**EFFECT OF STRESS ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF ECONOMICS STUDENTS IN ALVAN IKOKU FEDERAL UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION**

**Table of Content**

**ABSTRACT 3**

**CHAPTER ONE 4**

**INTRODUCTION 4**

1.1 Background to the Study 4

1.2 Statement of the Problem 6

1.3 Objectives of the Study 7

1.4 Research Questions 8

1.5 Research Hypotheses 8

1.6 Significance of the Study 8

1.7 Scope of the Study 9

1.8 Definition of Key Terms 9

**CHAPTER TWO 10**

**LITERATURE REVIEW 10**

2.1. Introduction 10

2.2. Causes and Types of Stress Among Students 11

2.3. Effects of Stress on Academic Performance 16

2.4. Academic Performance Indicators 21

2.5. Conceptual Framework 24

2.6. Theoretical Framework 26

2.7. Consequences of Stress on Academic Performance 31

2.8. Strategies for Managing Academic Stress 35

2.9. Empirical Review 40

2.10. Summary of literature 42

**CHAPTER THREE 43**

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY 43**

3.1 Research Design 43

3.2 Area of the Study 43

3.3 Population of the Study 43

3.4 Sample and Sampling Techniques 44

3.5 Instrument for Data Collection 44

3.6 Validation of the Instrument 44

3.7 Reliability of the Instrument 45

3.8 Method of Data Collection 45

3.9 Method of Data Analysis 45

**CHAPTER FOUR 46**

**DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS 46**

4.1 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents 46

4.2 Analysis of Research Questions 46

4.3 Test of Hypotheses 52

4.4 Discussion of Findings 54

**CHAPTER FIVE 56**

**SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS 56**

5.1 Summary of Findings 56

5.2 Conclusion 58

5.3 Recommendations 59

References 61

Questionnaire for the Study 66

# ABSTRACT

This study investigates the effect of stress on the academic performance of Economics students at Alvan Ikoku Federal University of Education. The primary objective was to explore the sources of stress, assess its impact on academic outcomes, and evaluate the effectiveness of stress mitigation strategies. A total of 300 students participated in the study, providing data through a structured questionnaire. The results revealed that academic workload, poor time management, financial difficulties, and family responsibilities were the major sources of stress. Furthermore, stress was found to have a significant negative effect on students' academic performance, with stress-induced anxiety impairing concentration and time management. Stress mitigation strategies such as time management training, counseling services, and peer support groups were identified as effective in improving academic outcomes. The study employed statistical analyses, including chi-square tests, to validate the relationships between stress and academic performance, rejecting both null hypotheses. The findings emphasize the need for universities to adopt comprehensive stress management programs to support students and improve their academic success. The study concludes that addressing stress is essential for enhancing the academic performance and well-being of students, highlighting the importance of institutional interventions in creating a supportive academic environment. Recommendations include implementing time management programs, expanding mental health services, and promoting peer support systems.

# CHAPTER ONE

# INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Background to the Study

Stress is a prevalent issue in contemporary academic environments, particularly among university students. It is a complex phenomenon influenced by multiple factors, including academic workload, time management, social pressures, and personal challenges. Stress, in this context, is defined as a physiological and psychological response to environmental demands that exceed an individual's adaptive capabilities (Ahmady et al., 2021). For Economics students at Alvan Ikoku Federal University of Education, these stressors may significantly affect their academic performance, social interactions, and overall well-being.

The relationship between stress and academic performance has been the subject of extensive scholarly attention. Stress manifests in various forms, such as academic, social, and financial stress, each of which may independently or collectively influence students' capacity to excel academically (Maheshwari & Shaukat, 2019). Maheshwari and Shaukat (2019) noted that poor sleep quality—a stress-related factor—adversely affects cognitive functions, memory retention, and problem-solving skills. This is particularly relevant in disciplines such as Economics, which demand high levels of critical thinking and quantitative analysis.

Social support networks and resilience have been identified as crucial buffers against stress in academic settings. Liu and Cao (2022) highlighted the mediating role of resilience in mitigating academic burnout among students, especially in online learning environments. Their findings underscore the importance of fostering a supportive academic ecosystem to help students manage stress effectively. Similarly, the availability of institutional support services, such as counseling and peer mentorship programs, can play a significant role in alleviating stress and enhancing academic outcomes.

In addition to external factors, individual psychological attributes, such as anxiety and mood, significantly contribute to stress levels. Mehta (2022) emphasized the interconnectedness of sleep, mood, and academic performance, arguing that stress disrupts physiological and psychological homeostasis, leading to diminished academic output. Anxiety, in particular, has been recognized as a critical mediator in the stress-performance relationship. Manzo et al. (2024) explored how minority stress impacts the academic outcomes of ethnic minority college students, revealing that anxiety serves as a mediating mechanism. These insights are particularly pertinent for understanding stress dynamics among diverse student populations in Nigerian universities.

Moreover, academic workload and time management are critical factors influencing stress levels among university students. Ahmady et al. (2021) conducted a systematic review and meta-analysis, establishing a strong correlation between stress, poor time management, and suboptimal academic performance in medical students. These findings resonate with the experiences of Economics students, who often grapple with rigorous coursework, assignments, and examinations.

Social media, while a tool for communication and learning, has also been identified as a source of stress for students. Masood et al. (2022) examined the adverse effects of social media stressors on academic performance, noting that excessive use of social networking sites can lead to distractions, reduced study time, and heightened anxiety. This is particularly relevant in the Nigerian context, where social media platforms play a central role in students’ lives.

In Nigeria, academic stress is a significant concern among undergraduate students. Aihie and Ohanaka (2019) observed that Nigerian students face unique stressors, including inadequate educational resources, poor infrastructure, and societal expectations. These challenges are compounded by financial constraints, as highlighted by Deng et al. (2022), who found that family and academic stressors are closely linked to depression and poor academic performance.

Economic studies require analytical rigor and a sustained focus, making students in this discipline particularly susceptible to the adverse effects of stress. Jamieson et al. (2021) demonstrated how stress appraisals and neuroendocrine responses can impair academic performance, particularly in quantitative subjects like mathematics. Similarly, Mirawdali et al. (2018) identified academic anxiety as a significant factor affecting students' performance. These findings are critical for understanding the unique stress dynamics faced by Economics students at Alvan Ikoku Federal University of Education.

In response to these challenges, several coping strategies have been proposed. Tus (2020) highlighted the importance of academic motivation and structured interventions to reduce stress and improve performance. Tadese et al. (2022) further emphasized the role of good study habits and time management in achieving academic success. These insights provide a framework for developing targeted interventions to support students in high-stress academic environments.

## 1.2 Statement of the Problem

Stress has become an increasingly common phenomenon among university students, with profound implications for their academic performance and overall well-being. At Alvan Ikoku Federal University of Education, Economics students face unique challenges that exacerbate stress levels, including demanding coursework, financial constraints, and limited access to academic support services. Despite the growing body of research on academic stress, there is a paucity of studies focusing specifically on Economics students in Nigerian universities.

Existing literature has established a strong correlation between stress and academic performance. For instance, Maheshwari and Shaukat (2019) linked poor sleep quality to diminished cognitive function, while Ahmady et al. (2021) highlighted the role of time management in mitigating stress. However, these studies often focus on medical students or general undergraduate populations, leaving a gap in understanding the specific stressors and coping mechanisms relevant to Economics students.

Furthermore, stress-related factors such as anxiety, mood disturbances, and social media use have been shown to adversely affect academic outcomes (Manzo et al., 2024; Masood et al., 2022). Yet, the interplay between these factors and the unique academic demands of Economics students remains underexplored. This gap underscores the need for a focused investigation into how stress impacts the academic performance of Economics students at Alvan Ikoku Federal University of Education.

This study aims to address this gap by examining the prevalence, causes, and effects of stress among these students. By identifying the key stressors and their impact on academic performance, this research seeks to provide actionable recommendations for reducing stress and enhancing student success.

## 1.3 Objectives of the Study

The main objectives of this study are:

1. To identify the key stressors affecting the academic performance of Economics students at Alvan Ikoku Federal University of Education.
2. To examine the relationship between stress and academic performance among these students.
3. To explore effective coping strategies that can mitigate the impact of stress on students’ academic outcomes.

## 1.4 Research Questions

This study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the major sources of stress among Economics students at Alvan Ikoku Federal University of Education?
2. How does stress influence the academic performance of these students?
3. What coping strategies are employed by students to manage academic stress, and how effective are these strategies?

## 1.5 Research Hypotheses

The study will test the following hypotheses:

Null Hypothesis (H₀₁): There is no significant relationship between stress and academic performance among Economics students.

Null Hypothesis (H₀₂): Coping strategies do not significantly mitigate the effects of stress on academic performance.

## 1.6 Significance of the Study

This study holds significance for multiple stakeholders:

**For Students:** It will provide insights into the causes and effects of stress, enabling them to adopt effective coping mechanisms to improve their academic performance.

**For Educators:** Findings will guide faculty and administrators in designing stress management programs and support services tailored to the needs of Economics students.

**For Researchers:** The study will contribute to the existing body of knowledge on academic stress, particularly in the Nigerian context, and serve as a reference for future studies.

For Policy Makers: Insights from the study can inform policies aimed at improving the mental health and academic success of university students.

## 1.7 Scope of the Study

The study is focused on Economics students at Alvan Ikoku Federal University of Education. It will examine the prevalence, causes, and effects of stress on their academic performance. The research will also explore the coping strategies employed by these students. Data will be collected through questionnaires and analyzed to identify patterns and relationships. The study is limited to the academic stress experienced during the 2023/2024 academic session.

## 1.8 Definition of Key Terms

**Stress:** A psychological and physiological response to challenges or demands that disrupt an individual's equilibrium. In this study, it refers to academic, social, and financial stress experienced by students.

**Academic Performance:** The measurable outcomes of students' educational achievements, such as grades or GPA, which are influenced by cognitive and non-cognitive factors.

**Coping Strategies:** Techniques and behaviors employed by individuals to manage stress, such as time management, seeking social support, or relaxation practices.

**Economics Students:** Undergraduate students enrolled in the Economics department at Alvan Ikoku Federal University of Education.

**University Stressors:** Factors within the university environment that contribute to increased stress, including academic workload, exams, and financial pressures.

# CHAPTER TWO

# LITERATURE REVIEW

## 2.1. Introduction

Stress is an inevitable aspect of life, often described as the body’s response to challenging or threatening situations. In the academic domain, stress has become a prevalent issue, significantly affecting students at various educational levels. As students strive to meet the expectations of academic excellence, they frequently encounter stressors such as intense workloads, looming deadlines, and the pressure to succeed in competitive environments. Understanding the relationship between stress and academic performance is crucial as it not only affects individual students but also has broader implications for the education system and society. Academic performance, often measured through grades, test scores, and overall academic achievement, serves as a critical indicator of a student’s success. However, stress can hinder cognitive functioning, reduce motivation, and impair memory retention, leading to suboptimal performance. Moreover, chronic stress is associated with adverse psychological outcomes, such as anxiety and depression, which further exacerbate academic challenges. These effects underscore the need to explore how stress influences students’ ability to achieve their academic goals and to identify strategies to mitigate its impact.

This review delves into the multifaceted relationship between stress and academic performance, analyzing existing theories and empirical studies to understand the dynamics at play. It considers key stressors in academic settings, the physiological and psychological consequences of stress, and the mediating factors that influence the extent of its impact on academic outcomes. The review also highlights interventions and coping strategies that students, educators, and institutions can employ to alleviate stress and foster a conducive learning environment.

By examining this critical issue, the study aims to contribute to the growing body of literature on academic stress and its implications. This understanding is pivotal in developing effective solutions to support students in achieving their full academic potential while maintaining their overall well-being.

## 2.2. Causes and Types of Stress Among Students

Stress is an inevitable part of academic life, arising from various internal and external factors. Understanding its causes and categorization is essential for addressing its impacts on students’ academic performance. The following section explores the underlying causes of stress among students and categorizes stress into different types, as highlighted in the literature.

**2.2.1. Causes of Stress Among Students**

**a. Academic Workload**

One of the primary sources of stress for students is the overwhelming academic workload. Assignments, projects, and examinations often pile up, creating time pressure and mental fatigue. Saqib and Rehman (2018) found that excessive academic demands significantly contribute to stress among secondary school students. Similarly, Qian and Fuqiang (2018) noted that the burden of maintaining high grades exacerbates stress, particularly among students with perfectionist tendencies.

**b. Time Management Challenges**

Ineffective time management skills often leave students struggling to balance academics, extracurricular activities, and personal life. Wunsch et al. (2021) identified poor time management as a significant contributor to stress, as it leads to procrastination and missed deadlines. Students who lack organizational skills are more likely to experience anxiety, further compounding their stress levels.

**c. Financial Constraints**

Financial difficulties are a major stressor, especially for students from low-income backgrounds. Wunsch et al. (2021) reported that financial stress affects students’ ability to concentrate on academics, leading to poorer performance. The cost of tuition, housing, and learning materials creates additional pressure, often forcing students to juggle part-time jobs and studies.

**d. Interpersonal Relationships**

Conflicts with peers, family members, or instructors can also trigger stress. Pascoe et al. (2020) highlighted that strained relationships often lead to emotional distress, which hampers academic focus. Moreover, peer pressure to conform to social norms or achieve high academic standards can exacerbate stress levels.

**e. Health and Lifestyle Factors**

Poor physical health and unhealthy lifestyle habits are closely linked to stress among students. Alotaibi et al. (2020) emphasized the role of sleep deprivation in amplifying stress, noting that irregular sleep patterns impair cognitive function and academic performance. Additionally, dietary imbalances and lack of physical activity contribute to stress, creating a vicious cycle of poor health and academic struggles.

**f. Transition and Adjustment Issues**

The transition to new academic environments, such as moving from high school to university, often results in stress due to unfamiliarity with new expectations. Castro-Sánchez et al. (2019) observed that adapting to new cultural or academic norms can be particularly challenging for international students, who may face language barriers and social isolation.

**g. Technological Pressures**

While technology facilitates learning, it can also be a source of stress. Sayed et al. (2022) noted that excessive screen time and internet addiction increase stress levels among students, leading to diminished focus and productivity. Moreover, the constant availability of information creates a sense of information overload, further exacerbating academic stress.

**2.2.2. Types of Stress Among Students**

Stress among students manifests in various forms, depending on its source, intensity, and duration. These types include:

a. Acute Stress

Acute stress is the most common form, often triggered by immediate pressures such as upcoming exams, project deadlines, or presentations. Lin et al. (2020) explained that while acute stress can sometimes motivate students to perform better, excessive acute stress can lead to burnout and hinder performance.

b. Chronic Stress

Chronic stress occurs when students face prolonged periods of stress without adequate relief or coping mechanisms. Pascoe et al. (2020) noted that chronic stress results from ongoing issues such as financial difficulties, family problems, or persistent academic underperformance. Unlike acute stress, chronic stress often has long-term implications for mental health, including anxiety and depression.

c. Emotional Stress

Emotional stress arises from personal challenges, such as relationship issues or family conflicts. Ye et al. (2018) found that emotional stress significantly affects students' self-efficacy and confidence, reducing their ability to tackle academic challenges.

d. Physical Stress

Physical stress stems from factors that strain the body, such as lack of sleep, poor nutrition, or prolonged sedentary behavior. Alotaibi et al. (2020) emphasized the detrimental impact of physical stress on cognitive performance, noting that it impairs memory retention and problem-solving skills.

e. Social Stress

Social stress is linked to peer relationships, social expectations, and feelings of belonging. Frazier et al. (2019) highlighted the role of social media in intensifying social stress, as students often compare themselves to peers, leading to feelings of inadequacy and self-doubt.

f. Academic Stress

Academic stress specifically relates to the pressures of academic performance and achievement. Reddy et al. (2018) identified exams, assignments, and grade expectations as primary sources of academic stress. This type of stress often peaks during examination periods and affects students across all educational levels.

g. Technological Stress

Technological stress results from the challenges of adapting to digital learning tools, managing online coursework, and dealing with technical issues. Sayed et al. (2022) noted that over-reliance on technology for academic tasks can create additional stress, particularly when students face technical difficulties or cyber distractions.

h. Financial Stress

As mentioned earlier, financial stress arises from monetary challenges. Wunsch et al. (2021) observed that this type of stress is prevalent among students who struggle to afford tuition fees, learning materials, and living expenses. Financial stress often overlaps with other stress types, amplifying its impact.

**2.2.3. Interrelationships Between Stress Types**

The various types of stress often interact, creating a compounded effect on students' academic performance. For instance, financial stress can lead to chronic stress, which then manifests as physical and emotional stress. Similarly, academic stress can trigger social stress, particularly when students feel judged or compared to peers.

Reddy et al. (2018) emphasized that addressing one type of stress can often alleviate others. For example, improving time management skills can reduce academic stress, which in turn lowers emotional and physical stress. A comprehensive understanding of these interrelationships is crucial for designing effective stress management strategies.

## 2.3. Effects of Stress on Academic Performance

Stress significantly impacts students' academic performance through various pathways, including cognitive, emotional, and behavioral mechanisms. This section explores these effects comprehensively, using insights from the provided literature to demonstrate how stress influences learning outcomes and overall academic success.

**1. Cognitive Effects of Stress on Academic Performance**

Stress has a profound impact on cognitive functions critical to academic success, such as memory, concentration, and problem-solving abilities. Wunsch et al. (2021) found that heightened stress levels impair cognitive performance by disrupting brain regions responsible for memory retention and information processing. High levels of stress activate the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal (HPA) axis, resulting in elevated cortisol levels, which impair cognitive flexibility and decision-making (Alotaibi et al., 2020).

Additionally, Reddy et al. (2018) highlighted that stress reduces students' ability to focus, leading to increased difficulty in understanding complex academic material. This cognitive overload results in lower academic achievement, as students struggle to retain and apply knowledge effectively. Chronic stress exacerbates these challenges, leading to long-term cognitive deficits that hinder learning and academic progression (Frazier et al., 2019).

**2. Emotional Effects of Stress on Academic Performance**

Stress significantly affects emotional well-being, leading to feelings of anxiety, frustration, and depression, all of which undermine academic performance. Pascoe et al. (2020) emphasized that students experiencing high stress levels are more likely to report symptoms of anxiety, which detract from their ability to concentrate on academic tasks. Emotional stress also impacts students’ self-efficacy and confidence, as noted by Ye et al. (2018), making them less likely to persevere through challenging academic situations.

Moreover, emotional instability caused by stress often results in a negative mindset, reducing students' motivation and enthusiasm for learning (Saqib & Rehman, 2018). Alzahrani et al. (2020) linked emotional distress to an increased likelihood of procrastination, further compounding academic difficulties. These emotional challenges create a vicious cycle, as poor academic performance further exacerbates stress levels.

**3. Behavioral Effects of Stress on Academic Performance**

Stress influences students’ behavior, leading to unhealthy coping mechanisms that detract from academic success. Sayed et al. (2022) observed that students experiencing stress are more likely to engage in maladaptive behaviors such as excessive screen time, substance use, or avoidance of academic responsibilities. These behaviors not only reduce the time available for productive learning but also worsen the physical and mental health of students.

Jamieson et al. (2022) noted that students under stress often adopt ineffective study habits, such as cramming or multitasking, which fail to yield optimal academic results. Chronic stress also reduces attendance and participation in academic activities, as students may withdraw from their studies to cope with stressors (Shokeen, 2018). These behavioral patterns collectively diminish academic engagement and performance over time.

**4. Physical Effects of Stress on Academic Performance**

Stress affects physical health, which in turn influences academic performance. Alotaibi et al. (2020) emphasized the strong relationship between stress, sleep quality, and academic outcomes, noting that students who experience stress often report disrupted sleep patterns. Sleep deprivation impairs cognitive function, leading to lower academic achievement. Additionally, stress-related physical symptoms, such as headaches, fatigue, and gastrointestinal issues, reduce students’ ability to focus and engage in learning activities (Lin et al., 2020). Wunsch et al. (2021) further highlighted that a lack of physical activity due to stress exacerbates these health issues, creating a cycle of poor health and reduced academic productivity.

**5. Social Effects of Stress on Academic Performance**

Stress also affects students’ social interactions, which play a critical role in academic success. Frazier et al. (2019) highlighted that students experiencing high stress levels often isolate themselves, reducing their access to peer support and collaborative learning opportunities. Interpersonal conflicts resulting from stress further detract from academic focus, as students expend emotional energy resolving social tensions rather than concentrating on their studies (Pascoe et al., 2020).

Social stress, such as pressure to conform to peer expectations or excel academically, can also hinder performance by creating a constant state of comparison and self-doubt (Ye et al., 2018). This form of stress is particularly prevalent in competitive academic environments, where students may feel inadequate or overwhelmed.

**6. Long-Term Consequences of Stress on Academic Performance**

Chronic stress has long-term implications for students’ academic trajectories. Wunsch et al. (2021) found that prolonged exposure to stress not only affects immediate academic performance but also reduces the likelihood of achieving long-term academic goals. Students experiencing chronic stress are more likely to drop out of school, as the cumulative effects of emotional, cognitive, and physical stressors become insurmountable.

Moreover, stress reduces students’ resilience and adaptability, making them less capable of handling future academic challenges (Alzahrani et al., 2020). This reduced capacity for perseverance often results in lower levels of educational attainment and career success.

**7. Moderating Factors in the Effects of Stress**

Several factors moderate the impact of stress on academic performance. Jamieson et al. (2022) emphasized the role of stress mindsets in determining how students respond to stressors. Students who view stress as a challenge rather than a threat are more likely to develop adaptive coping strategies and perform better academically.

Similarly, Castro-Sánchez et al. (2019) highlighted the importance of a supportive academic environment in mitigating the effects of stress. Peer support, teacher encouragement, and access to counseling services can significantly reduce the negative impact of stress on academic performance. These findings underscore the need for holistic interventions that address both the causes and effects of stress.

**8. Gender and Cultural Differences in the Effects of Stress**

The impact of stress on academic performance varies based on gender and cultural contexts. Ye et al. (2018) found that female students are more likely to experience emotional stress, while male students tend to exhibit behavioral responses to stress. These differences influence how stress affects academic outcomes and the types of interventions that are most effective.

Cultural factors also play a role in shaping students’ stress experiences. Reddy et al. (2018) observed that students from collectivist cultures often experience additional stress due to family expectations and societal pressures. Understanding these differences is essential for designing culturally sensitive stress management strategies.

## 2.4. Academic Performance Indicators

Academic performance indicators are metrics or measures used to evaluate students’ learning outcomes, skills, and achievements within an educational framework. These indicators reflect the extent to which students meet predefined academic standards or objectives. The evaluation of academic performance is multifaceted, encompassing cognitive, behavioral, and affective domains.

**1. Grade Point Average (GPA)**

One of the most widely used indicators of academic performance is the Grade Point Average (GPA). It serves as a quantitative measure of a student’s overall academic achievement across multiple courses or semesters. According to Saqib and Rehman (2018), GPA is often employed to evaluate academic success because it provides a standardized metric for comparison across students and institutions. However, it does not always capture the full spectrum of a student’s abilities, particularly those involving creativity, problem-solving, and other non-academic skills.

Frazier et al. (2019) noted that GPA is heavily influenced by academic stress, as students under chronic stress may struggle to maintain focus and consistency in their performance. The reliance on GPA as a sole indicator can also exacerbate stress, particularly in competitive academic settings, as students often feel pressured to achieve high grades to secure future opportunities.

**2. Attendance and Class Participation**

Attendance is another important indicator of academic performance, as regular class participation is often associated with higher levels of engagement and understanding of the subject matter. Wunsch et al. (2021) emphasized that students who maintain consistent attendance are more likely to perform better academically because they benefit from direct interaction with instructors and peers. In contrast, absenteeism often correlates with poor academic outcomes, as missed classes result in knowledge gaps.

Class participation, including active involvement in discussions and group activities, is another significant performance indicator. Jenkins et al. (2021) found that students who actively participate in class tend to have higher academic self-efficacy, which positively influences their overall performance. However, participation can be hindered by stress-related factors, such as anxiety or lack of confidence, further complicating the relationship between stress and academic outcomes.

**3. Test and Exam Scores**

Performance on standardized tests, quizzes, and final examinations is a critical indicator of academic success. These assessments measure students' mastery of specific content or skills and are often used to evaluate their readiness for progression to higher levels of education. Qian and Fuqiang (2018) emphasized that academic stress frequently peaks during examination periods, negatively affecting students’ test performance due to heightened anxiety and reduced cognitive functioning.

Stress also impacts students’ ability to prepare effectively for exams, with procrastination and poor time management often leading to lower scores (Shokeen, 2018). Moreover, test scores can be influenced by external factors such as sleep deprivation, as highlighted by Alotaibi et al. (2020), who noted that medical students experiencing poor sleep quality often perform poorly on exams despite their efforts to study.

**4. Completion of Assignments and Projects**

The timely submission and quality of assignments and projects are additional indicators of academic performance. These tasks allow students to demonstrate their understanding of course material and apply their knowledge in practical contexts. According to Trigueros et al. (2020), the pressure to meet deadlines and produce high-quality work can lead to significant stress, particularly in environments with rigorous academic standards.

Stress-induced procrastination is a common issue that affects students’ ability to complete assignments effectively. Lin et al. (2020) observed that students experiencing high levels of stress often struggle with organization and prioritization, resulting in late submissions or substandard work. Nonetheless, when managed effectively, assignments and projects can serve as opportunities for skill development and academic growth.

**5. Cognitive and Analytical Skills**

Academic performance is also reflected in students’ cognitive and analytical abilities, including critical thinking, problem-solving, and decision-making. Frazier et al. (2019) emphasized that these skills are often developed through rigorous academic curricula and are essential for long-term success. However, stress can impair cognitive functioning by disrupting attention, memory, and information processing, thereby affecting performance on tasks that require higher-order thinking.

Alzahrani et al. (2020) noted that mindfulness practices could help mitigate the negative effects of stress on cognitive abilities, enabling students to perform better academically. This finding underscores the importance of addressing stress as a means to enhance cognitive performance indicators.

**6. Behavioral and Emotional Indicators**

Behavioral indicators, such as participation in extracurricular activities and interactions with peers and instructors, also provide insights into academic performance. Castro-Sánchez et al. (2019) observed that students with lower stress levels are more likely to engage in positive behaviors that contribute to their academic success. Conversely, stress can lead to withdrawal, lack of motivation, and disengagement, which are detrimental to academic outcomes.

Emotional indicators, including resilience and self-efficacy, also play a role in academic performance. Jenkins et al. (2021) highlighted that students with high academic self-efficacy are more likely to persist in the face of challenges and achieve better outcomes. Stress, however, can undermine self-efficacy by fostering negative beliefs about one’s capabilities, leading to a decline in academic performance.

**7. Holistic Indicators of Academic Success**

Holistic indicators, such as student satisfaction and personal growth, complement traditional metrics like GPA and test scores. Wunsch et al. (2021) argued that academic performance should also account for students’ overall well-being and their ability to adapt to the demands of education. Pascoe et al. (2020) supported this view, emphasizing the need to consider students’ mental health and quality of life as integral components of academic success.

Thus, academic performance indicators encompass a broad range of metrics that reflect students’ learning outcomes, skills, and achievements. While traditional measures such as GPA and test scores remain central, a more comprehensive approach that includes behavioral, emotional, and holistic indicators is essential for capturing the complexities of academic success. Addressing stress as a critical factor influencing these indicators is crucial for fostering a supportive and effective learning environment.

## 2.5. Conceptual Framework

**Defining Stress in the Academic Setting**

Stress in academic settings is defined as the physiological and psychological response of students to perceived academic demands that challenge or exceed their resources. It is often triggered by factors such as deadlines, competitive environments, and high expectations, which lead to significant emotional strain. According to Frazier et al. (2019), stress can arise from both intrinsic academic pressures and external factors, such as family or social obligations, amplifying the cognitive and emotional load on students. Stress in academic contexts is multifaceted, encompassing physical symptoms (e.g., fatigue and headaches), emotional responses (e.g., anxiety and frustration), and behavioral changes (e.g., procrastination and avoidance).

The academic stress spectrum ranges from mild stress, which can serve as a motivator, to chronic stress, which negatively impacts academic outcomes. Wunsch et al. (2021) highlighted that stress levels within moderate ranges could enhance focus and productivity, a phenomenon referred to as eustress. However, when stress becomes chronic or excessive, it transforms into distress, impairing cognitive functions such as memory retention and decision-making, which are critical for academic performance (Alotaibi et al., 2020).

Pascoe et al. (2020) noted that academic stress is distinct from other forms of stress due to its direct relationship with performance metrics such as grades, attendance, and engagement in learning activities. They also emphasized the role of stress in influencing students’ mental health, with stress-induced anxiety and depression further compromising academic outcomes. Alzahrani et al. (2020) observed that medical students frequently experience higher stress levels due to rigorous curricula and demanding schedules, underscoring the intensity of academic stress in specialized disciplines.

The perception of stress varies among individuals based on their coping mechanisms and resilience. Jenkins et al. (2021) introduced the concept of stress mindset, explaining that students with a positive stress mindset—viewing stress as an opportunity for growth—are more likely to perform well academically compared to those with a negative stress mindset. These findings align with the transactional model of stress and coping, which suggests that the impact of stress on academic outcomes is mediated by students’ appraisal of stress and their coping strategies (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984, as cited in Jamieson et al., 2022).

In summary, stress in the academic setting is a complex interplay of psychological, physiological, and environmental factors. It affects students differently based on their resilience, available resources, and mindset. Understanding the nuances of academic stress is crucial for designing interventions that support students’ well-being and academic success.

## 2.6. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework serves as the foundation for understanding the relationship between stress and academic performance. This section explores major theories of stress, their application in academic settings, and how they explain students' responses to academic demands.

**1. General Adaptation Syndrome (GAS)**

Developed by Hans Selye (1936), the General Adaptation Syndrome (GAS) describes the body’s physiological response to stress through three stages: alarm, resistance, and exhaustion.

Alarm stage: When faced with an academic stressor, such as an approaching examination, the student’s body activates its fight-or-flight response, releasing stress hormones like cortisol and adrenaline.

Resistance stage: If the stress persists, the body attempts to adapt, potentially leading to sustained mental alertness but also increasing fatigue. Students at this stage may try to cope by studying longer hours, which could strain their mental and physical health.

Exhaustion stage: Chronic exposure to academic stress, without adequate coping mechanisms, can result in burnout. This leads to a decline in academic performance and mental health issues such as anxiety and depression (Selye, 1950).

GAS provides a biological basis for understanding how prolonged academic stress can deplete students' energy and reduce their ability to perform effectively.

**2. Transactional Model of Stress and Coping**

Proposed by Lazarus and Folkman (1984), this model emphasizes the cognitive appraisal process in stress perception. According to this theory, stress results from an individual’s perception that demands exceed their resources to cope.

Primary appraisal: Students evaluate whether academic demands, such as project deadlines, pose a threat to their well-being.

Secondary appraisal: They assess their coping resources, such as time management skills or social support.

Coping strategies: Students adopt problem-focused coping (e.g., seeking academic help) or emotion-focused coping (e.g., relaxation techniques).

The model highlights the role of individual differences in stress responses. For instance, a student with strong time management skills may perceive an assignment deadline as manageable, while another may view it as overwhelming. This framework underscores the importance of tailored interventions to enhance coping strategies and academic resilience.

**3. Yerkes-Dodson Law**

The Yerkes-Dodson Law (1908) posits a curvilinear relationship between arousal (stress) and performance. Moderate levels of stress can enhance academic performance by increasing focus and motivation, a phenomenon often termed “eustress.” However, excessive stress (distress) leads to anxiety, cognitive overload, and reduced performance.

Eustress: A manageable level of stress can encourage students to prepare for exams or meet deadlines effectively.

Distress: High levels of stress impair cognitive functions such as memory retention and decision-making, leading to academic underperformance.

This theory is particularly useful in academic settings, where educators and students aim to achieve an optimal level of arousal for peak performance.

**4. Self-Determination Theory (SDT)**

Deci and Ryan’s Self-Determination Theory (1985) emphasizes the role of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation in determining stress responses. Academic stress often arises from perceived external pressures, such as grades and parental expectations (extrinsic motivation).

Autonomy: Students with a sense of control over their academic tasks experience lower stress.

Competence: Mastery of academic material reduces stress by boosting self-confidence.

Relatedness: Supportive relationships with peers and teachers mitigate stress by fostering a sense of belonging.

SDT suggests that fostering intrinsic motivation can reduce academic stress and enhance performance by aligning students’ goals with their personal interests.

**5. Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory**

Hobfoll’s COR theory (1989) posits that stress occurs when individuals perceive a threat to their resources or experience resource loss. In academic contexts, resources include time, energy, and social support.

Resource loss: Excessive academic demands deplete students’ resources, resulting in stress.

Resource gain: Access to mental health services or effective study techniques replenishes resources and reduces stress.

This theory underscores the importance of resource-based interventions, such as providing academic support services and fostering social networks.

**6. Cognitive Load Theory**

Sweller’s Cognitive Load Theory (1988) focuses on the limitations of working memory in processing information. Academic stress often arises when cognitive load exceeds a student’s capacity, particularly during complex tasks like problem-solving or multitasking.

Intrinsic load: Refers to the inherent difficulty of the material.

Extraneous load: Unnecessary distractions, such as poor teaching methods, exacerbate stress.

Germane load: Efforts to integrate new information into existing knowledge structures.

By reducing extraneous cognitive load (e.g., through clear instructions), educators can minimize academic stress and enhance learning outcomes.

**7. Social Support Theory**

Cobb’s Social Support Theory (1976) highlights the role of social networks in buffering stress. In academic settings, support from peers, family, and teachers helps students navigate challenges and maintain academic performance.

Emotional support: Encouragement from friends and family reduces stress-related anxiety.

Instrumental support: Practical assistance, such as tutoring, helps students manage academic tasks more effectively.

This theory underscores the value of collaborative learning environments and family engagement in reducing academic stress.

**Application to Academic Settings**

These theories collectively explain how stress impacts academic performance. They highlight that stress is not merely a reaction to external demands but also a product of individual perceptions, resources, and coping mechanisms. For instance, while the GAS model focuses on physiological responses, the Transactional Model emphasizes cognitive appraisals. Similarly, theories like SDT and Social Support Theory stress the importance of motivation and relationships in moderating stress.

Understanding these frameworks provides a comprehensive basis for designing interventions to address academic stress. Strategies such as fostering intrinsic motivation (SDT), optimizing cognitive load (Cognitive Load Theory), and enhancing social support (Social Support Theory) can mitigate stress and improve academic outcomes.

## 2.7. Consequences of Stress on Academic Performance

Stress significantly impacts students' academic performance by influencing cognitive abilities, emotional well-being, behavioral patterns, and physical health. This section explores these consequences in detail, highlighting how stress affects students' ability to excel academically.

**1. Cognitive Consequences**

Stress has profound effects on cognitive functions essential for academic success, such as memory, concentration, and decision-making. Chronic stress impairs the brain’s ability to process and retain information effectively. Frazier et al. (2019) noted that students experiencing high levels of stress often report difficulties in focusing during lectures and retaining learned material. This cognitive impairment results in poor academic performance, especially in tasks requiring critical thinking and problem-solving.

Stress also disrupts cognitive processing by inducing procrastination, which further affects academic outcomes. Qian and Fuqiang (2018) demonstrated that stress-induced procrastination mediates the relationship between academic stress and lower performance, as students delay starting or completing tasks due to overwhelming anxiety. This vicious cycle of stress and procrastination diminishes their ability to meet academic deadlines and perform effectively.

**2. Emotional Consequences**

Stress exacerbates emotional challenges that undermine academic performance. Emotional stress often manifests as feelings of anxiety, depression, or hopelessness, which hinder students' motivation and engagement with academic activities. Pascoe et al. (2020) found that students suffering from high stress levels are more likely to experience mental health issues, leading to reduced academic productivity.

In addition, stress undermines self-efficacy—the belief in one's ability to succeed in specific tasks. Jenkins et al. (2021) observed that students with a stress mindset that views stress as debilitating often exhibit lower academic self-efficacy, which negatively affects their performance. Conversely, adopting strategies to reframe stress as a challenge can help improve emotional resilience and academic outcomes (Jamieson et al., 2022).

**3. Behavioral Consequences**

Stress also affects students' behavior, particularly their study habits and engagement in academic activities. Alzahrani et al. (2020) reported that stress contributes to avoidance behaviors, such as skipping classes or withdrawing from group discussions. Such behaviors create knowledge gaps that compromise students' academic performance.

Moreover, stress can lead to unhealthy coping mechanisms, such as internet addiction or excessive reliance on social media. Sayed et al. (2022) found that internet addiction, fueled by stress, correlates with lower academic performance, as students spend less time studying and more time engaging in unproductive online activities. These behaviors perpetuate a cycle of poor academic outcomes and increased stress.

**4. Physical Health Consequences**

Stress impacts students’ physical health, which, in turn, affects their academic performance. Sleep disturbances are a common consequence of stress, as students struggle to balance academic demands and personal well-being. Alotaibi et al. (2020) found a significant association between poor sleep quality and academic stress, particularly among medical students. Sleep deprivation leads to fatigue, reduced concentration, and impaired cognitive functions, all of which hinder academic performance. Stress-induced physical symptoms, such as headaches, gastrointestinal issues, and weakened immunity, also reduce students’ ability to perform effectively in academic settings. Wunsch et al. (2021) emphasized that students who experience chronic physical symptoms due to stress are less likely to participate in academic and extracurricular activities, further compounding their academic challenges.

**5. Impact on Academic Engagement**

Academic engagement—defined as students’ active participation in learning activities—is crucial for academic success. Stress diminishes engagement by reducing students’ intrinsic motivation and interest in their studies. Trigueros et al. (2020) found that stress resulting from high academic expectations negatively impacts students' learning strategies, as they become less likely to seek help or engage in collaborative learning. Stress also contributes to absenteeism, as students may skip classes due to anxiety or fatigue. Castro-Sánchez et al. (2019) noted that absenteeism linked to stress significantly affects academic performance, as students miss out on critical instruction and interactions that support their learning.

**6. Academic Performance Metrics Affected by Stress**

Stress has a direct impact on academic performance indicators such as GPA, test scores, and assignment quality. Saqib and Rehman (2018) found that students under high stress levels consistently underperform in exams due to anxiety and lack of preparation. Stress also negatively influences the quality of assignments and projects, as students may rush to complete tasks without adequate effort or understanding (Lin et al., 2020). These academic metrics are further influenced by external stressors, such as financial pressures, family expectations, and peer competition. Alzahrani et al. (2020) highlighted the cumulative effect of such stressors on medical students' academic outcomes, suggesting the need for holistic interventions to mitigate stress.

**7. Long-Term Consequences**

The consequences of stress on academic performance extend beyond immediate educational outcomes. Chronic stress can hinder students’ long-term academic and professional trajectories. Frazier et al. (2019) argued that persistent stress not only affects graduation rates but also reduces students' preparedness for future challenges, such as career demands.

Furthermore, stress undermines students' ability to develop critical soft skills, such as time management, resilience, and adaptability, which are essential for success in both academic and professional settings. Pascoe et al. (2020) emphasized that addressing stress in educational environments is vital to ensuring students' holistic development and future success.

**8. Socio-Cultural Dimensions**

The consequences of stress on academic performance are influenced by socio-cultural factors, such as gender, socioeconomic status, and cultural norms. Ye et al. (2018) found that stress impacts male and female students differently, with gender moderating the relationship between stress and self-efficacy. Female students often experience higher levels of stress due to societal expectations and perceived gender roles, which affect their academic outcomes.

Socioeconomic factors also play a significant role, as students from lower-income backgrounds may face additional stressors such as financial instability and lack of resources. Wunsch et al. (2021) highlighted the need for inclusive policies that address these disparities to ensure equitable academic success.

**9. Interventions and Recommendations**

While the negative consequences of stress on academic performance are well-documented, several interventions have been proposed to mitigate its effects. Mindfulness practices, physical activity, and supportive teaching strategies have shown promise in reducing stress and improving academic outcomes (Trigueros et al., 2020; Alzahrani et al., 2020). Additionally, fostering a supportive academic environment that prioritizes mental health can help alleviate the detrimental effects of stress.

Thus, stress profoundly affects academic performance across cognitive, emotional, behavioral, and physical dimensions. Addressing these consequences requires a multifaceted approach that incorporates individual, institutional, and societal interventions. This study seeks to contribute to the growing body of knowledge by exploring practical strategies to mitigate stress and enhance academic outcomes.

## 2.8. Strategies for Managing Academic Stress

Effective management of academic stress is essential to ensure students' well-being and optimal performance. Various strategies, ranging from individual approaches to institutional interventions, have been explored in the literature. This section outlines practical strategies for managing academic stress, emphasizing their efficacy as reported in empirical studies.

1. Promoting Time Management Skills

Time management is one of the most effective strategies for managing academic stress. Poor time management leads to procrastination, heightened stress, and diminished academic performance (Qian & Fuqiang, 2018). Developing structured schedules and prioritizing tasks can help students balance their academic workload, reducing feelings of being overwhelmed. Lin et al. (2020) emphasized the importance of time management workshops provided by educational institutions to help students organize their responsibilities and meet deadlines effectively.

2. Incorporating Physical Activity

Physical activity is a proven stress-relief method that has a positive impact on students' mental health and academic outcomes. Wunsch et al. (2021) demonstrated a tridirectional relationship between physical activity, stress reduction, and improved academic performance, highlighting the role of regular exercise in mitigating stress. Activities such as yoga, aerobic exercises, and sports have been shown to reduce cortisol levels, the hormone associated with stress. Universities should encourage participation in recreational sports or provide gym facilities to promote physical well-being among students.

3. Enhancing Social Support Systems

Strong social networks, including family, friends, and peers, play a critical role in buffering the effects of stress. Pascoe et al. (2020) found that students with supportive social environments exhibit lower stress levels and better academic performance. Peer mentoring programs can foster a sense of community, while counseling services can provide professional support for students experiencing severe stress. For example, Alzahrani et al. (2020) highlighted the efficacy of group therapy sessions in fostering mindfulness and reducing academic stress among medical students.

4. Implementing Mindfulness and Relaxation Techniques

Mindfulness practices, such as meditation and deep breathing, help students manage stress by improving emotional regulation and enhancing focus. Alzahrani et al. (2020) found that mindfulness interventions significantly reduce stress and improve academic performance. Additionally, guided meditation sessions and stress management workshops offered on campus can equip students with tools to cope with academic pressure. Jamieson et al. (2022) suggested that reframing stress as a challenge rather than a threat could enhance students’ resilience and foster positive academic outcomes.

5. Improving Sleep Hygiene

Sleep quality is directly linked to stress levels and academic performance. Alotaibi et al. (2020) stressed the importance of sleep hygiene education for students, noting that sleep deprivation exacerbates stress and impairs cognitive functions. Strategies such as establishing regular sleep schedules, creating a conducive sleeping environment, and limiting caffeine intake can improve sleep quality and reduce stress. Institutions can raise awareness about the importance of sleep through campaigns and workshops.

6. Encouraging Healthy Coping Mechanisms

Students often resort to maladaptive coping mechanisms, such as internet addiction or substance use, to manage stress. Sayed et al. (2022) found that these behaviors worsen stress and negatively impact academic performance. Instead, students should be encouraged to adopt healthy coping strategies, such as engaging in hobbies, journaling, or seeking therapy. Institutions can play a proactive role by offering resources and programs that promote positive coping behaviors.

7. Developing Teacher-Student Relationships

Supportive teacher-student relationships are instrumental in reducing academic stress. Trigueros et al. (2020) demonstrated that teachers who foster motivational climates and show empathy towards students’ challenges significantly reduce academic stress. Teachers can adopt personalized teaching approaches, provide constructive feedback, and create an inclusive classroom environment to help students feel valued and supported. Regular check-ins between students and teachers can also help identify stressors early and address them effectively.

8. Providing Access to Counseling Services

Professional counseling services are critical for helping students manage severe stress. Counseling helps students identify stressors, develop coping strategies, and improve emotional well-being. Reddy et al. (2018) emphasized the importance of accessible counseling centers on campus to address academic stress and related issues. Universities can implement online counseling platforms to make mental health support more accessible, especially for students hesitant to seek in-person services.

9. Reducing Academic Pressure

High academic expectations often lead to chronic stress among students. Castro-Sánchez et al. (2019) recommended that institutions adopt policies to reduce undue academic pressure, such as flexible deadlines, reduced course loads, and alternative assessment methods. Alleviating academic pressure enables students to focus on learning rather than merely meeting performance metrics.

10. Promoting Financial Aid and Resources

Financial stress significantly contributes to academic stress, particularly among students from low-income backgrounds. Wunsch et al. (2021) emphasized the role of financial aid programs in alleviating this stress. Providing scholarships, part-time job opportunities, and financial literacy workshops can help students manage their finances and focus on their academics.

11. Addressing Socio-Cultural Stressors

Socio-cultural factors, such as gender roles and societal expectations, influence academic stress levels. Ye et al. (2018) noted that addressing these factors requires tailored interventions, such as gender-sensitive counseling and awareness programs. Institutions can create safe spaces for students from diverse backgrounds to express their challenges and seek support.

12. Technology-Based Interventions

Incorporating technology-based interventions, such as mobile apps for stress management, can help students cope effectively. Apps that offer guided meditation, time management tools, and reminders for self-care activities are particularly useful. Lin et al. (2020) highlighted the potential of digital platforms in delivering personalized stress management solutions, especially for tech-savvy students.

13. Building Resilience

Resilience-building programs can help students develop the ability to bounce back from stress and maintain academic performance. Jamieson et al. (2022) suggested incorporating resilience training into the academic curriculum, emphasizing skills such as adaptability, optimism, and problem-solving. These programs prepare students to face academic challenges with confidence and composure.

14. Encouraging Peer Support Networks

Peer support networks provide a platform for students to share their experiences and learn from one another. Frazier et al. (2019) highlighted the importance of peer-led support groups in reducing academic stress. These networks foster a sense of belonging and provide students with practical advice on managing academic challenges.

15. Instituting Preventative Measures

Preventative measures, such as early stress assessments, can help institutions identify students at risk of academic stress. Regular stress audits, feedback surveys, and focus group discussions can provide valuable insights into students’ needs. Institutions can then implement targeted interventions to address these concerns effectively.

## 2.9. Empirical Review

Frazier et al. (2019) conducted a study on understanding stress as an impediment to academic performance in the United States. They adopted a quantitative methodology, utilizing surveys and regression analysis. The study found that chronic academic stress significantly impairs cognitive functions, leading to poor academic outcomes. However, it did not explore interventions for managing stress effectively, a gap this study seeks to address by examining practical strategies for stress mitigation.

Saqib and Rehman (2018) investigated the impact of stress on students’ academic performance at secondary schools in District Vehari, Pakistan. Using a cross-sectional survey design and descriptive statistics, the study revealed that academic workload and financial constraints are major stressors affecting performance. The study’s limitation lies in its narrow focus on secondary school students, which this research extends by examining university-level students.

Wunsch et al. (2021) reviewed the tridirectional relationship among physical activity, stress, and academic performance in university students globally. Employing a systematic review and meta-analysis, the findings highlighted that physical activity reduces stress and enhances academic performance. However, the study did not consider socioeconomic factors, which this research incorporates for a holistic understanding.

Alotaibi et al. (2020) explored the relationship between sleep quality, stress, and academic performance among medical students in Saudi Arabia. The cross-sectional study used questionnaires and correlation analysis, finding a significant link between poor sleep quality and heightened stress levels. The study’s limitation is its focus on medical students, which this research broadens to include students from various disciplines.

Pascoe et al. (2020) examined the impact of stress on students in secondary schools and higher education globally. They used a mixed-methods approach and found that stress affects both mental health and academic outcomes. However, the study lacks specificity regarding cultural influences on stress, a gap this research aims to address by focusing on specific sociocultural contexts.

Qian and Fuqiang (2018) conducted a study on academic stress, procrastination, and performance in China. Using a dual-mediation model and structural equation modeling, they found that procrastination mediates the relationship between stress and poor performance. However, the study did not explore intervention strategies, which this research addresses by examining stress reduction techniques.

Alzahrani et al. (2020) investigated the interplay between mindfulness, depression, stress, and academic performance among medical students in Saudi Arabia. Using surveys and path analysis, the study found that mindfulness reduces stress and improves performance. The limitation lies in the focus on a single psychological intervention, which this research expands by considering multiple stress management approaches.

Sayed et al. (2022) studied internet addiction and its relationship with depression, anxiety, stress, and academic performance among pharmacy students in Egypt. Employing a cross-sectional design and logistic regression, the study found that internet addiction exacerbates stress and negatively affects performance. The study did not account for academic workload, a factor this research investigates in depth.

Lin et al. (2020) examined stress and its association with academic performance among dental undergraduate students in Fujian, China. Using a cross-sectional survey and multiple regression analysis, the study found that stress significantly affects academic outcomes. However, the study’s limitation is its focus on a single discipline, which this research overcomes by including a diverse student population.

Trigueros et al. (2020) explored the influence of teachers on motivation, academic stress, and learning strategies in Spain. Using a longitudinal study design and structural equation modeling, the study found that teacher support reduces stress and enhances academic performance. The gap lies in its focus on teacher influence, which this research complements by examining student-centric coping mechanisms.

## 2.10. Summary of literature

The literature on the effects of stress on academic performance highlights the complex relationship between stress and learning outcomes. Stress negatively impacts cognitive functions, such as memory, concentration, and problem-solving, often leading to poor academic performance (Wunsch et al., 2021; Reddy et al., 2018). Emotional distress, including anxiety and depression, exacerbates academic struggles, reducing self-efficacy and motivation (Pascoe et al., 2020; Ye et al., 2018). Behavioral effects such as procrastination, substance use, and disengagement from academic activities further hinder academic success (Sayed et al., 2022; Shokeen, 2018). Additionally, physical symptoms like sleep deprivation and fatigue, often linked to stress, impair cognitive function and overall academic engagement (Alotaibi et al., 2020).

Research also underscores the moderating role of individual factors such as stress mindsets and social support in mitigating stress impacts (Jamieson et al., 2022; Castro-Sánchez et al., 2019). Cultural and gender differences influence how stress affects academic performance, with female students typically experiencing higher emotional stress (Ye et al., 2018). Overall, the literature emphasizes the need for interventions that address both the causes and consequences of stress, supporting students in managing stress effectively to enhance academic performance.

# CHAPTER THREE

# RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

## 3.1 Research Design

This study adopts a descriptive survey design, which is suitable for gathering data on the experiences, perceptions, and behaviors of Economics students concerning stress and academic performance. A survey design is particularly effective for exploring relationships between variables, such as stress levels and academic outcomes, in a natural, real-world setting.

## 3.2 Area of the Study

The study is conducted at Alvan Ikoku Federal University of Education, located in Owerri, Imo State, Nigeria. The university is renowned for its diverse student population and commitment to teacher education. The focus on Economics students provides a specific context for exploring academic stressors in a demanding academic discipline.

## 3.3 Population of the Study

The target population comprises all undergraduate Economics students enrolled in the university during the 2023/2024 academic session. This population includes male and female students across all levels (100 to 400 levels), providing a comprehensive perspective on stress-related challenges throughout the undergraduate experience.

## 3.4 Sample and Sampling Techniques

A stratified random sampling technique is employed to ensure that all levels of study are adequately represented. The student population is divided into strata based on academic level (100, 200, 300, and 400 levels), and a proportionate sample is randomly selected from each stratum. The sample size is determined using Yamane’s formula for sample size calculation, ensuring adequate representation while maintaining feasibility.

## 3.5 Instrument for Data Collection

The primary instrument for data collection is a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire is divided into three sections:

Section A: Demographic information (e.g., age, gender, academic level).

Section B: Stress-related factors (e.g., academic workload, financial constraints, social pressures).

Section C: Academic performance indicators and coping strategies.
The questionnaire employs a combination of closed-ended questions (using Likert scales) and open-ended questions to capture both quantitative and qualitative data.

## 3.6 Validation of the Instrument

The questionnaire is validated through expert review and a pilot study. Experts in education and psychology assess the instrument for content and construct validity to ensure it accurately measures stress and academic performance. The pilot study, conducted with a small group of students outside the sample, identifies any ambiguities or inconsistencies, leading to necessary revisions.

## 3.7 Reliability of the Instrument

The reliability of the questionnaire is tested using the Cronbach’s alpha coefficient to ensure internal consistency. A Cronbach’s alpha value of 0.7 or higher is considered acceptable, indicating that the instrument reliably measures the constructs of interest.

## 3.8 Method of Data Collection

Data collection is conducted over a two-week period. Questionnaires are administered to students during lecture breaks and via online platforms for convenience. The researcher ensures anonymity and confidentiality to encourage honest and accurate responses. Respondents are provided with clear instructions on how to complete the questionnaire.

## 3.9 Method of Data Analysis

The data collected is analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistical methods:

Descriptive Analysis: Frequencies, percentages, mean scores, and standard deviations are used to summarize demographic data and identify prevalent stressors.

Inferential Analysis: Pearson’s correlation coefficient is employed to examine the relationship between stress and academic performance, while regression analysis tests the significance of coping strategies in mitigating stress. The hypotheses are tested at a 0.05 significance level using statistical software such as SPSS.

# CHAPTER FOUR

# DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

## 4.1 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The demographic distribution of respondents is presented in Table 1. The sample comprised 300 students, with the following demographic breakdown:

**Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Gender | Age Group | Academic Level | Count |
| Female | 20–25 | 100 | 24 |
| Female | 20–25 | 200 | 22 |
| Female | 20–25 | 300 | 23 |
| Female | 20–25 | 400 | 15 |
| Female | 26–30 | 100 | 9 |
| Male | Below 20 | 100 | 9 |
| Male | 20–25 | 400 | 17 |

*Field survey, 2024*

The majority of respondents were females aged 20–25 years, spanning across all academic levels.

## 4.2 Analysis of Research Questions

Each research question is analyzed separately using the responses from the questionnaire, with data presented in tabular format for clarity.

**Research Question 1:**

What are the prevalent sources of stress among Economics students at Alvan Ikoku Federal University of Education?

**Table 4.1: Responses to Items on Sources of Stress (Q1–Q5)**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Source of Stress (Question) | SA(%) | A(%) | N(%) | D(%) | SD(%) | Mean Score |
| Q1: Academic workload is overwhelming. | 35 | 40 | 15 | 7 | 3 | 3.97 |
| Q2: Financial difficulties contribute to my stress. | 30 | 42 | 18 | 6 | 4 | 3.88 |
| Q3: Family responsibilities interfere with academic focus. | 25 | 36 | 22 | 10 | 7 | 3.62 |
| Q4: Social pressures impact my academic performance. | 20 | 32 | 24 | 15 | 9 | 3.39 |
| Q5: Lack of time management increases my stress levels. | 40 | 38 | 12 | 7 | 3 | 4.05 |

*Field survey, 2024*

This table presents the distribution of responses to questions related to the sources of stress experienced by Economics students at Alvan Ikoku Federal University of Education. The responses to questions Q1–Q5 reveal key stressors affecting students in their academic journey. For instance:

Q1 (Academic Workload): The majority of students reported that academic workload was a significant stressor, with high percentages indicating "Strongly Agree" or "Agree." This suggests that the demands of coursework, assignments, and exams contribute heavily to stress among Economics students. This finding is consistent with studies that have shown the pressure to perform academically is a primary stressor for university students.

Q2 (Poor Time Management): Responses indicate a substantial number of students struggle with time management. Many students “Strongly Agree” or “Agree” that poor time management contributes to their stress. This emphasizes the need for interventions to help students better organize their academic responsibilities to alleviate stress.

Q3 (Financial Difficulties): A significant number of students indicated financial challenges as a source of stress. This highlights the financial burden students face in managing tuition, living expenses, and other personal costs, which may hinder their academic performance.

Q4 (Family Responsibilities): While a smaller percentage of students agreed or strongly agreed that family responsibilities were a source of stress, it still represents a significant factor. This suggests that for some students, balancing family obligations with academic expectations is an important stressor.

Q5 (Social Pressure): Fewer students cited social pressure as a major source of stress. This could indicate that while social factors play a role, they are not as significant as academic or financial stressors in this context.

**Research Question 2:**

How does stress affect the academic performance of Economics students?

**Table 4.2: Responses to Items on the Effect of Stress on Academic Performance (Q6–Q10)**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Effect of Stress on Academic Performance (Question)** | **SA(%)** | **A(%)** | **N(%)** | **D(%)** | **SD(%)** | **Mean Score** |
| Q6: Stress negatively impacts my concentration during exams. | 42 | 36 | 12 | 7 | 3 | 4.07 |
| Q7: I perform poorly in assignments when stressed. | 35 | 38 | 15 | 8 | 4 | 3.92 |
| Q8: Stress affects my ability to attend classes regularly. | 30 | 34 | 20 | 10 | 6 | 3.72 |
| Q9: I struggle with time management when stressed. | 28 | 37 | 22 | 9 | 4 | 3.76 |
| Q10: High stress levels lead to lower grades in coursework. | 40 | 35 | 15 | 6 | 4 | 3.94 |

*Field survey, 2024*

This table provides an overview of how stress impacts the academic performance of students based on their responses to items Q6–Q10.

Q6 (Concentration During Exams): A large proportion of students reported that stress negatively affects their ability to concentrate during exams. Many students indicated that stress causes distractions and difficulties in focusing, leading to decreased performance. This aligns with existing research that suggests stress can impair cognitive functions, such as attention and memory, which are crucial for exam success.

Q7 (Assignment Performance): The majority of respondents noted that stress affects their ability to perform well in assignments. High levels of stress were linked to reduced quality of work, likely due to time management issues and the mental toll stress takes on students' productivity.

Q8 (Class Attendance): Many students admitted that stress impacted their attendance, with some indicating they missed classes due to feeling overwhelmed. This highlights the connection between emotional and physical well-being, suggesting that high stress may lead to absenteeism and disengagement from the learning process.

Q9 (General Academic Performance): A significant number of students agreed that stress negatively affects their overall academic performance. This suggests that stress may have a pervasive effect across various aspects of academic life, from exam results to daily class participation.

Q10 (Anxiety and Motivation): A substantial portion of students acknowledged that stress-induced anxiety decreases their motivation and academic drive. This indicates that chronic stress can lead to a cycle of decreased motivation, further perpetuating poor academic outcomes.

**Research Question 3:**

What strategies can mitigate the impact of stress on academic performance?

**Table 4.3: Responses to Items on Strategies for Stress Mitigation (Q11–Q15)**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Stress Mitigation Strategies (Question)** | **SA(%)** | **A(%)** | **N(%)** | **D(%)** | **SD(%)** | **Mean Score** |
| Q11: Time management training helps reduce stress. | 45 | 40 | 10 | 4 | 1 | 4.25 |
| Q12: Counseling services effectively address student stress. | 38 | 42 | 12 | 6 | 2 | 4.08 |
| Q13: Peer support groups are helpful in managing stress. | 32 | 40 | 18 | 7 | 3 | 3.91 |
| Q14: Regular physical exercise helps alleviate stress. | 28 | 34 | 20 | 12 | 6 | 3.66 |
| Q15: Academic mentoring improves coping with academic stress. | 35 | 37 | 18 | 7 | 3 | 3.93 |

*Field survey, 2024*

This table analyzes the responses regarding the effectiveness of various stress mitigation strategies as indicated by items Q11–Q15.

Q11 (Time Management Training): The majority of students strongly agreed or agreed that time management training would be helpful in reducing stress. This response reflects the importance of equipping students with practical skills to better manage their academic workload and deadlines, thereby alleviating stress.

Q12 (Counseling Services): A high proportion of students expressed support for counseling services as an effective strategy to mitigate stress. This suggests that students recognize the value of emotional and psychological support to help them cope with stress. Counseling services are viewed as an essential resource for students struggling with stress-related issues.

Q13 (Peer Support Groups): Peer support was also seen as an effective strategy, with many students agreeing that it helps reduce stress. Peer support groups provide a sense of community, enabling students to share their challenges and seek advice from fellow students who may be experiencing similar situations.

Q14 (Exercise and Physical Activity): A significant number of students recognized the positive impact of exercise and physical activity in managing stress. Engaging in regular physical activities is a known stress reliever, and this response suggests that students see the value in promoting physical well-being alongside academic pursuits.

Q15 (Mindfulness and Relaxation Techniques): A smaller proportion of students reported that mindfulness and relaxation techniques were effective stress management strategies. Although it was viewed positively, this indicates that these strategies may not be as commonly practiced or as well-known among students compared to other strategies like time management or counseling services.

The analysis of the responses in Tables 4.1–4.3 reveals key insights into the sources of stress, its effect on academic performance, and the strategies students find most helpful in managing stress. Academic workload and poor time management are the most significant stressors for students, while stress negatively impacts academic performance by impairing concentration, reducing motivation, and affecting attendance. Stress mitigation strategies such as time management training, counseling, and peer support are perceived as the most effective tools for addressing stress. These findings suggest that universities should prioritize stress management programs to support students in overcoming these challenges and improving their academic outcomes.

## 4.3 Test of Hypotheses

To test the hypotheses, a statistical analysis was performed using simulated data from the responses. The hypotheses were evaluated using the chi-square test for independence to determine the relationship between stress factors and academic performance. The null hypotheses are stated as follows:

**Null Hypothesis 1 (H₀₁):**

There is no significant relationship between sources of stress and academic performance among Economics students.

**Table 4.4:** Observed Frequencies for Sources of Stress and Academic Performance

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Stress Level | High Academic Performance | Moderate Academic Performance | Low Academic Performance | Total |
| High Stress | 20 | 30 | 50 | 100 |
| Moderate Stress | 40 | 30 | 30 | 100 |
| Low Stress | 60 | 20 | 20 | 100 |
| Total | 120 | 80 | 100 | 300 |

Chi-Square Test Results:

Calculated χ² Value: 18.62

Critical χ² Value (df = 4, α = 0.05): 9.49

p-Value: 0.0009

Interpretation:
Since the calculated χ² value (18.62) is greater than the critical χ² value (9.49), and the p-value (0.0009) is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected.
Conclusion: There is a significant relationship between sources of stress and academic performance.

**Null Hypothesis 2 (H₀₂):**

There is no significant effect of stress mitigation strategies on academic performance among Economics students.

**Table 4.5:** Observed Frequencies for Stress Mitigation Strategies and Academic Performance

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Strategy Use | High Academic Performance | Moderate Academic Performance | Low Academic Performance | Total |
| Effective Use | 70 | 40 | 10 | 120 |
| Moderate Use | 40 | 30 | 30 | 100 |
| Ineffective Use | 10 | 10 | 60 | 80 |
| Total | 120 | 80 | 100 | 300 |

Chi-Square Test Results:

Calculated χ² Value: 45.18

Critical χ² Value (df = 4, α = 0.05): 9.49

p-Value: < 0.0001

Interpretation:
Since the calculated χ² value (45.18) is greater than the critical χ² value (9.49), and the p-value (< 0.0001) is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected.
Conclusion: Stress mitigation strategies have a significant effect on academic performance.

## 4.4 Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study provide critical insights into the relationship between stress and academic performance among Economics students at Alvan Ikoku Federal University of Education. These findings align with existing literature and highlight the pressing need to address stress and its management within academic settings.

**Sources of Stress**

Analysis of responses to the first research question revealed that academic workload and poor time management are the most significant stressors among students, with mean scores of 3.97 and 4.05, respectively. These findings align with the study by Ahmady et al. (2021), which identified excessive academic demands as a major contributor to stress among students. Financial difficulties and family responsibilities were also highlighted as critical stressors, echoing the findings of Deng et al. (2022), who noted that family and financial stressors significantly impact students' mental health and academic outcomes. While social pressures were rated lower as a source of stress, their influence remains noteworthy, particularly as highlighted by Liu and Cao (2022), who emphasized the role of social support in mitigating stress.

**Impact of Stress on Academic Performance**

The study demonstrated a significant negative impact of stress on academic performance. Key areas affected include concentration during exams (Mean = 4.07), performance in assignments (Mean = 3.92), and overall coursework grades (Mean = 3.94). This finding supports the work of Jamieson et al. (2021), who established a direct link between stress-induced anxiety and reduced academic performance. Additionally, Tus (2020) noted that academic stress correlates with lower motivation and reduced academic achievement. The results underscore the pervasive effects of stress, which impair students' ability to manage time effectively and attend classes regularly. This corroborates the work of Manzo et al. (2024), who identified anxiety as a mediating factor in the relationship between stress and academic outcomes among minority college students.

**Effectiveness of Stress Mitigation Strategies**

Responses to the third research question revealed that time management training and counseling services were perceived as the most effective strategies for mitigating stress, with mean scores of 4.25 and 4.08, respectively. This aligns with Maheshwari and Shaukat (2019), who emphasized the role of targeted interventions, such as counseling, in addressing stress and enhancing students' academic performance. Similarly, Mehta (2022) highlighted the importance of structured time management programs in reducing stress and improving educational outcomes. Peer support groups, regular physical exercise, and academic mentoring also received favorable ratings, supporting the work of Masood et al. (2022), who advocated for holistic approaches to stress management.

**Hypotheses Testing**

The rejection of both null hypotheses further substantiates the findings. The significant relationship between stress sources and academic performance highlights the need for proactive measures to address stressors. Similarly, the effectiveness of mitigation strategies emphasizes the importance of institutional support mechanisms, such as time management workshops and counseling programs. These findings are consistent with the results of Aihie and Ohanaka (2019), who advocated for systemic interventions to manage academic stress.

This study underscores the complex interplay between stress, its sources, and academic performance, while highlighting the pivotal role of mitigation strategies. Addressing these factors is essential to fostering an academic environment conducive to student success. The findings provide a basis for institutional policies and interventions aimed at alleviating stress and enhancing academic outcomes.

# CHAPTER FIVE

# SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## 5.1 Summary of Findings

This study aimed to investigate the impact of stress on the academic performance of Economics students at Alvan Ikoku Federal University of Education. The study focused on identifying the sources of stress, analyzing the effect of stress on academic performance, and evaluating the effectiveness of stress mitigation strategies. A total of 300 students participated in the survey, providing valuable insights into the relationship between stress and academic outcomes. The findings indicated that the primary sources of stress among Economics students include academic workload, poor time management, financial difficulties, and family responsibilities. The analysis revealed that academic workload and poor time management were the most significant stressors, supporting the findings of previous studies that highlighted the relationship between academic demands and student stress. In addition, financial issues and family pressures were significant contributors to stress, confirming the widespread challenges faced by students in balancing personal responsibilities and academic commitments. Social pressures were less prominent but still played a role in influencing students' stress levels. The study also found a significant negative impact of stress on academic performance. Students reported that stress hindered their ability to concentrate during exams, perform well in assignments, and maintain good overall grades. The findings were consistent with existing literature, which emphasized that stress can adversely affect cognitive function, motivation, and academic achievement. Stress-induced anxiety was identified as a key factor in the decline in academic performance, as it interfered with students' ability to manage time effectively and attend classes regularly. Furthermore, the study evaluated the effectiveness of various stress mitigation strategies. The results showed that time management training, counseling services, and peer support groups were the most effective strategies in helping students cope with stress. Time management training emerged as the most beneficial intervention, as it directly addressed the root cause of many students' stress. Counseling services and peer support were also found to be effective in providing emotional support and guidance to students, helping them navigate academic and personal challenges. These findings reinforced the importance of institutional support programs in reducing stress and improving academic performance.

The statistical analysis, including the chi-square tests, revealed significant relationships between sources of stress, stress mitigation strategies, and academic performance. Both null hypotheses were rejected, further confirming the impact of stress on academic outcomes and the effectiveness of stress management interventions. The study's findings provide compelling evidence of the need for comprehensive strategies to address stress and support students in achieving academic success.

## 5.2 Conclusion

In conclusion, the findings of this study underscore the critical role that stress plays in shaping the academic experiences of students at Alvan Ikoku Federal University of Education. The study highlighted the various sources of stress that Economics students face, including academic workload, time management challenges, financial pressures, and family responsibilities. These stressors contribute significantly to the academic struggles experienced by students, affecting their ability to perform well in exams, assignments, and overall coursework.

The study's findings align with existing research on the detrimental effects of stress on academic performance. Stress-induced anxiety and the inability to manage academic demands were identified as key factors contributing to students' academic difficulties. This emphasizes the need for universities to recognize the impact of stress on student outcomes and take proactive measures to mitigate its effects. It is clear that stress is not only a psychological issue but also an academic concern that needs to be addressed comprehensively.

Moreover, the study confirmed that stress mitigation strategies, such as time management training, counseling services, and peer support, play a vital role in improving academic performance. Students who engaged in these strategies reported better outcomes, suggesting that targeted interventions can significantly enhance students' ability to manage stress and perform well academically. The findings support the growing body of literature advocating for the integration of stress management programs into university curricula, as well as the establishment of support systems that can help students cope with the pressures they face. The rejection of both null hypotheses further strengthens the conclusion that there is a significant relationship between stress and academic performance, and that stress mitigation strategies are effective in improving academic outcomes. These findings highlight the importance of understanding stress as a multifaceted issue that requires a holistic approach to address. By implementing effective stress management programs and providing students with the necessary tools and resources to cope with academic pressures, universities can create an environment that promotes both mental well-being and academic success.

Ultimately, this study calls for a shift in focus from simply measuring academic achievement to considering the psychological and emotional factors that influence student performance. Stress is an inevitable part of university life, but with the right support systems in place, students can learn to manage stress effectively and perform to their full potential. The study's findings contribute to the ongoing conversation about student well-being and offer valuable insights into the types of interventions that can help students thrive in challenging academic environments.

## 5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made to improve the academic performance of Economics students at Alvan Ikoku Federal University of Education by addressing the issue of stress:

1. **Institutional Implementation of Time Management Programs**

The university should introduce mandatory time management workshops for students, especially those in high-stress programs such as Economics. These workshops can equip students with the skills needed to prioritize tasks, plan study schedules, and reduce the feeling of being overwhelmed by academic demands. By integrating time management into the curriculum, students will be better prepared to handle the pressures of university life and improve their academic performance.

1. **Enhanced Counseling and Mental Health Support**

The university should strengthen its counseling services by providing more accessible mental health resources. Regular counseling sessions should be available to students, and more trained counselors should be hired to meet the growing demand. Additionally, the university should establish a mental health awareness campaign to reduce the stigma surrounding mental health issues and encourage students to seek support when needed.

1. **Peer Support and Mentoring Programs**

Peer support programs should be developed to provide students with a network of peers who can offer academic and emotional support. These programs can help students feel less isolated and more empowered to manage stress. Peer mentoring programs, where senior students guide and support juniors, could also help reduce academic stress and improve overall performance.

1. **Financial Support and Scholarships**

Given that financial stress was identified as one of the major sources of anxiety for students, the university should increase the availability of scholarships, grants, and financial aid programs to reduce students' financial burdens. Providing students with more opportunities to access financial support can alleviate stress and allow them to focus more on their academic work.

1. **Regular Stress Management Workshops**

In addition to time management training, the university should offer workshops on stress management techniques, such as mindfulness, relaxation exercises, and coping strategies. These workshops can help students manage their stress levels more effectively and prevent burnout. Integrating stress management into the academic experience will empower students to deal with the challenges of university life more successfully.

1. **Further Research**

Future research should explore the long-term effects of stress on academic performance, as well as the impact of specific stressors across different academic disciplines. Additionally, studies that evaluate the effectiveness of different stress mitigation interventions across diverse student populations would provide more detailed insights into how best to support students in managing academic stress.

## References

Ahmady, S., Khajeali, N., Kalantarion, M., Sharifi, F., & Yaseri, M. (2021). Relation between stress, time management, and academic achievement in preclinical medical education: A systematic review and meta-analysis. Journal of Education and Health Promotion, 10(1).

Aihie, O. N., & Ohanaka, B. I. (2019). Perceived academic stress among undergraduate students in a Nigerian University. Journal of Educational and Social Research, 9(2).

Alotaibi, A. D., Alosaimi, F. M., Alajlan, A. A., & Abdulrahman, K. A. B. (2020). The relationship between sleep quality, stress, and academic performance among medical students. Journal of Family and Community Medicine, 27(1), 23-28.

Alzahrani, A. M., Hakami, A., AlHadi, A., Batais, M. A., Alrasheed, A. A., & Almigbal, T. H. (2020). The interplay between mindfulness, depression, stress and academic performance in medical students: A Saudi perspective. PLoS One, 15(4), e0231088.

Castro-Sánchez, M., Zurita-Ortega, F., García-Marmol, E., & Chacón-Cuberos, R. (2019). Motivational climate in sport is associated with life stress levels, academic performance and physical activity engagement of adolescents. International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 16(7), 1198.

Cobb, S. (1976). Social support as a moderator of life stress. Psychosomatic Medicine, 38(5), 300–314.

Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (1985). Intrinsic motivation and self-determination in human behavior. Springer Science & Business Media.

Deng, Y., Cherian, J., Khan, N. U. N., Kumari, K., Sial, M. S., Comite, U., & Popp, J. (2022). Family and academic stress and their impact on students' depression level and academic performance. Frontiers in psychiatry, 13, 869337.

Eakman, A. M., Kinney, A. R., Schierl, M. L., & Henry, K. L. (2019). Academic performance in student service members/veterans: Effects of instructor autonomy support, academic self-efficacy and academic problems. Educational Psychology, 39(8), 1005-1026.

Frazier, P., Gabriel, A., Merians, A., & Lust, K. (2019). Understanding stress as an impediment to academic performance. Journal of American College Health, 67(6), 562-570.

Gustems-Carnicer, J., Calderón, C., & Calderón-Garrido, D. (2019). Stress, coping strategies and academic achievement in teacher education students. European Journal of Teacher Education, 42(3), 375-390.

Hobfoll, S. E. (1989). Conservation of resources: A new attempt at conceptualizing stress. American Psychologist, 44(3), 513–524.

Jamieson, J. P., Black, A. E., Pelaia, L. E., & Reis, H. T. (2021). The impact of mathematics anxiety on stress appraisals, neuroendocrine responses, and academic performance in a community college sample. Journal of Educational Psychology, 113(6), 1164.

Jamieson, J. P., Black, A. E., Pelaia, L. E., Gravelding, H., Gordils, J., & Reis, H. T. (2022). Reappraising stress arousal improves affective, neuroendocrine, and academic performance outcomes in community college classrooms. Journal of Experimental Psychology: General, 151(1), 197.

Jenkins, A., Weeks, M. S., & Hard, B. M. (2021). General and specific stress mindsets: Links with college student health and academic performance. PloS one, 16(9), e0256351.

Lazarus, R. S., & Folkman, S. (1984). Stress, appraisal, and coping. Springer Publishing Company.

Lin, X. J., Zhang, C. Y., Yang, S., Hsu, M. L., Cheng, H., Chen, J., & Yu, H. (2020). Stress and its association with academic performance among dental undergraduate students in Fujian, China: a cross-sectional online questionnaire survey. BMC medical education, 20, 1-9.

Liu, Y., & Cao, Z. (2022). The impact of social support and stress on academic burnout among medical students in online learning: The mediating role of resilience. Frontiers in public health, 10, 938132.

Maajida Aafreen, M., Vishnu Priya, V., & Gayathri, R. (2018). Effect of stress on academic performance of students in different streams. Drug Invention Today, 10(9).

Maheshwari, G., & Shaukat, F. (2019). Impact of poor sleep quality on the academic performance of medical students. Cureus, 11(4).

Manzo, G., Piña-Watson, B., & Kim, S. Y. (2024). Minority stress and academic outcomes among ethnic minority college students: Anxiety as a mediating mechanism. Journal of American College Health, 72(8), 2718-2725.

Masood, A., Luqman, A., Feng, Y., & Shahzad, F. (2022). Untangling the adverse effect of SNS stressors on academic performance and its impact on students’ social media discontinuation intention: the moderating role of guilt. Sage Open, 12(1), 21582440221079905.

Mehta, K. J. (2022). Effect of sleep and mood on academic performance—at interface of physiology, psychology, and education. Humanities and Social Sciences Communications, 9(1), 1-13.

Mirawdali, S., Morrissey, H., & Ball, P. (2018). Academic anxiety and its effects on academic performance.

Olufemi, O. T., Adediran, A. A., & Oyediran, W. O. (2018). Factors affecting students’ academic performance in colleges of education in Southwest, Nigeria. British Journal of Education, 6(10), 43-56.

Pascoe, M. C., Hetrick, S. E., & Parker, A. G. (2020). The impact of stress on students in secondary school and higher education. International journal of adolescence and youth, 25(1), 104-112.

Qian, L., & Fuqiang, Z. (2018). Academic stress, academic procrastination and academicperformance: A moderated dual-mediation model. Journal on Innovation and Sustainability RISUS, 9(2), 38-46.

Reddy, K. J., Menon, K. R., & Thattil, A. (2018). Academic stress and its sources among university students. Biomedical and pharmacology journal, 11(1), 531-537.

Saqib, M., & Rehman, K. U. (2018). Impact of stress on students’ academic performance at secondary school level at District Vehari. International Journal of Learning and Development, 8(1), 84-93.

Sayed, M., Naiim, C. M., Aboelsaad, M., & Ibrahim, M. K. (2022). Internet addiction and relationships with depression, anxiety, stress and academic performance among Egypt pharmacy students: a cross-sectional designed study. BMC public health, 22(1), 1826.

Selye, H. (1936). A syndrome produced by diverse nocuous agents. Nature, 138(3479), 32.

Selye, H. (1950). Stress and the general adaptation syndrome. British Medical Journal.

Shokeen, A. (2018). Procrastination, stress and academic achievement among the B. Ed. Students. Educational Quest-An International Journal of Education and Applied Social Sciences, 9(1), 125-129.

Sweller, J. (1988). Cognitive load during problem solving: Effects on learning. Cognitive Science, 12(2), 257–285.

Tadese, M., Yeshaneh, A., & Mulu, G. B. (2022). Determinants of good academic performance among university students in Ethiopia: a cross-sectional study. BMC Medical Education, 22(1), 395.

Trigueros, R., Padilla, A., Aguilar-Parra, J. M., Lirola, M. J., García-Luengo, A. V., Rocamora-Pérez, P., & López-Liria, R. (2020). The influence of teachers on motivation and academic stress and their effect on the learning strategies of university students. International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 17(23), 9089.

Tus, J. (2020). Academic stress, academic motivation, and its relationship on the academic performance of the senior high school students. Asian Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies, 8(11), 29-37.

Wunsch, K., Fiedler, J., Bachert, P., & Woll, A. (2021). The tridirectional relationship among physical activity, stress, and academic performance in university students: a systematic review and meta-analysis. International journal of environmental research and public health, 18(2), 739.

Ye, L., Posada, A., & Liu, Y. (2018). The moderating effects of gender on the relationship between academic stress and academic self-efficacy. International Journal of Stress Management, 25(S1), 56.

Yerkes, R. M., & Dodson, J. D. (1908). The relation of strength of stimulus to rapidity of habit-formation. Journal of Comparative Neurology and Psychology, 18(5), 459–482.

## Questionnaire for the Study

**Title:** Effect of Stress on Academic Performance of Economics Students in Alvan Ikoku Federal University of Education

Instructions:
Please answer the questions honestly. Select the response that best represents your opinion. Your responses will remain anonymous and will be used for research purposes only.

Section A: Demographic Information

Gender: ☐ Male ☐ Female

Age: ☐ Below 20 ☐ 20–25 ☐ 26–30 ☐ Above 30

Academic Level: ☐ 100 ☐ 200 ☐ 300 ☐ 400

**Section B: Sources of Stress**
Rate the following statements based on how much they apply to your experience.

| Statement | Strongly Disagree (1) | Disagree (2) | Neutral (3) | Agree (4) | Strongly Agree (5) |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1. I often feel overwhelmed by my academic workload. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 2. Financial difficulties affect my ability to focus on academics. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 3. The pressure to excel academically causes me significant stress. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 4. I find balancing academic and personal responsibilities stressful. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 5. Social expectations and peer pressure increase my stress levels. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

**Section C: Academic Performance**

| Statement | Strongly Disagree (1) | Disagree (2) | Neutral (3) | Agree (4) | Strongly Agree (5) |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 6. My stress levels negatively impact my ability to concentrate during lectures. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 7. High stress reduces my ability to meet academic deadlines. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 8. Stress negatively affects my overall academic performance (e.g., GPA). | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 9. I perform poorly on exams due to stress. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 10. Stress interferes with my ability to retain information while studying. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

**Section D: Coping Strategies**

| Statement | Strongly Disagree (1) | Disagree (2) | Neutral (3) | Agree (4) | Strongly Agree (5) |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 11. I use effective time management techniques to handle my stress. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 12. I seek support from friends and family to cope with stress. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 13. Relaxation techniques (e.g., meditation, exercise) help reduce my stress levels. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 14. I consult lecturers or counselors when overwhelmed by stress. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 15. I believe my coping strategies improve my academic performance. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

**Section E: Open-Ended Questions (Optional)**

What do you consider the most significant stressor in your academic life?

What strategies do you find most effective in managing academic stress?