thoughts freely can help boost their confidence and motivation in writing (Ames, 1992).

Constructive feedback is highlighted as a valuable strategy to improve SHS students' composition writing skills. English teachers mentioned various ways they provide feedback, including highlighting strengths and areas for improvement, using rubrics for assessment, conducting one-on-one conferences, and utilizing sample essays as models. Additionally, peer review sessions were cited as effective in fostering a supportive environment for constructive criticism and collaborative learning.

Research supports the significance of constructive feedback in writing instruction (Cho, & MacArthur, 2010). Teachers' feedback that is specific, actionable, and focuses on content, organization, and grammar can effectively guide students in improving their compositions (Graham, & Perin, 2007). By involving peers in the feedback process,

students gain valuable insights from diverse perspectives, promoting a sense of ownership and responsibility over their writing (Roca de Larios et al., 2008).

Furthermore, the incorporation of rubrics aids in setting clear expectations for students and allows them to self-assess their work against established criteria (Andrade, 2000). One-on-one conferences provide personalized guidance to students, addressing their challenges and helping them develop stronger writing skills (Ferris, & Roberts, 2001). These feedback strategies foster a growth mindset, encouraging students to embrace challenges and view mistakes as opportunities for improvement (Dweck, 2006).

Self-reflection is identified as a powerful strategy for improving composition writing skills. Teachers mentioned activities such as journaling, self-assessment questionnaires, and technology-assisted audio reflections to encourage students to introspectively examine their writing progress. By critically assessing their work and setting writing goals, students become more proactive in honing their writing skills.

Research indicates that self-reflection promotes metacognitive awareness, helping students identify areas for growth and make intentional improvements in their writing (Zimmerman, 2002). Journaling allows students to record their thoughts and feelings about their writing, leading to a deeper understanding of their progress and writing strengths (Cho, 2011). Self-assessment questionnaires provide a structured approach for students to evaluate their writing, helping teachers tailor instruction to individual needs (Boud, 1995). Additionally, technology-assisted reflections provide an innovative way for students to gain insights into their writing tone and coherence (Kirkwood, & Price, 2013).

Continuous Professional Development (CPD) for English language teachers is recognized as a crucial factor in enhancing their skills, knowledge, and teaching methodologies, which directly impact students' composition writing abilities. English teachers reported that CPD equips them with effective writing strategies, modern pedagogical approaches, and technology-based tools that enrich students' compositions. Research supports the significance of teacher professional development in improving student outcomes (Desimone, 2009). Engaging in CPD allows teachers to stay updated with best practices in writing instruction and design engaging activities that promote student creativity and critical thinking (Guskey, & Yoon, 2009). By exploring modern pedagogical approaches, teachers can better cater to students' writing styles and language proficiency levels (Marzano, 2003).

Moreover, incorporating technology-based tools enhances teachers' ability to provide formative feedback and enrich students' compositions with multimedia elements and online resources (Benson, 2012). CPD workshops that emphasize self-assessment and reflective practices help teachers evaluate their instructional methods and adjust approaches to optimize students' writing competence (Timperley, et al., 2007).

It concludes that improving the composition writing skills of SHS students requires a comprehensive approach that includes regular writing exercises, constructive feedback, self-reflection, and continuous professional development for teachers. These strategies, aligned with relevant literature, create an enriching learning environment where students can grow in their writing abilities, ultimately preparing them for academic and professional success. By fostering creativity, critical thinking, and effective communication through writing, SHS students will be better equipped to express their ideas with clarity and coherence in various contexts.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

In chapter five, the key insights gained from the study are summarized and conclusions drawn, practical recommendations made, and areas suggested for further investigations. The aim is to contribute to academia the understanding of writing skills at senior high schools while guiding policymakers, researchers, and stakeholders involved in education on the steps that facilitate effective composition writing.

5.1 Summary of Findings

Based on the analysis and discussion, the study findings are summarized based on the research objectives.

Summary of Findings

1. The study found that SHS students encounter several challenges in composition writing, including limited vocabulary, poor grammar and syntax, difficulty in organizing ideas, and lack of creativity. Additionally, students struggle with writing apprehension, inadequate feedback from teachers, and insufficient practice opportunities. The findings suggest that these challenges negatively impact students' ability to write coherent, well-structured compositions.
2. Teachers utilize regular writing exercises, structured feedback, peer reviews, and guided instruction to enhance students' composition skills. The study revealed that journaling, storytelling, critical thinking exercises, and vocabulary-building activities are commonly employed to boost fluency and

creativity. Additionally, one-on-one writing conferences, rubric-based assessments, and technology-assisted feedback were identified as effective methods for refining students' writing abilities.

3. The study highlights the importance of consistent writing practice, targeted feedback, reflective writing, and the integration of technology in improving students' composition writing skills. Encouraging students to self-assess their writing, engage in peer evaluations, and participate in writing workshops were also found to be beneficial. Furthermore, Continuous Professional Development (CPD) for teachers was identified as a key factor in enhancing instructional methods and ensuring that students receive quality writing instruction tailored to their individual needs.

5.2 Conclusions

The following conclusions were drawn from the study.

The study concludes that significant deficiencies exist in various aspects of students writing, such as clarity, organization, grammar, vocabulary, evidence support, cohesion, mechanics, and creativity. These shortcomings adversely impact their academic success and communication abilities. This is critical for a final year's class hence; immediate steps must be taken to rectify these issues.

There are critical factors impacting their writing skills, including limited vocabulary and language skills, lack of reading habits, difficulties with essay structure, and inadequate critical thinking abilities. These factors are indeed worrying for students in their final years as the effects could spill into their final examinations which have serious implications for their future.

The study concludes that a multifaceted approach that includes the incorporation of regular exercises writing, constructive feedback, self-reflection, and continuous

professional development (CPD) for teachers. Regular practice enhances fluency, grammar, and storytelling. Constructive feedback and self-reflection foster critical thinking and metacognitive awareness. CPD must be frequent to equip teachers with effective strategies for better instruction, positively impacting students' writing abilities.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the conclusions drawn from the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Organize regular workshops that focus on specific writing skills, such as clarity, organization, and cohesion. These workshops should provide students with hands-on practice and constructive feedback to improve their writing abilities. Also, incorporate creative writing exercises into the curriculum to stimulate students' imagination and improve their storytelling skills. These exercises can be in the form of storytelling contests, writing prompts, or collaborative writing projects.
2. Offer specialized language classes that aim to improve student's vocabulary and language skills. These classes can focus on word usage, synonyms, and idiomatic expressions to enrich their writing. Also, design activities and assignments that encourage students to think critically and analyze various perspectives. Engaging in debates, discussions, and essay topics can help students develop a deeper understanding of the subjects they write about.
3. Integrate short writing tasks into daily lessons to enhance students' fluency and grammar. Frequent practice will allow students to develop confidence and proficiency in their writing. Also, organize workshops and seminars for teachers to keep them updated with the latest instructional methods and effective strategies for teaching

writing. Well-equipped teachers can better support and guide their students in improving their writing skills.

5.4 Implications for Practice

Based on the findings, conclusions and recommendations, the study has implications for students, teachers, school authorities, the Ghana Education Service and learning in general.

1. Students in SHS need targeted support in writing skills to overcome deficiencies in clarity, organization, grammar, and vocabulary. Implementing writing workshops and explicit instruction will enhance their academic success and communication abilities, leading to improved overall learning outcomes.

2. Educators should address critical factors affecting students' writing skills, like limited vocabulary, essay structure difficulties, and poor critical thinking. To do so, they must provide targeted language instruction, promote reading habits, and teach effective writing strategies. Offering regular writing practice and constructive feedback is crucial for continual improvement.

3. A multifaceted approach is necessary to bolster students' writing abilities. School leaders should encourage the incorporation of regular writing exercises, constructive feedback, and self-reflection in the curriculum. Additionally, supporting teachers through continuous professional development will equip them with effective strategies for better writing instruction, thereby positively impacting students' writing skills.

4. The Ghana Education Service should prioritize writing skills development in SHS by implementing the recommendations from the study. By promoting writing workshops, targeted language instruction, and regular writing practice, they can elevate

students' writing proficiency, leading to improved academic performance and communication abilities.

5. By addressing the identified deficiencies and challenges in students' writing, the overall learning experience will be enriched. Improved writing skills contribute to better comprehension, critical thinking, and communication across various subjects, positively impacting the overall quality of education in SHS and fostering academic excellence.

5.5 Suggestions for Further Research

Since the study was unable to deal with all aspects of writing skills in composition due to the mixed methods used, the following suggestions are made for future research.

1. Further research is required to explore the long-term effects of implementing writing workshops, explicit instruction, and vocabulary-building exercises on students' academic success and communication abilities. A comparative study with control groups could provide deeper insights into the efficacy of these interventions.

2. Investigate the correlation between reading habits and writing skills in students to better understand how promoting reading can positively influence their writing abilities. Additionally, a longitudinal study tracking students' progress after targeted language instruction and critical thinking interventions would be valuable.

3. Conduct a comparative study to assess the effectiveness of different feedback approaches, such as peer feedback, teacher feedback, and automated feedback tools, on students' writing improvement. Also, explore the impact of self-reflection exercises on metacognitive awareness and writing quality over time. Long-term studies tracking the

impact of continuous professional development (CPD) for teachers on students' writing outcomes can further strengthen the research in this area.



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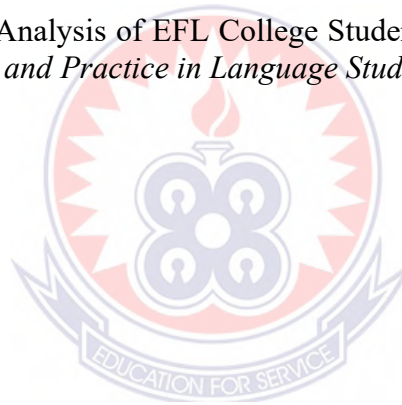
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APPENDIX A

STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear student,

Thank you for your accepting to participate in this study. This questionnaire is a research instrument for gathering data for my research, “**WRITING SKILLS OF SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN COMPOSITION WRITING. A STUDY OF OUR LADY OF LOURDES GIRLS SHS IN THE KASSENA-NANKANA MUNICIPALITY**”. I am a graduate student in the Department of Applied Linguistics, University of Education, Winneba. Your sincere responses to this interview will help me gain insight into the topic. The data you provide will be kept highly confidential and used only for this research. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. I would appreciate your sincere opinions. Your responses will be anonymous. In case of any concerns about this questionnaire, you may contact me by phone at 0247656575.

FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO STUDENTS WEAK WRITING SKILLS

Using the scale below, indicate the extent to which you consent or dissent with the statements on factors contributing to students’ weak writing skills as indicated below.

Please circle/tick the number that best represents your opinion.

<u>Agree</u> <u>1</u>	<u>Disagree</u> <u>2</u>	<u>Not Sure</u> <u>3</u>		
Statement	Response			
A. Limited Vocabulary and Language Skills				
1. Lack of word variety and limited use of synonyms	1	2	3	
2. Inadequate knowledge of grammar rules and sentence structure	1	2	3	
3. Limited understanding of appropriate word choice and tone	1	2	3	
B. Insufficient Reading and Exposure to Diverse Writing				
4. Lack of reading habits and exposure to different writing styles	1	2	3	
5. Limited comprehension of various genres and writing techniques	1	2	3	
6. Inadequate exposure to vocabulary expansion through reading	1	2	3	
C. Ineffective Planning and Organization				
7. Weak understanding of essay structure and paragraph development	1	2	3	

8. Difficulty in creating a coherent and logical flow of ideas	1	2	3
9. Inability to develop a clear thesis statement and support it with relevant evidence	1	2	3
D. Weak Critical Thinking and Analysis	1	2	3
10. Limited ability to analyze and evaluate information critically	1	2	3
11. Difficulty in identifying main ideas, supporting evidence, and logical fallacies	1	2	3
12. Inability to construct well-reasoned arguments and counterarguments	1	2	3
E. Insufficient Practice and Feedback:	1	2	3
13. Lack of opportunities for writing practice in various contexts	1	2	3
14. Limited feedback and guidance from teachers on writing assignments	1	2	3
15. Inadequate self-reflection and revision skills	1	2	3

Thanks for participating



APPENDIX B

TEACHERS' INTERVIEW

Dear Sir/Madam,

Thank you for your accepting to participate in this study. This interview is a research instrument for gathering data for my research, **“WRITING SKILLS OF SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN COMPOSITION WRITING. A STUDY OF OUR LADY OF LOURDES GIRLS SHS IN THE KASSENA-NANKANA MUNICIPALITY”**. I am a graduate student in the Department of Applied Linguistics, University of Education, Winneba. Your sincere responses to this interview will help me gain insight into the topic. The data you provide will be kept highly confidential and used only for this research. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. I would appreciate your sincere opinions. Your responses will be anonymous. In case of any concerns about this questionnaire, you may contact me by phone at 0247656575.

Please write your response to the questions in the spaces provided

1. What specific strategies or approaches do you recommend for SHS students to enhance their overall writing skills?

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2. As writing is a diverse skill, how would you suggest balancing the focus between different aspects, such as grammar, vocabulary, structure, and creativity, to ensure well-rounded improvement?

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3. Writing can be a daunting task for some students. How would you suggest building their confidence and motivation to engage more actively in writing exercises?

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4. Technology has become an integral part of education. In what ways can digital tools or online resources be utilized to aid SHS students in improving their writing skills?

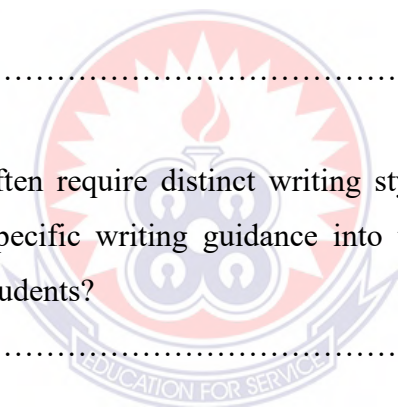
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5. Different subjects often require distinct writing styles. How would you propose incorporating subject-specific writing guidance into the curriculum to cater to the diverse needs of SHS students?

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6. Peer review and feedback play a vital role in refining writing skills. What strategies do you recommend for implementing effective peer review sessions among SHS students?

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7. In your experience, what are some successful examples of extracurricular activities or writing initiatives that have proven to be effective in enhancing the writing abilities of SHS students, and how could similar activities be integrated into the existing educational framework?

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Thanks for participating in the study



APPENDIX C

EXTRACTS OF STUDENTS' WRITTEN ASSESSMENTS

21st FEBRUARY, 2025

PTS 38

SECTION A ESSAY

Q1 Question 2

Our Lady Of Lourdes Girls' Senior High School
Post Office Box 50
Nawranga.
21st February, 2025.

Dear Philia,

I am very delighted to write to you. How are you? I hope you, Selorm and Osman are doing well and getting along in school. I received your last letter and thanks for the letter. I am writing this letter to tell you and answer ^{your} question ^{on} why my school, Our Lady of Lourdes Senior High School is excelling in academic work. This letter I write is to give you three reasons for which O.L.L. Girls' excels in academic work.

To begin with, Our Lady of Lourdes Girls' Senior High School ^{which is in} my school is located in Nawranga, to be precise (Green) and the school's location is far from ^{and} noise, far from distraction which makes the environment so comfortable, so convenient, so relaxing and above all so good for the ~~our~~ students to learn. Can you remember the time we were debating and mercy came and asked the ~~of~~ if studying under a tree helps in understanding more than just sitting anywhere and we all debated about it but finally the answer was that studying under a tree helps you relax and understand whatever you are studying very well. This brings me back to my point, a good environment, my school is full of trees which we often sit under to study. This helps the students to understand what we are being taught and this makes us perform well or excel in ^{our} academic work. My school's environment is very good and conducive for studies.

Secondly, My school, Our Lady of Lourdes Girls' Senior High School has qualified, trained, skilled and good teachers who know how to handle each and every student and they also know their field of work too well which makes them teach to the understanding of students. Our teachers take their time to explain whatever they teach very well to us so we would understand and do well in our academic performance work. Do you remember Sir Ryo-Luke, our math teacher back at ~~elementary~~ school? We both know he was a

qualified, skilled, trained and a good teacher due to all these, he knew his field of work and thought taught us the Maths to our understanding and he made sure we all excelled in academic work. Think of all School full of sir Ayaw Luges, well that is how Our lady of Lourdes Girls' Senior High School, my school is, it is full of Ayaw LUKES, all the teachers are just like him.

Finally, Our lady of Lourdes girls' school, ~~my school~~ has made it possible for ~~me~~ students to have teacher-student relationship. ~~and~~ I know what you are thinking but it is not what you are thinking. What I mean by teacher-student relationship is that, a student can go to any teacher to help her in ~~under~~ understanding the topic in ^{which} ~~the~~ teacher ~~is~~ she doesn't understand in his or her subject. Students are free and not scared to go and ask teachers for more explanation and clarification. Do you remember our former English teacher, Sir Ayanga Peter whom we were all scared to ask questions and it made our performance in English language poor until we ~~at last~~ reported him to administration and he was changed. In Our lady of Lourdes girls' ~~my school~~ we don't have a teacher liked sir Ayanga Peter. All our teachers are friendly and we can easily speak to them.

In conclusion, the three reasons stated above ~~are~~ why Our lady of Lourdes Girls' Senior High School excels in academic work and I hope you understand ~~and~~ the reasons and before I forget good luck in your upcoming examination.

Thank you

your penpal
Riya.