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**FACTORS LEADING TO THE DECLINE IN LIBRARY PATRONAGE AMONG
STUDENTS AT HOLY FAMILY NURSING AND MIDWIFERY TRAINING
COLLEGE, BEREKUM**

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BEREKUM]**

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2025

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DECLARATION

We hereby declare that this submission is our own work towards the Diploma in Registered 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.

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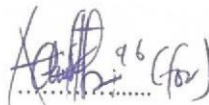
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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the factors contributing to the decline in library patronage among students at the Holy Family Nursing and Midwifery Training College, Berekum. A descriptive cross-sectional design was adopted, involving a stratified random sample of 297 students drawn from a population of approximately 800. Data were collected using structured questionnaires covering student knowledge, attitudes, and perceived barriers to library use. The data were analyzed using SPSS version 26, with results presented in frequencies and percentages.

The findings revealed that although students had general knowledge about the existence and importance of the college library, actual usage was low. Major factors contributing to low patronage included limited internet access, inadequate and outdated books, inconvenient library hours, and an uncomfortable library environment. Furthermore, students preferred digital resources and group study settings, which the current library setup did not adequately support.

The study concluded that multiple institutional and individual factors contributed to reduced library usage, and addressing these could enhance patronage. Recommendations included improving Wi-Fi connectivity, updating library materials, extending library operating hours, and creating more conducive reading spaces. The study emphasized the need for the college administration to invest in modernizing library services and increasing student engagement with available academic resources.

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ABBREVIATION

AASL	American Association of School Librarians
IFLA	International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions
RGN	Registered General Nursing
RM	Diploma and Registered Midwifery
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background to the study

The decline in library patronage among students has become a significant concern in educational institutions worldwide, including nursing and midwifery training colleges in Ghana. Understanding the factors contributing to this decline is essential for developing strategies to enhance library usage and, consequently, academic performance (Osman H. , 2021).

School libraries play a critical role in the education system by providing students with access to information and ideas necessary for academic success. They support the development of essential learning skills and promote intellectual growth (Udoh-Ilomechine, 2024). The American Association of School Librarians (AASL, 2019) highlights the importance of school libraries in equipping students with educational competencies by offering both physical and intellectual access to information resources.

The effective utilization of library and information resources has become increasingly important, especially as libraries have transformed from being cultural monuments to becoming hubs of knowledge acquisition and information dissemination. In response to this evolution, librarians have initiated user education strategies to help individuals locate and access the information they need for academic and personal development (Tiefel, 2019).

Today's libraries serve as information powerhouses where knowledge is stored, generated, and transferred to meet the needs of users. To benefit fully from library resources, users must possess the necessary skills to navigate these systems effectively and conduct purposeful information searches (Alemna, 2024).

Additionally, school libraries offer students the opportunity to cultivate lifelong learning skills. These include the development of critical thinking, creativity, and independent learning abilities. Regular library use encourages the habit of reading and fosters the ability to evaluate and apply information appropriately (IFLA & UNESCO, 2019). As learning laboratories, libraries also support students in building research skills that are essential for academic advancement (Unagha, 2024).

Despite their significance, there is a noticeable decline in library usage. In the United Kingdom, public library patronage among adults has declined by almost one-third since 2005 and continues to decrease each year (Onwuemezi, 2022; Adegbite, 2020). A similar trend is observed in Nigerian schools, where students increasingly rely on digital devices such as smartphones and tablets, which may be contributing to reduced engagement with traditional library systems (Adedokun, Magaji, & Makinde, 2024).

In the Ghanaian context, university libraries have also faced neglect. Although these institutions play a pivotal role in higher education and national development, they suffer from challenges such as insufficient funding, limited access to current learning materials, and a lack of skilled personnel (Antwi, 2022).

According to Kissiedu (2019), these challenges are well documented across African university libraries but have yet to receive adequate policy attention or long-term solutions. Nursing students often face rigorous academic schedules, including clinical rotations and shift duties, which limit their available time for library visits. Studies have identified time scarcity as a significant barrier to library usage among nursing students, suggesting that academic commitments may take precedence over library engagement (Abubakar, et al., 2022).

The quality of interactions between students and library staff significantly influences library patronage. Negative perceptions or experiences, such as unhelpful staff behavior, can deter

students from using library services. Studies have shown that poor staff-user relationships can lead to decreased library usage among students (Abdulsalami & Efosa, 2020). Effective use of library resources requires adequate information literacy skills. However, some nursing students may lack training in information retrieval and evaluation, leading to underutilization of library resources. Research indicates that students' proficiency in information-seeking behaviors correlates with their usage of library electronic resources (Osman, 2021).

The quality of library facilities, including the availability of modern ICT infrastructure, comfortable study spaces, and a diverse collection of resources, can influence patronage. Studies have shown that students' satisfaction with library facilities affects their usage patterns.

Addressing these factors requires a comprehensive approach that includes enhancing digital resources, improving accessibility, fostering positive staff-student relationships, and promoting information literacy. Such measures are crucial for reversing the trend of declining library patronage and ensuring that students at Holy Family Nursing and Midwifery Training College, Berekum, fully benefit from the educational resources available to them.

1.1 Problem Statement

The school library plays a significant role in meeting the information needs of students (Clabo, 2020). However, many academic libraries have reported a decline in the circulation of materials and student visits to physical library spaces. This trend may be partly attributed to the widespread availability of internet access and the growing number of electronic resources (Shill & Tonner, 2024). In Libya, research has indicated a consistent drop in school library usage over the years. Contributing factors include a lack of qualified staff, inadequate training, limited access to free internet, and insufficient library materials (Gallal, 2024).

At Holy Family Nursing and Midwifery Training College, Berekum, data from the library's sign-in book shows a noticeable decrease in student usage compared to previous academic years. Between February and May 2024, only 375 student visits were recorded for the entire student population. Despite this observed decline, there is limited information regarding the underlying causes of reduced library patronage among students at the college.

1.2 General objective

To determine the factors leading to the decline in library patronage among nursing students at Holy Family Nursing and Midwifery Training College, Berekum

1.3 Specific objective

1. To determine students' knowledge on the importance of library usage.
2. To determine factors that may have resulted in low library patronage among students
3. To find out measures that can promote library patronage among students

1.4 Operational Definition of Terms

Students' Knowledge: In this study, knowledge will be measured by students' responses to questions assessing their awareness of how the library supports learning, research, academic performance, and access to credible resources.

Measures That Can Promote Library Patronage: This refers to suggested or perceived interventions and improvements that can increase the frequency and satisfaction of library use among students.

Library Patronage: Library patronage refers to the frequency and consistency with which students make use of the library and its services.

Academic Performance: Academic performance refers to the level of achievement students attain in their coursework and examinations. While this study does not directly assess

academic scores, it considers students' perceptions of how library usage contributes to their learning outcomes, preparedness for assessments, and ability to complete assignments or research work.

Library Resources: Library resources include all materials and services provided by the library to support academic and research needs. These may be physical (e.g., textbooks, reference books, journals, newspapers) or digital (e.g., e-books, online journals, databases).

Information Literacy: Information literacy is the ability to identify, locate, evaluate, and effectively use information for academic or personal purposes. In this study, information literacy is examined in terms of students' confidence and competence in using library catalogs, digital databases, and other tools to find and evaluate academic sources.

Perceived Barriers to Library Use: This refers to the challenges or limitations that students believe hinder their ability to make use of the library. These may be real (e.g., lack of space, outdated books) or perceived (e.g., belief that online sources are better).

Library Environment: Library environment refers to the physical and social setting of the library that can influence student behavior. Factors such as lighting, ventilation, availability of reading spaces, noise levels, cleanliness, and availability of seating will be explored in the study. Students will be asked to rate the conduciveness of the library environment on a Likert scale.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter will review other studies on factors leading to decline in library patronage. It will cover the specific objectives of the study which includes; knowledge on the importance of the library usage, factors that may have resulted in low library patronage and measures that can promote library patronage.

2.1 Knowledge on the Importance of Library Usage

In the past two decades, several studies have confirmed the significant role of high-quality school libraries in enhancing student success (Scholastic Research & Results, 2024). School libraries are central to learning as they offer essential materials for all courses available at educational institutions. For postgraduate students, these libraries provide the resources necessary for effective learning and research. Teaching staff also benefit from library resources to support their teaching and research activities. Additionally, libraries are expected to provide materials for extracurricular activities. The role of the university library is often described as integral to the educational institution, with some describing a university as a collection of buildings organized around its library. A quality library is considered indispensable for quality education, and the reputation of a university often relies on the standard of its library facilities (Aina, 2022). School libraries also play a key role in developing students' information literacy, helping them to find, assess, and use information effectively for their future careers (Strong, 2020).

A significant study conducted by a researcher at the Colorado Department of Education was one of the first to examine the statewide impact of school library programs (SLPs) on student performance. Utilizing quantitative methods such as correlational analysis and multiple regression, the study found that a strong school library program had a positive impact on student achievement (Kaplan, 2022). Chan (2024) reinforced this by stating that the importance of school libraries is well-established in the literature, with most studies indicating a positive influence on student outcomes. Similarly, Udoh-Ilomechine (2024) emphasized that school libraries are crucial to the success of both students and teachers, as they provide resources that cater to various informational needs and promote independent learning.

Adding further support to the value of school libraries, Jato, Ogunniyi, and Olubiyo (2020) found that consistent library use is associated with better academic performance, while irregular library use correlates with lower achievement in secondary schools in Ondo West Local Government Area of Ondo State. In Nigeria, a study using a semi-structured questionnaire with 1,268 university students showed that libraries offer materials that enrich the curriculum, broaden students' perspectives, and foster critical thinking (Oni-Orisan, 2022).

In Ghana, Agyekum and Filson (2019) found that students rely heavily on library resources to supplement classroom learning, assist with assignments, and prepare for exams. Similarly, Clabo (2020) observed that students use school libraries for recreational reading, reference materials, homework, and news from newspapers. Daniel (2004) concluded that school libraries are at the core of educational institutions, stressing that an educational institution without a library is akin to a car without an engine—an institution lacking in direction and purpose.

2.2 Factors Resulting in Low Library Patronage

The primary reason for low library patronage seems to be the insufficient resources available to students, as institutional budgets typically only cover staff salaries and basic building upkeep (Rosenberg, 2024). The lack of progress in library usage has been attributed to a shortage of adequately trained and experienced staff capable of managing library services effectively (Gallal, 2024).

In Kenya, while the government acknowledges the importance of school libraries, there is no formal policy supporting their development. School libraries often suffer from poor funding, lack of recognition, and a shortage of qualified librarians. These challenges have significantly contributed to the low usage of library services (Otiike, 2019).

The internet, with its vast range of information on various subjects, has created a collaborative environment that many students prefer for information retrieval, reducing the reliance on library resources (Yebowaah, 2022). Yebowaah (2022) argued that Nigerian students' preference for the internet over traditional libraries is largely due to its easier accessibility. They noted that the internet is available more frequently than library resources, especially when library materials are not in electronic formats.

In Tanzania, Mcharazo (2024) found that students were reluctant to use public libraries due to the elementary nature, irrelevance, and outdatedness of available materials. Aruna and Chinaka (2024) also identified several barriers to library usage, including poor library facilities, inadequate library orientation, and limited library hours.

Additionally, Clabo (2020) pointed out that factors like limited access to books, inadequate reference materials, and the absence of computers and internet connectivity were major obstacles to students utilizing school libraries. Similarly, a study conducted in the Ashanti

Region of Ghana found that the lack of resources, including books and audiovisual materials, made students reluctant to use public libraries (Boateng, 2024).

2.3 Measures that can Promote Library Patronage

Promotional tools that can be used by academic libraries serves to promote their patronage include: digital media, such as the library's Website, blogs and podcasts; print materials, such as posters, handouts and giveaways; events such as orientation tours and workshops; and other tools such as library publications, contests and brochures (Fisher & Pride, 2021).

A descriptive survey research reported that the internet has been viewed as a very important tool for learning due to the enormous amount of information it contains which makes scholars to spend much time on it. It has been discovered that the Internet is taking the shine off the library unless something is done to save the school library; this could be through the provision of funds to increase current and relevant materials; availability of qualified staff to make the information materials easily accessible to the library users; and having a media section in the school library for students 'access to computers and Internet. Doing these will save the library from going into extinction (Adedokun, et al., 2024).

A study was conducted in Nigeria reported that it is important to review the library use instruction programme, organise outreaches and book exhibitions to create attraction. They are to know that the library is a service-oriented entity seeking the satisfaction of its users (Odu, 2022). Adegbite (2020) reported that if adequate funds are made available and judiciously spent on library resources and services, the library will retain its position as the heart of the academic activities in the higher institutions where they have been established (Patil & Pradhan, 2022).

CHAPTER THREE

MATERIALS AND METHODS

3.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the methodology used in the study to examine the factors leading to the decline in library patronage among students at the Holy Family Nursing and Midwifery Training College, Berekum. The chapter outlines the study area, population, design, sampling technique, sample size calculation, data collection methods and instruments, data analysis techniques, and ethical considerations

3.1 Study area

The study was carried out at the Holy Family Nursing and Midwifery Training College, Berekum. The College community is located at the western part of Berekum, in the premises of The Holy Family Hospital, Berekum with a student population of about 800. The college has two entrances leading into it. The college community consists of a number of Nursing, Post basic students and Midwifery students. The college runs three Diploma programs; Registered General Nursing (RGN) Diploma and Registered Midwifery (RM) Diploma. The college authorities has made provision for several veronica buckets at various vantage points on campus to aid in hand washing. Lectures takes place from Monday to Friday and it starts from 8:00am to 4:00pm. Most of the Tutors stay outside campus whilst a few of them stay on campus. There are numerous facilities, found in the school. Some of them are, lecture halls, Anatomy/Pathology Museum, Library, Computer laboratory, Skills lab, Supermarket, dining hall and kitchen, and Security posts.

3.2 The study population

The study targeted all students enrolled at the Holy Family Nursing and Midwifery Training College, Berekum. The total student population is estimated to be 800 students. The study focused on these students as they are the primary users of the college library, and their patronage behavior provided valuable insights into the factors affecting library usage.

3.3 Study design

This study adopted a descriptive cross-sectional design. This design is appropriate for the study as it allowed for the collection of data at a specific point in time to assess the factors leading to the decline in library patronage. A cross-sectional survey helped capture a broad range of information on the factors influencing library use, as well as the students' knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors concerning the library.

3.4 Sampling technique and Size

The study used a stratified random sampling technique to select the study participants. Stratified sampling was employed to ensure that different student categories (e.g., first-year, second-year, and third-year students) are adequately represented in the study. A proportionate allocation method was used to determine the number of students from each stratum, ensuring that each group is proportionally represented according to the total student population.

Based on the student population of 800 and using a 5% margin of error, the sample size was

be calculated using the Slovincs formula:
$$n = \frac{N}{(1+Ne^2)}$$

Where;

N = 800 (total number of nurses)

e = 0.05 (margin of error)

$$n = \frac{800}{(1+800 \times 0.05^2)}$$

$$n \approx 267$$

Considering a 10% non-response rate the final sample size was 297 students

3.5 Data collection methods and instruments

Data was collected using a structured questionnaire, which was designed to capture information on the students' knowledge of library services, factors influencing library usage, and potential measures to improve patronage. The questionnaire included both closed and open-ended questions to allow for quantitative and qualitative data collection. The questions covered areas such as: Students' knowledge about the importance of library usage, Factors contributing to low patronage, including library resources, staff, and facilities and Possible measures to improve library patronage

3.6 Data analysis techniques

The data collected was analyzed using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) version 26. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages was used to summarize and describe the demographic characteristics of the study sample, as well as the students' responses to the questions.

3.7 Ethical consideration

Ethical approval was sought from the administration of Holy Family Nursing and Midwifery Training College, Berekum, before the commencement of data collection. Participation in the study was voluntary, and all participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time without any negative consequences.

Informed consent was obtained from all participants, ensuring that they are aware of the purpose of the study, the procedures involved, and their role in the study. Confidentiality was maintained by ensuring that all responses are anonymized, and no personal identifiers were used in the data analysis and reporting. The data was stored securely and was only accessible to the research team.

Additionally, the research findings were disseminated to the college administration and participants to ensure that the results are used for improving library services and promoting better library patronage among students.

3.8 Limitations of the Study

The study was confined to a specific institution, which limited the generalizability of the findings to other colleges or universities with different settings or student populations. The study did not include analysis of actual library usage records (e.g., borrowing frequency, digital resource access), which could have provided a more objective assessment of patronage levels.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter deals with the analysis of data collected from the field of study and the results obtained from the analysis. The study findings are presented in tables or figures.

4.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents

The study surveyed a total of 297 nursing and midwifery students at Holy Family Nursing and Midwifery Training College, Berekum, to assess factors influencing the decline in library patronage. Respondents were grouped into three age categories. The majority (50.5%, $n = 150$) were aged between 22 and 25 years, followed by 40.4% ($n = 120$) aged 18 to 21 years, while those above 25 years constituted only 9.1% ($n = 27$). This indicates that most of the students are within the typical college age range. There was a significant gender imbalance, with 77.1% ($n = 229$) being female, and 22.9% ($n = 68$) being male. This aligns with the gender distribution typically observed in nursing and midwifery training institutions, where females tend to dominate. With regard to the year of study, second-year students represented the largest group, accounting for 37.0% ($n = 110$), followed by first-year students at 33.7% ($n = 100$). Third-year students made up 29.3% ($n = 87$) of the total respondents. This fairly even distribution suggests that the study captured the perspectives of students across different levels of academic progression. A larger proportion of respondents (60.6%, $n = 180$) were enrolled in the Nursing program, while 39.4% ($n = 117$) were pursuing Midwifery. This distribution reflects the general enrollment trend in the institution, where nursing often has higher intake numbers.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (N = 297)

Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Age	18 – 21 years	120	40.4%
	22 – 25 years	150	50.5%
	Above 25	27	9.1%
Gender	Male	68	22.9%
	Female	229	77.1%
Year of Study	First Year	100	33.7%
	Second Year	110	37.0%
	Third Year	87	29.3%
Program of Study	Nursing	180	60.6%
	Midwifery	117	39.4%

4.2 Knowledge on the Importance of Library Usage

The study examined the knowledge of 297 nursing and midwifery students regarding the importance and role of the school library in supporting their academic success.

A significant majority of respondents viewed the library as a crucial academic resource.

Specifically, 47.1% ($n = 140$) considered it very important, and 33.7% ($n = 100$) rated it as

important for their academic success. Only a small percentage expressed a neutral stance (11.8%) or considered the library unimportant (7.4% combined for "unimportant" and "very unimportant"). This demonstrates a generally positive perception of the library's relevance among the student population.

Students identified multiple roles played by the library in their education. The most frequently acknowledged role was the provision of learning materials such as books and journals (80.8%), followed by support for research and assignments (70.7%) and the provision of a quiet study environment (65.7%). Additionally, 58.9% believed the library helps with exam preparation, and 53.9% felt it promotes critical thinking and self-learning. A small proportion (8.4%) identified other roles, likely specific to individual needs. These findings reflect a broad understanding of the multifaceted purpose of the library beyond merely lending books.

When asked whether the library is essential for developing research and information literacy skills, 70.7% of respondents affirmed this view, while 15.2% disagreed, and 14.1% were uncertain. This indicates that a strong majority recognize the library's role in equipping students with critical academic competencies.

Regarding their knowledge of how to use library resources (such as books, journals, and databases), only 13.5% considered themselves very knowledgeable, and 35.4% rated themselves as knowledgeable. However, a notable proportion were either neutral (26.9%) or admitted to being not knowledgeable (24.2%), suggesting a gap in user skills that may limit effective library utilization.

When asked whether they had received library orientation or training, 42.1% reported yes, while a majority of 57.9% indicated they had not. This gap in formal introduction to library

use could explain the relatively low level of self-reported knowledge on accessing and using library resources effectively.

Table 2: Knowledge on the Importance of Library Usage

Question	Response Option	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Importance of library for academic success	Very Important	140	47.1%
	Important	100	33.7%
	Neutral	35	11.8%
	Unimportant	15	5.1%
	Very Unimportant	7	2.3%
Main roles of the library <i>(Multiple responses allowed)</i>	Provides learning materials	240	80.8%
	Supports research and assignments	210	70.7%
	Provides a quiet study environment	195	65.7%
	Helps with exam preparation	175	58.9%
	Promotes critical thinking and selflearning	160	53.9%
	Other	25	8.4%
Is the library essential for research and information literacy skills?	Yes	210	70.7%
	No	45	15.2%
	Not Sure	42	14.1%

Knowledge of using library resources	Very Knowledgeable	40	13.5%
	Knowledgeable	105	35.4%
	Neutral	80	26.9%
	Not Knowledgeable	72	24.2%
	Yes	125	42.1%
Received library orientation or training	No	172	57.9%

4.3 Factors Leading to Low Library Patronage

The results show that a significant number of students do not frequently use the school library. While only 11.8% ($n = 35$) reported visiting the library daily, and 26.9% ($n = 80$) visited weekly, another 23.6% ($n = 70$) indicated they visit monthly. Notably, the largest group—37.7% ($n = 112$)—never visited the library. This finding clearly highlights a pattern of low patronage, with more than one-third of students reporting no engagement with library services.

When asked about the factors contributing to low usage, students were allowed to select multiple responses. The most common barrier identified was lack of time, cited by 69.0% ($n = 205$) of respondents. This suggests that students' academic and personal schedules may not be well-aligned with library access.

Another major challenge was insufficient library resources, such as books and journals, reported by 60.6% ($n = 180$), indicating that the existing materials may not meet the needs of users. Similarly, 55.6% ($n = 165$) cited inadequate internet access or computers, which

suggests that the digital infrastructure of the library may be lacking—especially in an era where students increasingly rely on online academic tools.

Additionally, 45.5% (n = 135) of students noted that the library is not open at convenient hours, while 40.4% (n = 120) mentioned a lack of space or an uncomfortable study environment, which may deter prolonged usage or group study.

Interestingly, 53.9% (n = 160) indicated a preference for other sources such as the internet, suggesting a shift in learning behavior where students rely more on personal devices and online databases. Another important barrier identified was lack of knowledge on how to use the library, reported by 37.0% (n = 110), reflecting a need for proper user orientation.

A small number (8.4%, n = 25) selected “other,” suggesting the presence of additional, possibly institution-specific or personal barriers.

Table 3: Factors Leading to Low Library Patronage

Question	Response Option	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Frequency of library visits	Daily	35	11.8%
	Weekly	80	26.9%
	Monthly	70	23.6%
	Never	112	37.7%
Factors contributing to low patronage <i>(Multiple responses allowed)</i>	Lack of time	205	69.0%
	Insufficient library resources	180	60.6%

Inadequate internet/computers	165	55.6%
Inconvenient opening hours	135	45.5%
Uncomfortable study environment	120	40.4%
Preference for other sources (e.g., internet)	160	53.9%
Lack of knowledge on how to use the library	110	37.0%
Other	25	8.4%

4.4 Measures to Promote Library Patronage

Respondents were allowed to select multiple options for strategies that could enhance library patronage. The most highly recommended measure was to increase the number of library resources, such as books and journals, which was endorsed by 75.8% ($n = 225$) of respondents.

Additionally, 70.7% ($n = 210$) suggested improving internet access and providing more computers, pointing to a need for better ICT infrastructure to support digital learning and research. Another commonly proposed solution was extending library operating hours, selected by 67.3% ($n = 200$), which reflects earlier concerns about inconvenient timing as a barrier to use.

Other notable suggestions included creating more comfortable and quiet study areas (60.6%, $n = 180$), organizing library orientation or training sessions (57.2%, $n = 170$), and offering workshops or events to promote library usage (52.2%, $n = 155$). A small portion (6.7%, $n = 20$) provided other unspecified suggestions.

When asked whether the library should provide more digital resources such as e-books and online journals, a large majority (80.8%, $n = 240$) responded yes, confirming the growing demand for digital content in academic settings. Only 8.4% ($n = 25$) disagreed, while 10.8% ($n = 32$) were not sure.

The availability of library staff to assist students was another area of concern. Most respondents (74.1%, $n = 220$) expressed that they would prefer more support from library staff in locating resources or using library facilities. Meanwhile, 15.8% ($n = 47$) selected maybe, indicating uncertainty, and only 10.1% ($n = 30$) felt additional support was unnecessary.

Table 4: Suggestions for Improving Library Patronage (N = 297)

Question	Response Option	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Measures to encourage library visits (<i>Multiple responses allowed</i>)	Extending library operating hours	200	67.3%
	Increasing library resources (books, journals, etc.)	225	75.8%
	Improving internet access and providing more computers	210	70.7%
	Organizing library orientation/training	170	57.2%

	Creating comfortable and quiet study areas	180	60.6%
	Offering workshops/events promoting library usage	155	52.2%
	Other	20	6.7%
Should the library provide more digital resources?	Yes	240	80.8%
	No	25	8.4%
	Not Sure	32	10.8%
Prefer library staff to be more available?	Yes	220	74.1%
	No	30	10.1%
	Maybe	47	15.8%

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter provides a comprehensive discussion of the findings of the study in relation to the research objectives and existing literature. The main aim of the study was to explore the reasons behind the decline in library patronage among nursing students at Holy Family Nursing and Midwifery Training College. Key areas examined include students' knowledge of the importance of library use, factors contributing to low usage, and possible interventions to improve patronage. The discussion draws on both the findings from the study and relevant scholarly sources from the literature review.

5.1 Discussion

5.1.1 Knowledge and Perceptions of Library Use

The findings revealed that a majority of students (39.4%) perceived the library as very important, while 30.3% rated it as important for their academic success. This aligns with findings by Odu et al. (2019), who noted that students generally acknowledged the academic relevance of library services, especially in research, assignments, and exam preparation.

Furthermore, most students identified the library's key roles as providing learning materials (29.2%) and supporting research and assignments (25.8%), which is consistent with studies by Kumar and Kaur (2021) indicating that access to quality academic resources was among the top reasons students value libraries.

However, when it came to practical knowledge of library resources, only 23.9% considered themselves very knowledgeable, and 25.3% knowledgeable, which reflects a knowledge gap.

Similar to the work of Owusu-Acheaw & Larson (2019), the lack of training and exposure to library systems negatively impacts students' ability to use libraries effectively.

Notably, over 53% of students reported not receiving any orientation or training, which supports the findings of Agyekum & Filson (2012) that students unfamiliar with library systems are less likely to use them effectively.

5.1.2 Frequency and Barriers to Library Usage

Library usage frequency was low, with only 14.1% visiting daily, while the majority visited weekly (38.7%), or monthly (28.6%). Alarming, 18.5% reported never using the library. These findings mirror those of Ezeala & Yusuff (2019), who found declining trends in physical library visits among health students due to digital alternatives and institutional limitations.

The most frequently cited barriers to usage included lack of time (21.4%), inadequate internet or computers (20.4%), limited resources (19.3%), and preference for other sources like the internet (15.6%). These are echoed in studies by Ani (2020) and Ahmed (2022), which showed that time constraints and the availability of online alternatives reduce student visits to physical libraries.

Lack of training (7.2%) and the library not being open during convenient hours (9.1%) were also significant. A similar study by Edem & Egbe (2023) found that poorly scheduled operating hours and uninviting library environments were demotivating factors for student usage.

5.1.3 Strategies to Improve Library Patronage

When asked about measures to increase library use, students recommended increasing resources (22.3%), extending library hours (20.3%), and organizing library training (18.3%).

These align with recommendations by Khan & Bhatti (2012), who emphasized expanding collections, training programs, and flexible operating schedules to boost usage.

Also, 90.2% of respondents indicated a strong preference for more digital resources, and 79.1% wanted more staff support in navigating resources. These findings are consistent with global trends noted by Tenopir et al. (2019), who argued that digital resource integration and user assistance enhance academic library relevance in the digital age.

5.2 Conclusions

The study revealed that while students recognize the importance of the library in supporting academic success, actual usage remains low. This is primarily due to time constraints, inadequate resources, lack of digital infrastructure, and insufficient training. Students show interest in enhanced services, including improved digital access and guided support, indicating that well-targeted interventions could revive library engagement.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. **Enhance Library Resources:** The institution should increase the stock of relevant and updated books, journals, and databases to meet the growing academic demands of students.
2. **Implement Regular Library Orientation and Training:** Periodic workshops should be conducted to equip students with the skills needed to use library facilities and resources effectively.
3. **Extend Library Operating Hours:** The library should operate during evenings and weekends to accommodate students' tight academic schedules.

4. **Improve Digital Access and Infrastructure:** Introduce more e-books, online journals, and computers to meet the preferences of tech-savvy students.
5. **Create a More Conducive Environment:** Improve seating, ventilation, lighting, and noise control to make the library more inviting for extended use.
6. **Engage Students Through Events and Campaigns:** Organize events such as book clubs, research clinics, and study nights to make library usage more attractive.
7. **Increase Librarian Support:** Staff should be available and approachable to guide students in finding resources and conducting research.

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QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear respondent,

This questionnaire is designed to gather data on the factors leading to the decline in library patronage among nursing students at Holy Family Nursing and Midwifery Training College, Berekum. The information collected will be used for research purposes to identify factors influencing the library usage behavior among students. Your participation is essential to help understand these behaviors and improve services and resources that are available to students. The survey will take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete, and all responses will remain anonymous and confidential.

Please indicate your answer with a (tick x)

Section 1: Demographic Information

1. Age: a. 18-21 ☐ b. 22-25 ☐ c. above 25 ☐
2. Gender: a. Male ☐ b. Female ☐
3. Year of Study: a. First Year ☐ b. Second Year ☐ c. Third Year ☐
4. Program of Study: a. Nursing ☐ b. Midwifery ☐

Section 2: Knowledge on the Importance of Library Usage

5. How important do you think the school library is for your academic success?
 - a. Very Important ☐
 - b. Important ☐
 - c. Neutral ☐
 - d. Unimportant ☐
 - e. Very Unimportant ☐

6. What do you think are the main roles of the library in your education? (Select all that apply)
- a. Provides learning materials (books, journals, etc.) ☐
 - b. Supports research and assignments ☐
 - c. Provides a quiet study environment ☐
 - d. Helps with exam preparation ☐
 - e. Promotes critical thinking and self-learning ☐
 - f. Other (Please specify): _____
7. Do you believe that the library is essential for developing research and information literacy skills?
- a. Yes ☐
 - b. No ☐
 - c. Not Sure ☐
8. How would you rate your knowledge of how to use library resources (e.g., books, journals, databases)?
- a. Very Knowledgeable ☐
 - b. Knowledgeable ☐
 - c. Neutral ☐
 - d. Not Knowledgeable ☐
9. Have you ever received library orientation or training?
- a. Yes ☐
 - b. No ☐

Section 3: Factors Leading to Low Library Patronage

10. What factors contribute to your low patronage of the library? (Select all that apply)
- a. Lack of time ☐

- b. Insufficient library resources (books, journals, etc.) ☐
- c. Inadequate internet access or computers ☐
- d. Library is not open at convenient hours ☐
- e. Lack of space or uncomfortable study environment ☐
- f. I prefer using other sources (e.g., the internet) ☐
- g. Lack of knowledge on how to use the library ☐
- h. Other (Please specify): _____

Section 4: Measures to Promote Library Patronage

11. What measures should be implemented to encourage students to visit the library more often? (Select all that apply)

- a. Extending library operating hours ☐
- b. Increasing the number of library resources (books, journals, etc.) ☐
- c. Improving internet access and providing more computers ☐
- d. Organizing library orientation or training for students ☐
- e. Creating more comfortable and quiet study areas ☐
- f. Offering workshops or events that promote library usage ☐
- g. Other (Please specify): _____

12. Do you think the school library should provide more digital resources (e-books, online journals)?

- a. Yes ☐
- b. No ☐
- c. Not Sure ☐

13. Would you prefer if library staff were more available to assist with finding information or using library resources?

- a. Yes ☐

b. No ☐

c. Maybe ☐

NATIONAL CATHOLIC HEALTH SERVICE (DIOCESE OF SUNYANI)
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Tel. 0352222124
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Our Ref.

Your Ref.

June 19, 2025

Date

Mr. Joseph Appiah
Holy Family NMTC,
Post Office Box 21
Berekum

Dear Mr. Appiah

RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH

With reference to your memorandum of June 19, 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 "Factors leading to decline in Library patronage among students at Holy Family Nursing and Midwifery Training College, Berekum."

1. Ankamah Amakuor Anita
2. Appiah Nsiah Sophia

Thank you.

Yours sincerely,

Martha Kyeremaa

Academic Coordinator, Midwifery

For: Principal

ACADEMIC COORDINATOR
HOLY FAMILY NURSING AND
MIDWIFERY TRAINING COLLEGE
BEREKUM