

**THE DETERMINANTS OF DEPRESSION ON THE ACADEMIC  
PERFORMANCE OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS IN UNIVERSITY OF  
BENIN CITY”**

**BY**

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**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK,  
FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES,  
UNIVERSITY OF BENIN,  
BENIN CITY, NIGERIA.**

**FEBRUARY, 2025.**

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**A PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK,  
FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES, UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, BENIN CITY,  
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THE AWARD OF THE BACHELOR OF SCIENCE (B. Sc) DEGREE IN  
SOCIAL WORK**

**FEBRUARY, 2025.**

## **CERTIFICATION**

This is to certify that this project work was undertaken by **Constance Sanaohiokosi EDMUND** and has been approved as meeting the required standards in both scope and quality for the partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of a Bachelor of Science (B. sc) Degree in social work at the University of Benin City, Nigeria.

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## **DEDICATION**

I hereby dedicate this project to God almighty and my Beloved Mother.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I'm extremely grateful To God, my Rock and foundation for seeing me through against all odds.

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## ABSTRACT

*This study investigates the determinants of depression on the academic performance of undergraduate students in the University of Benin City. The research aims to examine the relationship between depression and academic performance, identify the determinants of depression among undergraduate students, and explore the implications for university support services. The findings of the study reveal that depression has a significant negative impact on the academic performance of undergraduate students, with factors such as academic pressure, social isolation, and financial stress contributing to the development of depression. The study highlights the need for universities to provide accessible mental health support services, academic counseling, and stress management programs to support undergraduate students' mental health and academic success. This study contributes to the existing body of knowledge on depression and academic performance, providing insights for university administrators, mental health practitioners, and policymakers seeking to address the mental health needs of undergraduate students. Keywords: Depression, Academic Performance, Undergraduate Students, University of Benin City, Mental Health Support Services.*

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background of the Study

Understanding the factors that lead to depression among students at the University of Benin is crucial, particularly given the high rates of depressive symptoms observed in this population. Research indicates that university students are particularly susceptible to depression, with prevalence rates significantly exceeding those found in the general population, where the rate for the same age group typically ranges from 3% to 4% (Honney et al., 2010). Several factors contribute to this higher prevalence, including the challenges posed by the transition to university life, which can undermine personal and social stability, thereby increasing the likelihood of depression (Honney et al., 2010).

Furthermore, the ways in which students cope with depression are often ineffective. According to Zong et al., undergraduates suffering from depression tend to perceive events as more uncontrollable than their peers without depression, often leading them to adopt less helpful coping strategies (Zong et al., 2010). This skewed perception not only exacerbates depressive symptoms but also detracts from academic performance, as effective coping relies on a clear and accurate assessment of situations (Zong et al., 2010). The role of the academic environment in student mental health is also significant. Research by Sheroze indicated that high levels of depressive symptoms are common across various academic programmes, suggesting that academic stress is a major factor (Sheroze, 2022). Findings from Arora et al. further confirm this, showing that students in

the basic sciences face the most severe levels of depression, indicating that specific academic pressures contribute to mental health challenges (Arora et al., 2014).

Finally, negative life events play a crucial role in depression among university students. A meta-analysis by Lei et al. revealed that students experiencing depressive symptoms often report a greater number of negative life events and a more significant negative impact from these events (Lei et al., 2016). This suggests that both personal and academic stressors, when accumulated, can have a considerable effect on students' mental health and their academic outcomes.

## **1.2 Statement of the Research Problem**

The research problem concerning how depression affects the academic performance of undergraduate students at the University of Benin, Benin City, is a complex issue that requires an in-depth exploration of various contributing factors. Depression is a serious mental health condition that can impede essential cognitive abilities such as reasoning, memory, and motivation, all of which are crucial for learning and academic success (Freitas et al., 2022). There is substantial evidence demonstrating a strong link between stress, anxiety, and depression, with these psychological states negatively impacting academic performance (Freitas et al., 2022). This connection is even more pronounced during the transition to adulthood, when individuals are particularly vulnerable to mental health challenges due to the stress of life changes (Freitas et al., 2022).

Family background plays a significant role in shaping the mental health of university students. Studies indicate that maternal literacy has a considerable effect on depressive symptoms, while paternal literacy does not appear to have the same influence (Yu et al., 2015). This suggests that the educational level of parents may affect the mental well-being of their children, which, in turn, influences their academic outcomes. Furthermore, depression is prevalent among university students, with multiple studies noting that academic pressures, lifestyle adjustments, and financial struggles are key factors contributing to this mental health challenge (Gao et al., 2020).

Experiencing negative life events is another major factor in the development of depression in students. Research shows that students who experience depressive symptoms tend to encounter a greater number of negative life events, which worsen both their mental health and academic performance (Lei et al., 2016). The combined effect of these stressors can create a vicious cycle where depression hinders academic achievement, leading to even more psychological strain. Consequently, it is vital to identify the causes of depression to develop effective interventions that address both mental health and academic performance issues among undergraduate students at the University of Benin.

### **1.3 Objective of the Study**

The aim of this study was to investigate the determinants of depression on the academic performance of undergraduate students in University of Benin City. The specific objectives of the study are to:

- i. To assess the impact of personal factors on depression among University of Benin students.
- ii. To examine how academic stress affects depression and academic performance.
- iii. To explore the influence of social factors on student depression.
- iv. To evaluate the effectiveness of social work interventions in reducing depression and improving academic performance.

#### **1.4 Research Questions**

- i. What is the impact of personal factors on depression among undergraduate students at the University of Benin?
- ii. How does academic stress affect depression and academic performance among students at the University of Benin?
- iii. How do social factors influence depression among undergraduate students at the University of Benin?
- iv. How effective are social work interventions in reducing depression and improving academic performance among students at the University of Benin?

#### **1.5 Scope of Study**

This study examined the causes of depression and how it affected the academic performance of undergraduates at the University of Benin, Benin City. It explored various personal, academic, and social factors, such as self-esteem, stress from academic pressures, family dynamics, relationships with peers, and the availability of social support. The study also assessed how social work interventions could help manage depression and improve academic outcomes. Data was collected from students across different faculties to gain insights into how these factors influenced both mental health and academic performance.

### **1.6 Significance of the Study**

This study holds significant value as it will shed light on the various factors leading to depression among undergraduate students at the University of Benin. By examining key personal, academic, and social factors, the research will deepen understanding of how depression influences academic performance. The insights gathered could guide university policies and initiatives designed to improve mental health support, creating a more nurturing environment for academic achievement. The study's results will underscore the importance of addressing depression with targeted interventions that can improve students' mental and academic well-being.

Moreover, the research's emphasis on social work interventions presents a fresh approach to understanding how professional support can reduce depression and enhance academic success. By investigating practical methods for social workers to assist students facing

mental health issues, this study will contribute to the establishment of more effective mental health services at universities. This approach aims not only to alleviate depression but also to foster a healthier academic atmosphere, enriching the overall social and academic experiences of students at the University of Benin.

## 1.7 Definition of Terms

- i. **Academic Performance:** The level of achievement or success a student attains in their studies, typically measured by grades, test scores, and overall academic outcomes.
- ii. **Determinants:** Factors or variables that influence or determine an outcome, in this case, the factors contributing to depression among students and its impact on their academic performance.
- iii. **Depression:** A mental health disorder characterised by persistent feelings of sadness, hopelessness, and a lack of interest or pleasure in activities, affecting emotional, physical, and academic well-being.
- iv. **Undergraduate Students:** Individuals enrolled in a university or college programme leading to a bachelor's degree, typically aged 18–25, and pursuing their first degree.
- v. **Social Work Interventions:** Professional strategies employed by social workers to support individuals in managing mental health issues, improve coping mechanisms, and enhance overall well-being, including academic success.

## CHAPTER TWO

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

#### 2.1 Review of Relevant Concepts

##### 2.1.1 Overview of Depression and its Global Prevalence among University Students

Depression among students in universities is a significant health issue globally, with varying prevalence rates reported across different regions. According to a systematic review and meta-analysis, approximately 30.6% of university students worldwide are affected by depression (Gao et al., 2020). This is consistent with other research indicating high rates of depressive symptoms in specific groups, such as Chinese university students, where 23.8% were found to suffer from depression (Lei et al., 2016). Furthermore, a study conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic found an increase in depression among Palestinian university students, many of whom experienced moderate to severe symptoms, reflecting a global trend during this period (Ghanim et al., 2022).

The causes of depression among university students are diverse, encompassing both academic pressures and family-related stress. Studies have shown that the demands of academic life, including heavy workloads and performance pressures, significantly contribute to mental health problems (Deng et al., 2022). One particular study found that students with higher levels of depression tended to have poorer academic results, with a strong negative correlation ( $\beta = -0.319$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) between depression and academic

performance (Deng et al., 2022). This suggests that as students experience more depressive symptoms, their academic performance suffers, which can exacerbate their mental health issues.

In the Nigerian context, anxiety and depression among university students have also become serious concerns. A recent study reported that the global prevalence of anxiety and depression among university students was 39.0% and 33.6%, respectively (Adeleke, 2023). This highlights the urgent need for mental health solutions tailored to address the specific challenges students face in different cultural and academic settings, including at the University of Benin in Benin City.

### **2.1.2 The Concept of Depression**

Depression, being a complex mental health issue, can lead to a decline in academic results for several reasons, such as reduced focus, diminished confidence in academic abilities, and heightened anxiety related to schoolwork. In their longitudinal studies, Bi et al. (2022) highlighted that depressive feelings during adolescence can negatively impact academic performance, emphasising the importance of understanding these factors in educational contexts. The connection between depression and academic performance is intricate and often inconsistent in the literature.

For instance, Khan et al. (2020) found a strong negative relationship between depression and academic achievement, suggesting that alleviating depressive symptoms could lead

to improved academic results. Conversely, some research shows no clear link between depression and academic performance, indicating the need for further exploration of these contrasting findings. These variations underline the importance of considering specific academic settings, such as the University of Benin, when examining the effects of depression.

Moreover, the pressure from academic demands can exacerbate feelings of depression. Nguyen and Nguyen (2021) observed that high academic stress is associated with increased depressive symptoms, creating a cycle that impacts both mental well-being and academic success. Mahdavi et al. (2021) also found that mental health struggles during training years affect not only academic performance but also students' attitudes towards their studies and, in medical disciplines, their patients. This underscores the importance of addressing mental health to enhance academic performance.

Additionally, the reciprocal relationship between depression and academic performance should not be overlooked. Dementeva and Smirnov (2021) argued that depression impairs cognitive abilities, leading to poorer academic outcomes, which can further exacerbate depressive symptoms. This suggests the need for academic institutions to establish mental health support structures to mitigate the impact of depression on students' academic achievements.

### **2.1.3 Personal Factors and Depression**

Depression among university students is a complex issue shaped by various personal factors, such as genetic background, personality traits, and family history. These individual aspects play a crucial role in the prevalence and severity of depressive symptoms among students. Research highlights that personal elements, such as dissatisfaction with social interactions, concerns over career paths, and problems with accommodation, contribute to higher rates of depression in students (Nguyen et al., 2018). Additionally, the transition to university life can exacerbate these issues, as students often face challenges that affect their personal and social well-being, making them more vulnerable to depression (Honnev et al., 2010).

Genetics also has a strong influence on the onset of depression. Studies suggest that individuals with a family history of depression are more likely to experience depressive symptoms themselves, indicating a hereditary link to this mental health issue (Arora et al., 2014). Furthermore, certain personality traits, such as neuroticism, have been associated with a higher likelihood of depression, as individuals with these traits may be more susceptible to experiencing negative emotions and stress (Lu, 2023). The interaction between genetic factors and personality traits illustrates the complexity of depression in relation to personal characteristics.

At the University of Benin, these personal factors manifest in unique ways, influenced by the academic and cultural context. The demands of academic success, combined with

socio-cultural expectations in Nigeria, can increase feelings of inadequacy and anxiety among students. For instance, students transitioning directly from secondary school to university may experience more depressive symptoms than those who have taken a gap year or pursued earlier studies, as they might struggle to cope with the rigours of university life (Honney et al., 2010). Moreover, the cultural stigma surrounding mental health in Nigeria can prevent students from seeking help, exacerbating their depression and negatively affecting their academic outcomes (Bruffærts et al., 2018).

Additionally, the academic environment at the University of Benin, characterised by high expectations and competition, can heighten stress and mental health concerns. Studies suggest that students in more intensive academic programmes often report higher levels of distress, which can adversely affect their academic performance (Bruffærts et al., 2018). This is particularly true for students in demanding fields such as medicine and engineering, where the stress related to academic success can severely impact their mental well-being (Arora et al., 2014).

#### **2.1.4 Academic Stress and Depression**

Academic stress is a significant concern for students, particularly in the context of higher education, where high academic expectations, exam pressures, heavy workloads, and intense competition are prevalent. Research indicates that these stressors can have detrimental effects on students' mental health, leading to conditions such as anxiety and depression. For instance, a study conducted among undergraduate nursing students in the

Philippines found that increased stress levels were correlated with decreased academic performance, highlighting the negative impact of stress on student outcomes (Oducado & Estoque, 2021). Similarly, a study in Pakistan demonstrated a direct relationship between heightened stress and lower academic performance, suggesting that students experiencing elevated stress levels tend to have poorer GPAs and overall adjustment (Bibi et al., 2022).

The relationship between academic stress and academic performance is complex and multifaceted. Empirical evidence suggests that academic stress and depression can adversely affect various student outcomes, including GPA, attendance, and engagement. For example, research has shown that students who experience high levels of stress are more likely to exhibit lower academic performance and engagement in their studies (Bibi et al., 2022). This aligns with findings from Rady and El-Sayed, who noted that psychological distress, including depression and anxiety, can lead to diminished academic achievement among university students, despite some studies reporting no significant correlation (Rady & El-Sayed, 2015). This indicates that while the relationship may not be uniformly observed, the potential for academic stress to negatively influence performance remains a critical area of concern.

In the context of African universities, particularly at the University of Benin, studies have documented the impact of academic stress on students' mental health and academic performance. The findings suggest that excessive and prolonged stress can lead to significant psychological issues, including depression, which in turn affects students'

academic outcomes (Rady & El-Sayed, 2015). For instance, students who perceive high levels of stress are more likely to experience depressive symptoms, which can further exacerbate their academic challenges. This cycle of stress and poor academic performance underscores the importance of addressing mental health issues within academic settings to foster better educational outcomes.

### **2.1.5 Social Factors Influencing Depression**

Depression among university students is a multifaceted issue influenced by various social factors, including peer pressure, social isolation, financial concerns, and relationship difficulties. These elements significantly impact the mental well-being of students and, consequently, their academic performance. Financial worries, in particular, emerge as a key factor affecting academic outcomes. Many students face immense pressure to maintain their grades while grappling with financial hardships, which often results in heightened levels of stress and anxiety (Mohamad, 2018). This stress is further aggravated by personal challenges such as romantic relationships and academic pressures, creating a cycle that negatively affects both mental health and academic success (Mohamad, 2018). Having strong social support is crucial in mitigating the impact of depression. Research has shown that students who feel socially disconnected or lack support from family and friends are more likely to experience depressive symptoms (Cooper et al., 2020). In the absence of a strong social network, feelings of worthlessness and inadequacy, common in those experiencing depression, can be intensified (Cooper et

al., 2020). This lack of emotional support makes it more difficult for students to cope with academic pressures, potentially leading to a decline in academic performance (Lamis et al., 2014). Conversely, strong connections with family and friends provide the emotional backing necessary for students to navigate the challenges of university life, helping them build resilience against mental health issues (Cooper et al., 2020).

At the University of Benin, students encounter specific socio-economic challenges that complicate their mental health situations. The economic conditions of students in Benin City significantly affect both their academic experiences and mental health. Financial constraints often limit access to valuable resources such as tutoring or mental health services (Prebi, 2023). Additionally, the social environment within the university, including peer pressure and competition, can exacerbate levels of anxiety and depression among students (Okorodudu, 2013). This pressure to meet academic and social expectations can lead to maladaptive coping mechanisms, such as cheating during exams, which further undermines academic performance (Okorodudu, 2013).

### **2.1.6 Social Work Interventions in Reducing Depression**

Social work interventions play a crucial role in addressing mental health issues, particularly depression. Social workers are uniquely positioned to provide comprehensive support that encompasses not only mental health but also the social determinants of health, such as poverty and family dynamics. Their involvement is vital in creating a holistic approach to mental health care, which is essential for effective intervention

strategies. For instance, Saavedra et al. emphasise that social workers integrate physical, mental, emotional, and social aspects of care, which are often overlooked by other healthcare providers (Saavedra et al., 2018). This multifaceted approach allows social workers to connect individuals with appropriate resources and programmes, thereby addressing the root causes of mental health issues, including depression.

Counselling services, peer support, and mental health awareness programmes are essential components of social work interventions. Counselling services provide individuals with a safe space to express their feelings and challenges, which is critical for those suffering from depression. Peer support programmes foster a sense of community and belonging, which can significantly reduce feelings of isolation and loneliness often associated with depression. While the specific reference to peer support is not directly supported by the cited literature, the general consensus in the field suggests that social support is beneficial for mental health (Cao et al., 2018). Additionally, mental health awareness programmes are crucial in destigmatising mental health issues and encouraging individuals to seek help. These programmes can educate communities about the signs of depression and the importance of early intervention, thereby promoting a proactive approach to mental health care (Levine & Sher, 2020).

The effectiveness of social work interventions in academic settings, particularly in improving mental health among students, has been well documented. Studies have shown that mental health support services can lead to significant improvements in academic

performance. Farrer et al. conducted a systematic review that highlighted the positive impact of technology-based interventions on mental health among tertiary students, indicating that such interventions can lead to a decline in psychological distress (Farrer et al., 2013). Furthermore, the establishment of virtual mental health clinics has been shown to meet the needs of students who may be reluctant to seek help due to stigma, thus providing a vital resource for mental health support (Farrer et al., 2015). This is particularly relevant in university settings, where academic pressures can exacerbate mental health issues.

At the University of Benin, current social work practices and mental health resources include counselling services and peer support initiatives. However, there is room for improvement. Enhancing the visibility of social work roles in mental health care, as suggested by Saavedra et al., could lead to better integration of services and improved outcomes for students (Saavedra et al., 2018). Additionally, expanding mental health awareness programmes and utilising technology-based interventions could further support students in managing their mental health effectively. Recommendations for improvement include increasing training for social workers in mental health diagnostics and treatment, as well as fostering partnerships with local mental health organisations to enhance resource availability.

## **2.2 Review of Empirical Studies**

Hishan et al. (2018) found that 143 university students in Johor Bahru exhibited high rates of depression (62.2%), anxiety (78.3%), and stress (55.9%). Female students tended to suffer more from depression, anxiety, and stress compared to male students. Anxiety was found to be more common among Malays, while other ethnicities experienced more depression and stress. Students from rural areas showed a higher tendency towards anxiety and depression, whereas urban students faced more stress. No significant connections were identified between these factors and aspects such as gender, ethnicity, or background. Students commonly coped with these issues through methods like acceptance, positive reframing, and self-distraction, with anxiety being the most widespread issue compared to stress and depression.

Dapaah and Amoako (2019) examined the causes of depression among university students and how it affects their academic lives. Students generally described depression based on their own experiences, mostly as deep sadness, feelings of hopelessness, and worthlessness. Key causes included the loss of loved ones, financial difficulties, and unmet academic expectations. Depression negatively impacted students' academic performance by making it harder for them to focus on their studies. The researchers suggest that universities improve access to counselling services and encourage students to seek help when needed.

Chikezie and Okoro (2021) found that 30.5% of medical students at Niger Delta University experienced depression. Their study, which used questionnaires based on the MINI and DASS scales, showed that depression was significantly linked to being female, academic year, living conditions, academic performance, and academic failure. Additionally, 14.8% of the students reported suicidal thoughts, 14.8% used alcohol, 9.9% used psychoactive substances, and 29.6% experienced anxiety. The study suggests a holistic approach to supporting medical students' mental health, addressing both depression and related mental health conditions.

### **2.3 Theoretical Framework**

Aaron Beck's Cognitive Theory of Depression posits that an individual's thought processes can significantly influence the onset and persistence of depressive symptoms. This concept is particularly relevant to Nigerian undergraduate students, who often face academic stress that can exacerbate their negative thinking patterns. Beck's notion of the cognitive triad—negative views of oneself, the world, and the future—frequently manifests in students encountering academic difficulties, leading to a decline in academic performance.

Research has shown that students who have experienced bullying or other traumatic events tend to develop mental habits that increase their vulnerability to depression. Rajabi and colleagues note that such negative experiences can lead to entrenched patterns of

negative thinking, causing individuals to interpret ambiguous situations pessimistically, in line with Beck's depression model (Rajabi et al., 2016). This mindset not only affects their emotional well-being but also hampers their academic success. Similarly, Marchetti and co-authors argue that mental vulnerabilities, such as maladaptive attitudes and negative thinking patterns, are interrelated and together contribute to depressive symptoms in young people (Marchetti et al., 2019). This connection suggests that students with a negative self-view may struggle with academic tasks, resulting in a cycle of poor performance and heightened depressive symptoms.

Cognitive therapy has been recognised as an effective approach to addressing these negative thought patterns. Sutinah highlights that cognitive therapy helps individuals identify and alter distorted thoughts, which is essential for replacing negative beliefs with more positive ones (Sutinah, 2020). This form of therapy is particularly beneficial for students, as it not only tackles depression but also equips them with coping strategies that can enhance academic performance. Akinsola and Nwajei concur, demonstrating that cognitive restructuring can significantly reduce both test anxiety and depression, leading to improved academic outcomes (Akinsola & Nwajei, 2013). Their research underscores the importance of therapy focused on changing thought patterns to help students manage academic stress.

Furthermore, the relationship between mental vulnerabilities and depressive symptoms is intricate and multi-faceted. Bernstein and colleagues explain how early negative

experiences can foster internalised feelings of inadequacy, exacerbating depression (Bernstein et al., 2019). These feelings can undermine students' confidence and motivation, making academic success more difficult to achieve. Therefore, addressing mental vulnerabilities with appropriate support is crucial for improving both mental health and academic achievement in undergraduate students.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

This chapter delved into the research methodology, highlighting the procedures and strategies utilised in gathering and evaluating data for societal objectives. It detailed the actions taken by the researcher to finalise the study. The section encompassed various elements such as research design, the target population, sample size and the sampling approach, methods for collecting data, tools used for data collection, and the technique for data analysis.

#### **3.1 Research Design**

This research adopted a quantitative approach to explore the causes of depression and how it affected the academic outcomes of undergraduate students at the University of Benin City. A one-time survey was used to collect data through a structured questionnaire from a randomly selected group of students. The questionnaire incorporated recognised tools such as the Beck Depression Inventory (BDI) to assess depression levels, while students' academic performance was measured by their self-reported GPA. The collected data was processed using statistical methods, such as descriptive analysis, to identify the key factors associated with depression and its impact on academic success.

#### **3.2 Population of Study**

As Bryman (2012) explained, the research population encompassed the full range of elements or units that a study aimed to focus on. This research targeted students at the

University of Benin, where the total student body exceeded 77,000, comprising individuals at both postgraduate and undergraduate levels.

### **3.3 Sample size and Sampling technique**

With the student population at the University of Benin exceeding 77,000, a sample size of 150 undergraduate students was selected for this study. This size was chosen to balance manageability with the need for comprehensive data. A simple random sampling method was utilised, ensuring that every student had an equal opportunity to participate in the study. This technique reduced potential bias and enhanced the representativeness of the sample, providing a broad range of insights into the factors contributing to depression and its impact on academic performance.

### **3.4 Research Instrument**

The instrument that was used to gather data was a carefully developed questionnaire, designed to collect answers from the selected students. This questionnaire featured well-organised questions aimed at capturing opinions and responses related to the research objectives. It was divided into two sections: Part A focused on collecting socio-demographic details from the participants, while Part B presented questions where respondents could choose from the following options: SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, D = Disagree, SD = Strongly Disagree. The researcher distributed the surveys

individually to each respondent and waited to retrieve them, ensuring that none were misplaced.

### **3.5 Validity and Reliability of the Research Instrument**

The validity and reliability of the questionnaire were content validated by the project supervisor and two other learned professionals within the Department of Social Work, to ensure that the included questions embodied the study variables. Adopting the internal consistency reliability, the questionnaire was administered to 10 respondents and then subjected to the Cronbach's alpha formula, from which inferences were drawn. The reliability coefficient of this study's questionnaire, using Cronbach's alpha at 0.7, indicated a strong reliability of the questionnaire.

### **3.6 Method of Data Analysis**

The data that was collected from the quantitative instrument, which was the questionnaire, was coded and entered using a software package known as the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 27.0. The data that was collected was analysed using descriptive statistics.

### **3.7 Ethical Consideration**

Throughout the data collection process, ethical considerations were maintained. The confidentiality and privacy of participants were upheld, ensuring that individual identities were protected. The research team adhered to ethical guidelines and obtained informed

consent from participants. Any sensitive information or personal details were handled with the utmost care and securely stored to prevent unauthorised access.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DATA ANALYSIS

#### 4.0 Presentation and Data Analysis

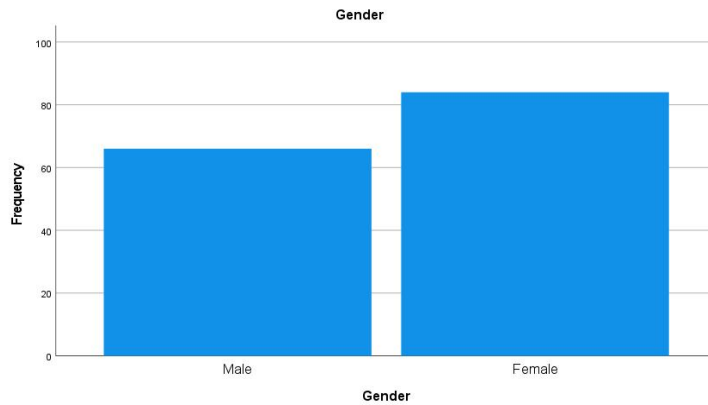
This chapter dealt with the presentation of result and analysis of data. The results are presented in order of research questions that guided the study.

#### 4.1 Analysis for Demographic Data

| Variables             | Frequency (N =150) | Percentage |
|-----------------------|--------------------|------------|
| <b>Gender</b>         |                    |            |
| Male                  | 66                 | 44.0%      |
| Female                | 84                 | 56.0%      |
| <b>Age</b>            |                    |            |
| 16 – 18 years         | 67                 | 44.7%      |
| 19 – 21 years         | 75                 | 50.0%      |
| 22 years and above    | 8                  | 5.3%       |
| <b>Religion</b>       |                    |            |
| Christianity          | 141                | 94.0%      |
| Islam                 | 9                  | 6.0%       |
| <b>Marital Status</b> |                    |            |
| Single                | 148                | 98.7%      |
| Married               | 2                  | 1.3%       |

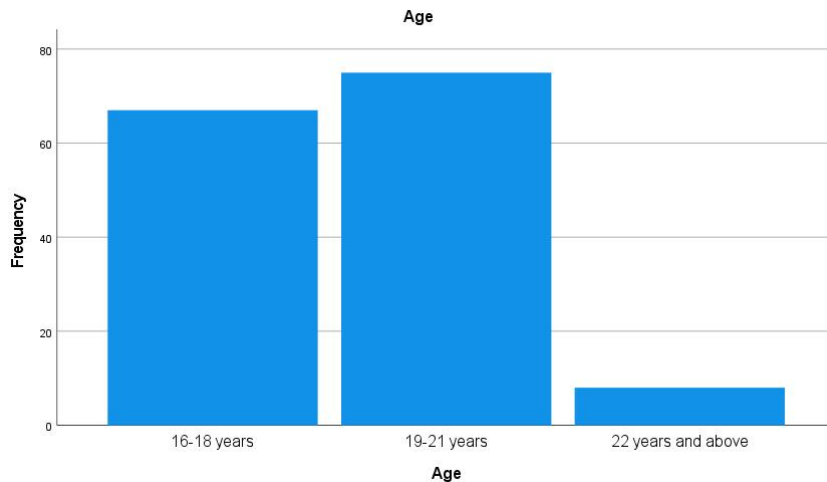
*Table 4.1 shows the demographic data of the respondents in the study.*

The data presents the gender distribution of a group, indicating that there are 66 males, representing 44% of the total, and 84 females, accounting for 56%. This shows a slightly higher proportion of females compared to males in the group.



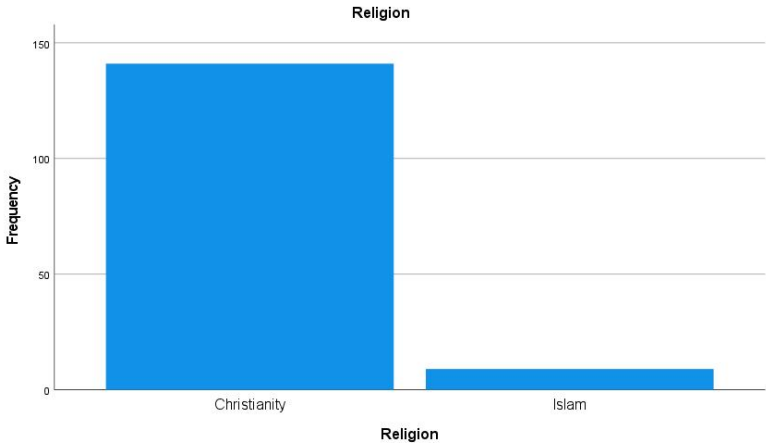
***Figure 4.1 Distribution of respondents by gender (Source: Field survey 2024)***

The data represents the distribution of individuals across three age groups: 16–18 years, 19–21 years, and 22 years and above. There are 67 individuals (44.7%) in the 16–18 age range, 75 individuals (50.0%) in the 19–21 age range, and 8 individuals (5.3%) aged 22 and above. This indicates that the majority of the group is concentrated in the 19–21 age bracket, while the 22 years and above group makes up a very small portion of the total.



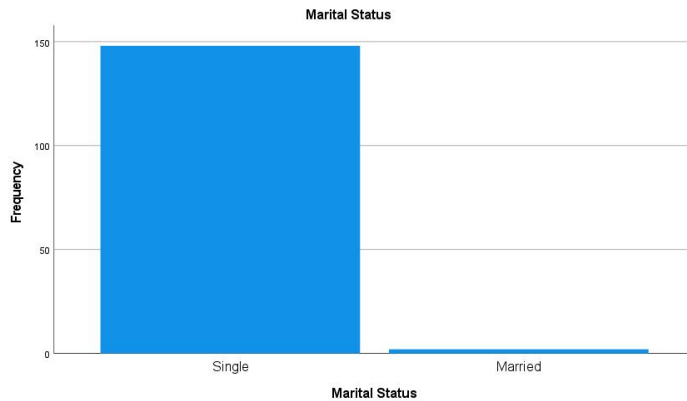
***Figure 4.2 Distribution of respondents by age (Source: Field survey 2024)***

The data indicates a religious distribution where the majority, 94%, of individuals identify as Christian, with 141 respondents. A smaller proportion, 6%, identify as Muslim, with 9 respondents. This suggests that Christianity is the dominant religion within the sampled population, while Islam represents a minority group.



**Figure 4.3 Distribution of respondents by Religion (Source: Field survey 2024)**

The data shows the marital status distribution of a group, where the vast majority of individuals, 98.7%, are single, while only a small percentage, 1.3%, are married. In total, 148 people are single, and just 2 are married. This indicates that the population is predominantly made up of single individuals.



*Figure 4.4 Distribution of respondents by Marital Status (Source: Field survey 2024)*

## 4.2 Presentation and analysis of the research questions

**Objective One: The impact of personal factors on depression among University of Benin students.**

| Variables  | (N =150)   | Min | Max | Mean | Std Deviation |
|--|------------|-----|-----|------|---------------|
| I often feel overwhelmed by personal responsibilities, which contributes to feelings of depression.                | 150        | 1   | 4   | 2.80 | 1.099         |
| Financial difficulties have a significant impact on my emotional well-being and contribute to depressive symptoms. | 150        | 1   | 4   | 2.84 | 1.130         |
| My family dynamics and relationships have affected my mental health in a negative way.                             | 150        | 1   | 4   | 2.81 | 1.097         |
| Academic pressure at the university plays a major role in my experiences of depression.                            | 150        | 1   | 4   | 2.83 | 1.091         |
| I feel that my social life or lack of social support has contributed to my depressive feelings.                    | 150        | 1   | 4   | 2.11 | 1.033         |
| <b>Valid N (listwise)</b>  | <b>150</b> |     |     |      |               |

*Table 4.2 (Source: Field survey 2024)*

The data highlights various personal factors contributing to depression among undergraduates at the University of Benin, which, in turn, affects their academic performance. One notable observation is that many students frequently experience a sense of being overwhelmed by their personal responsibilities, with an average score of 2.80 and a standard deviation of 1.099. This suggests that balancing multiple personal obligations plays a significant role in the students' depressive feelings. The broad variation in responses (ranging from 1 to 4) also implies that personal responsibilities have differing impacts on students, with some struggling more than others. This strain may hinder their academic performance.

Financial challenges also stand out as a key factor influencing students' emotional health, with a mean score of 2.84 and a standard deviation of 1.130. Students indicate that financial instability exacerbates their depressive symptoms, emphasising the significance of economic stress in shaping their mental health. Economic pressures often divert attention away from academic priorities, which could negatively affect academic results, highlighting the connection between financial hardships and students' ability to excel academically.

Additionally, family dynamics are a major factor affecting mental health, with a mean score of 2.81 and a standard deviation of 1.097. Negative family experiences are shown to have a detrimental impact on students' mental well-being, leading to depression. For many, stress related to family matters acts as a mental burden that distracts them from

academic tasks, reducing their overall performance. The combination of family and academic stress can amplify depressive feelings. Lastly, while academic pressure at the university (mean = 2.83, SD = 1.091) is a significant contributor to student depression, the lack of social support also emerges as a noteworthy factor, with a mean score of 2.11 and a standard deviation of 1.033. Social isolation or limited support networks can intensify feelings of depression, restricting students' ability to manage both academic and personal stress. The cumulative effect of academic, financial, and social challenges likely leads to decreased academic performance, as depression affects students' focus, motivation, and engagement in their studies.

**Objective Two: How academic stress affects depression and academic performance**

| <b>Variables</b>  | <b>(N =150)</b> | <b>Min</b> | <b>Max</b> | <b>Mean</b> | <b>Std Deviation</b> |
|---|-----------------|------------|------------|-------------|----------------------|
| Academic stress has a significant impact on my overall mood and emotional well-being.           | 150             | 1          | 4          | 2.82        | 1.106                |
| When I experience academic stress, I find it difficult to concentrate on my studies.            | 150             | 1          | 4          | 2.79        | 1.045                |
| The pressure of academic deadlines increases feelings of anxiety and depression.                | 150             | 1          | 4          | 2.19        | 1.039                |
| High levels of academic stress negatively affect my academic performance.                       | 150             | 1          | 4          | 2.79        | 1.154                |
| I feel less motivated to complete academic tasks when I am stressed about my academic workload. | 150             | 1          | 4          | 2.27        | 1.133                |
| <b>Valid N (listwise)</b>   | <b>150</b>      |            |            |             |                      |

*Table 4.3 (Source: Field survey 2024)*

The data demonstrates the pivotal role academic stress plays in shaping both the emotional health and academic achievements of undergraduates at the University of Benin. One major finding is that academic stress profoundly influences students' emotional state, with an average score of 2.82 and a standard deviation of 1.106. This suggests that a significant number of students encounter emotional difficulties, such as anxiety and depression, due to the pressures of their studies. The wide range of responses (with a low of 1 and a high of 4) highlights that the emotional effects of stress vary among individuals, with some being more heavily affected than others. The emotional burden of academic stress may, in turn, diminish students' ability to focus and fully engage in their academic work.

Additionally, the data reveals that academic stress severely impacts students' ability to concentrate. With an average score of 2.79 and a standard deviation of 1.045, students report finding it hard to stay focused on their studies when under stress. This difficulty in concentration likely stems from the emotional and mental strain caused by academic challenges. Students who face concentration issues are at greater risk of experiencing a drop in their academic performance, as their capacity to process information and complete tasks efficiently is weakened. The findings suggest that academic stress disrupts cognitive functions, making it harder to meet academic obligations.

Academic deadlines further amplify anxiety and depressive symptoms. With an average score of 2.19 and a standard deviation of 1.039, the data shows that the pressure of approaching deadlines heightens feelings of anxiety and depression. The stress of

deadlines tends to elevate overall stress levels, impacting students' mood and motivation, thereby creating a cycle of academic stress and emotional strain. Elevated anxiety can negatively influence students' academic outcomes, as they may feel overwhelmed by their workload and struggle to complete assignments to the best of their ability.

Finally, the data indicates a strong connection between academic stress and a reduction in motivation and academic performance. With an average score of 2.79 and a standard deviation of 1.154, students report feeling less motivated to tackle academic tasks when stressed by their workload. The combination of stress, low motivation, and decreased focus can significantly hinder academic success. As stress builds, students may become less engaged in their studies, resulting in poorer academic results. The cumulative effect of stress on emotional health, concentration, and motivation ultimately leads to reduced academic performance.

**Objective Three: The influence of social factors on student depression**

| <b>Variables</b>   | <b>(N =150)</b> | <b>Min</b> | <b>Max</b> | <b>Mean</b> | <b>Std Deviation</b> |
|--|-----------------|------------|------------|-------------|----------------------|
| Social support from family and friends helps reduce my feelings of depression.                   | 150             | 1          | 4          | 2.78        | 1.055                |
| I feel more depressed when I experience social isolation or loneliness.                          | 150             | 1          | 4          | 2.82        | 1.062                |
| Negative peer interactions, such as bullying or exclusion, contribute to my depressive feelings. | 150             | 1          | 4          | 2.61        | 1.086                |
| Academic pressure from my social circle increases my feelings of stress and depression.          | 150             | 1          | 4          | 2.33        | 1.127                |

|  |            |   |   |      |       |
|--|------------|---|---|------|-------|
| I find that participating in social activities helps alleviate my depressive symptoms. | 150        | 1 | 4 | 2.37 | 1.138 |
| <b>Valid N (listwise)</b>  | <b>150</b> |   |   |      |       |

*Table 4.4 (Source: Field survey 2024)*

The data points to the crucial role of social influences on depression among undergraduate students at the University of Benin and how this also impacts their academic performance. A key observation is that support from family and friends plays a moderate role in alleviating depressive feelings, with a mean score of 2.78 and a standard deviation of 1.055. This indicates that while such support can help reduce depression, not all students benefit equally. The variation in responses (ranging from 1 to 4) suggests that some students may rely more on their social circles to cope with depression, while others find little or no comfort from this support. This difference in experiences may influence how well students handle academic pressures.

Social isolation and feelings of loneliness also emerge as significant contributors to depression, with a mean score of 2.82 and a standard deviation of 1.062. The data implies that students who feel lonely are more likely to experience depressive symptoms, which can further hinder their academic progress. As loneliness can result in less emotional support and lower motivation, it is not surprising that socially isolated students may find it harder to stay engaged in their studies. The strong association between social isolation and depression highlights the need to foster social connections and networks of support within the university.

Negative interactions with peers, such as bullying or exclusion, are another important

factor contributing to depression, with a mean score of 2.61 and a standard deviation of 1.086. This shows that harmful social dynamics, such as being bullied or excluded, significantly add to students' emotional distress. The emotional strain caused by these interactions can lead to a decline in academic focus and self-confidence, creating a cycle in which depression exacerbates academic struggles. Therefore, addressing negative peer dynamics is essential for reducing depression and enhancing academic performance.

Lastly, the data reveals that academic pressure from social groups moderately impacts students' depressive symptoms, with a mean score of 2.33 and a standard deviation of 1.127. Although this factor is less significant than others, it still shows that the expectations and comparisons within social circles can increase stress and depression. The pressure to meet academic expectations or outperform others may result in additional stress, making it more difficult for students to concentrate on their studies. Participation in social activities, though somewhat beneficial (mean = 2.37, SD = 1.138), is generally less effective in reducing depressive symptoms. This suggests that while engaging in social activities can provide some relief, it may not be sufficient to counteract the mental strain caused by academic and social pressures.

**Objective Four: The effectiveness of social work interventions in reducing depression and improving academic performance.**

| <b>Variables</b>   | <b>(N =150)</b> | <b>Min</b> | <b>Max</b> | <b>Mean</b> | <b>Std Deviation</b> |
|--|-----------------|------------|------------|-------------|----------------------|
| Social work interventions have helped reduce my feelings of depression.  | 150             | 1          | 4          | 3.07        | 1.001                |
| I have experienced an improvement in my academic performance as a result of social work support.   | 150             | 1          | 4          | 2.98        | 0.973                |
| The counselling provided by social workers has positively impacted my mental well-being.   | 150             | 1          | 4          | 2.96        | 1.055                |
| Social work interventions have equipped me with coping strategies to manage both academic stress and emotional challenges.                       | 150             | 1          | 4          | 2.91        | 1.023                |
| The guidance from social workers has contributed to a noticeable reduction in my depressive symptoms, allowing me to focus better on my studies. | 150             | 1          | 4          | 3.26        | 0.878                |
| <b>Valid N (listwise)</b>  | <b>150</b>      |            |            |             |                      |

*Table 4.5 (Source: Field survey 2024)*

The analysis uncovers several important insights into the effectiveness of social work interventions in reducing depression and enhancing academic performance among students at the University of Benin. Students provided an average score of 3.07 (SD = 1.001) in response to the statement, "Social work interventions have helped reduce my feelings of depression." This suggests that these interventions have had a moderately beneficial effect on alleviating depressive feelings, with the score reflecting strong

agreement regarding their effectiveness. The relatively low standard deviation (1.001) indicates that most students' responses were closely clustered around the average, signalling a generally consistent view of the benefits of these interventions in easing depression.

Moreover, students gave an average score of 2.98 (SD = 0.973) for the statement, "I have experienced an improvement in my academic performance as a result of social work support." This suggests a moderately positive relationship between social work support and academic enhancement. Although the score indicates that students perceive a beneficial impact on their academic performance, the slight variation in responses (as indicated by the standard deviation of 0.973) suggests that the effect is not uniform across all students. This finding underscores the need for personalised interventions, as some students appear to benefit more significantly from social work support in terms of academic performance than others. The counselling services provided by social workers also seem to have a positive impact on students' mental well-being, with an average score of 2.96 (SD = 1.055). This indicates that students recognise the usefulness of counselling in addressing emotional issues and depression. The overall score reflects a positive effect, although the higher standard deviation (1.055) suggests some variability in students' views on the effectiveness of counselling. These results highlight the importance of mental health support in helping students manage academic pressures and improve their overall well-being.

Lastly, the data suggests that social work interventions have equipped students with coping strategies to manage both academic stress and emotional difficulties, with an average score of 2.91 (SD = 1.023). While students reported acquiring valuable skills to cope with stress, the moderate score suggests there is room for improvement in the effectiveness of these interventions. The highest average score (3.26, SD = 0.878) was given for the statement, "The guidance from social workers has contributed to a noticeable reduction in my depressive symptoms, allowing me to focus better on my studies." This outcome implies that social work guidance is particularly effective in reducing depressive symptoms, which likely leads to improved focus and academic performance. Overall, the data supports the view that social work interventions play a key role in alleviating depression and enhancing academic success among undergraduate students.

### **4.3 Discussion of Findings**

The findings of the first objective of the study indicate that personal factors, such as financial struggles, family dynamics, academic pressure, and social life, significantly influence depressive symptoms in students at the University of Benin. The mean scores for factors like feeling overwhelmed by responsibilities, financial stress, and negative family situations highlight a considerable impact on students' mental health. Similarly, academic pressure was identified as a major factor contributing to depression, with a mean score of 2.83. Surprisingly, social life or the absence of social support had a lower

mean score, suggesting that, while important, this aspect may be less impactful than other personal and academic challenges. These findings align with studies such as Hishan et al. (2018), which emphasised financial difficulties and academic pressure as significant stressors for university students, particularly linked to anxiety and depression, although their study also pointed out regional differences in mental health issues. Similarly, Dapaah and Amoako (2019) observed that financial strain and unmet academic expectations were common causes of depression, negatively affecting academic performance, which mirrors the current study's findings. However, this study sheds light on family dynamics, a factor less emphasised in other studies. Furthermore, Chikezie and Okoro (2021) established a strong connection between depression and academic challenges, particularly in medical students, focusing on comprehensive mental health support, which echoes the current study's findings on academic pressure's role in depression. Overall, the results underscore the importance of personal and academic factors in depression and highlight the need for targeted interventions to support students' mental health.

The second objective, which examines how academic stress influences depression and academic performance among University of Benin students, reveals that academic stress notably impacts students' mood, emotional well-being, concentration, and motivation. The data shows that students struggle with concentration and reduced motivation when under academic stress, which significantly affects their academic performance. This aligns with Hishan et al. (2018), who identified high levels of

depression, anxiety, and stress among university students, particularly in relation to academic pressure. However, while Hishan et al. found rural students to be more prone to anxiety and depression, University of Benin students displayed a broader pattern of stress and mood deterioration under academic pressure, with no clear ethnic or rural-urban differences. Similarly, Dapaah and Amoako (2019) noted the negative impact of depression on academic focus, a pattern also observed in the University of Benin study, where academic stress led to reduced performance. In contrast, Chikezie and Okoro (2021) noted links between depression, academic failure, and living conditions in medical students, reflecting the broader impact of academic stress on mental health and performance. Overall, the findings confirm a harmful link between academic stress, depression, and performance, suggesting a need for interventions to help students manage stress.

The third objective explored social factors influencing depression among students at the University of Benin, revealing that social interactions have a significant impact. Results suggest that support from family and friends, social isolation, negative peer interactions, academic pressure, and involvement in social activities all contribute to depression. Mean scores indicate moderate support from social networks, with family and friends helping to alleviate depression. However, feelings of loneliness and exclusion were found to increase depression. These findings are in line with empirical reviews, such as Hishan et al. (2018), which found that social isolation and poor peer interactions often lead to depression. While academic pressure contributed to depression in both

studies, University of Benin students appeared slightly less affected compared to Dapaah and Amoako's (2019) findings, which highlighted financial difficulties and unmet academic expectations as primary stressors affecting performance. Additionally, Chikezie and Okoro (2021) linked depression to factors like gender, academic year, and living conditions, which resonate with the current study, although there was more focus on social isolation and peer dynamics. Overall, these findings reveal a complex relationship between social factors, mental health, and academic performance.

The fourth objective's findings suggest that social work interventions significantly reduced depressive symptoms and improved academic performance among students at the University of Benin. With above-average mean scores for all indicators, the results suggest that social work support, including counselling and coping strategies, plays a key role in improving students' mental well-being and academic focus. The highest mean was for social workers' guidance, which was associated with a reduction in depressive symptoms, improving concentration and performance. This finding aligns with Dapaah and Amoako's (2019) research, which highlighted the importance of counselling services in reducing depression and enhancing academic results. However, unlike Hishan et al. (2018), who observed high levels of depression and anxiety among university students, this study shows that social work interventions can help alleviate these issues, highlighting the importance of mental health support services in addressing depression's impact on academic outcomes.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1 Summary

Examining the causes of depression among undergraduate students at the University of Benin is crucial, as depressive symptoms are highly prevalent in this group, surpassing the rates observed in the general population (Honney et al., 2010). Various factors contribute to this, including the transition to university life and maladaptive coping methods. Depressed students often perceive events as beyond their control, leading them to adopt coping mechanisms that worsen their condition, which in turn negatively affects their academic performance (Zong et al., 2010). Stress linked to academic work is another significant factor, with students in many fields, especially the basic sciences, reporting higher levels of depression (Sheroze, 2022; Arora et al., 2014). Additionally, personal and academic stressors, categorised as negative life events, have been shown to significantly affect depression and academic results (Lei et al., 2016).

Research into the causes of depression affecting academic performance at the University of Benin reveals various contributing factors, such as stress, anxiety, and family issues. Depression impacts learning-related cognitive functions, particularly memory and motivation (Freitas et al., 2022). Studies highlight the relationship between elevated psychological states, such as stress, and lower academic performance ("Stress, Anxiety, and Depression as Predictors of Academic Performance among Undergraduate University Students in North Western Nigeria," 2023). A student's family background, particularly

the education level of their mother, also plays a role in mental health, which can affect academic outcomes (Yu et al., 2015). The high prevalence of depression among university students is driven by factors like academic demands, lifestyle adjustments, and economic issues (Gao et al., 2020). Negative life experiences exacerbate depression and lead to academic challenges, creating a continuous cycle of emotional stress and poor performance (Lei et al., 2016). Addressing these issues is essential for improving both mental health and academic success.

The aim of this study is to identify the causes of depression and their impact on the academic performance of undergraduate students at the University of Benin City, with a focus on individual factors, academic stress, social factors, and the role of social work interventions. A quantitative method was used in this research to examine the reasons behind depression and its effect on undergraduate students' academic performance at the University of Benin City. Data collection was conducted using a structured questionnaire in a one-time survey, incorporating the Beck Depression Inventory (BDI) and students' self-reported GPAs. A sample of 100 students was chosen randomly from the university's large population. The questionnaire, divided into sections covering socio-demographic information and opinions, was tested for reliability, with a Cronbach's alpha score of 0.7. The data were processed using SPSS and descriptive statistics, with ethical practices such as consent and confidentiality strictly maintained throughout the research.

## 5.2 Summary of Findings

The findings from the first objective show that personal issues such as financial struggles, family relationships, academic pressures, and social life significantly contribute to depressive symptoms among students at the University of Benin. Financial stress and academic challenges were particularly influential, echoing the research of Hishan et al. (2018) and Dapaah and Amoako (2019), who identified similar sources of stress. However, this study highlights a new aspect by focusing on the role of family dynamics, which has been less discussed in previous studies. Chikezie and Okoro (2021) also drew connections between depression and academic struggles, further emphasising the importance of addressing these factors through interventions.

In the second objective, it was shown that academic pressure negatively affects mood, focus, and performance. Students exhibited lower motivation and concentration when under academic stress, which mirrors the findings of Hishan et al. (2018) and Dapaah and Amoako (2019). However, unlike Hishan et al.'s study, which found that rural students were more affected, the students at the University of Benin showed a more uniform reaction to academic stress. This suggests the need for targeted support to reduce the impact of academic stress on students' mental health and performance.

For the third objective, the findings suggest that social connections play a key role in student depression, with support from family and friends helping to alleviate depressive symptoms. In contrast, isolation and negative interactions with peers were linked to

higher levels of depression. This aligns with Hishan et al. (2018), who identified social isolation as a contributing factor, and Dapaah and Amoako (2019), who pointed to financial struggles as major stressors. These findings highlight the complex relationship between social factors and mental health, underscoring the need for positive social networks for students.

The fourth objective reveals that social work interventions can substantially reduce depressive symptoms and improve students' academic performance. The support provided by social workers, including counselling and coping strategies, was effective in improving students' mental health. This is consistent with the findings of Dapaah and Amoako (2019) on the benefits of counselling and with Chikezie and Okoro's (2021) call for comprehensive mental health care. In contrast to Hishan et al. (2018), who reported high levels of depression, this study demonstrates that social work interventions can mitigate these issues, highlighting the need for mental health support to lessen the academic impact of depression.

### **5.3 Conclusion**

In conclusion, the research on the factors that influence depression and how it affects the academic performance of students at the University of Benin reveals the substantial role that personal, academic, and social elements play in shaping students' mental health. Financial struggles, academic challenges, and unfavourable family situations were shown to be significant contributors to depressive symptoms, echoing the conclusions of Hishan

et al. (2018) and Dapaah and Amoako (2019). The study also highlights how academic stress reduces students' motivation and ability to focus, leading to lower academic achievement. These findings align with broader research showing the harmful effects of academic stress on student well-being and success.

Additionally, social interactions were found to play a crucial role in either easing or worsening depressive symptoms. While support from family and friends had a positive effect, experiences of isolation and negative peer relationships contributed to higher levels of depression. This complex relationship between social factors is consistent with earlier research by Hishan et al. (2018) and Dapaah and Amoako (2019), highlighting the importance of fostering supportive social connections to counter the negative effects of depression. The study emphasises the need for holistic interventions that address both academic pressures and the personal and social challenges that students face.

Finally, the research illustrates the positive role of social work interventions in alleviating depressive symptoms and enhancing academic performance. The assistance provided by social workers, including counselling and stress-management strategies, notably improved students' mental health and academic concentration, in line with the findings of Dapaah and Amoako (2019) and Chikezie and Okoro (2021). These findings suggest that universities should focus on mental health services to help students handle depression and academic pressure more effectively. By offering comprehensive support, universities can

substantially improve students' mental health and academic performance, which ultimately contributes to their overall success and well-being.

#### **5.4 Recommendations**

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

- ***Increase Access to Mental Health Support Services:*** Universities should enhance access to counselling and psychological support services to help students cope with personal, academic, and social stressors. Regular mental health workshops, peer support groups, and individual counselling sessions should be integrated into university services to provide continuous support for students facing depression.
- ***Implement Academic Stress Management Programs:*** To reduce the academic pressure students experience, the university could introduce stress management programs that focus on time management, academic skills development, and resilience building. These programs should aim to help students manage their workload effectively and cope with academic challenges in a healthier way.
- ***Foster Stronger Social Support Networks:*** Efforts should be made to promote positive social interactions among students. Peer mentoring programs, student clubs, and community-building activities can help reduce social isolation and foster supportive friendships. Encouraging students to seek support from family, friends, and university networks can be essential in alleviating depressive symptoms.

- ***Offer Financial Assistance and Guidance:*** Since financial difficulties were identified as a significant stressor for students, the university should provide more financial aid programs, including scholarships, grants, and emergency funds. Additionally, financial literacy workshops could help students manage their finances better, reducing financial strain and its associated impact on mental health.
- ***Enhance Faculty Awareness and Support:*** Faculty members should be trained to recognise signs of depression and stress in students and be equipped to offer support or direct students to relevant resources. By fostering a supportive academic environment where students feel understood and valued, faculty can play a key role in reducing academic-related stress and promoting overall student well-being.

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**APPENDIX**  
**QUESTIONNAIRE**

**THE DETERMINANTS OF DEPRESSION ON THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS IN UNIVERSITY OF BENIN CITY**

Dear Respondent,

I am undergraduate student in the Department of Social Work in the University of Benin carrying out a study on “THE DETERMINANTS OF DEPRESSION ON THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS IN UNIVERSITY OF BENIN CITY”. Kindly answer all questions honestly. All information given would be held in strict confidence.

**(Names are not needed).**

**Please answer the following question and tick as appropriate,**

**SECTION A: SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC DATA**

1. Age: (a) 16-18 years ( ), (b), 19 - 21 years ( ), (c) 22 years and above ( )
2. Sex: (a) Male ( ), (b) Female ( )
3. Religion: (a) Christianity ( ), (b) Islam ( ), African Traditional Religion ( ), Others ( )
4. Marital Status: (a) Single ( ), (b) Married ( ), (c) Divorced ( ), (d) Separated ( ), (e) Widowed ( )

**SECTION B: THE DETERMINANTS OF DEPRESSION ON THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS IN UNIVERSITY OF BENIN CITY**

Please, tick (√) appropriately in the rate of agreement for each items below. The options available in the spaces provided are Strongly Agree (SA); Agree (A); Strongly Disagree (SD); and Disagree (D)

| <b>Item</b> | <b>The impact of personal factors on depression among University of Benin students</b>                             | <b>Responses</b> |          |          |           |
|-------------|--|------------------|----------|----------|-----------|
| <b>S/N</b>  | <b>Questions</b>   | <b>SA</b>        | <b>A</b> | <b>D</b> | <b>SD</b> |
| 1.          | I often feel overwhelmed by personal responsibilities, which contributes to feelings of depression.                |                  |          |          |           |
| 2.          | Financial difficulties have a significant impact on my emotional well-being and contribute to depressive symptoms. |                  |          |          |           |
| 3.          | My family dynamics and relationships have affected my mental health in a negative way.                             |                  |          |          |           |
| 4.          | Academic pressure at the university plays a major role in my experiences of depression.                            |                  |          |          |           |
| 5.          | I feel that my social life or lack of social support has contributed to my depressive feelings.                    |                  |          |          |           |
| <b>Item</b> | <b>How academic stress affects depression and academic performance</b>   |                  |          |          |           |
| 6.          | Academic stress has a significant impact on my overall mood and emotional well-being.                              |                  |          |          |           |
| 7.          | When I experience academic stress, I find it difficult to concentrate on my studies.                               |                  |          |          |           |
| 8.          | The pressure of academic deadlines increases feelings of anxiety and depression.                                   |                  |          |          |           |
| 9.          | High levels of academic stress negatively affect my academic performance.  |                  |          |          |           |
| 10.         | I feel less motivated to complete academic tasks when I am stressed about my academic workload.                    |                  |          |          |           |
| <b>Item</b> | <b>The influence of social factors on student depression</b>   |                  |          |          |           |

|             |  |  |  |  |  |
|-------------|--|--|--|--|--|
| 11.         | Social support from family and friends helps reduce my feelings of depression.   |  |  |  |  |
| 12.         | I feel more depressed when I experience social isolation or loneliness.  |  |  |  |  |
| 13.         | Negative peer interactions, such as bullying or exclusion, contribute to my depressive feelings.   |  |  |  |  |
| 14.         | Academic pressure from my social circle increases my feelings of stress and depression.  |  |  |  |  |
| 15.         | I find that participating in social activities helps alleviate my depressive symptoms.   |  |  |  |  |
| <b>Item</b> | <b>The effectiveness of social work interventions in reducing depression and improving academic performance.</b>                                 |  |  |  |  |
| 16.         | Social work interventions have helped reduce my feelings of depression.  |  |  |  |  |
| 17.         | I have experienced an improvement in my academic performance as a result of social work support.   |  |  |  |  |
| 18.         | The counselling provided by social workers has positively impacted my mental well-being.   |  |  |  |  |
| 19.         | Social work interventions have equipped me with coping strategies to manage both academic stress and emotional challenges.                       |  |  |  |  |
| 20.         | The guidance from social workers has contributed to a noticeable reduction in my depressive symptoms, allowing me to focus better on my studies. |  |  |  |  |

**Researcher**