

**UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF ACADEMIC WRITING TASKS**

**IN**

**THE UNIVERSITY OF BENIN**

**BY**

**Oluchi Joy EMEKA**

**EDU1708761**

**MAY, 2023**

**UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF ACADEMIC WRITING TASKS**

**IN**

**THE UNIVERSITY OF BENIN**

**BY**

**Oluchi Joy EMEKA**

**EDU170876**

**A PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF CURRICULUM AND  
INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNOLOGY, FACULTY OF EDUCATION IN PARTIAL  
FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF  
BACHELOR OF SCIENCE EDUCATION (B.Sc. Ed) DEGREE IN INTEGRATED  
SCIENCE, UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, BENIN CITY.**

**MAY, 2023**

## CERTIFICATION

We certify that this project work is adequate in scope and was carried out by Oluchi Joy EMEKA, in the Department of Curriculum and Instructional Technology, Faculty of Education, University of Benin, Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria, In partial fulfillment for the award of the B.Sc (Ed) degree in Integrated Science.

---

DR (MRS) P.I.O AIKA

---

DATE

**(PROJECT SUPERVISOR)**

---

DR (MRS) F.N. OFUANI

---

DATE

**(PROJECT CO-ORDINATOR)**

---

PROF. O.K. OMOROGIUWA

---

DATE

**(DEAN, FACULTY OF EDUCATION)**

## **DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated to God Almighty who provided me the grace and strength to complete this project. Secondly, to my wonderful parents Engr and Mrs Emeka Ossai for the continuous love and support for which I am eternally grateful.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First of all, praises and infinite thanks to God, who showered me with his blessings, provided me with strength, and guided me through my unique journey to bring my research project into the light.

This researcher would like to express her deepest gratitude to her outstanding project supervisor Dr Mrs P. I. O Aika, for giving her an opportunity and an unforgettable experience in writing this project. This researcher is thankful for all she has taught her and all of the resources she provided for her during the course of writing this project. This project would not have been possible without you.

The researcher would also like to thank the HOD, Dr.(Mrs.) R.J. Musa and all the Lecturers and Staff of the Department of Curriculum and Instructional Technology for their support.

This researcher also wants to appreciate her Parents Engr and Mrs Emeka Ossai, her sibling Tochuku Emeka for their unyielding support during this journey. Special thanks also to her colleague and best friend Michael Obasoro for his continued encouragement and emotional support whenever I needed it.

This researcher extends gratitude to her best friends Okhide Peace, Uyi Osahenmwinhia and Uyi Osaosemwen for their support, understanding and for being a source of inspiration while working on this project. This researcher feels truly blessed to have such amazing people in her life

### **ABSTRACT**

The study adopted the descriptive survey research design. The population of the study comprised of students in the Faculty of Education, University of Benin. The sample size of the study was made up of one hundred and twenty (120) students randomly selected from three course areas from the Department of Curriculum and Instructional Technology. A questionnaire titled "

Undergraduate Students' Perception of Academic Writing Tasks" was used to collect data. The data collected were analyzed using simple percentage, mean and standard deviation for the research questions and t-test and ANOVA for the hypotheses. Three questionnaires and two hypotheses were raised to guide the study.

The results of this study indicated that students preferred working on objective tests. Many students also have the view that academic writing is difficult and is challenging. From the results of this study, tests are the most popular form of academic writing tasks among students with term papers being the least. Students perceived peer review and reading materials as very helpful in improving their writing abilities. In addition, it was revealed that students differ in their attitudes towards academic writing tasks based on academic level and sex

. Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended among others that more writing opportunities be provided to students in writing.

## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

<b>CERTIFICATION</b>	<b>iii</b>	<b>DEDICATION</b>	<b>iv</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENT</b>			<b>v</b>
<b>ABSTRACT</b>			<b>vii</b>

<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS</b>	<b>viii</b>
<b>LIST OF TABLES</b>	<b>xii</b>
<b>CHAPTER ONE</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Background of the Study</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Statement of the Problem</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Research Questions</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Hypotheses</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Purpose of the Study</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Significance of the Study</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Scope and Delimitation of the Study</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>CHAPTER TWO</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>The Concept of Perception</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>The Concept of Perception</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>The Relationship between Students' sex and their Perception of Academic Writing</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>The Relationship between Students' level and their Perception of Academic Writing</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>History of Writing</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Academic Writing</b>	<b>12</b>

<b>Forms of Academic Writing Tasks</b>	13
<b>Academic Writing Tasks at the Undergraduate Level</b>	14
<b>Factors to Consider in Developing Academic Writing Skills</b>	17
<b>Undergraduate Students' Perception of Academic Writing Tasks</b>	24
<b>Summary of Reviewed Literature</b>	25
<b>CHAPTER THREE</b>	27
<b>METHODOLOGY</b>	27
<b>Research Design</b>	27
<b>Population of the Study</b>	28
<b>Sample and Sampling Techniques</b>	28
<b>Research Instrument</b>	28
<b>Validity of the Instrument</b>	29
<b>Reliability of the Instrument</b>	29
<b>Method of Data Collection</b>	29
<b>Method of Data Analysis</b>	30
<b>CHAPTER FOUR</b>	31
<b>PRESENTATION OF RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS</b>	31
<b>CHAPTER FIVE</b>	45
<b>SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	45
<b>Summary</b>	45
<b>Findings</b>	45
<b>Conclusion</b>	46
<b>Recommendations</b>	46

<b>Suggestion for Further Research</b>	47
<b>References</b>	49

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1 : Students' Attitudes Towards writing Task	31
Table 2: Frequency of writing task	32
Table 3 : Support needed To Improve Academic Writing	34
Table 4: Group Statistics	36
Table 5: Descriptive Statistics	37
Table 6: Sex Distribution of the Respondents	38
Table 7:Academic level of the Respondents	39
Table 8: Analysis of Variance	40
Table 9: Dependent Variables	41



## **CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION Background of the Study**

Writing is a means of communication which involves the exemplification of language through a system used in rendering language. It has additionally been found that the hobby of writing itself could have knowledge-reworking effects, because it lets people to externalize their questioning in forms that may be less complicated to reflect on, elaborate and revise.

Writing can also be described as a traditional system of marks or indications that shows the utterances of a language. A reasonable, record level of command of Writing skill is pivotal to enhance undergraduate students writing performance. Inevitably, the prerequisite for having a standard writing capacity emerges as one of the most essential criteria for competent graduates. It is one of the vital abilities aimed to be relayed to students through education. This ability is one of the four principal language capabilities and is of importance in the many different stages of education.

Writing is one of the major capabilities in gaining knowledge of which greater interest has to be paid to. It is the fundamental device by which inexperienced persons display their understanding. However, it is a tough challenge and a demanding study because it calls for some techniques that have to be completed simultaneously. As it is inexperienced persons must expand and enhance their writing skills.

Academic writing is a formal fashion used in the academic, scholarly articles or works, they also include journals, periodicals, research works tutorial topic, essays, research essays all related to the educational style. It follows the same writing method as other types of texts, but it has particular conventions in terms of context, structure and style. It allows the students gift ideas, examine studies and assemble a powerful argument. Through the motive of scholarly writing can range amongst disciplines, writing has many uncommon features, it also helps students gain understanding from traits and classes of writing that helps to boost work.

Academic writing is an essential capability to become proficient in the method of writing used in academic work. It is a validated style of writing that uses fact based logic and line of reasoning to guide the learners appreciation of a subject. Writers use this format to pick out and examine a notion and propose a thought or ideal conclusion. Researchers use academic work to relay their field work.

Academic writing tasks have been recognized has one of the key foundations of the educational process. It is one of the most vital components of learning and it is expected that every student should have an acceptable level of mastery in writing and at least a positive attitude towards writing tasks. Ideally, students should have a positive attitude towards writing tasks. According to Gerald (1993) students with a high level of writing proficiency tend to have positive attitudes

towards writing tasks and are willing to participate in these tasks, while students with low mastery of writing avoid or have reduced level of participation in writing tasks as they find it difficult and too tasking. The students with high proficiency and the right attitude towards tasks get the opportunity to improve upon their skills by taking on more tasks, this also helps them to improve their vocabulary and gain more knowledge on the subject matter. While students that shy away from these writing tasks do not get the opportunity to improve and thus they remain at the level they are and most times develop writing anxiety.

Academic writing is illustrative and elucidatory, its intention is to provide more insight to a concept. Argument is imperative in academic writing, it allows for different opposing views or concepts to co-exist, narrative in academic writing is voluntary. The main basis for academic writing is the acquisition of fresh statistics and data through arguments that have been backed up with sufficient facts and logic. Argument does not interdict the idea of a narrative point of view, a researcher can publish an article a narrative with functional and beneficial arguments but narrative cannot operate as a replacement of useful argument in an experienced setting. It is the articulation of research into newly discovered evidence that might be presented in the form of new information or a fresh perspective or interpretation of old data, as well as the use of new means or methods or materials to sustain old argument.

Mastery of academic writing seldom comes easy to individuals not to mention undergraduate students, even if the individual is a skilled writer in some other areas and already sees writing as a satisfying exercise, participating in academic writing tasks can be a difficult challenge. The prominence of English language as the speech used in education, in general, means that individuals face obstacles in constructing an academic work and to accurately relay this writing task in a manner that is straight-forward.( Tom 2013).

Common academic writing tasks include Essay, Research paper, Research proposal, Lab reports, Literature review, Assignments etc.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Writing is a skill that is particularly needed in higher education. However, many undergraduate students' struggle with this skill. The bulk of students fail to increase their writing capabilities even after completing school. There is a decline in students' participation in academic writing tasks. One way to improve writing ability is through practice, written assignments provides opportunities for students to write. Thus, this study investigated undergraduate students' perception of academic writing tasks in the University of Benin.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions were used to guide the study:

- 1) What is Students Attitude Towards Academic Writing Tasks?
- 2) How often are students required to submit written assignments?
- 3) What support do students need to improve in their academic writing abilities?

## **Hypotheses**

H<sub>01</sub>: Students do not differ in their attitude to academic writing tasks based on sex.

H<sub>02</sub>: Students do not differ in their attitude to academic writing tasks based on level.

## **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to examine students' perception of academic writing tasks specifically. It sought to :

- 1) Find out students attitude towards writing tasks in the University of Benin.
- 2) Investigate how often students are required to submit written assignments.
- 3) Identify the support students need to improve their academic writing abilities.
- 4) Determine whether students' attitude towards academic writing tasks differ by sex and academic level.

## **Significance of the Study**

This study is expected to be of immense benefit to lecturers, teachers, students, college administrators, counselors and the general public who may stumble on this piece of research. The study will help teachers to understand how students perceive academic writing. It will help to change students' negative attitude to academic writing tasks.

This study will be a great material to any one that will conduct further study in this field as it is a dependable supply of records for proceeding researchers.

## **Scope and Delimitation of the Study**

This study focused on Undergraduate Students perception of academic writing tasks in the University of Benin.

The study is therefore delimited to undergraduate students in the Faculty of Education in the University of Benin.

## **Definition of Terms**

The following terms are defined as used in the study:

Writing- may be defined as a traditional system of composing words to represent utterances. It relies on the usage of crucial language with fundamental precision and compatibility.

Academic Writing- is a method of writing used in publications of academic nature. It is any body of work that is related to education. Academic writing according to Albadi (2015) is a compound process with many tiers with a significance placed on other skills such as incorporating and interpreting information that students need to improve on their writing.

Perception- the ability to perceive. Perception can be seen as a intellectual depiction of a concept which can be understood through an image that encompasses beliefs and meanings. People perceive the objective of a concept by understanding the concept itself. ( Fodor 1998).

## **CHAPTER TWO**

## **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

This chapter deals with the review of related literature. This chapter is discussed under the following sub-headings:

### **The Concept of Perception**

The Relationship between Students' sex and their Perception of Academic Writing

The Relationship between Students' level and their Perception of Academic Writing

History of Writing

Academic Writing Tasks at the Undergraduate Level

Factors to consider in Developing Academic Writing Skills

Undergraduate Students' Perception of Academic Writing Tasks

Summary of Reviewed Literature

## **The Concept of Perception**

Perception is a crucial cognitive ability that enables us to capture, process, and interpret the information that our senses receive. It allows us to make sense of our surroundings by actively interpreting the stimuli that we receive through our sensory organs. This ability is essential to our daily lives as it enables us to understand and navigate the world around us. Perception is the process by which an individual receives information about their environment through the senses of seeing, hearing, feeling, tasting, and smelling. According to Joseph Reitz, the functioning of this process is affected by three classes of variables: the objects or events being perceived, the environment in which perception occurs, and the individual doing the perceiving.

Perception and sensation are two distinct processes. While sensation is solely based on physiological features, perception is influenced by both physiological and psychological characteristics of an individual. Perception involves selective absorption of stimuli, cognitive organization of the perceived information, and interpretation to assess the environment. It is a subjective process, and different people may perceive the same environment differently based on their preferences and interpretations. It is possible to predict a person's behavior in changed circumstances by understanding their current perception of the environment. Every individual may view the same set of facts differently, which can result in varying behavior.

To truly comprehend human behavior, it is crucial to comprehend their perception. This means understanding how individuals perceive various situations. It's important to note that people's behavior is based on their perception of reality, not reality itself. Therefore, to understand human behavior, it's imperative to understand the world as perceived by individuals.

## **The Relationship between Students' sex and their Perception of Academic Writing**

Gender differences between male and female are socially constructed and have been observed by scholars, policymakers, and practitioners. Studies conducted worldwide among students at different levels have found significant differences in academic performance between genders. Female students are reported to outperform their male counterparts in several studies

(Orabi, 2007; Dayioglu & Turut, 2007; Khwaileh & Zaza, 2010). Ghazvini & Khajehpour (2011) argued that even cognitive functioning in the academic environment is affected by gender differences. Girls are more likely to adapt to learning in different environments. However, Wangu (2014) found in a study among secondary school students in Kenya that boys passed more than girls.

However, this study revealed that there are differences in how male and female students perceive academic writing tasks. These findings suggest that gender may play a role in how students approach writing assignments.

### **The Relationship between Students' level and their Perception of Academic Writing**

This study found that students do not differ in their perceptions of academic writing. Their perceptions of academic writing is the same in all levels. However, according to Parker's (2019) study at the American University in Cairo, there were notable differences in student perceptions based on their level of education.

### **History of Writing**

Writing systems have evolved greatly in human civilizations, the earliest forms of writing included the use of symbols or letters that represented words. This form of writing was used to

make remembrance and memorization much easier and simpler. The primitive uses of writing was in the ancient civilizations, where writing was used to report agricultural produce, maps, livestock information and primitive medication. But soon, writing began to be used for much more primary reasons and soon became more common and popular. It was used to document important happenings in history, laws, religions and an easier way of communication between individuals. With time, writing became more popularized and there was a growing need to further master this key component of learning and so, writing slowly evolved to the level it is at today. It became the basis of learning and education and one is unable to do without having an acceptable level of writing proficiency.

As writing began to evolve, humans started to discover other structures and forms of writing, these forms include : Creative writing, Descriptive writing, Journalism, Business editorials, Prose/Literature, Poetry, Memoirs, Eulogies, Speeches, Academic writing. For the purpose of this research we will focus on academic writing and students' perception towards academic writing tasks.

### **Academic Writing**

Academic writing is a form of writing that uses facts, logic and reasoning to command the learners' attention and appreciation of scholarly work. This type of writing is usually, clear,

succinct and concise, to appeal to the learner and also for easy assimilation. It is important for both students and teachers alike to be masters in this form of writing as it helps in the learning process. Academic writing consists mainly of texts written for the purpose of publication and additional reference to a specified subject matter. The most common examples of these writings include ; essay, research paper, thesis, dissertation, literature review, laboratory reports. The main aim of academic writing is to be formal, precise and to the point, well-structured, wellreferenced and cited, (Smith,2019).

For academic writing, argument is essential and narrative is optional. Academic research is the gathering of fresh information by various sources and means, the importance of this information is relayed by means of fact based arguments, a good researcher can draft a narrative that provides a variety of useful arguments but narratives cannot replace arguments especially in the academic setting. Academic writing is the implementation of research into new understanding, that may also be in the form of a new viewpoint or another perspective and also, analysis of old data, using different methods and materials to solidify or add to existing research.

### **Forms of Academic Writing Tasks**

To master academic writing tasks,it is imperative to be familiar with the types of academic writing tasks, they include;

1) Descriptive writing. Just as the name describes, this form of writing is descriptive in nature, its essence is to provide data or information in detail. An example of this type of writing is the summary of an article, results of an experiment.

2) Analytical writing. This form of writing is similar to descriptive writing but it requires the writer to go a step further to re-arrange facts or data described into various categories for further analysis. This writing mainly compares or contrasts facts. It is mainly used in articles with opposing viewpoints.

3) Persuasive writing. Persuasive writing adds the writer's own point of view to the existing research. Most articles have a persuasive standpoint or element in its concluding part. It involves presenting an existing argument and the addition of the writer's own interpretation of it.

4) Critical writing. Critical writing is a very common form of writing tasks, especially for undergraduate and post graduate programs. It allows for the review of various standpoints and perspectives with the aim of adding another point of view. It is important to have good writing abilities and also a complete understanding of the topic, strong essay structure to be able to excel in this form of writing.

## **Academic Writing Tasks at the Undergraduate Level**

Writing is a crucial part of education and life in general, especially for Undergraduate students. In the academic setting, students use writing to express thoughts, ideas and also add to existing research and also as a communication tool. To adequately partake in writing tasks, it is crucial for students to possess a level of writing proficiency. Students are required to improve on their writing skills in the academic setting because they will participate in more writing tasks than in previous levels. In essence, a high level of writing competence will improve the learners' ability to develop academically and, later on, professionally.

It has been established that academic writing tasks are very essential to the instructional process, some other reasons for participation in academic writing tasks include:

- ) Academic writing tasks help students to improve their knowledge of the class content and to strive for simplification of the class work.
- ) Scholarly writing tasks aid in developing students cognitive skills.
- ) It helps students to clearly present their thoughts and to persuade the reader.

Even students who excel at other language skills may face difficulty when asked to write. Writing attitudes play an important role in the formation of students view of writing tasks. It is effective in improving writing achievements.

Gerald(2015) stated that students with positive attitudes towards writing generally perform better than those with a low writing proficiency. Even students who excel at other language skills face some level of difficulty when they are asked to write, they fear making mistakes and are not confident to exhibit their thoughts through writing as they believe it is beyond their capacity, that is, they have associated a negative attitude or reaction to writing tasks.

Perceptions toward writing can be an important factor on the learners' level of goal setting, problem solving abilities, beliefs towards writing and their motivations in the process of writing and their writing performances. Perception can be seen as a construct that can be affected through emotional processes or mental ability that influences a persons' behavioural disposition, feelings towards certain situations etc. Attitude towards writing are important elements on the learners problem solving abilities, beliefs towards writing and their incentives in the process of their writing performances. Students with positive attitudes performed better than those with negative attitudes. It is very effective in improving or hindering writing achievements.

Writing Skills consist of all the capabilities and knowledge concerned with the expression of thoughts and ideas through writing. This means to accurately and clearly convey ideas with writing is very crucial for every individual in all areas of life and most especially students and

people involved in the instructional process. Technical understanding of writing conventions, styles and format for different types of writing is an integral part of writing skills.

These writing skills are important because they help the writer to relay his thoughts and ideas without having to speak in person, having knowledge of academic writing skill is essential in learning and instrumental to academic success. Mastery of academic writing gives knowledge, builds up on former knowledge and career development. Developing a level of mastery in academic writing is a difficult and lengthy procedure that requires time, discipline and mental and emotional prowess. One cannot improve on their writing skills overnight, it takes a lot of discipline to be able to become a good writer.

### **Factors to Consider in Developing Academic Writing Skills**

Teaching academic writing skills to students may not always be enough to help them master academic writing, Here are some factors to contemplate in developing writing skills:

- 1) Pay great attention to the essential elements of Academic writing, for example Audience, Purpose, Organization, Style, Clarity, Flow and Appearance.
- 2) Develop linguistic and grammar perception.
- 3) Evaluate the task.

4) Adequate research about the subject matter.

5) Source for information relating to the study.

6) Appropriate use of literature to support the study.(Swales, J. M., Feak, C. B. ,2012).

While considering factors to consider in developing writing skills, it is also important to focus on the elements that affect these writing skills.

They include;

1) Materials and Media used in lecturing Students. Most times, students find a subject difficult to understand because of the methods used in educating them. Lecturers should endeavour to use simplified materials to educate students according to their level of understanding.

2) The struggle to understand the mechanics of writing. It has been established that writing is perceived as difficult because of its complex nature. There are many rules to be applied when it comes to writing and special attention should be paid to the type of writing task and most of the time, these rules are particular and do not apply to all types of writing tasks.

3) Inability to concentrate. Students need to concentrate as writing is an activity that fully engages the brain.

Writing is one of the macro skills that is imperative for students to develop to be able to successfully withstand the ordeal of formal education. .Therefore, instructors should continue to emphasize the significance of writing to students, encourage them to participate actively in academic writing tasks. Most students avoid these writing tasks mainly because of its complexity and in addition, they find it tiresome to conduct research or to write on a topic. In terms of writing, there are many reasons for introducing writing into the academic process.

Writing assists in increasing the brain cognitive ability and critical thinking skills to complete assignments, tests and stimulates reflection and conceptual development. In the university setting, undergraduate students will need to participate in a higher level of academic writing than in previous academic levels. Writing tasks at this level usually requires more research, effort and clear writing. The length of essays at this level also increases, undergraduate writing can range from anywhere between 20 – 60 pages long. This type of writing needs to be well supported and well-referenced, the works will need to be well researched and documented. Undergraduate students are also expected to write more often than students at the secondary school level. Also, writing at tertiary level cuts across all subject areas and students will partake in writing tasks in almost all course areas.

Writing expectations becomes more sophisticated as students advance from secondary school to the university. Tertiary students experience even longer writing tasks that incorporate more comprehensive research. For most courses in the university, undergraduate students will need to complete a research thesis before earning a degree, undergraduate students are expected to complete this thesis with supervision from a faculty lecturer or senior colleague who will oversee the writing process. This is one of the most difficult writing task students will face. A long thesis is not always advised, a thesis that is well researched, referenced and documented is better than a lengthy one. This type of research helps students to improve their writing skills.

Individuals can decide to display an enthusiastic disposition or use self-impact to show a negative behaviour. Active engagement of university students is crucial to studying. Instructors should engage students in discussion, use teamwork to assist them in studying and include writing both within and outside the confines of the school. Trevor Gambell (1978) and Hassani (2016) investigate education undergraduate students attitudes to personal writing and set about investigating writing for educational cause. He observed that most students see writing as exciting and as a hard undertaking mostly due to the following reasons :

- 1) They have a hard time getting started and feel overwhelmed by the task- when starting a task, there is always a form of anxiety or fear that comes up in the mind of the individual. The

task may seem cumbersome and difficult as individuals think of how much time, energy and research that will go into the task and start to get apprehensive which affects the performance of the individual.

2) Low, poor command of English grammar- students with a poor command of the English language find it hard to do well in writing tasks. A poor understanding of the English language will make it hard for students to put their thoughts on paper and thus they shy away from writing tasks.

3) Lack of constructive ideas- ideas are the most important feature of writing. Without ideas, the purpose of writing would not exist. Lack of these ideas can result in students being anxious of academic writing tasks.

4) Teachers' inadequate teaching methods- at times teachers contribute to anxiety in students. Teachers should make use of precise, easy to assimilate techniques to educate students to aid in easy memorization and understanding. Using complex methods to teach students can cause students to lose motivation and interest towards academic tasks and create anxiety when faced with such tasks.

5) Poor vocabulary and weak sentence structure- this is similar to having a low grasp of the English language. Having a weak vocabulary negatively impacts the performance of a student

in writing tasks. It results in the individual shying away from tasks that can expose their incompetence. This can be rectified by regular practice and gathering knowledge to improve their vocabulary.

6) Inexperienced teachers- an experienced teacher would have the accurate knowledge to lead students. Teacher quality is necessary to help students acquire skills and knowledge to pass out from the school system as well-rounded members of the society.

7) Poorly planned or outlined Research

8) Mental fatigue

Another reason why students perceive writing as a difficult task, is because of its complexity, because writing combines many strengths and elements in one subject. Students' notion of writing tasks definitely has an effect on the lecturer's choice on how to direct them in the writing class. It is essential to find out students perception towards writing itself and other elements that contribute to writing tasks which also include the learning resources that impacts on students' ease or trouble in undertaking writing tasks.

Students writing performance can also depend on the lecturer and their methods of teaching the subject matter. With constant practice and encouragement from the lecturer, students can gain a positive attitude to writing tasks. Lecturers should give more writing tasks to students to make

them practice several times over. This helps them to overcome their fear of writing tasks and hone their writing skills.

Also, peer review of writing, where students get to rate and rank the work of their fellow students helps to solve some of these issues and improve on student writing abilities simultaneously. It also helps students to broaden their knowledge and this revision procedure supplied a wonderful strategy for student engagement.

Students pay a great deal of attention to how their classmates perceived their work, with peer pressure motivating them positively in their writing. However, Peer review of writing has problems concerning its effectiveness. Yang (2011) stated that too frequently, students engaged in off-task communications and shared reviews as a substitute of giving revision oriented feedback. Advanced writing capabilities are in fantastical demand in the workforce. Unfortunately, notwithstanding the plain importance of such talents, undergraduate students are not organized enough to meet the vital, demanding situations ahead. They have not been groomed, coached enough to write skillfully. Writing has turned out to be a grossly overlooked life skill. As a key component of language, writing is more commonly used in language acquisition as opposed to the spoken form. Writing capabilities are no longer stressed in reference to language abilities and

thus it is suggested that more emphasis be placed on improvement of writing skills alongside other credentials.

Self-assessment is another tool that students can use to test the standard of their works and keep track of their progress.( Nilsen, 2012). It allows students to reflect on their work at their own pace using assessment techniques like checklists which also increases their cognitive skills and guarantee smooth execution of the work (Hattie & Timperley, 2007; Little & Perclova, 2001; Noonan & Duncan, 2005; Stiggins, 2001).

Alongside self-assessment, grading of students work is another way of improving students writing skills. It helps the student reflect on their work and highlight their mistakes and their strengths. Evans and Engelberg(1988) conducted a research on how grading affects student performance and it was found that primary school students aged 4 -11 years had positive attitudes towards their grades. In contrast, older students showed a lack of satisfaction with their grades. Their findings also revealed that younger students with lower grades tend to assume that these grades are due to external factors, such as the level of task difficulty and their own disposition. In contrast, high achievers in older levels tend to relate their high grades to themselves and their efforts (Baker et al., 2002).

## **Undergraduate Students' Perception of Academic Writing Tasks**

After carrying out due research into students' perceptions of their writing tasks, Chou (2011) conducted research into undergraduate students' perception of academic writing tasks in China and found that students consider writing as an important means for transmitting their research projects and a way of guaranteeing that others can converse with them. It can be said that some students tend to be too timid to freely express themselves; in addition, they may be hindered by their peer's insights.

The study involved first-year undergraduate students from various universities and cultural backgrounds who aimed to enhance their writing skills for academic and career purposes. Chou(2011) employed questionnaires and focus-group interviews to gather data. The results of the study indicated that most students hold the ideas of their peers in high regard and as such may be too timid to present their works to guard against the fear of ridicule. Students viewed writing as a complex, creative process.

This indicates that students show more motivation to learn when learning takes place alongside their peers which also entails mastering the skill of correcting their own and others' work as they discuss their works. Some students perceived their writing in terms of establishing accountability to their programs. Some students focus on identifying the need to work on the structuring of ideas,while others emphasized the importance of peer feedback.

Many other research has been carried out on this topic in several different countries and institutions. However, such research in the University of Benin seem to be sparse, an issue that this study aims to address.

### **Summary of Reviewed Literature**

This chapter examined recent literature that tackled the two aspects of this study: students' perceptions of writing and academic writing tasks. This chapter examined the history of writing, academic writing, writing skills, how to improve on writing skills, significance of writing to education followed by a discussion of the challenges encountered by university students while developing their writing. The final part of the research highlighted students' and undergraduate students' perception of academic writing tasks.

## **CHAPTER THREE METHODOLOGY**

In this chapter, the research methodology adopted is presented under the following sub-headings:

Research Design

Population of the Study

Sample and Sampling Techniques

Research Instrument

Validity of the Instrument

Reliability of the Instrument

Method of Data Collection

Method of Data Analysis

### **Research Design**

The descriptive research design was adopted for the study.

### **Population of the Study**

The population of the study consists of undergraduate students in the Department of Curriculum and Instructional Technology, Faculty of Education, University of Benin. The population of the

Study comprised of students from 3 course areas from the Department of Curriculum and Instructional Technology in the Faculty of Education.

### **Sample and Sampling Techniques**

The sample for the study consists of 120 students randomly selected across three course areas from the Department of Curriculum and Instructional Technology in the Faculty of Education and across the four academic levels 100, 200 ,300, 400.

### **Research Instrument**

The research instrument used is a structured questionnaire designed by the researcher to collect data from the respondents. The instrument is divided into two sections; the first section records the bio-data of the responders, their age, gender. The second section of the instrument contains items that quantify the instrument on a 4-point scale i.e Strongly Agree =4, Agree = 3, Strongly Disagree = 2, Strongly Disagree =1. The third section consists of items used to determine how frequently students participate in writing tasks. The fourth section consists of items that indicate the support students need to improve academic writing, on a 4-point scale i.e Always = 4, Sometimes = 3, Seldom = 2, Never = 1.

### **Validity of the Instrument**

The validity of the instrument was determined by the supervisor and two other lectures in the Department of Curriculum and Instructional Technology for necessary adjustments and face validity. The final draft was proved valid by the supervisor.

### **Reliability of the Instrument**

The questionnaire was first administered to 20 respondents with status as those used in the study. The data collected was analyzed using Cronbach Alpha and a reliability coefficient of .72 was obtained.

### **Method of Data Collection**

The questionnaire was administered personally by the researcher to the randomly selected respondents. The respondents were sure of confidentiality to ensure that accurate data was recorded. The respondents were given enough time to answer the questions to the best of their knowledge. The questionnaire was collected by the reasearcher to avoid loss.

### **Method of Data Analysis**

The data collected were analyzed using simple percentage and mean for the research questions and t-test and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) for the hypotheses.



## CHAPTER FOUR RESENTATION OF RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

### RESULTS ; Descriptive statistics on Undergraduate Students' Perception of Academic Writing Tasks in the University of Benin.

**Research question 1: What is Students Attitude Towards Academic Writing Tasks?**

**Table 1 - Students' Attitude Towards Writing Tasks**

S/N.	ITEMS.	Mean.	Standard	Remark
	<b>Deviation.</b>			
1.	I enjoy working on academic writing tasks.	2.30.	1.00	Disagree
2.	I shy away from academic writing tasks.	2.80.	1.12.	Agree
3	.I would love to be given more writing assignments	2.10		0.99.
	Disagree			
4	I think academic writing is difficult.	3.00.	1.00	Agree
5.	I prefer objective test to written test.	3.30	0.84.	Agree

#### **Benchmark - 2.50**

The results of the table reveal that the students all agreed with statements that show dislike for academic writing tasks (items: 2{x=2.80}, 4{x=3.00}, 5{x=3.30}). They however disagreed with

statements showing a preference for academic writing assignments (items: 1{x=2.30}, 3{x=2.10}). These results therefore indicate that students have a predominantly negative perception of academic writing.

**Research question 2 : How often are students required to submit written assignments?**

**Table 2 - Frequency of Writing Tasks**

S/N.	Items.	Mean.	Standard Deviation.	Remark
1.	Summary of articles.	2.90.	0.30.	Medium
2.	Brief research papers.  pages or less).	2.80.	0.51.	Medium (5
3.	Term papers.	2.20.	0.81	Medium
4.	Lab reports.  writing.	3.45.  3.10.	0.86.  0.54.	High 5. Group  assignments
6.	Tests.	3.75.	0.43.	High

**Key**

**1 - 1.9 = Low**

**2 - 2.9 = Medium**

**3 - 4 = High**

The table shows the frequency of written tests given to students. The results indicate that Tests (x=3.75), Lab reports (x=3.45) and group assignments (x=3.1) are the most frequently written tasks in descending order. Summary of articles (x=3.45), Brief research papers (x=2.80) and Term papers (x=2.20) are less frequently given than the aforementioned tasks. However, they still fall within the medium range. Term papers seems to be the least form of written assignments students are required to engage in. Therefore, it can be concluded that students are frequently required at various times to write different forms of academic papers.

**Research Question 3: What support do students need to improve in their academic writing abilities?**

**Table 3 - Support needed to Improve Academic Writing**

<b>S/N.</b>	<b>Items.</b>	<b>Mean.</b>	<b>Standard Deviation.</b>	<b>Remark</b>
-------------	---------------	--------------	----------------------------	---------------

1. Feedback on my written assignment from my course lecturer.	3.0.	0.67.	Agree
2. Training on academic writing (e.g a course on academic writing).	2.65.	0.96.	Agree
3. Online support for my writing (providing materials, instructions, models of good papers).	3.25.	0.76.	Agree
4. Peer Review.	3.30.	0.46.	Agree
5. Reading academic materials.	3.30.	0.64.	Agree

### **Benchmark - 2.5**

This table shows the support that students need to improve their writing ability. Item 1, 4, 5 have the highest mean of all the items (3.30) which shows that respondents relied mostly on Feedback, Peer Review and Reading materials to help improve their writing more than other means of support. Respondents also acknowledge the importance of Training and Online support as shown with the mean (2.65, 3.25 respectively).

## **Hypotheses**

**H<sub>01</sub>: Students do not differ in their perception of academic writing tasks based on sex.**

**Table four: Independent sample t-test on Students differ in their perception of academic writing tasks based on sex,**

**Table 4: Group Statistics**

	sex	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-test	Df	Sig.
attitude	male.	54.	14.00.	1.34.	4.06.	118.	0.00
	female	66.	13.09.	1.09.			

The table shows the independent sample t-test on how students differ on students differ in their attitudes towards academic writing tasks based on sex. It can be seen that the t-test value is 4.06, degree of freedom is 118 and level of significance is 0.00 which is less than the set alpha level of 0.05. Thus the null hypothesis which states that students do not differ in their attitudes towards academic writing tasks based on sex is rejected. This shows that students differ in their attitudes towards academic writing tasks based on sex.

**H<sub>02</sub>: Students do not differ in their attitudes towards academic writing tasks based on level**

**Table 5: Descriptive statistics**

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
100.	36.	13.00.	1.30
200.	30.	13.40.	0.81
300.	24.	13.75.	1.32
400.	30.	14.70.	1.43
Total.	120.	13.50.	1.28

The table shows the mean distribution of students do not differ in their perception of academic writing tasks based on level. It can be seen that the 100level had a mean of 13.00, 200level had a mean of 13.40, 300level had a mean of 13.75 and 400level students had a mean of 14.00.

**Table 6:Sex Distribution of the Respondents**

S/N.	LEVEL.	FREQUENCY.	PERCENTAGE.
1	Male.	54.	45%
2.	Female.	66.	55%
<b>Total.</b>		120	100%

The table Shows the respondents to the questionnaires.Out of 120 respondents, 54 were males making up 45% of respondents and 66 were females making 55% of respondents. This means that majority of the respondents for this study are females.

**Table 7:Academic Level of the respondents**

S/N.	LEVEL.	FREQUENCY.	PERCENTAGE
1.	100.	36.	30%
2.	200.	30.	25%

3.	300	24	20%
4.	400.	30.	25%
Total.		120.	100%

The table Shows the academic level of the respondents of the study, with the highest frequency of respondents coming from 100level, the same number of respondents from both 200 and 400level and the least number of respondents in 300 level.

**Table eight: Independent sample t-test on students do not differ in their perception of academic writing tasks based on level.**

**Analysis of Variance** attitude

**Table 8**

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	18.300	3	6.100	3.938	.01
Within Groups.	179.000	116	1.549		
Total.	198.000	119			

The table shows the one way analysis of variance (ANOVA) students do not differ in their perception of academic writing tasks based on level. It can be seen that the f-value is 3.93, degree of freedom is 3,116 and level of significance is 0.01 which is less than the set alpha level of 0.05. Thus the null hypothesis which states that students do not differ in their attitudes towards academic writing tasks based on level is rejected. This shows that students do not differ in their attitudes towards academic writing tasks based on level.

### Multiple Comparisons

Dependent Variable: attitude LSD **Table 9**

(I) level	(J) level	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
100.	200.	.40000.	.30768.	.196.	1.0094.	.2094
	300.	-.75000.	.32799.	.024.	-1.3996.	-.1004
	400.	-.10000.	.307670	.002.	-1.6094.	-.3906
200	100.	.40000.	.30768.	.196.	-.2094.	1.0094

	300.	-.35000	.34086.	.307.	-10251.	1.0251
	400	-60000.	.32137.	.064.	-1.2365.	.0365
300.	100	.75000.	.32799.	.024.	.1004.	1.3996
	200.	.35000.	.34086.	.0307	.3251	1.0251
	400	-25000	.34086	.465	-.9251	.4251
400	100	1.0000	.30768	.002	.3906	1.2365
	200.	60000.	.32137.	.064.	-.0365.	1.2365
	300	.25000.	.34086.	.465	-.4251.	.9251

The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

The table shows that the significant difference lies between respondents in 100level and 300level and 100level and 400level.

### **Discussion of Findings**

Academic writing is a crucial part of the undergraduate student's experience. While it's been argued that academic literacy is challenging, and all students struggle with it, it's also recognized that a lot of students still face difficulties. Students face many challenges, including writing the literature review, formulating the problem statement, plagiarism, and writing up the methodology. These challenges have been highlighted by various scholars. The results of this study shows that

undergraduate students have a negative attitude to academic writing and try to avoid engaging in them, which is difficult as academic writing tasks are an essential part of education.

### **Research Question 1: What is Students' Attitude Towards Academic Writing Tasks**

In this section, the aim is to find out how the students feel about writing and academic writing. From the research carried out, it was discovered that majority of the students do not enjoy participating in academic writing and they think it is difficult and would prefer to be given less assignments to work on. The respondents also confirmed they preferred objective tests to written tests as objective tests are easier to work on and not as much time or knowledge is spent on them compared to written tests. This does not mean that students do not recognize the importance of academic writing, they do, but they also tend to shy away from them as they already think that academic writing is difficult.

### **Research Question 2 : How often are Students required to submit Written assignments?**

This section highlights the different forms of academic writing tasks and aims to ascertain how frequently students engage in them. Six different forms of academic writing tasks were listed for the respondents to indicate how frequently they engaged in these tasks. They are: Summary of articles, Brief research papers, Term papers, Lab reports, Group writing assignments

and Tests. The research showed that students engaged more in writing tests and lab reports than in the other tasks. Respondents engaged in term papers the least.

### **Research Question 3 : What support do students need to improve in their writing abilities?**

The results of this research indicates that students view writing as a difficult task and do not enjoy participating in it and to help encourage students in writing, some methods of support were listed to help students improve on their writing. Of all these methods students perceived the most efficient one to be Peer review and Reading academic materials. The participants in this study also value feedback on their writing from lecturers and their fellow students. The teachers role in improving students writing is very significant and has been highlighted in the study.

From the statistics above it is seen that students prefer tests, objective tests to be precise to other forms of academic writing tasks. This is because it easier to undertake and one does not have to do a lot of research to engage in it.

The study also shows that students differ in their attitudes towards academic writing tasks based on sex. It was also seen that students' do not differ in their perception of academic writing tasks based on level.

It is important to change this negative attitude and provide means of improving students writing and to enable them gain more interest in academic writing. This is possible by providing encouragement on students' writing assignments. Students voted that Peer review is the best means of getting feedback on their writing. This study recommends that more emphasis be placed on improving students writing abilities.

## **CHAPTER FIVE SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS Summary**

This study investigated Undergraduate Students' Perception of Academic Writing Tasks in the Department of Curriculum and Instructional Technology (CIT), Faculty of Education, University of Benin. Three research questions and two hypotheses were raised to guide the study. A sample of one hundred and twenty (120) students were used in the study. The test instrument used in the collection of data was a questionnaire titled " Undergraduate Students' Perception of Academic Writing Tasks in the University of Benin" The data collected were analyzed using mean, standard deviation for the research questions and T-test and ANOVA for the hypotheses.

### **Findings**

The findings revealed:

- 1) Students preferred objective tests to written tests. It was discovered that students do not enjoy participating in academic writing and they find it difficult.
- 2) The students engaged in more in writing tests and lab reports than in other tasks. They engaged in term papers the least.
- 3) They voted Peer review and reading of materials as the most efficient method of support for their writing.
- 4) Students differ in their perception of academic writing tasks based on sex.
- 5) Students differ in their perception of academic writing tasks based on level.
- 6) Students have a negative attitude towards academic writing tasks.

## **Conclusion**

Based on the findings of the study it was concluded that students have a negative attitude towards academic writing tasks and they prefer objective tests to written tests. Students engaged in Tests than any form of academic writing. They also perceived peer review and reading of materials to be helpful in improving their writing abilities.

## **Recommendations**

- 1) The academic writing course should be taught practically to ensure maximum learning. This can be achieved by providing opportunities for students to engage in continuous writing activities and collaborative group work throughout the teaching period.
- 2) Institutes can organise seminars or courses to address the challenges faced during the academic writing process. These events can be held regularly to help students minimise these problems.
- 3) Encouraging students to produce various academic products beyond just theses can be highly beneficial. By engaging in different types of academic work, students can develop a range of skills and gain a deeper understanding of their chosen field of study. These products could include research papers, presentations, and even creative works such as short stories or poetry. Providing opportunities for students to explore different forms of academic expression can ultimately lead to a more well-rounded education and better prepare them for their future careers.

### **Suggestion for Further Research**

Based on the conclusion of the Study, the following are suggested for further studies:

- 1) Further research can be carried out on Students Perceptions of writing across different disciplines and also across different research on students writing mastery.

- 2) Research can be carried out on Students mastery of writing and level of mastery according to their gender and level of education.
- 3) A study can be carried out to find out students' perceptions across different disciplines.
- 4) Further research can be carried out on the topic but in other facilities and institutions.

## References

- Aduwa-Ogiegbaen, S.E. & Iyamu, E.O.S. (2010). *Factors Affecting Quality of English Language Teaching and Learning in Secondary Schools in Nigeria.*
- Afful, J.B.A. (2007). *Academic literacy and communicative skills in the Ghanaian university: A proposal. Nebula 4(3): 141-159.*
- Ahmed, A. (2016). *EFL writing instruction in an Egyptian university classroom: An emic view.* In A. Ahmed & H. Abouabdelkader (Eds.), *Teaching EFL writing in the 21st century Arab world.*
- Aitchison, C., & Lee, A. (2006) *Research writing: problems and pedagogies, Teaching in Higher Education,*
- Akhtar, R., Hassan, H., & Saidalvi, A. (2020). *The effects of ESL student's attitude on academic writing apprehensions and academic writing challenges. International Journal of Psychosocial Rehabilitation, 24(5), 5404–5412.*

Bacha, N. N. (2010). *Teaching the academic argument in a university EFL environment. Journal of English for Academic Purposes* 229–241.

Bachman, L. F., & Palmer, A. S. (1996). *Language*.

Bacha, N.N. (2002). *Developing Learners' Academic Writing Skills in Higher Education: A Study for Educational Reform' Language and Education*. 16 (3):161-177.

Bachman, L. F., & Palmer, A. S. (1996). *Language testing in practice: Designing and d*Bachman, L. F., & Palmer, A. S. (1996).*Language testing in practice: Designing and developing useful language tests. Oxford: Oxford University Press.*

Bachman, L., & Palmer, A. S. (2010). *Language assessment in practice: Developing useful language tests. Oxford: Oxford University Press.*

Bair, M. A. & Mader, C. E. (2013). *Academic Writing at the Graduate Level: Improving the Curriculum through Faculty Collaboration. Journal of University Teaching & Learning Practice,*

Beard, C. Clegg, S. & Smith, K. (2007). *Acknowledging the affective in higher education. British Educational Research Journal*. 33 (2): 235-252.

Beaufort, A. (2007). *College writing and beyond: A new framework for university writing instruction.*

Cai, L. J. (2013). *Students' perceptions of academic writing: A needs analysis of EAP in China.* *Language Education in Asia*, 4 (1), 5-22.

Crusan, D., Plakans, L., & Gebril, A. (2016). *Writing assessment literacy: Surveying second language teachers' knowledge, beliefs, and practices.*

Flores, M. A., Veiga Simao, A., Barros, A., & Pereira, D. (2015). *Perceptions of effectiveness, fairness and feedback of assessment methods: A study in higher education.*

Hegazi, H. A. (2021). *University Students' Perceptions of Writing Assessment [Master's Thesis, the American University in Cairo]. AUC Knowledge Fountain*

Ismail, S., (2011). *Exploring students' perceptions of ESL writing.* *English Language Teaching*, 4(2), p. 73.

Jabali, O. (2018). *Students' attitudes towards EFL university writing: A case study at An-Najah National University, Palestine.* *Heliyon*, 4(11).

Kendall, L. (2008). *The conduct of qualitative interview: Research questions, methodological issues, and researching online.*

Lea & B. Stierer (Eds.), *Student writing in higher education: New contexts* (pp 32–46). SRHE and Open University Press.

Lizzo, A. & Wilson, K. (2008). *Feedback on assessment: Students' perceptions of quality and effectiveness.* *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education*, 33(3), 263-275.

Marton, F., & Saljo, R. (1997). *Approaches to learning.* In F. Marton, D. Hounsell, & N. Entwistle (Eds.), *The experience of learning: Implications of teaching and studying in higher education.*

Mulliner, E. & Tucker, M. (2015). *Feedback on feedback practice: Perceptions of students and academics.* *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education.*

Nunan, D. (1992). *Research methods in language learning.* Cambridge Language Teaching Library. Orsmond, P., Merry, S., & Reiling, K. (1997). *A study in self-assessment: Tutor and students' perceptions of performance.*

Petric, B., & Czarl, B. (2003). *Validating a writing strategy questionnaire*. Ross, J. (2006). *The reliability, validity, and utility of self- assessment. Practical Assessment, Research, and Evaluation*.

Silverman, D. (1993). *Interpreting qualitative data: Methods for analyzing talk, text, and interaction*. Sage.

Tom, A., Morni, A., Metom, L& Joe, S., (2013). *Students' perception and preferences of written feedback in academic writing. Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*.

Zhang, Z. & Burry-Stock, J.A. (2003) *Classroom assessment practices and teachers' self perceived assessment skills. Applied Measurement in Education*.