

ASSESSMENT OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN STRESS AND
ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE ON FINAL YEAR STUDENT IN SOCIAL
SCIENCE FACULTY, UNIVERSITY OF BENIN.

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A B.SC PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY
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OCTOBER, 2025.

CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that this research project titled ASSESSMENT OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN STRESS AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE ON FINAL YEAR STUDENT IN SOCIAL SCIENCE FACULTY, UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, was carried out by IGAGA EGHOGHO AYOMIDE, with Matriculation Number SSC2208862, in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Benin, Edo State, Nigeria.

This work has been read, assessed, and approved as partially meeting the requirements for the award of the degree of Bachelor of Science (B.Sc.) in Sociology and Anthropology.

Dr Jude Akaba

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Date:

DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to God Almighty for His grace, strength, and wisdom throughout this journey. To my family and loved ones, for their unwavering support, encouragement, and prayers. Most importantly, to myself, for my resilience, sleepless nights, determination, and the courage to keep going even when it was tough. I'm truly proud of how far I've come. And to every students striving to succeed despite challenges, this is for you.

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TABLE OF CONTENT

Title page.....	i
Certification	iii
Dedication.....	iv
Acknowledgment.....	v
Table of Content	vi
Abstract.....	ix

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study.....	1
1.2. Statement of the Problem.....	4
1.3. Objective of the Study.....	6
1.4. Research Questions.....	7
1.5. Significance of the Study.....	7
1.6. Scope of the Study.....	8
1.7. Definition of Terms.....	9

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Conceptual Clarification.....	12
2.2. Effect of Stress on Academic Performances.....	13
2.3. Physiological and Behavioral Consequences.....	14
2.4. Causes of Stress and it's Relations to Academic Performance.....	15

2.5. Coping Mechanism Employed by Students.....	18
2.6. Empirical Review.....	20
2.7. Theoretical Framework.....	24

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Preamble.....	29
3.2. Research Design.....	29
3.3. Area of the Study.....	29
3.4. Population of the Study.....	29
3.5. Sample Size.....	30
3.6. Sample Technique.....	30
3.7. Instrument for Data Collection	31
3.8. Method of Data Collection.....	31
3.9. Method of Data Analysis.....	31
3.10. Ethical Considerations.....	31

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, AND

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1. Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents.....	32
4.2. Analysis of Research Questions/ Objective.	34

**CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND
RECOMMENDATIONS**

5.1. Summary of Findings.....45

5.2. Conclusion.....47

5.3. Recommendations..... 47

5.4. Contribution to Knowledge.....48

REFERENCE.....50

APPENDIX.....55

ABSTRACT

This study examined the relationship between stress and academic performance among final-year students in the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Benin. Stress, as a response to academic, financial, and personal pressures, often exceeds students' coping capacities and affects their academic outcomes. The research aimed to assess the effect of stress on performance, identify its major causes, and examine coping mechanisms among students. Guided by Lazarus and Folkman's Transactional Model of Stress and Coping (1984), the study employed an explanatory design. Data were collected through structured questionnaires administered to 150 students selected via stratified random sampling across six departments and analyzed using simple percentages and frequency distributions.

Findings revealed that most students frequently experience academic-related stress, which intensifies during their final year. The major sources of stress were financial difficulties, examinations, and project work. The study further discovered that stress negatively affects students' concentration, motivation, and overall academic performance, often leading to physical and emotional exhaustion. Many students reported experiencing burnout and health-related issues resulting from prolonged academic pressure. Sleeping and talking to friends or family were the most common coping strategies, while only a few students sought professional help, indicating inadequate use of institutional support systems.

The study recommended establishing stronger mental health services, reducing academic workloads, and improving communication between students and faculty. It concludes that unmanaged academic stress has a significant adverse effect on students' performance and well-being, emphasizing the need for proactive institutional interventions to promote healthier coping mechanisms and academic success.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Stress is the body's response to any demand or challenge that disrupts its normal state. It can be physical, emotional, or psychological, and often occurs when an individual perceives that the demands placed on them exceed their ability to cope (Khan, Altaf, & Kausar, 2015). In academic settings, stress can stem from deadlines, exams, and the pressures of balancing academic and personal responsibilities (Beiter et al., 2017). Academic performance refers to the extent to which a student achieves their academic goals, typically measured through grades, test scores, and overall grade point average (GPA). It reflects how well a student can meet the demands of their academic programs and demonstrates their level of intellectual capability and achievement (Nia, 2019). Academic performance is influenced by factors such as motivation, study habits, time management, and external pressures like stress (Huang, 2020; Tessema, Ready, & Yu, 2015). In higher education, a student's performance reflects their ability to apply academic skills effectively under various challenges, both intellectual and emotional (Xie, 2021).

Stress and academic performance are closely linked. While a moderate level of stress may enhance alertness and improve performance, excessive stress often leads to anxiety, reduced concentration, memory issues, and poor academic

outcomes. Research shows that high stress levels negatively impact students' cognitive functioning and academic results (Pascoe, Hetrick, & Parker, 2020). Students who experience prolonged academic stress are more likely to suffer from burnout, lack of motivation, and academic failure (Asif, Jameel, Hussain, & Hwang, 2021). Globally, stress is a major factor affecting the academic performance of students at all levels of education. University students across countries report high levels of academic stress due to competitive environments, heavy workloads, and expectations of excellence. This stress often leads to mental health issues such as anxiety and depression, which in turn negatively impact concentration, memory, and overall academic performance (Pascoe et al., 2020).

In developed countries like the United States, UK, and Australia, studies show that academic stress correlates with poor sleep quality, decreased class participation, and lower grades. Similarly, in developing countries such as India, Nigeria, and Pakistan, limited access to academic support services and socioeconomic challenges further increase stress levels among students, thereby reducing academic productivity and motivation (Asif et al., 2021; Deb et al., 2021). In Nigeria, the education system is often characterized by overcrowded classrooms, limited learning resources, unstable academic calendars, and socioeconomic pressures, all of which contribute significantly to students' stress

levels. For university students, stress is intensified by project deadlines, examinations, and uncertain career prospects.

Research shows that high stress levels negatively affect Nigerian students' academic performance by impairing concentration, reducing motivation, and increasing the likelihood of academic burnout (Ugwoke et al., 2020). Additionally, stress-related issues such as anxiety and sleep disturbances further reduce students' cognitive functioning, leading to poor academic outcomes (Olowookere et al., 2021). Understanding the stress levels and their impact on the academic performance of final-year students in the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Benin, involves analyzing the academic workload and responsibilities they are expected to handle. Final-year students face multiple academic demands, including seminars, research projects, and final examinations. Moreover, the structure of the CGPA system, where 400 level contributes the highest percentage to a student's final grade makes many students experience heightened stress, knowing that any mistake or failure in their final year can drastically affect their academic standing. In addition, financial obligations such as project expenses, faculty clearance, and final-year activities further increase the burden. These combined academic and financial pressures can significantly affect the mental well-being of final-year students, and if not properly managed, may negatively impact their academic performance.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Stress is a growing concern among university students, and it has become a major concern in recent years due to increasing academic demands, competition, and financial challenges. Students often face multiple sources of stress, including heavy coursework, strict deadlines, examinations, poor time management, and pressure to achieve high academic results. In many cases, these pressures are compounded by external stressors such as financial difficulties, family responsibilities, and inadequate institutional support systems (Asif et al., 2021). When stress is left unmanaged, it can affect concentration, reduce academic motivation, and ultimately lead to poor academic performance (Pascoe et al., 2020). In addition to academic challenges, students are faced with numerous financial obligations such as payment for project materials, faculty and departmental dues, clearance fees, and final-year activities. For students without consistent financial support, these demands can create a sense of anxiety and emotional strain (Olowookere et al., 2021). While some students develop coping mechanisms to manage stress, others may experience a decline in mental well-being and academic achievement.

Recent statistics show that academic stress significantly affects university students' mental health and performance. In the United States, a study at Ohio State University reported that the number of students experiencing burnout rose sharply from 40% in August 2020 to 71% in April 2021. This form of stress,

characterized by emotional exhaustion and reduced academic motivation, negatively influenced academic performance (Hechinger Report, 2021). Furthermore, the American Psychological Association's Stress in America Survey (2020) found that 87% of Gen Z college students considered their education to be a major source of stress. Students suffering from stress were more likely to experience reduced focus, lower academic engagement, and increased risk of poor academic outcomes (APA, 2020).

Internationally, studies conducted in France, Saudi Arabia, and Bangladesh during the pandemic revealed similarly high levels of academic stress, with a corresponding impact on students' academic performance. For example, *Frontiers in Psychology* (2021) reported that 35% of Saudi students experienced moderate to extreme anxiety, directly affecting their academic concentration and results. Stress and academic performance are inversely related, meaning that as stress increases, academic performance tends to decrease. High levels of academic stress can lead to reduced concentration, poor memory retention, decreased motivation, and overall cognitive fatigue, all of which negatively affect students' ability to perform well academically.

Pascoe et al. (2020) explain that chronic stress impairs working memory, focus, and decision-making, which are essential for learning and academic achievement. They found that stress-related symptoms like insomnia, burnout,

and emotional exhaustion reduce students' ability to engage effectively with their studies. Similarly, Deb et al. (2021) observed that students who reported higher stress levels had significantly lower academic outcomes, demonstrating a direct inverse relationship. Although previous research has explored the impact of stress on academic performance among university students, there has been limited in-depth investigation into the relationship between stress and academic performance among final-year social science students at the University of Benin. This study aims to address this gap by examining the causes of stress and its effects on the academic performance and the coping mechanisms employed by final-year students in the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Benin City.

1.3 OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The main objective of this study is to assess the relationship between stress and academic performance of final year student in social science faculty, university of Benin.

The specific objective are to:

1. Understanding the causes of stress and its relation to academic performance of final year student in social science, University of Benin
2. Examine the effect stress has on the academic performance of final year student in social science, university of Benin.
3. Investigate the coping mechanisms employed by final year student in social science, university of Benin.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTION

1. What are the causes of stress and how do they relate to the academic performance of final-year social science students at the University of Benin?
2. What is the effect of stress on the academic performance of final-year social science students at the University of Benin?
3. What coping mechanisms do final-year social science students at the University of Benin employ to manage stress?

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study is significant as it seeks to provide a deeper understanding of the relationship between stress and academic performance among final-year social science students at the University of Benin. By examining the causes and effects of stress, along with the coping mechanisms employed by students, the research aims to uncover critical factors that influence academic outcomes. The findings will offer valuable insights that can inform university policies, enhance student support services, and contribute to the development of targeted interventions that address the specific needs of students in their final year. Furthermore, understanding how stress impacts academic performance will help identify vulnerable student groups who may benefit from additional resources or tailored strategies to improve their academic resilience.

The study also holds significance for students themselves, as it provides a platform for them to better understand how stress affects their studies and equips them with practical tools to manage it. By focusing on coping mechanisms, the research will identify strategies that students can use to mitigate stress and improve their academic productivity and mental well-being. Additionally, the results of this study will serve as a valuable resource for educators and counselors, guiding them in the design of programs and workshops that promote healthy coping strategies and support student success.

Lastly, this research will contribute to the broader academic discourse on stress and academic performance, filling a gap in existing literature, especially within the social sciences context. It will encourage further research into how stress affects students across different disciplines and stages of their academic journey, ultimately fostering a more supportive and productive academic environment.

1.6 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study examines the connection between stress and academic achievement among University of Benin, Benin City final-year students in the Faculty of Social Sciences. The study will specifically focus on final-year students in the following departments: Public Administration, Economic and Statistics, Social Work, Political Science, Sociology and Anthropology, and Geography and Regional Planning.

1.7 DEFINITION OF TERMS

1. Stress:

Stress refers to the psychological and physiological response that occurs when an individual perceives that the demands placed upon them exceed their ability to cope effectively (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). In this study, stress denotes the tension and pressure experienced by final-year students due to academic, financial, and personal demands.

2. Academic Stress:

Academic stress is the mental strain and anxiety that students experience as a result of academic demands such as examinations, deadlines, coursework, and project writing (Misra & Castillo, 2004).

3. Academic Performance:

Academic performance refers to the extent to which a student achieves their educational goals, often measured through grades, GPA, or examination results (Robotham & Julian, 2006). It reflects a student's ability to meet academic standards and expectations.

4. Academic Workload:

Academic workload refers to the total amount of academic tasks a student is expected to complete, including lectures, assignments, projects, and examinations. It often serves as a major source of academic stress (Robotham & Julian, 2006)

5. Final-Year Students:

Final-year students are undergraduates in their last academic year of study who are completing requirements such as project writing, final examinations, and seminars before graduation.

6. Coping Mechanisms:

Coping mechanisms are the behavioral and psychological strategies individuals use to manage stressful situations (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

In this study, they refer to how students handle academic and personal pressures to maintain performance.

7. Problem-Focused Coping:

Problem-focused coping involves direct efforts to address or eliminate the source of stress, for example, through time management, study planning, or seeking help from lecturers (Carver, Scheier & Weintraub, 1989).

8. Emotion-Focused Coping:

Emotion-focused coping refers to strategies aimed at managing the emotional response to stress rather than the stressor itself, such as relaxation, prayer, or talking to friends (Folkman & Moskowitz, 2004).

9. Maladaptive Coping:

Maladaptive coping involves ineffective responses to stress, such as procrastination, withdrawal, or substance use, which may temporarily reduce tension but worsen academic performance (Okwaraji & Aguwa, 2015).

10. University of Benin:

The University of Benin is a federal university located in Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria. It serves as the study area for this research.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

The review of related literature will be discussed in this chapter. A number of literature have been written on stress and academics. Some of the few research works relevant to this study have been carefully reviewed and recorded in this chapter. In view of this, related materials have been reviewed under the following sub-headings.

2.1. CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATIONS

▪ Stress and Academic Performance

Stress is generally described as a psychological and physiological response to perceived challenges or threats (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Within academic settings, stress arises when students perceive that academic demands exceed their adaptive capacity (Misra & Castillo, 2004). For university students, especially those in their final year, stress often relates to project deadlines, examinations, future career uncertainties, and financial constraints. Stress at moderate levels may enhance alertness and motivation, but excessive stress has been shown to impair concentration, memory, and decision-making, thereby reducing academic performance (Akinsola & Nwajei, 2013).

Academic performance, on the other hand, is the demonstration of knowledge and skills acquired through learning, typically measured by grades, GPA, or research output (Robotham & Julian, 2006). Several studies have documented a

negative correlation between high stress levels and students' academic outcomes (Deb et al., 2015; Owolabi, 2015).

2.2 EFFECTS OF STRESS ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

The relationship between stress and academic performance has been widely studied in higher education research, with findings consistently showing that stress exerts significant influence on students' learning outcomes. Stress may have both (positive) and (negative) effects, depending on its intensity and the coping resources available to students.

- **Negative Effects of Stress**

Excessive stress has been found to impair students' cognitive processes such as concentration, memory retention, and problem-solving ability, which are essential for academic success (Kaplan & Sadock, 2015). High levels of stress activate the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal (HPA) axis, releasing cortisol, which in prolonged amounts can negatively affect brain regions responsible for learning and memory (Sapolsky, 2004). This explains why students under chronic stress often report difficulties in focusing during lectures or examinations.

Several empirical studies have established that high stress levels correlate with lower academic performance. Misra and McKean (2000) found that college students who reported higher academic stress also exhibited poor time management and lower leisure satisfaction, leading to diminished academic achievement. Similarly, Elias, Ping, and Abdullah (2011) noted that stress was a significant predictor of low GPA among undergraduates in Malaysia. In the Nigerian context, Akinola (2017) reported

that academic workload, financial constraints, and examination pressure were strong predictors of academic underachievement among undergraduates.

Psychologically, stress has also been linked to increased anxiety and depression, both of which interfere with academic engagement. Deb, Strodl, and Sun (2015) found that students with high levels of academic stress displayed heightened anxiety and poor academic outcomes. Ugwoke et al. (2018) further observed that final year undergraduates in Nigeria who experienced high stress levels showed reduced ability to complete academic tasks such as project writing and research activities.

- **Moderate or Positive Effects of Stress**

While chronic or excessive stress is detrimental, moderate levels of stress can have a motivational effect. The Yerkes-Dodson Law (1908) suggests that there is an optimal level of arousal (stress) that enhances performance, but when stress exceeds this optimal level, performance declines. For example, mild stress before examinations may encourage students to engage in focused study and revision, thereby improving performance (Seery & Quinton, 2016).

2.3. PHYSIOLOGICAL AND BEHAVIORAL CONSEQUENCES

Stress also manifests physiologically in ways that affect academic life. Symptoms such as fatigue, headaches, poor sleep quality, and loss of appetite are common among stressed students and often translate into absenteeism, poor class participation, and reduced productivity (Alzaem, Sulaiman, & Gillani, 2010). Behaviorally, students under stress may resort to maladaptive coping mechanisms such as procrastination,

withdrawal, or substance use, all of which negatively impact academic outcomes (Okwaraji & Aguwa, 2015).

Taken together, stress affects academic performance through multiple pathways, cognitive impairment, psychological distress, physiological strain, and maladaptive behaviors. While a certain degree of stress may stimulate motivation, persistent or excessive stress is associated with reduced academic achievement, lower GPA, and in severe cases, dropout or academic burnout (Robotham & Julian, 2006; Owolabi, 2015).

2.4. CAUSES OF STRESS AND ITS RELATION TO ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

Stress among university students has been extensively studied and is often attributed to multiple academic, social, financial, and personal factors. Stress occurs when students perceive academic or life demands as exceeding their ability to cope, leading to both psychological and academic consequences (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Misra & Castillo, 2004). For final year students in particular, stress levels are intensified due to increased workload, project writing, examinations, and career uncertainties.

- **Academic Workload and Examinations**

One of the most frequently reported causes of stress among undergraduates is (academic workload). Final year students are expected to complete demanding tasks such as seminar presentations, term papers, and project work alongside preparing for examinations. Robotham and Julian (2006) note that heavy coursework and deadlines contribute significantly to academic stress. Misra and McKean (2000) also observed

that pressure from multiple academic responsibilities negatively affects students' ability to manage time, resulting in stress that directly hampers academic performance.

Examination pressure is another major stressor. Students often perceive exams as a determinant of future opportunities, creating high stakes that lead to anxiety and stress (Owusu & Essel, 2017). In the Nigerian context, Akinola (2017) found that students facing continuous assessment and final examinations reported higher stress levels, which were inversely related to their grade point averages (GPAs).

- **Financial Constraints**

Financial hardship is a pervasive source of stress among Nigerian university students. Tuition fees, accommodation expenses, and costs of project materials create financial strain that exacerbates academic stress. Akinola (2017) reported that financial stressors significantly predicted low academic performance among undergraduates in public universities. Similarly, Ugwoke et al. (2018) noted that final year students often worry about securing funds for project printing, binding, and data collection, thereby increasing stress levels that interfere with concentration and productivity.

- **Social and Interpersonal Factors**

Social and interpersonal relationships also play a role in student stress. Conflicts with peers, lecturers, or family members, as well as pressures from social expectations, contribute to heightened stress (Agolla & Ongori, 2009). For instance, students from low-income backgrounds may experience additional stress due to comparison with peers who have more financial or academic support. These social pressures can lead to

feelings of inadequacy and reduced self-efficacy, which negatively impact academic performance (Friedlander et al., 2007).

- **Uncertainty About the Future**

For final year students, concerns about life after graduation, such as securing employment, pursuing further studies, or achieving financial independence, serve as significant stressors (Omoniyi & Ogunsanmi, 2012). Such uncertainties may lead to psychological distress and divided attention, reducing academic focus and performance. Umeh (2018) reported that career-related anxiety was a strong predictor of academic stress among undergraduates in Southern Nigeria.

- **Poor Study Habits and Time Management**

Students with ineffective study habits or poor time management skills are more vulnerable to stress. Misra and Castillo (2004) found that students who lack organizational skills or procrastinate are more likely to experience academic stress and perform poorly. In the Nigerian setting, Owolabi (2015) observed that poor study routines and last-minute preparations were strongly associated with higher stress levels and declining academic outcomes.

- **Relation to Academic Performance**

The link between these stressors and academic performance is well established. Stress interferes with attention, memory, and problem-solving, which are critical for academic success (Kaplan & Sadock, 2015). Empirical evidence shows that students experiencing high stress levels often record lower GPAs, increased absenteeism, and

reduced academic engagement (Elias, Ping & Abdullah, 2011). Furthermore, chronic exposure to stress can lead to burnout, depression, or withdrawal, all of which have long-term effects on academic achievement (Deb, Strodl & Sun, 2015).

2.5. COPING MECHANISMS EMPLOYED BY STUDENTS

Coping refers to the cognitive and behavioral strategies that individuals use to manage stressful situations (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Among university students, coping mechanisms are vital in mitigating the adverse effects of academic stress, particularly for final year students who face multiple academic and personal challenges. The choice of coping strategy often determines whether stress leads to improved resilience or poor academic outcomes (Carver, Scheier & Weintraub, 1989).

- **Problem-Focused Coping**

Problem-focused coping strategies involve efforts to deal directly with the source of stress, with the aim of reducing or eliminating it. Common approaches among students include developing effective time management skills, engaging in goal setting, seeking clarification from lecturers, and forming study groups (Misra & Castillo, 2004). For final year students, problem-focused coping may also involve breaking large tasks such as project writing into smaller, manageable parts, thereby reducing the overwhelming nature of the workload. Research has shown that problem-focused coping is strongly associated with higher academic performance (Park & Adler, 2003).

- **Emotion-Focused Coping**

Emotion-focused coping aims at managing emotional responses to stress rather than tackling the stressor itself. Students often adopt strategies such as relaxation, prayer, meditation, and social support from friends and family (Folkman & Moskowitz, 2004). In Nigeria, religious practices such as prayer and church attendance are widely reported as common coping strategies among undergraduates (Olaitan et al., 2010). Although emotion-focused strategies may not eliminate the academic stressor, they help preserve mental health and reduce the risk of burnout.

- **Social Support**

Seeking support from peers, mentors, and family members is another common coping mechanism. Social support serves both problem-focused and emotion-focused functions by providing practical assistance as well as emotional reassurance (Friedlander et al., 2007). For instance, Umeh (2018) found that undergraduate students in Southern Nigeria relied on peer discussions and support networks to manage project-related stress. This approach often promotes a sense of belonging and shared experience, which reduces the feeling of isolation.

- **Avoidance and Maladaptive Coping**

Not all coping strategies are adaptive. Some students engage in avoidance mechanisms such as procrastination, withdrawal, substance use, and excessive social media use to escape stressors. While these strategies may provide temporary relief, they often exacerbate academic problems in the long run (Okwaraji & Aguwa, 2015).

For example, Owolabi (2015) observed that Nigerian students who resorted to procrastination reported higher stress levels and poorer academic outcomes.

- **Cultural and Contextual Variations**

Coping strategies often differ across cultural and contextual settings. In collectivist societies such as Nigeria, communal support and religious practices are emphasized, whereas in Western contexts, individual problem-solving and counseling are more common (Agolla & Ongori, 2009). Understanding these cultural differences is crucial in designing interventions to support students' academic success.

- **Implications for Academic Performance**

Effective coping mechanisms play a critical role in determining whether stress undermines or enhances academic performance. Students who rely on adaptive strategies such as time management, social support, and problem-solving tend to perform better academically. Conversely, reliance on maladaptive coping strategies has been consistently linked to poor academic achievement, absenteeism, and in severe cases, academic withdrawal (Ugwoke et al., 2018).

2.6. EMPIRICAL REVIEW

In a previous study on stress factors as predictor of academic performance of undergraduate students in university of Benin, Edo state, Nigeria carried out by Andrew (2024) opined that Although stress factors as a composite variable did not significantly predict the academic performance of undergraduate students, but the parameter estimate of the regression revealed that academic stress

significantly predict the students' academic performance. This finding confirmed the assertions of Agolla and Ongori (2009); Ahem, Yeung and Wong (2010) that academic stress which is manifested in the volume of homework (assignment), overcrowded lecture hall and sitting for examinations are the major academic stressors for the undergraduate students. This could be hue of the respondents of this study as overcrowded lecture halls abound in most departments of the faculties used. Besides, the different course lecturers mandatorily give the students take home assignment as part of the continued assessment. This could often times overwhelm the students especially those who receive lectures in other faculties outside theirs for courses that are not in their own department/faculty. Their inability to control the lecture time table and venue heighten their anxiety and increases their academic stress.

The study revealed that stress factors (family, emotional, financial and academic) significantly predict the academic performance of undergraduate male students. This finding corroborated the assertions of Misra and Mckean (2000), Rayle and Chung (2008) and Bang (2009) that the level of academic related stress differs among male and female students. Moreso, the findings confirmed the assertion Khan, Gulzar and Yahya (2013) that male students experience more academic tress than the female students. This could be attributed to the pressure from the family and the society that place a great demand on the male folk with the responsibility of being the caregiver to other members of the family. While the

female students may win the sympathy of their parents and extended family members to prevent them from being abused for want of assistance, the male may be left unassisted as they are perceived to face less danger than the female.

However, the finding of this study goes contrary to the numerous research findings of Thawalieb and Qaisy (2012), Rayle and Chung (2008), Misra and McKean (2000) that female students experience more stress than male students.

It could be that the female respondents of this study display strength in the face a challenges and adopt a positive appraisal to stressful events. Besides, the parameter estimate of the regression revealed that male students experienced more emotional stress, as it significantly predict their academic performance.

This could be true of the respondents of this study as a good number of the male students engage in self-menial jobs which could be physically energy sapping and emotionally demanding on the male folk. This confirmed the postulation of Khan, Gulzar and Yahya (2013) that male undergraduate students experience worse emotional disposition that equally affect their academic performance.

Although stress factors did not significantly predict the academic performance of female students, the parameter estimate of the regression revealed that financial stress significantly predicted their academic performance. This confirmed the assertion of Brougham, Zail, Mendeza and Miller (2009); Heckman and Montato (2014); Northern, O'Brien and Goetz (2010) that female students experienced more financial stress and that financial stress exact a long

term impact on the students' academic performance as it plays a major role as a stressor. This could be true of the respondents of this study as most of the female students are on pressure of finance for different reasons. Beside academic materials, a good number of the female students purchase expensive mobile handset, clothing, shoes, wrist- watches, cosmetics and expensive jewelries.

The desire for these expensive things especially by those whose parents cannot afford them could be stressful for the female students. The finding of the study shows that stress factors did not significantly predict the academic performance of the students by their years of study. Although the parameter estimate of the regression shows 15.4% and 37.0% variance of stress factors to 300 and 400 levels students' respectively, they were not sufficient to affect their academic performance. However, it shows that the variables of this study have a degree of contribution on the students' academic performance. This confirmed the assertion of Shaikh, Kahloon, Kazmi, Khalid, Nawez, Khen and Khan (2004) that senior students experience higher level of stress than students of the lower levels. This could be attributed to the volume of academic workload and home assignment which they are engaged in. Being the last year of study, the students could be more concerned with their academic grade and credit units required for good grade at graduation. This could also be attributed to their level of involvement in co-curricular activities in search for means of sustaining

themselves as they are at the verge of completing their university studies. In a country like ours (Nigeria), where the universities' graduate thousands of students into the labour market without job every year, the final year students are bound to be emotionally stressed as they leave school to join the teeming Nigerian youth without job.

2.7. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is anchored on Lazarus and Folkman's Transactional Model of Stress and Coping (1984). This model is one of the most influential frameworks for understanding stress, its appraisal, and the coping processes individuals employ. Unlike earlier theories that viewed stress as either a stimulus (external events that trigger strain) or a response (psychological or physiological reactions), Lazarus and Folkman conceptualized stress as a dynamic (transactional process) between an individual and the environment (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Folkman, 2010).

- **Core Assumptions of the Model**

The model is built on the assumption that stress arises when an individual perceives that the demands of a situation exceed their personal or social resources to cope effectively (Compas et al., 2001). In academic contexts, such as among final year students in the Faculty of Social Sciences at the University

of Benin, these demands may include coursework, project writing, examinations, financial responsibilities, and post-graduation uncertainties.

According to the theory, stress is determined by two central appraisal processes:

1. Primary Appraisal

This involves the individual's evaluation of whether an event or situation is irrelevant, benign-positive, or stressful. When it is appraised as stressful, the student determines whether it is a harm/loss (something already damaging), a threat (potential for future harm), or a challenge (an opportunity for growth or mastery) (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). For example, project deadlines may be appraised as a threat by some students who feel unprepared, while others may see it as a challenge that motivates them to work harder.

2. Secondary Appraisal

Here, the individual evaluates their available coping resources and options for dealing with the situation. For students, this may include time management skills, social support networks, access to financial assistance, or even personal resilience. If a student perceives that they have adequate resources, stress is likely to be minimized. Conversely, if resources are judged as inadequate, stress intensifies, which may impair academic performance (Biggs et al., 2017).

- **Coping Mechanisms**

Following appraisal, individuals engage in coping strategies, which Lazarus and Folkman (1984) classify into two broad types:

1. **Problem-focused coping:** These are efforts aimed at managing or altering the problem causing the stress. For students, this could involve improving study habits, seeking clarification from lecturers, practicing effective time management, or joining study groups. Research has shown that problem-focused coping is often associated with better academic outcomes (Park & Adler, 2003).
2. **Emotion-focused coping:** These strategies are directed at regulating the emotional response to stress rather than the stressor itself. Examples among students include relaxation techniques, prayer, socializing with peers, and engaging in recreational activities. While these strategies may not eliminate the stressor, they help reduce psychological distress and preserve mental well-being (Folkman & Moskowitz, 2004).

Students may also adopt maladaptive coping mechanisms such as avoidance, procrastination, substance abuse, or withdrawal, which have been linked to poor academic performance (Okwaraji & Aguwa, 2015).

- **Relevance of the Model to Academic Stress**

The Transactional Model of Stress and Coping is particularly relevant to the present study because it provides a comprehensive framework for analyzing not only the (causes of stress) among final year students but also the (effects of stress on their academic performance) and the (coping mechanisms employed). For instance, if final year students at the University of Benin appraise project work and examinations as overwhelming and lack adequate coping strategies, this may manifest in lower academic outcomes. However, those who appraise such stressors as challenges and apply adaptive coping strategies are more likely to maintain or even improve their academic performance (Misra & McKean, 2000; Ugwoke et al., 2018).

Furthermore, this model emphasizes that stress and academic performance are not universally determined but are subjective, depending on individual appraisal and coping resources. This aligns with the objectives of this research, which seeks to understand the causes of stress, examine its effects, and investigate coping strategies among final year students in the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Benin.

- **Diagram of the Transactional Model**

Stressful Situation → Cognitive Appraisal (Primary & Secondary) → Coping Response (Problem-Focused / Emotion-Focused) → Outcome (Positive/Adaptive or Negative/Maladaptive Impact on Academic Performance)

In summary, Lazarus and Folkman's Transactional Model of Stress and Coping (1984) offers a robust theoretical foundation for this study. It highlights that academic stress is not solely determined by external demands but by students' subjective appraisal and coping responses. By applying this framework, the study can better explain why some final year students in the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Benin, excel academically despite stress, while others experience academic decline.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 PREAMBLE

This chapter will describe the techniques used to collect study-related data. It will go over the research design, study area, study population, sample size, sampling approaches, data collection tools, and data collection and analysis procedures.

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

Explanatory research designs will be used in this investigation. The purpose of the explanatory design is to comprehend and elucidate the sources of stress, how it affects academic performance, and the coping strategies used by University of Benin final-year social science students.

3.3 AREA OF STUDY

This research was conducted at the University of Benin, Edo State. It focused on the Faculty of Social Science, involving the departments of Sociology and Anthropology, Social work, Political Science, Public Administration, Economics and Statistics, Geography and Regional Planning.

3.4 POPULATION OF THE STUDY

For the purpose of this research, the target population includes all final-year undergraduate students across various departments within the Faculty of Social Sciences. Specifically, the Department of Sociology and Anthropology has 111

students, Social Work has 174, Public Administration has 116, Political Science has 157, Economics and Statistics has 120, while Geography and Regional Planning has 4 students. The total population of the study is 682.

3.5 SAMPLE SIZE

In this study, the sample size consists of 150 respondents selected from different segments of the population.

3.6 SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

For this study, stratified random sampling technique was employed. Stratified random sampling was used to ensure adequate representation of all departments. The total population of final-year students in the Faculty of Social Sciences is 682. The population was first divided into six departments (strata). Then, using the proportional allocation method, the sample size for each department was calculated based on its share of the total population. The distribution thereby resulted in selecting Sociology and Anthropology with 24 respondents, Social Work with 38 respondents, Public Administration with 26 respondents, Political Science with 35 respondents, Economics and Statistics with 26 respondents, and Geography and Regional Planning with 1 respondent. The formula used was:

Population of the Department ÷ Total Population × Total Sample Size

Finally, within each department, students were randomly selected to receive the questionnaire.

3.7 INSTRUMENT FOR DATA COLLECTION

Our instrument for data collection will consist of a structured questionnaire, which will be administered to 150 respondents who are final year students across all the various departments. The questionnaire will be divided into two sections: Section A and Section B. Section A will collect personal data from the respondents, including information such as gender, age, department, and other relevant demographic factors. Section B will contain a list of items or statements formulated with respect to the four research objectives and corresponding research questions related to the relationship between stress and academic performance among final year student in social science faculty.

3.8 METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION

This study will adopt primary and Secondary methods of data collection, which the primary method include structured questionnaires. A one-time survey method will be utilized, involving a face-to-face administration of the structured questionnaires to various respondents. While the secondary data collection will be Textbooks, Journals, Monographs, Newspapers, Magazines, etc.

3.9 METHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS

Data collected from this study will be analyzed using simple percentage and frequency distribution table.

3.10. ETHICS IN RESEARCH

The following ethical considerations were observed in this study; "confidentiality, justice, non-maleficence, beneficiate and cultural sensitivity.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This chapter reviews the result and analysis of the quantitative data, the complication of the questionnaire, the results and the analysis of the quantitative findings of the study.

SECTION A: SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE REPENDENTS.

TABLE 1.1 AGE OF THE RESPONDENTS

AGE	RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE
18 - 20	40	26.7%
22 - 25	80	53%
26 Above	30	20%
TOTAL	150	100%

SOURCE: FIELD SURVEY 2025

From the table above 1.1, the results show the age of the respondents. The results therefore reveals that the respondents between the age 18 – 20 are accounted as 26.7%, the respondents between the age 22 – 25 are accounted as 53%, and the respondents between the age 26 and above are accounted as 20%. This shows that the respondents between the age 22 - 25 counts as the majority of the population.

TABLE 1.2 GENDER OF THE RESPONDENTS

GENDER	RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE
Male	84	56%
Female	66	44%

TOTAL	150	100%
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SOURCE: FIELD SURVEY 2025

From the table above 1.2, the results show the gender of the respondents. The results show that 56% of the respondents are male, and 44% of the respondents are female. This shows that majority of the respondents are male.

TABLE 1.3 DEPARTMENT OF THE RESPONDENTS

DEPARTMENT	RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE
Sociology and Anthropology	24	16%
Social Work	38	25.3%
Public Administration	26	17.3%
Political Science	35	23.3%
Economic and Statistic	26	17.3%
Geography and Regional Planning	1	0.7%
TOTAL	150	100%

SOURCE: FIELD SURVEY 2025

From the table above 1.3, the results show the departments of the respondents. The results show that 16% of the respondents are from Sociology and Anthropology department, 25.3% of the respondents are from Social Work department, 17.3% of the respondents are from Public Administration, 23.3% of the respondents are from Political Science department, 17.3% are from Economic and Statistic department, 0.7% of the respondents is from Geography and Regional Planning.

TABLE 1.4 ACCOMMODATION OF THE RESPONDENTS

ACCOMMODATION	RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE
On Campus	89	59.3%

Off Campus	61	40.7%
TOTAL	150	100%

SOURCE: FIELD SURVEY 2025

From the table above 1.4, the results shows the accommodation of the respondents. The result shows that 59.3% of the respondents stay on campus, while 40.7% of the respondents stays off campus. This shows that the respondents who stay on campus counts as the majority of the population.

TABLE 1.5 RELATIONSHIP STATUS OF THE RESPONDENTS

RELATIONSHIP STATUS	RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE
Single	111	74%
In a Relationship	35	23.3%
Married	4	2.7%
Prefer not to say	0	0%
TOTAL	150	100%

SOURCE: FIELD SURVEY 2025

From the table above 1.5, the results show the relationship status of the respondents. The results show that University of Benin is highly saturated by single students, data show that 74% of students are single, 23.3% of students are in a relationship, 2.7% of students are married and 0% of students prefer not to say. The findings that 74% of the respondents are single can be explained by the demographic composition of the University of Benin.

SECTION B: RESEARCH QUESTIONS

OBJECTIVE 1: CAUSES OF STRESS AND IT'S RELATION TO ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE.

TABLE 2.1 HOW OFTEN DO YOU EXPERIENCE STRESS RELATED TO ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE?

HOW OFTEN DO YOU EXPERIENCE STRESS RELATED TO ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE?	RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE
Always	65	43.3%
Often	48	32%
Sometimes	28	18.7%
Rarely	9	6%
Never	0	0%
TOTAL	150	100%

SOURCE: FIELD SURVEY 2025

From the table above, data show that 43.3% of the respondents always experience stress related to academic performance, 32% of the respondents often experience stress related to academic performance, 18.7% of the respondents sometimes experience stress related to academic performance, 6% of the respondents rarely experience stress related to academic performance, 0% of the respondents never experience stress related to academic performance.

TABLE 2.2 WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING CAUSES YOU THE MOST STRESS?

WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING CAUSES YOU THE MOST STRESS?	RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE
Exam and Test	50	33.3%
Project Work	14	9.3%
Lecturers and	10	6.7%

Assignments		
Financial Pressures	63	42%
Family Issues	8	5.3%
Social Pressures	5	3.3%
TOTAL	150	100%

SOURCE: FIELD SURVEY 2025

From the table above, 33.3% of the respondents believe that exams and tests causes them the most stress, 9.3% of the respondents believe that project work causes them the most stress, 6.7% of the respondents believe that lecturers and assignments causes them the most stress, 42% of the respondents believe that financial pressures causes them the most stress, 5.3% of the respondents believe that family issues causes them the most stress, and 3.3% of the respondents believe that social pressure causes them the most stress.

TABLE 2.3 DO ACADEMIC DEADLINE AFFECT YOUR STRESS LEVEL?

DO ACADEMIC DEADLINE AFFECT YOUR STRESS LEVEL?	RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE
Yes	98	65.3%
No	52	34.7%
TOTAL	150	100%

SOURCE: FIELD SURVEY 2025

From the table above, data shows that 65.3% of the respondents agrees that academic deadline affects their stress level, while 34.7% of the respondents states that academic deadlines do not affect their stress level.

TABLE 2.4 HOW DO YOU FEEL BEFORE AND DURING EXAM PERIODS?

HOW DO YOU FEEL BEFORE AND DURING EXAM PERIODS?	RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE
Very Anxious	64	42.7%
Slightly Nervous	46	30.7%
Calm	27	18%
Indifferent	13	8.7%
TOTAL	150	100%

SOURCE: FIELD SURVEY 2025

From the table above, 42.7% of the respondents feel very anxious before and during exam periods, 30.7% of the respondents feel slightly nervous before and during exam periods, 18% of the respondents feel calm before and during exam periods, 8.7% of the respondents feel indifferent before and during exam periods.

TABLE 2.5 DO YOU BELIEVE STRESS HAS INCREASED SINCE ENTERING FINAL YEAR?

DO YOU BELIEVE STRESS HAS INCREASED SINCE ENTERING FINAL YEAR?	RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE
Yes	138	92%
No	12	8%
TOTAL	150	100%

SOURCE: FIELD SURVEY 2025

From the table above, 92% of the respondents believes that stress has increased since entering final year, while 8% of the respondents believe that stress has not increased since entering final year.

OBJECTIVE 2: EFFECT OF STRESS ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE.

TABLE 3.1 HAS STRESS EVER CAUSED YOU TO MISS CLASSES OR ACADEMIC DEADLINES?

HAS STRESS EVER CAUSED YOU TO MISS CLASSES OR ACADEMIC DEADLINES?	RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE
Yes	69	46%
No	81	54%
TOTAL	150	100%

SOURCE: FIELD SURVEY 2025

From the table above, 46% of the respondents have missed classes or academic deadlines because of stress, while 54% of the respondents have not missed classes or academic deadlines due to stress.

TABLE 3.2 HAS STRESS AFFECTED YOUR ABILITY TO CONCENTRATE WHILE STUDYING?

HAS STRESS AFFECTED YOUR ABILITY TO	RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE
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CONCENTRATE WHILE STUDYING?		
Yes	97	64.7%
No	53	36.7%
TOTAL	150	100%

SOURCE: FIELD SURVEY 2025

From the table above, 64.7% of the respondents agrees that stress has affected their ability to concentrate while studying, while 36.7% of the respondents says that stress has not affected their concentration while studying.

TABLE 3.3 DO YOU BELIEVE YOUR ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE HAS DROPPED DUE TO STRESS?

DO YOU BELIEVE YOUR ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE HAS DROPPED DUE TO STRESS?	RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE
Strongly Agree	53	35.3%
Agree	76	50.7%
Neutral	18	12%
Disagree	5	3.3%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%
TOTAL	150	100%

SOURCE: FIELD SURVEY 2025

From the table above, 35.5% the respondents strongly agrees that their academic performance has dropped due to stress, 50.7% the respondents agrees that their academic performance has dropped due to stress, 12% the respondents are neutral on if stress has caused their academic performance to drop, 3.3% the

respondents disagree that their academic performance has dropped due to stress, and 0% the respondents strongly disagree that their academic performance has dropped due to stress.

TABLE 3.4 HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED ANY PHYSICAL OR EMOTIONAL BREAKDOWNS CAUSED BY SCHOOL-RELATED STRESS?

HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED ANY PHYSICAL OR EMOTIONAL BREAKDOWNS CAUSED BY SCHOOL-RELATED STRESS?	RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE
Yes	138	93%
No	12	8%
TOTAL	150	100%

SOURCE: FIELD SURVEY 2025

From the table above, data show that 93% of the respondents have experienced physical or emotional breakdown caused by school-related stress, while 8% of the respondents have not experience physical or emotional breakdown cause by school-related stress.

TABLE 3.5 HAVE YOU EVER EXPERIENCED HEALTH ISSUE DUE TO ACADEMIC-RELATED STRESS?

HAVE YOU EVER EXPERIENCED	RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE
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HEALTH ISSUE DUE TO ACADEMIC-RELATED STRESS?		
Yes	78	52%
No	72	48%
TOTAL	150	100%

SOURCE: FIELD SURVEY 2025

From the table above, 52% of the respondents have experienced health issues due to academic-related stress, while 48% of the respondents have not experienced health issues due to academic-related stress.

OBJECTIVE 3: COPING MECHANISM

TABLE 4.1 WHAT DO YOU USUALLY DO TO COPE WITH STRESS?

WHAT DO YOU USUALLY DO TO COPE WITH STRESS?	RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE
Sleep	108	72%
Exercise	0	0%
Talk to Friends or Family	24	16%
Read or Listens to Music	10	6.7%
Seek Professional Help	8	5.3%
TOTAL	150	100%

SOURCE: FIELD SURVEY 2025

From the table above, data show that student cope with stress through sleep, with the majority 72% of the respondents stating this, 0% of the respondents use exercise to cope with stress, 16% of the respondents talk to friends or family as a coping mechanism for stress, 6.7% of the respondents read or listens to music

as a coping mechanism for stress, and 5.3% of the respondents seeks professional help to cope with stress.

TABLE 4.2 DO YOU THINK SCHOOL PROVIDES ENOUGH SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS DEALING WITH STRESS?

DO YOU THINK SCHOOL PROVIDES ENOUGH SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS DEALING WITH STRESS?	RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE
Yes	63	42%
No	87	58%
TOTAL	150	100%

SOURCE: FIELD SURVEY 2025

From the table above, 42% of the respondents believe that school provides enough support for students dealing with stress, while 58% of the respondents believe that school do not provide enough support for students dealing with stress.

TABLE 4.3 HAVE YOU EVER SPOKEN TO A COUNSELOR OR THERAPIST REGARDING STRESS?

HAVE YOU EVER SPOKEN TO A COUNSELOR OR THERAPIST REGARDING STRESS?	RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE

Yes	28	18.7%
No	122	81.3%
TOTAL	150	100%

SOURCE: FIELD SURVEY 2025

From the table above, 18.7% of the respondents has spoken to a counselor or therapist regarding stress, while 81.3% of the respondents has never spoken to a counselor or therapist regarding stress.

TABLE 4.4 WOULD YOU BE OPEN TO ATTENDING STRESS MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS IF OFFERED?

WOULD YOU BE OPEN TO ATTENDING STRESS MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS IF OFFERED?	RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE
Yes	96	64%
No	54	36%
TOTAL	150	100%

SOURCE: FIELD SURVEY 2025

From the table above, 64% of the respondents are open to attending stress management programs if offered, while 36% of the respondents are not willing to attend stress management programs even if offered.

TABLE 4.5 IN YOUR OPINION, WHAT CAN FACULTY DO TO HELP REDUCE STUDENT STRESS?

IN YOUR OPINION, WHAT CAN	RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE

FACULTY DO TO HELP REDUCE STUDENT STRESS?		
Reduce academic workloads and space out deadlines	53	35.3%
Improve communication and access to lecture	40	26.7%
Encourage better awareness and participation in mental health support	27	18%
Provide more financial aids and student welfare support	30	20%
TOTAL	150	100%

SOURCE: FIELD SURVEY 2025

From the table above, categorizing different suggestions of the respondents, 35.3% of the respondents suggest reducing academic workloads and spacing out deadlines, 26.7% of the respondents suggest an improved communication and access to lecturers, 18% of the respondents suggest encouraging better awareness and participation in mental health support, and 20% of the respondents suggest providing more financial aids and students welfare supports.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

This study examined the causes, effects, and coping mechanisms of stress among final year students in the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Benin, focusing on how stress influences academic performance. The findings were drawn from quantitative data gathered through questionnaires distributed to 150 respondents across various departments.

- **Socio-Demographic Characteristics**

The majority of respondents (53%) were between the ages of 22–25, showing that most participants were young adults. Males constituted 56% of the sample, while females accounted for 44%. Most students (59.3%) resided on campus, and a large proportion (74%) were single. Respondents were drawn from multiple departments, in the faculty of Social Sciences.

- **Causes of Stress and its Relation to Academic Performance**

The data revealed that stress is highly prevalent among students. About 43.3% of respondents reported always experiencing academic-related stress, while 32% experienced it often. The major causes of stress were financial pressures (42%), examinations and tests (33.3%), and project work (9.3%).

Furthermore, 65.3% agreed that academic deadlines increase their stress levels, and 92% stated that stress has intensified in their final year. Many students (42.7%) described feeling very anxious during exams, highlighting the emotional strain associated with academic performance.

- **Effects of Stress on Academic Performance**

The study found that stress significantly impacts students' academic performance and well-being. About 46% of respondents admitted missing classes or deadlines due to stress, and 64.7% reported that stress reduced their concentration while studying. Additionally, 86% (combining "agree" and "strongly agree") believed that their academic performance had declined due to stress. A striking 93% had experienced physical or emotional breakdowns, and 52% reported health issues linked to academic stress.

- **Coping Mechanisms**

The most common coping strategy was sleeping (72%), followed by talking to friends or family (16%). Only 5.3% sought professional help, and none reported exercising as a coping strategy. Furthermore, 58% of respondents believed that the university does not provide enough support for students dealing with stress. Despite this, 64% said they would be open to attending stress management programs if offered. When asked how the faculty could help, 35.3% suggested reducing workloads and spacing out deadlines, while 26.7% recommended improving communication and access to lecturers.

5.2 CONCLUSION

The study concludes that academic stress is a widespread and serious challenge among university students, particularly final-year students. The primary causes include financial hardship, heavy academic workload, and the pressure of examinations. Stress has a measurable negative impact on students' focus, attendance, and overall academic performance, as well as their physical and emotional health.

Despite these challenges, most students rely on informal coping methods such as sleep and social support, while very few access professional counseling services. The findings indicate a critical gap in institutional support for mental health and stress management. Without proactive interventions, students' academic efficiency and well-being may continue to decline.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are made:

- **Improved Mental Health Support:**

The university should establish or strengthen counseling centers staffed with qualified professionals to provide confidential stress management services and periodic wellness workshops.

- **Academic Workload Adjustment:**

Faculty should coordinate to reduce overlapping deadlines, space out assessments, and review the volume of assignments to lessen academic pressure.

- **Financial Assistance and Welfare Support:**

Scholarships, grants, or work-study opportunities should be expanded to alleviate financial stress, which was identified as the leading source of anxiety.

- **Awareness and Sensitization Programs:**

Regular campaigns should be conducted to raise awareness about the impact of stress and encourage students to seek professional help rather than relying solely on sleep or avoidance.

- **Student-Faculty Relationship Improvement:**

Lecturers should adopt a more approachable and supportive attitude toward students. Open communication channels can help detect stress-related issues early and offer academic guidance.

- **Promotion of Healthy Coping Mechanisms:**

The university should encourage physical exercise, mindfulness sessions, and extracurricular activities as part of a holistic approach to stress management.

5.4 CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE

This study contributes to the understanding of how stress affects final year university students, particularly in Nigerian tertiary institutions. It highlights the dominance of financial and academic factors in causing stress and underscores

the urgent need for institutional reforms that promote mental health awareness and academic support systems.

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APPENDIX QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Respondent,

My name is **IGAGA EGHOGHO AYOMIDE**, a final-year student in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Benin. I am conducting a research study as part of the requirements for the award of a Bachelor's degree. This questionnaire is designed to gather information for my final year project titled "**AN ASSESSMENT OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN STRESS AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF FINAL-YEAR STUDENTS IN THE FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES, UNIVERSITY OF BENIN.**"

Your responses will be treated with utmost confidentiality and will be used solely for academic purposes. Kindly answer the questions honestly and to the best of your knowledge.

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

1. What is your age?
 18–21 22–25 26 and above
2. What is your gender?
 Male Female Prefer not to say
3. What is your department?
 Sociology and Anthropology Political Science Economic and Statistic Geography and Regional Planning Public Administration Social Works
4. Do you live on or off campus?
 On-campus Off-campus
5. Relationship status
 Single In a relationship Married Prefer not to say

SECTION B: RESEARCH QUESTION

OBJECTIVE 1: CAUSES OF STRESS AND IT'S RELATIONS TO ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

6. How often do you experience stress related to academic activities?
 Always Often Sometimes Rarely Never
7. Which of the following causes you the most stress? (Select all that apply)
 Exams and tests Project work Lectures and assignments Financial pressure Family issues Social pressure
8. Do academic deadlines affect your stress levels?

- Yes No
9. How do you feel before or during exam periods?
 Very anxious Slightly nervous Calm Indifferent
10. Do you believe stress has increased since entering final year?
 Yes No

OBJECTIVE 2: EFFECT OF STRESS ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

11. Has stress ever caused you to miss classes or academic deadlines?
 Yes No
12. Has stress affected your ability to concentrate while studying?
 Yes No
13. Do you believe your academic performance has dropped due to stress?
 Strongly agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly disagree
14. Have you experienced any physical or emotional breakdowns caused by school-related stress?
 Yes No
15. Have you ever experienced health issues due to academic-related stress?
 Yes No

OBJECTIVE 3: COPING MECHANISM

16. What do you usually do to cope with stress?
 Sleep Exercise Talk to friends or family Read or listen to music Seek professional help
17. Do you think the school provides enough support for students dealing with stress?
 Yes No
18. Have you ever spoken to a counselor or therapist regarding your stress?
 Yes No
19. Would you be open to attending stress management programs if offered?
 Yes No
20. In your opinion, what can the faculty do to help reduce student stress?
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