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FACULTY OF ALLIED HEALTH SCIENCE

DEPARTMENT OF NURSING

DIPLOMA PROGRAMMES



**IMPACT OF PEER SUPPORT ON THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF SECOND-
YEAR NURSING STUDENTS IN HOLY FAMILY NURSING AND MIDWIFERY
TRAINING COLLEGE, BEREKUM.**

SUBMITTED BY:

ABASS ASANA	-	8515524
ABDULAI YUSHAW MUNFUMBA	-	8532224

[HOLY FAMILY NURSING AND MIDWIFERY TRAINING COLLEGE, BEREKUM]

AFFILIATED TO KNUST, KUMASI

HOLY FAMILY NURSING AND MIDWIFERY TRAINING COLLEGE, BEREKUM



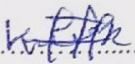
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ABASS ASANA	-	8515524
ABDULAI YUSHAW MUNFUMBA	-	8532224

DECLARATION

We hereby declare that this submission is our own work towards the Diploma in General Nursing and that, to the best of our knowledge, it contains no material previously published by another person nor material which has been accepted for the award of diploma of the University, except where due acknowledgement has been made in the text.

Abass Asana

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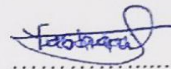
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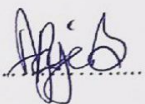
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Certified by:

Mrs. Rita Agyei Boakye

(Supervisor)

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Signature

21/07/25

Date

Monica Nkrumah

(Principal)

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Signature

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Date

ABSTRACT

Peer tutoring is one of the important techniques which has been used by the teachers to raise the assurance and confidence level of their students. The purpose of the study was to impact of peer support on the academic performance of second-year nursing students in Holy Family Nursing and Midwifery Training College, Berekum. A descriptive study design was adopted for the study. A convenient sampling technique was used to select 100 for the study. Data for the study was collected by administering structured questionnaire to the participants. Data was entered and analyzed using Microsoft Excel and results were presented in tables and figures. The study found that majority of the respondents identified that peer teaching enhances team working skills. Majority (94%) of the respondents said peer teaching helps in developing leadership skills. Majority (84%) of the respondents indicated that time management on the part of the peer tutor is a major challenge faced in peer teaching. The study concluded that knowledge on the importance of peer teaching was high. Students can communicate more freely with peers during peer teachings sessions. Peer tutors have insufficient knowledge on some delicate topics. The study recommended more utilization of peer teaching in nursing schools. Students should be allowed to form discussion groups where peer teaching can be encouraged especially at the end of every topic.

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ABBREVIATION

GPA	Grade Point Average
USA	United State of America
COR	Conservation of Resources
KNUST	Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology
NMC	Nursing and Midwifery Council
RGN	Registered General Nursing

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background of the study

Peer teaching is an educational strategy that embraces active learning. The concept of peer support is not new and has been used widely in medical education (Sukrajh, 2018). Learning together means that students working in pairs are given the opportunity to practice critical thinking, collaboration, reflection, problem-solving and independence (Palsson et al., 2017).

Peer learning is used as an umbrella concept for a group of approaches that includes group or paired learning. As defined by Palsson et al. (2017), “Students learning from and with each other in both formal and informal ways or the acquisition of knowledge and skill through active helping and supporting among status equals or matched companions”. It involves people from similar social groupings, who are not professional teachers, helping each other to learn and learning themselves by doing so. Peer support puts students own learning in focus and not the preceptors' or teachers' instruction. It originates from social learning theories, which purports that experience, understanding and knowledge-building are shaped and developed in interactions between humans (Palsson, et al., 2017).

The history of students supporting themselves has undergone model changes as far back as the Roman and Greek period where proficient individuals delivered support for the less skilled people with low level of knowledge or expertise (Ullah et al., 2018). According to Ullah et al., (2018), this method of learning happens in an interactive, meaningful and organized way such that the shy students are capable of learning effectively by sharing their thoughts with classmates. As far as peer support is concerned, it is a learning strategy where a group of students interact to help each other's learning by one student occupying the role of

tutor and the other the role of tutee. Usually, peer support involves the linking of intelligent students with less-intelligent ones. Ullah et al, (2018) discovered that by playing, talking, arguing and distribution of thoughts, peer interaction among children becomes useful in learning new skills, obtaining knowledge and discovers solutions to each other's problems.

Peer support has been well-thought-out as having a positive impact on student learning, motivation and socialization. Peer support was found effective in the development of creativity and problem-solving skills of both students (Ullah et al., 2018). Peer support possesses a lot of advantages for students. In the same way, peer support builds up confidence and enhances cognitive levels of introvert students because it gives confidence to shy students which may enable them to express themselves (Ullah et al., 2018).

A research in South Africa which described the experiences of learners involved in a cross-cultural peer teaching initiative between a privileged private school and a township school in Port Elizabeth. The aim was to explore the possible advantages of cross-cultural peer support on certain sections of the new mathematics curriculum. It was found that the understanding of the mathematics topics dealt with during peer studies session was enhanced and both groups gained from the peer studies interaction. This cross-cultural interaction brought understanding and sensitivity towards people from different cultural, racial and socio-economic groups (Oloo et al., 2016).

Peer support can be described as the educational constellation in which one student teaches another student or a group of fellow students (Engels et al., 2018). Engels et al. (2018), have elaborated on three dimensions of peer support, namely the academic distance between the students involved, the group size, and the formality of teaching. They differentiate between reciprocal teaching, in which students are at the same stage of training, and cross-level

teaching, where the students' academic levels diverge. Both students seem to benefit from the participation in peer learning/support programs.

Peer-led teaching is beneficial for students, as it provides a comfortable learning environment to explore and develop understanding of different fields of medicine. For example, students are more likely to discuss ethical dilemmas with peers rather than professors, as they may feel less intimidated. Furthermore, retention and application of knowledge, as well as academic performance, have been shown to improve significantly by peer-led teaching compared to lecture-style teaching (Allikmets & Vink, 2016).

Peer-led teaching provides significant benefits for the students who are involved in the educational process. Placing students in a position of responsibility to teach and support others, provides excellent opportunities to enhance leadership, presentation, and organizational skills, all of which are key elements of clinical practice. Furthermore, teaching exposes the tutor to giving and receiving feedback, both of which are important for improving one's own learning and confidence (Allikmets & Vink, 2016).

Peer support helps to develop the skills of students to manage and plan learning experiences, work in association, give and receive responses about their activities and finally evaluate their own learning. At present, the significance of peer support is increasing, and it has become an important part of many courses and disciplines in different countries (Ullah et al., 2018).

Peer support has positive impacts on student learning, motivation and socialization. Peer support was found effective in the development of creativity and problem-solving skills students. Results are very successful if students are engaged in collaborative work and meaningful activities under planned and structured program (Ullah et al., 2018).

1.1 Problem Statement

Nursing is a profession within the health care sector that focuses on the care of individuals, families, and communities by training and practice to attain, maintain or recover optimal health and quality of health care (Dunphy et al., 2019).

Peer support/learning is direct interaction between the students to promote active learning and is an effective teaching method. It helps build communication skills, critical thinking, and self-confidence among student nurses, Research indicates that peer learning activities has enhanced learning outcomes such as team building spirit, supportive relationships, psychological wellbeing, social competence, communication skill, self-esteem, and boost higher achievement and productivity (Sushmitha et al., 2020).

There is an increasing awareness of the benefits of peer support and increasing number of universities and colleges throughout United Kingdom integrating peer support as part of the instructional method (Chai & Lin, 2016). Peer learning approach was evident in improving clinical practice, and the student nurses experienced less anxiety (Sushimitha et al., 2020).

Various studies have been conducted around the globe to examine the effect of peer teaching on student performance but not much has been conducted in Ghana. The guiding concept of nursing education is to equip graduates with knowledge and skills (Abdul Raheem et al., 2017). The students who learn in cooperative learning groups acquire more knowledge and they take their responsibilities in a better way as compared to others (Annis, 2016). It is the interest of this research to determine the effect of peer teaching on student performance.

Therefore, Ulla et al. (2018), admit that students as tutors should be given proper orientation about the tutoring activity. The benefits of peer support or learning and assessment are well documented within nurse education literature. However, research to date has predominantly

focused on the advantages and disadvantages for the inexperienced learner, with a depth of knowledge relating effects of peer support on student performance.

Hence, the main purpose of this study is to determine the impact of peer support on the academic performance of second-year nursing students in Holy Family Nursing and Midwifery Training College, Berekum.

1.2 General Objective

To determine the impact of peer support on the academic performance of second-year nursing students in Holy Family Nursing and Midwifery Training College, Berekum.

1.3 Specific Objectives

1. To examine the impact of peer support on second-year nursing students' academic performance.
2. To explore the perceived benefits and challenges of peer support.
3. To investigate the influence of demographic characteristics, influence on peer-support participation and benefits.

1.4 Operational Definition of Terms

Peer Teaching: A strategy by which student teaches other students that are weak and less experienced about a certain subject.

Academic performance: The academic performance is related with the students' grades i.e., Grade Point Average (GPA). It works as a fundamental measurement technique of the students' performance regarding their study.

Knowledge: Information about something or a person's practical understanding about a subject at hand.

Effectiveness: The degree to which something is successful in producing a desired result.

Student: A second-year nursing pupil at Holy Family Nursing and Midwifery Training College, Berekum.

Challenges: Problems faced by second-year nursing students in peer support.

Benefits: Advantages students get during peer support.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter contains review of relevant literature related to the research topic. A well-structured literature review begins with broad or general information, then narrows the focus to those studies most closely related to the research problem.

2.1 Overview

With the ever-increasing number of students and institutions limited resources, an increased demand is placed on the teaching staff potentially compromising student learning. Peer teaching can possibly assist with this ‘educational crises’, but at the same time also offers students an opportunity to take responsibility for their own learning (Sukrajh, 2018).

Peer learning is a broad learning strategy. It covers a wide range of activities through which people learn through different techniques. These activities ranged from a traditional proctor model in schools to the more innovative learning groups in colleges and universities. In proctor model the senior students act as tutors and junior students as tutees. Peer learning can be termed as a technique of moving beyond independent to interdependent or mutual learning (Fuchs et al., 2020).

The history of peer learning goes back as far as the period of Aristotle. Throughout the history there have been many developments in peer learning, working in different contexts. The monitorial system developed is another type of peer learning in which monitors or proctors learn from their teachers and then passed it to other children (Campit et al., 2018). Peer support is one of the important techniques which has been used by the teachers to raise the assurance and confidence level of their students. Through this method the learners are

divided in pairs in which one acts as a tutor and the other as tutee or learner (Campit et al., 2018). The students who learn in cooperative learning groups acquire more knowledge and they take their responsibilities in a better way as compared to others (Annis, 2019).

2.2 Importance of Peer support

Maynard and Almarzouqi (2019) reported that there are a number of benefits to students participating in a peer tutoring programme for both tutors and tutees. An old saying “to teach is to learn twice” is one of the phrases describing the learning processes in peer teaching (Sukrajh, 2018). Peer support/teaching promotes students to take responsibility for their learning which encourages the development of their metacognitive skills (Stigmar, 2017). Ten Cate and Durning (2017) which reported that peer support may also foster self-confidence in students by teaching others. Through the progression of peer support begins a self-awareness of reflecting and accurately assessing one’s own learning strategies. This enables the student to self-regulate and self-monitor their learning approaches, which can lead to adapting more effective strategies which can be applied to different contexts (Dandavino et al., 2017). Oloo et al. (2019), reported that majority (92.6%) of students agreed that their grades improved by peer teaching.

Peer support enhances the intrinsic motivation in students due to the conditions, which evoke the emotions of competence, autonomy and relatedness that are honed when in the role of a teacher as compared to being in a role of a passive learner (Ten Cate & Durning, 2017). The active participation of students makes learning more autonomous. This encourages interactions through discussions and feedback thereby increasing the relatedness amongst students. Furthermore, students are intrinsically motivated when they take on the responsibility by actively participating in their learning (Kusurkar et al., 2018). Peer support may also foster self-confidence in students by teaching others. When a person is placed in a certain position then that person may adapt their perception of themselves in accordance with

that position. Hence a student adopting the role of a teacher may build self-confidence and belief in their own expertise within the role of a teacher (Ten Cate & Durning, 2017).

Maynard and Almarzouqi (2019), conducted a study to evaluate the English language peer tutoring programme in order to highlight benefits and challenges, and to make informed improvements. The study drew particularly on participant perceptions and observations of the programme. It identified various benefits for tutors such as learning through teaching and becoming more responsible while doing something worthwhile to help others. Peer tutoring results in improved transferable skills and higher grades for tutees (60%). Benefits for tutees included improved levels of self-confidence and English language aptitude.

Students' perceptions of their learning environment have an influence on their learning and a meaningful learning environment, which encourages closeness amongst students and a positive emotional environment promotes learning (Ten Cate & Durning, 2017). In peer support this promotes learning due to the trusting relationship between peers which is according to the social congruence theory. This theory relies on the trusting relationship between peer teachers and students where there is no hierarchy. The students feel less threatened and are able to admit to ignorance and misconceptions which can be corrected and creates better understanding (Whitman, 2020). Students engage in deeper learning with peers as they form relationships which allows them to freely explore concepts, learn to listen and critique each other without the presence of authority (Boud et al., 2018).

There are many benefits of peer support as discussed earlier in the study. Some main benefits of peer support which have a considerable impact on learning include the following (Campit et al., 2018). Firstly, it provides opportunity to the students to interact directly with each other which is helpful to promote learning activities among the students. Secondly, students usually do not get sufficient time and individual attention from their teachers, so peer support is a

very good solution for this problem which provides individual attention to the students. Also, by tutoring the students or learners, the tutors reinforce and revise whatever they have studied before. So, it directly benefits both tutor and the learner. Moreover, peer support is an enjoying way of learning where the peers do not get bore but they learn by entertaining themselves. Furthermore, peer support is a beautiful way to learn something out of the school, college or university. Again, students or learners are more open and comfortable with each other in peer support. So, the learners learn without any sort of hesitation from their student tutor in this kind of environment. To continue, peer support also develops interpersonal and a communication skill in the student and it also enhances their confidence level. To conclude, it also develops sense of responsibility, dedication, commitment and pride in the tutor because he is able to help the peers.

There are a number of other reported benefits to students participating in a peer support programme for students. These benefits include developing networking opportunities; making friends; building confidence and self-esteem; enhancing team-working skills; and developing leadership skills (Mynard & Almarzouqi, 2019).

All of the students mentioned that peer support helped them with their own studies either by improving their own language ability or their awareness of the learning process (Mynard & Almarzouqi, 2019). The benefits of the use of peer support are innumerable. With the rising criticism of the American education system and the decline in the affordability and availability of resources to assist classroom teachers, the use of peer support has been proven to be a cost-effective method to increasing student achievement in the classroom (Wolfe, 2018). There is also argument today for the use of technology to increase student achievement, however, a study conducted by Wolf (2018) found that peer support was four times more cost effective than computer assisted learning and was the best method; there is

no doubt that technology has vastly improved but students still do not get the necessary collaboration skills as they would be working with another student.

Students in the role of tutor develop a sense of ownership and pride towards their work as tutor and learn how to interact effectively with their tutees. Tutees also learn how to interact effectively with their tutors. (Wolfe, 2018).

A study conducted in the United Kingdom identified some key benefits associated with peer support, peer assessment and some challenges to implementation. The majority of first year students gained from the social interaction offered by working together with more experienced students, sharing tips and hints to enhance their learning and future practice. The senior students described experiencing an improvement in their communication skills, especially in relation to the important concept of breaking bad news. The supervised teaching role allowed students to gain insights into their own personal values, attributes and teaching styles (Engels et al., 2018).

2.3 Peer Teaching and Student Performance

Peer support works best when students of different ability levels work together (Kunsch et al., 2018). The old adage, “those who teach learn twice” holds true for peer support and when it is used, learning becomes more effective because learners are teaching themselves (Whitman, 2020). While one student may excel in mathematics, another student may be top-notch in English. These students can work together to help each other understand difficult concepts, while deepening their own knowledge of the subject (Kunsch et al., 2018).

Students with difficulties learning mathematics can be found in almost every classroom. The potential causes of these difficulties are numerous and can be explained by such child characteristics as intellectual functioning, motivation, problem-solving skills, memory skills, strategy acquisition and application, and vocabulary. Research on peer support has

demonstrated that peer support can be successfully implemented with tutors of various ability levels, including children with advanced skills and children with learning disabilities (Fuchs et al., 2020).

Several studies carried out on the impact of peer support reveal that it has a positive role in the instructional process. For example, during an evaluation study by Brost (2019) in Chippewa Valley Technical College in Eau Claire, Wisconsin, USA researchers explored some facts about peer support. The primary purpose of the research was to evaluate the effectiveness, shortcomings, and practicability of the peer support program that already existed in Chippewa Valley Technical College. The findings of the research showed that the peer support program at Chippewa Valley Technical College was effective but needed some improvement. The process of peer support should be restructured based on prior planning and scheduled so that it improves the level of understanding. The achievement rate of the tutoring program was good but needed further efforts to increase. The door is open for other researchers from all over the world to contribute by devising more tutoring models. In another experimental study, peer support was found to have significant positive effects on the performance of students by Campit et al., (2018). Similarly, Rizve (2020), measured the effect of peer support on students' academic achievements at secondary level in the subject of English in light of Vygotsky's theory in her doctorate dissertation. She believed that effective learning takes place in the zone of proximal development of a child if help is provided by peers or by some elders. Vygotsky recommended that social interactions, communication and guidance are prerequisites for learning. Therefore, scaffolding was recommended for those students, who are in the zone of proximal development. The researcher provided scaffolding in the form of peer support to the students of the experimental group of 9th grade by the students of 10th grade of the same school in the subject of English. The control group was given instruction through the traditional method (Rizve, 2020).

The findings of the study pointed out that the experimental group had performed well as compared to the control group. Likewise, a study explored the effectiveness of peer support and gender on the achievements of students in the subject of biology. The finding of the study revealed that students who were instructed through peer support had performed significantly better than students of the control group. The results also showed that the scores of male students were better than female students (Ezenwosu & Nworgu, 2019).

A study by Palsson et al. (2017) found that nursing students who were given the opportunity to learn with a peer during clinical practice education had improved levels of perceived competence seen over time compared to students supervised in the traditional manner.

A study conducted in Nigeria on the effects of peer support on academic performance of students with disabilities in Grades 6 through to 12 reported peer support as effective for special education students in both general education and special education settings. Peer support implemented across subject areas such as language, arts, mathematics, science and social studies showed positive academic effects (Peters, 2018). Additionally, Bowman-Perrot et al., (2019) conducted a meta-analysis on the effect of peer support across 26 single-case research experiments for 938 students in Grades 1-12. The findings were that peer support is an effective intervention regardless of dosage, grade level or disability status.

2.4 Challenges Faced in Peer support

The value of peer support to as an effective learning strategy is compelling, however there are a few challenges stated in the literature that could hinder the learning process. A study by Boud et al., (2018) discovered that despite the fact that learning was enhanced by the social and cognitive congruence, students were still concerned that peer teachers may not reflect the knowledge of an experienced expert in the field. Furthermore, in a less formal teaching

environment, the peer teacher had difficulty taking control of the group as they were taken less seriously. This also impacted their objectivity when evaluating and assessing their peers.

Solomon and Crowe (2018) used qualitative methods to examine the experience of student tutors who were in the final semester of a physiotherapy program. The student tutors were asked to keep a reflective journal outlining their peer support experiences for their peers in the same class. Content analysis of journals reflected nine thematic areas that were related to peer support experiences from the perspective of peer tutors, covering both benefits enjoyed by peer tutors and challenges faced by them. Results of the analysis indicated that peer tutors struggled with their facilitation duties. They were concerned about their ability to ask appropriate questions that could lead to further understanding and their ability to determine the right timing for intervention during group discussion. Another struggle was student tutors having role conflicts in separating the role of student from that of tutor (Solomon & Crowe, 2018).

A study conducted by Chai and Lin (2020), the peer tutors experienced a number of difficulties during peer-tutoring sessions, namely commitment, communication, time management, group management, interest sustenance and lack of knowledge. These problems left behind a negative impression on the teaching and learning process in the course of the peer-tutoring sessions. Details of the findings were as follows;

Commitment was among the problem rectified as tutor A had problem with a tutee who was not committed- she did not actively participate and was unprepared for the discussion session. As a result, the tutors did the asking instead of the tutees and the tutors contributed more inputs during their discussion session. It was observed that some of the tutees were reluctant to ask questions due to low confidence and inadequate understanding of concepts. Tutor B who is in IB programme admitted that she was busy with school work and projects and

therefore devoted very little time to prepare for the discussion sessions. Finally, Tutor E found that his IB tutee undisciplined and was always late for discussion sessions.

Secondly communication problem was found to be one of the challenging aspects of peer support. Tutor C and D had a tutee with different proficiency in English. During their first few discussions, they realized that they need to explain the concepts to their tutee in their mother tongue in order to make sure their tutee could grasp the concepts they have tried to explain. Next, Tutor E found it difficult to communicate because his tutee was disruptive, opinionated and confrontational due to the tutee's different way of thinking. Tutor F claimed that she had an issue explaining different concepts to her tutee due to different levels of understanding. She overcame this problem by splitting the information and by explaining with examples. Tutor G admitted that complicated subject matter impeded communication during her discussion sessions.

Time management was also a problem confronting the effectiveness of peer support as tutor E had three tutees in his group. Due to different areas of weaknesses, he had to handle his tutees differently. He discovered that he had limited time to pay individual attention during their discussion sessions. Tutor B also faced time management problem due to different schedule with her tutee. Tutor C had two tutees with different learning progression. She mentioned that it was hard for her to provide equal time for both her tutees. Similarly, Tutor G couldn't find a common time slot due to different subject combinations with her tutee. Lastly, Tutor H and I found it challenging to find a suitable time as their tutees are from different classes and took up different subject combinations. This resulted in inconsistent discussion schedule.

Lastly insufficient knowledge was also a problem found to hinder the effectiveness of peer support. Tutor J and H endeavored to assess the learning progression of their tutees by

marking their answers. However, they admitted that due to lack of marking skills, they failed to assess their tutees effectively. The tutor should be prepared to answer the questions by the tutees. Tutor A and E admitted that they were unable to answer some of the questions from their tutees. However, they clarified their answers with their respective subject teachers and got back to their tutees. They were glad that their tutees weren't disappointed with their performances. Additionally, Tutor G commented that she had limited materials to further her discussions with her tutee during their sessions.

Whitman (2020) lists several potential barriers to the use of peer-tutoring. The first barrier is that many people tend to think that only an adult can effectively impart knowledge to students. He writes: Other objections include: too much time and effort to train tutors, tutor impatience, implications of tutor selection, academic subject suitability for peer support, and lack of expertise on the tutors' part. Another challenge identified by Hill et al., (2019) involving groups of students working together and these groups involve differences. Teaching students how to work with each other and appreciate rather than resent their differences can be a daunting task and teachers must decide how they would like to address issues that may arise before implementing a peer-tutoring program.

2.5 Influence of demographic characteristics, influence on peer-support participation and benefits.

Peer support has emerged as an innovative strategy in nursing education to complement traditional instructor-led methods. It is widely used to foster learning, reduce clinical stress, and enhance both psychosocial and academic outcomes among nursing students. Peer support interventions provide emotional, informational, and practical assistance through interactions among students who share similar academic or clinical experiences. Recent studies suggest that the effectiveness of these programs is not uniform; rather, demographic characteristics

(e.g., age, gender, year of study) may influence both the extent to which students engage in peer-support activities and the benefits they receive.

Theoretical Foundations and Peer Support in Nursing Education

The conceptual underpinnings of peer support in higher education are often drawn from Social Support Theory and the Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory. Social Support Theory posits that resources derived from social interactions such as empathy, shared experiences, and practical assistance play a crucial role in mitigating stress and facilitating adaptation (Cohen & McKay, 2020). In nursing education, peer support helps students overcome clinical anxiety, improve clinical skills, and foster a sense of belonging in challenging learning environments (Cust & Guest, 2019). Furthermore, COR Theory suggests that individuals who can acquire and maintain external resources (like peer support) build a “resource gain spiral” that enhances overall well-being and performance (Hobfoll et al., 2018). When nursing students participate in structured peer support, they not only gain immediate academic and emotional benefits but also develop lasting professional and personal resources that contribute to future career resilience.

Demographic Influences on Peer-Support Participation

Several studies indicate that demographic variables may moderate both the likelihood of participating in peer support and its subsequent effectiveness:

1. **Gender and Age:** Most nursing programs have a predominance of female students, and some evidence suggests that female students may be more inclined toward collaborative and supportive learning environments (Zhou, et al., 2022). Age differences—particularly between first-year and more senior students can affect both participation rates and the perceived value of peer support. First-year students, who are often more vulnerable and less experienced, may rely more heavily on peer

support compared to senior students who have already established coping mechanisms (Paisson et al., 2021).

2. **Year of Study and Educational Background:** Research comparing junior and senior nursing students has shown that peer support can be especially beneficial during early clinical transitions. For instance, first-year nursing students have reported that peer support not only reduced their clinical stress but also enhanced their learning outcomes, suggesting that the stage of education plays a crucial role in both the uptake and benefit of peer support (Asian & Erci, 2021).
3. **Other Demographic Factors:** Although less consistently reported, factors such as cultural background, socioeconomic status, and previous exposure to clinical environments may also influence participation. Some studies have noted that students with limited familial or cultural capital—common among first-generation college students—find peer support particularly valuable as it fills gaps in external resources (Zhiu et al., 2025)

Peer-Support Participation and Its Reported Benefits

1. **Reduced Anxiety and Stress:** Multiple studies have documented that peer support interventions can lead to significant reductions in clinical and academic anxiety. For example, a quasi-experimental study found that nursing students who received peer-led instruction exhibited lower anxiety levels post-intervention compared to those receiving traditional training (Kocacai, 2022).
2. **Enhanced Clinical Skill Performance:** Beyond psychological benefits, peer-support programs have been shown to improve technical and psychomotor skills. Peer-led training models have achieved comparable, and sometimes superior, outcomes to traditional faculty-led methods, suggesting that learning from peers is an effective mode of skills acquisition (Paisson et al., 2021).

3. Improved Academic Adjustment and Professional Identity: Studies focusing on academic outcomes have indicated that peer support can enhance academic adjustment by bolstering students' academic hope and professional identity. In a large-scale study among higher vocational college students, perceived peer support was found to directly predict academic adjustment and also indirectly influence it via increased academic hope and stronger professional identity (Zhiu et al., 2025).

The reviewed literature suggests that while peer support programs generally confer significant benefits, the degree of benefit may vary according to demographic characteristics. For instance, younger or less experienced students often show a greater reliance on peer support, which can mitigate their transitional challenges and foster early professional socialization. Conversely, as students advance in their studies, the nature of their support needs may evolve, highlighting the necessity for dynamic peer-support models that are sensitive to the changing demographic profiles within a cohort.

Despite these insights, gaps remain. Many studies are cross-sectional, limiting our understanding of how the influence of demographic factors on peer-support participation evolves over time. Future research should adopt longitudinal designs to capture these dynamics more fully. Moreover, qualitative investigations could enrich our understanding of how demographic nuances shape the experiences and outcomes of peer-support interactions.

In summary, the literature indicates that demographic characteristics including gender, age, and year of study play a significant role in moderating nursing students' participation in peer-support programs and the benefits they derive. Peer support is associated with reduced anxiety, improved clinical skills, and enhanced academic adjustment. As such, tailoring peer-support interventions to address the specific needs of different demographic subgroups may be essential for maximizing their efficacy in nursing education.

CHAPTER THREE

MATERIALS AND METHODS

3.0 Introduction

This chapter details, the study area and study population, study design, sampling techniques, data collection method and instrument, data analysis techniques, ethical consideration, and the limitations of the study.

3.1 Study area

The study was conducted in the Holy Family Nursing and Midwifery Training College, Berekum. The College is located in the western part of Berekum, on the premises of The Holy Family Hospital. The Holy Family Nursing and Midwifery Training College is affiliated with the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) and accredited by the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) of Ghana. The college is a Catholic health institution established under the auspices of the Holy Family Hospital, a mission hospital managed by the Catholic Diocese of Sunyani. It plays a significant role in the training of professional nurses and midwives to support Ghana's healthcare system, particularly in maternal and child health. The College has a student population of 831 students comprising 141 males and 690 females. There are 24 teaching staff and 51 non-teaching staff.

The college offers various academic programmes, including Registered General Nursing (RGN), Registered Midwifery, and Post-Basic Midwifery programmes. With a student population of approximately 300-500 students annually, the institution boasts a structured curriculum that includes core theoretical courses in anatomy and physiology, obstetrics, paediatric nursing, medical-surgical nursing, community health, and clinical practice.

Students are exposed to both classroom learning and practical experience in affiliated health institutions, including the Holy Family Hospital.

Holy Family Nursing and Midwifery Training College was chosen as the study area because of its academic reputation, structured anatomy curriculum, and its critical role in producing competent health professionals for the Bono Region and beyond. The college provides a suitable environment for academic research due to its accessibility, diverse student body, and availability of experienced faculty and clinical instructors.

3.2 The study population

The target population is all nursing students (831) of Holy Family Nursing and Midwifery Training College, Berekum whereas the accessible population is all second-year nursing (135) students of the College.

3.3 Study design

A descriptive study design was used for the study. This design was used for the study because there was the need to describe the characteristics of the phenomenon being studied. The design also allows for us to observe the students in their natural and unchanged environment. The data collection in descriptive research allows for the gathering of in-depth information about the research problem.

3.4 Sampling technique and Size

A total of hundred (100) students were selected for the study. The respondents were obtained using the convenient sampling method. This method was used because it is inexpensive and respondents are easy to reach. The sample was obtained using the Yamane's formular ($n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$), Where: n = sample size, N = population size, e = margin of error (commonly 0.05 for 95% confidence level).

$$n = 135 / (1 + 135(0.05)^2)$$

$$= 135 / (1 + 135 + (0.0025))$$

$$= 135 / (1 + 0.3375)$$

$$= 135 / 1.3375$$

$$= 100.89.$$

Therefore 100 students were recruited for the study.

3.5 Data collection methods and instruments

Data collection was done through the use of structured questionnaires consisting of closed-ended questions for easy expression of views and ideas. This was chosen as the method of data collection because it is relatively cheaper, avoided embarrassment on the part of the respondents, and the complete anonymity of respondents. Questionnaires were shared with the students in their various classrooms during the class period. We explained to them how the questionnaires were to be filled. Each student used a maximum of 30 minutes to complete the questionnaire.

3.6 Data analysis techniques

The data obtained from the study were checked for accuracy, utility, and completeness. Data were analysed using Microsoft Excel 2019 and results were presented in tables and figures.

3.7 Ethical consideration

An introductory letter was obtained from the College before we conducted the study. The respondents were well informed about the purpose of the study and their consent was sought. Respondents were assured of anonymity and confidentiality by not providing any form of identification on the questionnaire. However, identification codes were used to represent the

respondent according to their chronologic entry into the study. Respondents were allowed to participate and withdraw from the study voluntarily at any time without any penalty.

3.8 Limitation of the study

The limitations to this study were, the limited time with which we had to complete the study and the smaller sample size that was chosen for the study. Because the sample size was small, we could not generalize the study findings.

CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSES OF DATA

4.0 Introduction

A detailed discussion of the analyzed results is presented in this chapter. The data collected was coded and analyzed with the help of a statistician, using the computer software called Microsoft excel. Descriptive statistical measures, such as tables with averages and percentages, along with graphs were used to show the occurrence of different observations as investigated in the study.

4.1 Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

4.1.1 Gender of Respondents

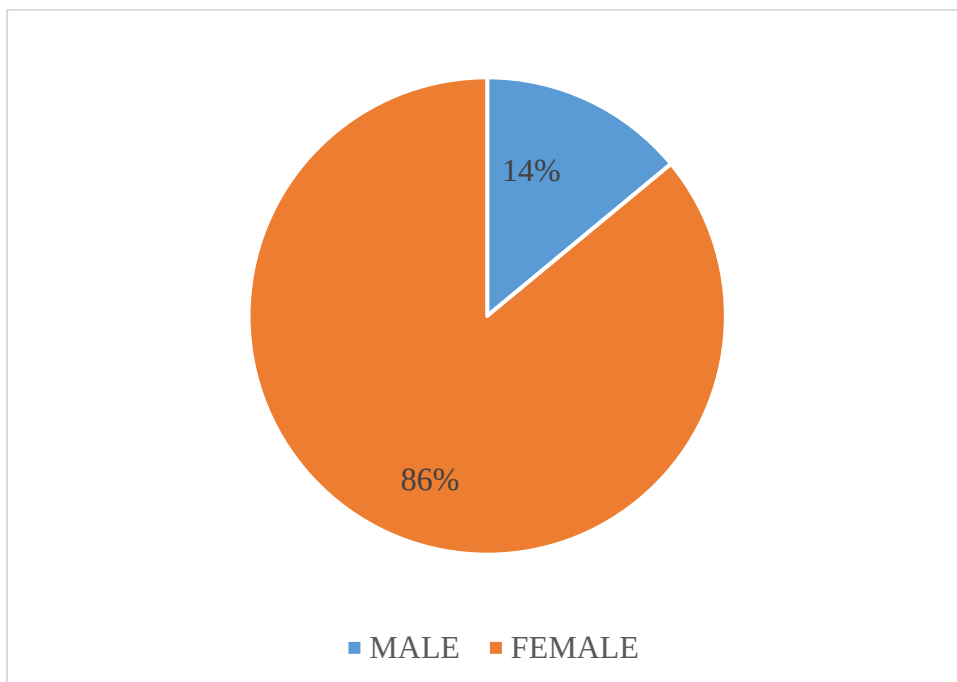


Figure 4.1: Distribution of gender of respondents

Majority (86%) of the respondents were females with males having (14%).

4.1.2 Age of Respondents

Table 4.1: Respondents Age

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
19-24	56	56
25-30	30	30
Above 30	14	14

Most of the respondents were between the ages of 19-24 representing 56% of the total sample population. This was followed by the ages between 25-30, representing 30% while the reminder of the respondents were above 30 years, representing 14% of the total sample size.

4.2 Impact of peer support on second-year nursing students' academic performance

Table 4.2: Respondents effects of peer teaching

Variable		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree	Disagree
My grades have improved since I participated in peer teaching	n	28	60	10	0	2
	%	28	60	10	0	2
The feedback I receive from my peers is from a student's viewpoint, therefore, more honest, reliable, helpful than from my instructor	n	14	70	14	2	0
	%	14	70	14	2	0
I can communicate more freely with my peers than with my instructor	n	40	54	0	2	4
	%	40	54	0	2	4
I learn less from my instructor than my peers	n	12	58	24	0	6
	%	12	58	24	0	6

Table 4.2 shows the frequency distribution of effects of peer teaching on student performance. Four variables were used to assess the effects of peer teaching. Majority (88%) of respondents said that their grades had improved since they participated in peer teaching. On students' viewpoints, 84% of respondents indicated that the feedback they receive from their peers is more honest, reliable and helpful than from their instructor. Majority (94%) of respondents said that they can communicate more freely with peers than with their instructor. Most (70%) of the respondents indicated that they learn less from their instructor than from their peers and (24%) indicated a neutral stance to that statement.

4.3 Perceived benefits and challenges of peer support

Table 4.3: Respondents Knowledge on the Importance of Peer Teaching

Variable		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree	Disagree
Peer support helps in building self confidence and self-esteem	n	42	54	4	0	0
	%	42	54	4	0	0
Peer support enhances team working skills	n	34	64	2	0	0
	%	34	64	2	0	0
Peer support helps in developing leadership skills	n	36	58	4	0	2
	%	36	58	4	0	2
Peer support promotes individualized attention to students	n	26	60	14	0	0
	%	26	60	14	0	0
Peer support provides an avenue where students feel comfortable when asking questions	n	56	42	0	2	0
	%	56	42	0	2	0
Time management on the part of the peer tutor is a major challenge	n	16	68	6	6	4
	%	16	68	6	6	4
Peer tutors have insufficient knowledge on some delicate topics	n	18	68	8	6	0
	%	18	68	8	6	0
Peer tutors are not well endowed with good communication skills during lectures	n	10	52	16	10	12
	%	10	52	16	10	12
Peer tutors have difficult managing conflicts that occurs during group meeting	n	16	38	36	8	2
	%	16	38	36	8	2

Majority (96%) of the respondents cited that peer teaching helps in building self confidence and self-esteem. Majority (98%) of the respondents mentioned that peer teaching enhances team working skills. Majority (94%) of the respondents held that peer teaching helps in developing leadership skills. Majority (86%) of the respondents said peer teaching promotes individualized attention to students. Majority (98%) of the respondents indicated that peer teaching provides an avenue where students felt comfortable when asking questions.

Majority (84%) of the respondents said that time management on the part of the peer tutor is a major challenge faced in peer teaching. Majority (86%) of the respondents cited that peer tutors have insufficient knowledge on some delicate topics. Most (62%) of the respondents indicated that peer tutors are not well endowed with good communication skills during lectures whiles few (16%) of the respondents indicated a neutral stance. More than half (52%) of the respondents indicated that peer tutors have difficult managing conflicts that occurs during group meetings whiles over thirty percent (36%) of the respondents indicated a neutral stance.

4.4 Influence of demographic characteristics, influence on peer-support participation and benefits

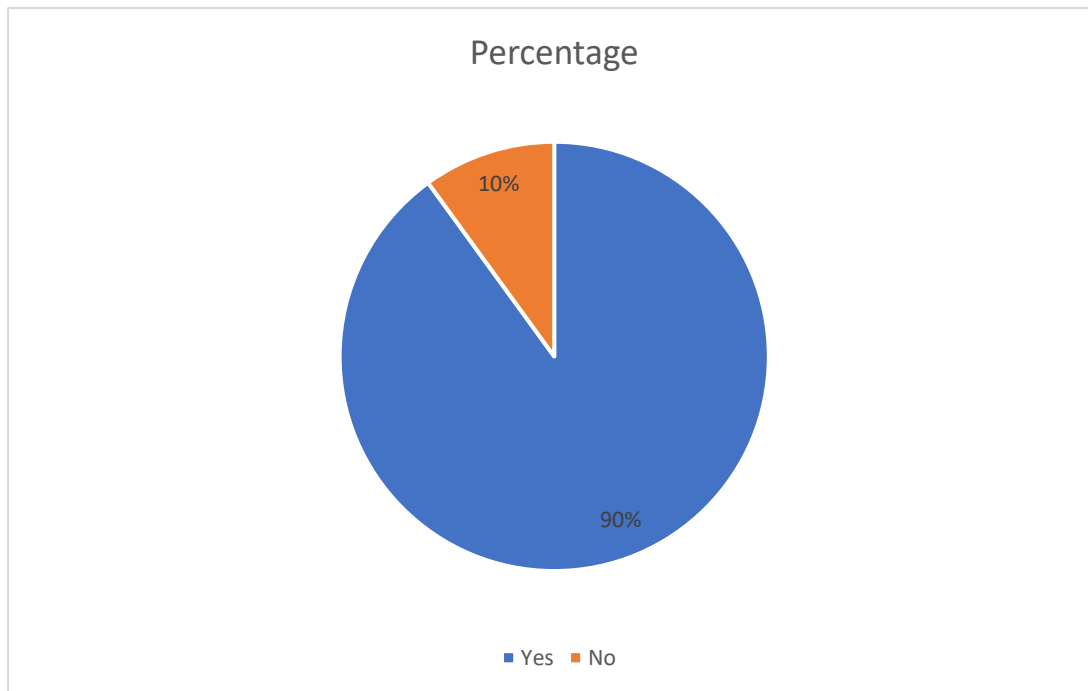


Figure 4.2: Demographic characteristics influence your participation in peer support

From figure 2, majority of the respondents indicated that their demographic characteristics influence the participation of peer support while only 10% indicated No to this assertion.

Majority of the respondents indicated that, their demographic characteristics influence the participation of peer support because they older students always feel shy to approach the younger ones to teach them.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

In this chapter, the data analyzed in chapter four were interpreted based on scientific evidence. The findings are briefly discussed with references to support the study.

5.1 Discussions

5.1.1 Impact of peer support on second-year nursing students' academic performance

Majority (88%) of respondents said that their grades have improved since they participated in peer teaching. These results are in line with previous research that has also demonstrated that peer tutoring results in improved transferable skills and higher grades for tutees (60%) (Maynard & Almarzouqi, 2016). In addition, Oloo et al. (2019), reported that majority (92.6%) of students agreed that their grades improved by peer teaching.

5.1.2 Perceived benefits and challenges of peer support

Maynard and Almarzouqi (2019) reported that there are a number of benefits to students participating in a peer tutoring programme for both tutors and tutees. These benefits include developing networking opportunities; making friends; building confidence and self-esteem; enhancing team-working skills; and developing leadership skills. Similarly, the current study found that most (86%) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that making friends is an important aspect of peer teaching. Majority (98%) of the respondents identified that peer teaching enhances team working skills. Majority (94%) of the respondents said peer teaching helps in developing leadership skills.

Majority (96%) of the respondents indicated that peer teaching helps in building self confidence and self-esteem. This finding is in line with a study conducted by Ten Cate and

Durning (2017) which reported that peer support may also foster self-confidence in students by teaching others. When a person is placed in a certain position then that person may adapt their perception of themselves in accordance with that position. Hence a student adopting the role of a teacher may build self-confidence and belief in their own expertise within the role of a teacher.

Majority (86%) of the respondents indicated peer teaching promotes individualized attention to students. Similarly, Ullah et al. (2018) reported that peer tuition is valuable for the students because they get effective individual instructions and feedback from their peer tutors.

Majority (98%) of the respondents mentioned that peer teaching provides an avenue where students feel comfortable when asking questions. Similarly, Ullah et al., (2018) reported that students or learners are more open and comfortable with their tutor in peer tutoring. So, the learners learn without any sort of hesitation from their tutor in this kind of environment.

5.1.3 Challenges Faced in Peer Tutoring

Majority (84%) of the respondents indicated that time management on the part of the peer tutor is a major challenge faced in peer teaching. This finding is in line with a study conducted by Chai and Lin (2020). In the study time management was seen as the most challenge faced in peer tutoring.

Majority (86%) of the respondents said that peer tutors have insufficient knowledge on some delicate topics. Similarly, Palsson et al. (2017) has reported that the peer tutors experienced a number of difficulties during peer-tutoring sessions, group management and lack of knowledge. Again, Chai and Lin (2020) reported that peer tutors face difficulties like insufficient knowledge.

Most (62%) of the respondents held that peer tutors are not well endowed with good communication skills during lectures. This finding is supported by Engels et al. (2018) which reported that students described experiencing an improvement in their communication skills.

5.2 Conclusions

Based on the analysis of data obtained from the field, the following conclusions were drawn.

1. Knowledge on the importance of peer teaching was high as majority (96%) of the respondents held that peer teaching helps in building self confidence and self-esteem
2. Majority (98%) of the respondents said that peer teaching enhances team working skills.
3. Majority (94%) of respondents cited that they can communicate more freely with peers than with their instructor.
4. Majority (86%) of the respondents indicated that peer tutors have insufficient knowledge on some delicate topics.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made.

1. The study recommends more utilization of peer teaching in nursing schools.
2. Students should be allowed to form discussion groups where peer teaching can be encouraged especially at the end of every topic.
3. Group discussions should be encouraged to enable students who fear teachers to participate fully and ask questions to improve their performance.

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APPENDICE

QUESTIONNAIRE

HOLY FAMILY NURSING AND MIDWIFERY TRAINING COLLEGE, BEREKUM

Dear Respondent,

We are final year students of the Holy Family Nursing and Midwifery Training College, Berekum, conducting a study on the topic: Impact of peer support on the academic performance of second-year nursing students in Holy Family Nursing and Midwifery Training College, Berekum.

Any information provided shall be secured and kept private. To ensure confidentiality and anonymity, your name is not required. Participation is voluntary and you have the sole right to withdraw from participating in this study at any time at your discretion.

PLEASE TICK [✓] THE MOST APPROPRIATE RESPONSE TO THE QUESTION IN THE SPACE PROVIDED AND/OR WRITE IN THE SPACE PROVIDED

SECTION A: Respondent Demographic Data

1. Gender: A. Male [] B. Female []
2. Ages: A. 19-24 years [] B. 25-30 years [] C. Above 30 years []

SECTION B: Impact of peer support on second-year nursing students' academic performance

3. My grades have improved since I participated in peer support studies.
a. Strongly Agree [] b. Agree [] c. Neutral [] d. Strongly Disagree [] e. Disagree []
4. The feedback I receive from my peers is from a student's viewpoint, therefore, more honest, reliable, helpful than from my instructor
a. Strongly Agree [] b. Agree [] c. Neutral [] d. Strongly Disagree [] e. Disagree []

5. I can communicate more freely with my peers than with my instructor.

a. Strongly Agree [] b. Agree [] c. Neutral [] d. Strongly Disagree [] e. Disagree []

6. I learn less from my instructor than my peers.

a. Strongly Agree [] b. Agree [] c. Neutral [] d. Strongly Disagree [] e. Disagree []

SECTION C: Perceived benefits and challenges of peer support

7. Peer support helps in building self confidence and self-esteem

a. Strongly Agree [] b. Agree [] c. Neutral [] d. Strongly Disagree [] e. Disagree []

8. Peer support enhances team working skills

a. Strongly Agree [] b. Agree [] c. Neutral [] d. Strongly Disagree [] e. Disagree []

9. Peer support helps in developing leadership skills

a. Strongly Agree [] b. Agree [] c. Neutral [] d. Strongly Disagree [] e. Disagree []

10. Peer support promotes individualized attention to students

a. Strongly Agree [] b. Agree [] c. Neutral [] d. Strongly Disagree [] e. Disagree []

11. Time management on the part of the peer tutor is a major challenge

a. Strongly Agree [] b. Agree [] c. Neutral [] d. Strongly Disagree [] e. Disagree []

12. Peer tutors have insufficient knowledge on some delicate topics

a. Strongly Agree [] b. Agree [] c. Neutral [] d. Strongly Disagree [] e. Disagree []

13. Peer tutors are not well endowed with good communication skills during lectures

a. Strongly Agree [] b. Agree [] c. Neutral [] d. Strongly Disagree [] e. Disagree []

14. Peer tutors have difficult managing conflicts that occurs during group meetings

a. Strongly Agree [] b. Agree [] c. Neutral [] d. Strongly Disagree [] e. Disagree []

SECTION D: Influence of demographic characteristics, influence on peer-support participation and benefits

15. Do you think your demographic characteristics influence your participation in peer support?

a. Yes [] b. No []

16. If yes, how do your demographic characteristics influence your participation?

.....

.....

NATIONAL CATHOLIC HEALTH SERVICE (DIOCESE OF SUNYANI)
**HOLY FAMILY NURSING AND MIDWIFERY TRAINING COLLEGE
BEREKUM**



BANKERS:

Ghana Commercial Bank, Berekum
Agric Development Bank, Berekum
Fidelity Bank, Berekum



P.O. Box 21,
Berekum, BrA
Ghana, W/Africa
Tel. 0352222124
Fax: 0352222474

Our Ref.

Your Ref.

Date

June 20, 2025

Ms Rita Agyei Boakye
Holy Family NMTC,
Post Office Box 21
Berekum

Dear Ms. Agyei Boakye .

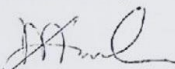
RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH

With reference to your memorandum of June 20, 2025, I write to notify you that the underlisted students have been granted the permission to conduct their research in the College on the topic "The Impact of Peer support on second year nursing students' Academic Performance at Holy Family Nursing and Midwifery Training College, Berekum."

1. Abdulai Yushaw Munfumba
2. Abass Asana

Thank you

Yours Sincerely,


Monica Nkrumah (FGCNM)
Principal