

**ASSESSMENT OF THE INFLUENCE OF STRESS ON ACADEMIC  
PERFORMANCE AMONG NURSING STUDENT'S IN UNIVERSITY  
OF BENIN**

**BY**

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BENIN CITY**

**OCTOBER, 2025**

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**IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE AWARD  
OF THE BACHELOR'S DEGREE IN NURSING SCIENCES**

**OCTOBER, 2025**

## DECLARATION

This is to declare that this research project titled **ASSESSMENT OF THE INFLUENCE OF STRESS ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AMONG NURSING STUDENTS IN UNIVERSITY OF BENIN** will be carried out by EKIEGINI PRECIOUS KELECHI. It will solely be the result of my work except where acknowledged as being derived from other person(s) or resources.

MATRICULATION NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_

DEPARTMENT/SCHOOL: **MEDICAL SURGICAL NURSING,**

**FACULTY: FACULTY OF NURSING SCIENCE**

UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, BENIN CITY.

Signature: .....

Date: .....

## CERTIFICATION/APPROVAL

This is to certify that this project titled “**ASSESSMENT OF THE INFLUENCE OF STRESS ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AMONG NURSING STUDENTS IN UNIVERSITY OF BENIN**” was carried out by **EKIEGINI PRECIOUS KELECHI** with Mat No. **BMS2001012** in the Faculty of Nursing Sciences, University of Benin, under the supervision of Mrs. INIOMOR MARY.

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Supervisor

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Head of Department (MED.SURG.)

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Sign & Date

External Examiner

\_\_\_\_\_  
Sign & Date

## **DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated to GOD ALMIGHTY who is providing me with the strength to complete my academic journey.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

First and foremost, I give all glory and honor to the Almighty God, the sovereign owner of my life. I am eternally grateful for His divine guidance, protection, and unfailing provision throughout my life and academic journey. Without Him, this research would not have been possible.

I would like to express my profound gratitude to Mrs. M. A. Iniomor, a distinguished scholar of high repute, whose invaluable contributions, expert guidance, and meticulous corrections were instrumental in shaping this research study. My sincere appreciation also goes to my Head of Department, Prof (Mrs.) C.E. Omorogbe, for her leadership and support.

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## ABSTRACT

*This study examined the influence of stress on the academic performance of undergraduate nursing students at the University of Benin. Using a cross-sectional survey design, data were collected from 282 students via structured questionnaires. Results showed that academic workload and clinical responsibilities were major stressors, with 44.9% and 76.4% of students respectively reporting significant stress related to these areas. While 76.4% found peer and instructor support beneficial for managing stress, 40.6% indicated limited access to coping resources. Stress was found to negatively impact concentration, motivation, examination performance, and information retention among many students. Despite these challenges, students commonly employed coping strategies such as listening to music, social interaction, and spiritual practices. The majority endorsed interventions including time management workshops, peer support groups, and counselling services to mitigate stress. Recommendations focus on implementing structured support systems and stress management programs to enhance academic outcomes and overall well-being, highlighting the importance of continuous evaluation to improve nursing education.*

**Keywords:** Stress, Academic Performance, Nursing Students, Coping Mechanisms, University of Benin.

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## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY**

Stress is a multifaceted psychological and physiological response to internal or external stimuli that disrupt an individual's state of equilibrium. It is a common phenomenon in contemporary life and is particularly pronounced in academic environments. In tertiary institutions, students are exposed to various stressors including academic workload, time pressure, financial constraints, social challenges, and uncertainties about the future (Jack et al., 2021). While a moderate amount of stress may act as a motivator for improved performance, persistent or high levels of stress can result in negative outcomes such as anxiety, depression, cognitive impairments, and reduced academic productivity (Deng et al., 2022). According to the World Health Organization (WHO, 2023), stress-related disorders account for a significant proportion of mental health issues globally, with over 264 million people affected by depression and anxiety—conditions often linked to prolonged stress exposure (Aloufi et al., 2021). Academic stress has been recognized worldwide as a major factor influencing students' academic achievement and general well-being, particularly in health-related disciplines such as nursing (Ali et al., 2024).

Nursing education, by its very nature, is rigorous, demanding, and emotionally taxing. It requires students to acquire theoretical knowledge, develop practical skills, and apply clinical judgment in real-life healthcare settings (Afonne et al., 2023; Akin-Otto et al., 2022). This dual requirement of academic excellence and clinical competence places significant pressure on nursing students. Clinical postings involve direct patient care, exposure to human suffering, emotional strain, and long hours of physically and mentally demanding tasks. Furthermore, students must simultaneously prepare for assessments, meet assignment

deadlines, and perform well in theoretical examinations (Brotobor et al., 2021). A cross-national study by Deng et al. (2022) revealed that over 50% of nursing students worldwide reported high to very high levels of academic stress, with clinical placements being the most commonly cited stressor. Similarly, a study conducted at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria, by Akin-Otiko et al. (2022) indicated that 68.7% of nursing students experienced moderate to severe stress, with academic workload and fear of failure ranking as top stressors.

In the context of Nigeria, the challenges faced by nursing students are further compounded by systemic issues such as inadequate educational infrastructure, shortage of qualified lecturers, overcrowded classrooms, limited access to clinical resources, and a generally under-resourced healthcare system (Ali et al., 2024). According to a report by the Nigerian Association of Nurses and Midwives (NANNM, 2021), the student-to-clinical instructor ratio in many public nursing institutions is as high as 30:1, far exceeding the recommended 10:1 ratio for effective clinical supervision (Okoro et al., 2021). These limitations hinder the effective delivery of nursing education and create an additional layer of stress for students who are expected to meet high academic and professional standards despite these constraints (Ugwu et al., 2023). The University of Benin, being one of the foremost universities in Nigeria, offers a Bachelor of Nursing Science (BNSc) degree through its Department of Nursing Science. The program is highly competitive and structured to equip students with both academic and practical competencies. However, the pressure to maintain academic excellence, coupled with the demands of clinical training, often places students under intense psychological pressure.

Several studies conducted both locally and internationally have established a strong link between stress and academic performance. Excessive stress has been associated with diminished cognitive function, impaired memory retention, poor time management, and reduced concentration, all of which can negatively impact academic outcomes (Younas et al.,

2022). For instance, research by Zhang et al. (2024) in Jordan found that nursing students with high stress levels had statistically lower GPA scores than their less-stressed peers. In Nigeria, a study by Okoro et al. (2021) conducted at the University of Nigeria Nsukka reported that 74.2% of nursing students believed that stress negatively affected their academic performance. In some cases, chronic stress has led to burnout, substance abuse, absenteeism, and even withdrawal from academic programs. Conversely, it has also been noted that when properly managed, stress can lead to heightened alertness, increased motivation, and improved academic engagement (Sultana et al., 2023). This paradoxical effect underscores the importance of understanding how individual students perceive and respond to stress. Factors such as personality traits, social support, coping mechanisms, and resilience levels all influence the way stress affects academic performance (Mauriz et al., 2021).

Despite the evident relevance of this issue, there is a paucity of empirical studies specifically focusing on the stress experienced by nursing students in the Nigerian university context, particularly within the University of Benin. While some studies have explored general academic stress among students, there remains a gap in research that examines the unique stressors encountered by nursing students and how these influence their academic outcomes. Addressing this gap is essential for formulating appropriate interventions and support systems aimed at improving students' learning experiences, mental well-being, and academic success (McBride et al., 2021).

This study, therefore, seeks to assess the influence of stress on the academic performance of nursing students in the University of Benin. By identifying the key sources and levels of stress, examining their effects on academic performance, and exploring the coping strategies employed by students, the research aims to provide evidence-based recommendations for stress management interventions. Such interventions could enhance not only students'

academic outcomes but also their preparedness for future professional responsibilities in a demanding healthcare environment.

## **1.2 STATEMENT OF PROBLEM**

Stress among university students, particularly nursing students, has reached alarming levels in recent years. The academic demands on nursing students are uniquely rigorous, combining extensive theoretical knowledge acquisition with practical clinical training. For students at the University of Benin, this dual demand is further compounded by systemic issues such as overcrowded classrooms, limited access to clinical facilities, and inadequate institutional support. These factors create an environment where stress is a pervasive issue with significant implications for students' academic performance and overall well-being (Aloufi et al., 2021).

Numerous studies have established the detrimental impact of stress on academic performance. Stress affects cognitive functioning, reduces concentration, and impairs memory retention—skills essential for nursing students who must process complex information and make critical decisions in clinical settings (Mojarrab et al., 2020). High stress levels are also associated with decreased motivation and lower self-esteem, which can further impair students' ability to meet academic expectations (Hamm & Yeh, 2024). Despite the global recognition of this problem, there is a dearth of localized research exploring the specific challenges faced by nursing students in Nigerian universities, including the University of Benin. This gap in the literature is particularly concerning given the unique socio-economic and institutional realities in Nigeria, which exacerbate the stressors experienced by students. The University of Benin nursing students face additional stressors unique to their educational context. These include high student-to-faculty ratios, outdated educational resources, and societal pressures to excel academically despite limited institutional support. Cultural attitudes toward mental health also play a role; the stigma associated with seeking psychological help often prevents students from accessing available resources, further compounding their stress levels (Afonne

et al., 2023). Clinical training, a critical component of nursing education, presents additional stressors. Students are often exposed to emotionally taxing situations, such as patient suffering and death, which can lead to compassion fatigue and burnout (Sharififard et al., 2020). These experiences are intensified in settings where clinical supervision is inadequate and resources are scarce, as is often the case in Nigerian healthcare facilities (Ugwu et al., 2023). The inability to balance these clinical demands with academic requirements creates a cycle of stress that negatively impacts both domains.

While international studies have provided valuable insights into the relationship between stress and academic performance, their findings are often based on contexts that differ significantly from Nigeria's. For instance, studies conducted in Western countries typically assume the availability of robust institutional support systems, such as counseling services and stress management programs, which are often lacking in Nigerian universities. Consequently, applying these findings to the Nigerian context without considering these differences may yield limited effectiveness. Addressing this issue requires a comprehensive understanding of the unique stressors faced by Nigerian nursing students and their impact on academic performance. Research in this area is critical not only for improving student outcomes but also for ensuring that future nurses are well-prepared to meet the demands of their profession. The current lack of empirical evidence on stress and academic performance among nursing students in Nigeria underscores the need for localized studies that consider the specific challenges and coping mechanisms relevant to this population. This study aims to fill this gap by exploring the influence of stress on academic performance among nursing students at the University of Benin. By identifying key stressors, examining their effects on academic outcomes, and evaluating effective coping strategies, the research seeks to provide actionable recommendations for alleviating stress and enhancing student performance. The

findings will not only contribute to the academic literature but also inform the development of policies and interventions tailored to the needs of Nigerian nursing students.

### **AIM OF THE STUDY**

This study aims to assess the influence of stress on the academic performance of nursing students at the University of Benin, Benin City, Edo State.

### **1.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

The objectives of the study are as follows;

1. To measure the level of stress among students' nurses at the university of Benin, Benin City, Edo State using Nursing Stress Scale.
2. To assess the impact of stress on the academic performance of nursing students at the University of Benin, Benin City Edo State.
3. To investigate the factors contributing to stress experienced by nursing students at the University of Benin, Benin City, Edo State.
4. To identify coping mechanisms used by nursing students to manage stress at the University of Benin, Benin City, Edo State.
5. To recommend possible interventions to manage stress among nursing students at the University of Benin, Benin City, Edo State.

### **1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

1. What is the level of stress among students' nurses of the University of Benin, Benin City, Edo State using Nursing Stress Scale?
2. What is the impact of stress on the academic performance of nursing students at the university of Benin?

3. What are the factors contributing to stress experienced by nursing students at the University of Benin?
4. What coping mechanisms do nursing students at the university of Benin employ to manage stress?
5. What Strategies can be implemented reduce stress and enhance academic performance among nursing students at the University of Benin, Benin City, Edo State.

### **1.5 HYPOTHESES**

1. There is a significant relationship between the level of stress and academic performance among nursing students at the University of Benin, Benin City, Edo State.

### **1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

This study is of significant importance as it explores the relationship between stress and academic performance among nursing students, a subject that has both educational and health-related implications. The findings will contribute to a better understanding of how psychological stress affects the learning capabilities and academic success of students in a high-stakes, performance-driven discipline such as nursing.

Firstly, the study is beneficial to nursing students, as it provides insight into the specific sources and effects of stress on their academic life. By identifying the common stressors and their impact on performance, students can become more aware of their mental health and adopt more effective coping strategies. Increased awareness and better stress management can lead to improved academic outcomes and a more balanced educational experience.

Secondly, the study will be valuable to lecturers, academic advisors, and clinical instructors. Understanding the stress patterns and performance challenges students face will enable them to provide better guidance, academic support, and mentorship. It may also inform

instructional design, assessment planning, and clinical scheduling in a way that reduces unnecessary stress without compromising educational quality.

Thirdly, the research findings will be relevant to university administrators and policymakers within the education and health sectors. The study can inform the development of policies and programs that support students' mental well-being, such as academic counseling services, mental health awareness campaigns, and stress management workshops. Institutions can also use the findings to restructure nursing curricula in ways that balance academic rigor with psychological sustainability.

Furthermore, this study holds value for healthcare institutions and future employers of nursing graduates. By identifying how stress during training affects academic performance—and potentially professional competence—it underscores the need for systemic support throughout the educational journey. It also emphasizes the importance of building resilience and stress-management skills that can carry over into professional practice.

Lastly, the research will serve as a useful reference for future researchers in related fields such as psychology, public health, education, and medical training. It fills an existing gap in literature, particularly within the Nigerian context, and lays the foundation for further empirical exploration of stress-related academic challenges in nursing and other healthcare-related disciplines.

In summary, the study's findings are expected to lead to actionable recommendations that promote healthier learning environments, enhance academic performance, and contribute to the production of more competent, well-adjusted nursing professionals.

## **1.7 SCOPE OF THE STUDY**

This study is limited to undergraduate nursing students enrolled in the Department of Nursing Science at the University of Benin. It focuses specifically on assessing the influence of stress

on their academic performance, identifying major sources of stress, examining the extent of its impact, and exploring coping strategies adopted by the students. The study does not include students from other departments or institutions, and it is restricted to data collected within a defined academic session. Both theoretical and clinical stressors are considered, but the research does not extend to long-term professional outcomes beyond the university setting.

### **1.8 OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS**

1. Stress: A psychological and physiological response to internal or external pressures or demands that exceed an individual's coping ability. In this study, stress refers specifically to the mental and emotional strain experienced by nursing students as a result of academic workload, clinical responsibilities, and related challenges.

2. Academic Performance: The measurable outcome of a student's academic activities, typically represented by grade point average (GPA), examination results, or continuous assessment scores. In this study, it denotes the level of academic achievement of nursing students as recorded by the institution.

3. Coping Strategies: The specific behavioral and psychological techniques individuals use to manage stress. For the purpose of this study, coping strategies refer to the methods nursing students employ to reduce or handle stress, such as time management, relaxation techniques, seeking social support, or avoidance.

4. Nursing Students: Individuals enrolled in the Bachelor of Nursing Science (BNSc) program at the University of Benin. This includes students at various levels (e.g., 200L, 300L, 400L, 500L) who are undergoing both academic and clinical training.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.0 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter reviews existing literature on the influence of stress on academic performance among nursing students. It aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the factors contributing to stress, its impact on academic outcomes, and strategies for stress management in nursing education. The sources reviewed include recent studies from the last four years, with a focus on their relevance and limitations in terms of publication years.

#### **2.1 CONCEPTUAL REVIEW**

This section examines the concept of stress, academic stress, clinical stress, personal stress, the impact of stress on academic performance, and coping mechanisms in nursing education, as well as a review of relevant literature in this area. A conceptual review outlines the major ideas, frameworks, and constructs relevant to a study, helping to explain how key concepts interrelate and guide the research. In this study, the central concepts include stress, academic performance, and the unique context of nursing education. Understanding these elements provides a foundation for analyzing how stress influences the academic success of nursing students at the University of Benin.

##### **2.1.1 CONCEPT OF STRESS IN NURSING EDUCATION**

###### **DEFINITION AND OVERVIEW**

Stress is a physiological and psychological response to perceived challenges, threats, or demands that exceed an individual's adaptive capacity (Agorastos & Chrousos, 2021). In the context of nursing education, stress refers to the emotional, mental, and physical strain

experienced by students due to academic, clinical, and personal challenges (Aryuwat et al., 2022). Nursing students face multiple stressors, including rigorous coursework, clinical responsibilities, time constraints, and the emotional demands of patient care, which can significantly impact their academic performance and overall well-being (Wei et al., 2021). Stress in nursing education is often categorized into academic stress, clinical stress, and personal stress (Chaabane et al., 2021). Academic stress arises from factors such as heavy coursework, exams, and assignment deadlines. Clinical stress is linked to the responsibilities of patient care, fear of making mistakes, and dealing with complex medical situations. Personal stress includes financial struggles, family obligations, and social pressures, all of which may contribute to students' overall stress levels (Moore et al., 2021). Stress is a psychological and physiological response to situations perceived as challenging, threatening, or beyond one's coping resources. It is a universal phenomenon that affects individuals across all age groups and professions. Hans Selye, a pioneer in stress research, defined stress as "the nonspecific response of the body to any demand made upon it." Stress triggers a range of biological responses, such as increased heart rate, release of cortisol, and heightened alertness, which are useful in short bursts but harmful when prolonged (Wei et al., 2021).

Stress can be categorized into two major types:

- Eustress – a positive form of stress that enhances motivation and performance. For instance, mild stress before an exam can help a student focus better and perform optimally.
- Distress – a negative form of stress that can lead to anxiety, reduced performance, and health issues. When a student is overwhelmed by the demands of academic life, this distress can hinder learning and cognitive functioning.

In the context of university students, stress often results from academic workload, time constraints, social obligations, family responsibilities, financial pressures, and uncertainty

about the future. If unmanaged, chronic stress may affect not only mental and physical health but also academic performance.

### **PHYSIOLOGICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECTS OF STRESS**

The effects of stress on nursing students can be physiological, psychological, and behavioral (Mauriz et al., 2021). Physiologically, stress activates the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal (HPA) axis, leading to the release of cortisol, which, when prolonged, can result in immune suppression, increased heart rate, fatigue, and headaches (Mbiyzenyuy & Qulu, 2024). Psychologically, stress is associated with anxiety, depression, reduced concentration, and decreased motivation, all of which can negatively affect academic performance (Murad, 2021).

Research suggests that prolonged exposure to stress can lead to burnout, emotional exhaustion, and diminished cognitive function, making it difficult for students to retain information and perform effectively in academic and clinical settings (Gavelin et al., 2021). High stress levels have also been linked to poor time management, decreased problem-solving ability, and lower academic achievement among nursing students (DiKmen, 2022).

### **RELEVANCE OF STRESS IN NURSING EDUCATION**

Understanding stress in nursing education is crucial because it directly affects students' learning outcomes, clinical competence, and future professional development. High-stress levels have been identified as a major contributing factor to academic failure, attrition, and reduced confidence in clinical decision-making (Wei et al., 2021b). A study conducted by Lavoie-Tremblay et al. (2021b) found that nursing students who experience excessive stress exhibit lower academic performance and are more likely to experience difficulty in transitioning into professional nursing roles.

Nursing education is widely recognized as one of the most demanding academic programs. It requires students to acquire theoretical knowledge, develop practical skills in real-life clinical settings, and maintain a high level of emotional resilience. Nursing students often face a heavier workload than many of their peers in other disciplines. This includes lengthy lectures, laboratory sessions, clinical placements, night shifts, frequent assessments, and professional examinations (Murad, 2021). Additionally, the emotionally intense nature of clinical practice, where students may witness illness, suffering, and death, can compound stress levels. They must also manage interpersonal relationships with patients, clinical instructors, hospital staff, and fellow students. These multi-dimensional pressures can make nursing students particularly vulnerable to stress, which, if not well managed, may affect their learning abilities, decision-making, and overall academic achievement (Wei et al., 2021).

### **2.1.2 SOURCES OF STRESS AMONG NURSING STUDENTS**

Nursing students experience multiple stressors throughout their academic journey, which can significantly impact their well-being and academic performance. Stress in nursing education is typically categorized into three main areas: academic stress, clinical stress, and personal stress (Chaabane et al., 2021b). Understanding these stressors is essential for developing strategies to mitigate their effects and support students in their professional development.

#### **ACADEMIC STRESS**

Academic stress arises from the demanding nature of nursing education, including coursework, exams, assignments, and time constraints. The heavy academic workload, coupled with the need to balance multiple subjects, creates significant pressure on students (Thornby et al., 2023). Nursing programs are known for their rigorous curricula, requiring students to master complex theoretical knowledge, pharmacology, and clinical skills within a limited timeframe (Pleshkan, 2023). One of the primary contributors to academic stress is the

pressure to perform well in examinations and assessments. Nursing students must achieve high grades to progress through their programs and meet professional standards (Fortes et al., 2022). The fear of failure and the high expectations placed on students by faculty, peers, and families can exacerbate stress levels (Nunes et al., 2021). In addition, time management challenges often arise due to overlapping deadlines, practical sessions, and study requirements, making it difficult for students to maintain a balanced schedule (Patel & Singh, 2022). Research by Ali et al. (2024) found that nursing students experience significantly higher levels of academic stress compared to students in other healthcare disciplines due to the intensive nature of their coursework and the continuous need for self-directed learning.

Academic performance refers to the level of achievement students reach in their educational pursuits, typically measured by grades, cumulative grade point average (CGPA), pass/fail rates, and examination results. It is an important indicator of a student's understanding of subject matter and readiness for professional practice. Academic performance can be influenced by several factors, including intellectual ability, motivation, learning environment, teaching methods, and, crucially, emotional and psychological well-being (Nunes et al., 2021). Research has consistently shown a link between stress and academic performance. While low to moderate levels of stress may enhance performance by increasing alertness and concentration, high levels of chronic stress can impair memory, reduce concentration, lower motivation, and increase the likelihood of academic failure. Nursing students experiencing intense stress may struggle to retain information, participate actively in class, or perform well in exams and clinical evaluations (Ali et al., 2024).

## **CLINICAL STRESS**

Clinical stress stems from students' direct engagement in patient care during clinical placements. These experiences expose students to real-world healthcare settings, which,

while essential for learning, can also be highly stressful. Factors contributing to clinical stress include:

- 1. Fear of Making Mistakes** – Many students worry about harming patients due to a lack of experience and clinical competence (Jack et al., 2021b). The fear of making errors, particularly with medication administration and critical procedures, is a significant stressor (El-Ashry et al., 2022).
- 2. High Expectations from Clinical Instructors and Staff** – Clinical instructors and healthcare professionals expect students to perform at a high level, which can create performance anxiety and self-doubt (Aller & Almrwani, 2022).
- 3. Emotional Demands of Patient Care** – Nursing students often deal with emotionally distressing situations, such as patient suffering, terminal illnesses, and death (Yoong et al., 2023). These experiences can lead to emotional exhaustion and compassion fatigue.
- 4. Workload and Long Shifts** – Clinical rotations require students to work long hours, often in high-pressure environments (Hawkins et al., 2021). The need to balance academic requirements with clinical responsibilities increases stress levels.
- 5. Interpersonal Challenges** – Nursing students frequently encounter difficult interactions with patients, families, and healthcare staff (Casafont et al., 2020). Negative experiences, such as bullying or lack of support from nurses and instructors, can negatively affect students' confidence and learning experience (Zheng et al., 2024).

## **PERSONAL STRESS**

In addition to academic and clinical stressors, nursing students also face personal challenges that can further impact their mental health and academic performance. These include:

1. **Financial Difficulties** – Many nursing students experience financial strain due to tuition fees, living expenses, and the costs associated with clinical placements (Usher et al., 2021). Working part-time to support themselves financially can reduce the time available for studying, increasing stress levels (Summer et al., 2023).
2. **Family and Social Responsibilities** – Balancing academic commitments with family responsibilities, social obligations, and personal relationships can be overwhelming (Smith et al., 2020). Students who are also caregivers for family members often struggle to manage both responsibilities effectively.
3. **Health Issues** – The demanding nature of nursing programs can take a toll on students' physical and mental health (Moyes et al., 2022). Poor sleep, unhealthy eating habits, and lack of exercise are common among nursing students, exacerbating stress levels.
4. **Lack of Social Support** – Emotional support from family, friends, and peers plays a crucial role in coping with stress. Students who lack a strong support system often report higher stress levels and increased feelings of isolation (Filho et al., 2021).

The combination of academic, clinical, and personal stressors creates a challenging environment for nursing students. Understanding these stressors is essential for developing interventions that enhance students' resilience and well-being. Effective coping strategies, institutional support, and mental health programs can help mitigate the negative effects of stress and improve overall academic performance and professional development.

### **2.1.3 EFFECTS OF STRESS ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE**

Stress is a significant factor influencing the academic performance of nursing students. While moderate levels of stress can serve as a motivator, excessive or chronic stress can negatively impact cognitive function, learning abilities, and overall academic success (Jenkins et al.,

2021). Stress affects nursing students in three main areas: cognitive performance, academic achievement, and clinical competence.

## **COGNITIVE PERFORMANCE AND LEARNING ABILITIES**

Chronic stress has been shown to impair cognitive processes such as memory, concentration, and problem-solving skills, which are essential for academic success (Almarzouki, 2024).

High levels of stress trigger the release of cortisol, a stress hormone that can interfere with brain function, leading to:

1. **Difficulty Concentrating** – Nursing students under stress often struggle to focus during lectures and while studying, reducing their ability to absorb and retain information (Urban et al., 2022).
2. **Memory Impairment** – Stress negatively affects short-term and long-term memory, making it difficult for students to recall critical concepts, especially during lecture periods.

In summary, stress is a multifaceted concept with both positive and negative implications, depending on its intensity and duration. For nursing students at the University of Benin, stress can arise from numerous academic, clinical, and personal sources. Given the importance of academic success for professional development and patient care, understanding the relationship between stress and academic performance is crucial. This study seeks to explore that relationship, identify contributing stressors, and provide recommendations for effective stress management to enhance learning and academic achievement.

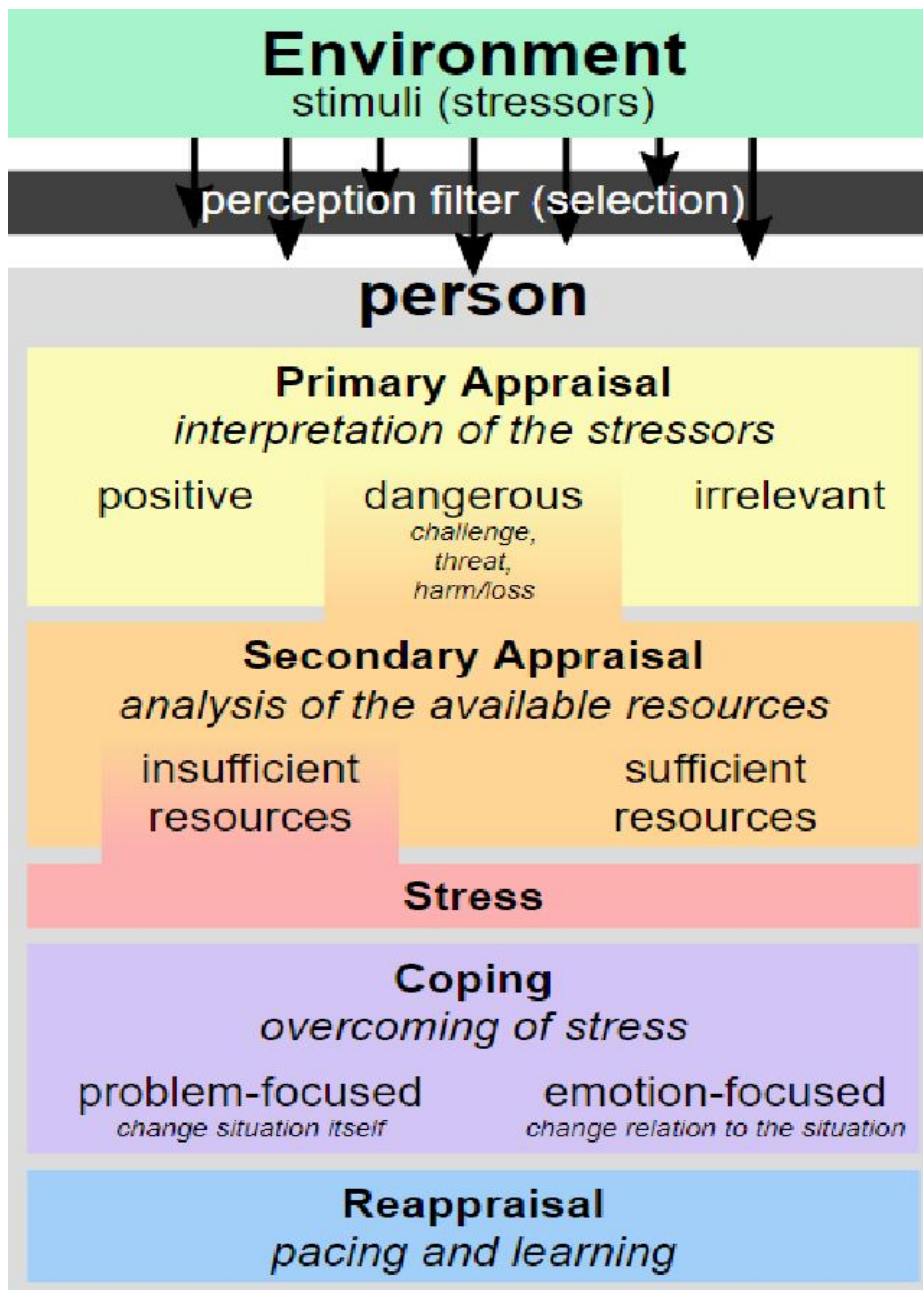
## 2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study adopts Lazarus and Folkman's Transactional Model of Stress and Coping (1984) as its theoretical foundation. This model is highly relevant for understanding the influence of stress on the academic performance of nursing students.

### TRANSACTIONAL MODEL OF STRESS AND COPING

Lazarus and Folkman's Transactional Model of Stress and Coping (1984) posits that stress is not merely a stimulus or response but a dynamic process involving an individual's perception and reaction to stressors. The model emphasizes the role of cognitive appraisal and coping mechanisms in determining how individuals experience and manage stress.

1. **Primary Appraisal** – In this stage, an individual evaluates whether a particular event or situation poses a threat, challenge, or harm to their well-being. Nursing students, for instance, may assess academic workloads, clinical responsibilities, and examinations as potential stressors.
2. **Secondary Appraisal** – Once a stressor is identified, individuals evaluate their coping resources and options. This includes assessing personal strengths, social support, and available resources to manage stress effectively. Nursing students may rely on problem-solving skills, peer support, or institutional resources to handle academic stress.
3. **Coping Strategies** – The model identifies two major types of coping strategies:
  - **Problem-Focused Coping:** This involves taking direct action to mitigate stress, such as time management, seeking academic help, and utilizing stress-reduction programs.
  - **Emotion-Focused Coping:** This involves managing emotional responses to stress, such as seeking social support, practicing mindfulness, or engaging in relaxation techniques.



**Fig2.1(Lazarus and Folkman’s Transactional Model of Stress and Coping -1984)**

### **2.2.2 APPLICATION TO THIS STUDY**

The Transactional Model of Stress and Coping provides a comprehensive framework for analyzing how nursing students perceive and respond to academic stress. Understanding these cognitive and behavioral processes can help educators and policymakers develop targeted interventions that enhance stress management and improve academic performance. Research has shown that students with effective coping mechanisms perform better academically and

demonstrate greater resilience in demanding educational environments ((Fullerton et al., 2021; Afzali et al., 2024). By applying this theory, the study seeks to explore the various academic stressors affecting nursing students, their coping mechanisms, and the impact on their overall academic performance. The insights gained can inform strategies to foster resilience and academic success among nursing students. This model is particularly relevant to understanding how nursing students at the University of Benin experience and manage academic stress. Nursing students face multiple academic, clinical, and social stressors, such as heavy coursework, examinations, and emotional challenges during clinical placements. How they appraise these stressors and the strategies they adopt to cope with them can significantly influence their academic performance. For example, a student who appraises an upcoming examination as a threat and perceives a lack of adequate study time or support may experience high stress levels. If the student lacks effective coping strategies or fails to seek help, their academic performance may be negatively affected. On the other hand, a student who views the same exam as a challenge and employs problem-focused coping strategies (e.g., organizing a study schedule or joining a study group) is more likely to manage stress positively and perform better academically.

Several recent studies have applied the transactional model to nursing education and student performance. Park and Choi (2021) demonstrated that students with higher levels of self-efficacy and adaptive coping skills performed better academically under stress. Similarly, Khezri et al. (2022) found that the way students appraise academic challenges directly correlates with their emotional well-being and academic outcomes. Alreshidi et al. (2023) further reinforced that effective coping mechanisms can buffer the adverse effects of stress among healthcare students. Furthermore, the model's emphasis on subjective appraisal aligns with the individual variability seen in students' responses to similar academic demands. Not all students respond to stress in the same way; some thrive under pressure, while others

struggle. By adopting the transactional perspective, this study acknowledges the importance of both personal and environmental factors in shaping stress responses and academic outcomes.

## **2.3 EMPIRICAL REVIEW**

This section reviews recent empirical studies that have examined the relationship between stress and academic performance among nursing students. The review focuses on three key areas: studies on academic stress in nursing education, effects of stress on academic performance, and coping mechanisms that influence academic success.

### **2.3.1 The Level of Stress Among Nursing Students**

Several empirical studies have examined the level of stress among nursing students and consistently revealed that they are exposed to moderate to high levels of academic and personal stress due to the demanding nature of nursing education. Anieche and Ottiwu (2024), in a cross-sectional study involving 366 student nurses across Colleges of Nursing Sciences in Anambra State, Nigeria, found that more than half of the respondents (52.7%) experienced academic stress, with 78% identifying the large volume of coursework as the main stressor and 67.5% reporting financial difficulties as an additional burden. Coping strategies used by students included seeking professional support from senior nurses, relying on family support, and engaging in leisure activities such as listening to music and watching movies, with the study further showing that demographic factors were significantly associated with coping approaches. Similarly, Kaur et al. (2022), in a descriptive study of 100 B.Sc. nursing students in Punjab, India, reported that 94% of participants experienced moderate levels of stressors, while 69% reported moderate stress, 20% mild stress, and 11% severe stress, with findings highlighting that stress adversely impacted students' physiological, psychological, and social well-being, though no significant association was found between stress levels and socio-

demographic variables. Extending this evidence, Villan and Cunanan (2025) surveyed 719 nursing students from both public and private universities in the Philippines and found that students experienced high stress ( $M = 3.89$ ,  $SD = 0.977$ ) alongside academic burnout ( $M = 3.65$ ,  $SD = 1.10$ ), with predictors of burnout including fear of failure, personal inadequacy, and poor study facilities, indicating that stress is a strong determinant of psychological distress and long-term disengagement from academic work. In addition, Al-Sayaghi et al. (2023) examined 150 internship nursing students at Alexandria University and established a relationship between self-esteem and stress coping strategies, showing that students with higher self-esteem were more likely to use adaptive strategies such as problem-solving and seeking social support, whereas those with lower self-esteem relied on avoidance coping, which worsened stress outcomes. Collectively, these studies affirm that nursing students across diverse contexts are significantly affected by stress stemming from coursework intensity, financial constraints, fear of academic failure, and personal inadequacy, with consequences ranging from burnout to impaired psychological well-being; however, effective coping strategies, supportive institutional policies, and self-esteem enhancement interventions can help mitigate these challenges and promote resilience among student nurses.

### **2.3.2 The Relationship Between Stress and Academic Performance Among Nursing Students**

Numerous empirical studies have consistently demonstrated a strong relationship between stress and academic performance among nursing students. The demanding nature of nursing education—characterized by rigorous coursework, frequent examinations, clinical placements, and high expectations—makes nursing students particularly vulnerable to academic stress. Stress, when left unmanaged, has been shown to negatively influence various aspects of academic performance, including cognitive processing, memory retention, concentration, and

motivation. Silva et al. (2021) conducted a large-scale cross-sectional study involving 520 undergraduate nursing students across three universities and found that 78% reported moderate to severe stress levels. The study revealed that those experiencing high levels of stress exhibited a notable reduction in academic performance, with a GPA decline of approximately 0.5 points compared to their peers with lower stress levels. The study concluded that academic stress, particularly during examination and clinical periods, significantly impaired students' cognitive function, reducing their ability to recall essential information. In a study by Deng et al. (2022), which surveyed 370 nursing students in China, the authors found that academic stress was a significant predictor of poor concentration, decreased academic motivation, and lower retention of course material. More than 60% of respondents reported difficulty focusing during lectures and clinical briefings due to persistent stress and anxiety. The study also linked increased stress to sleep disturbances, which further compromised academic performance. Sultana et al. (2023) surveyed 450 nursing students in Pakistan and found that approximately 65% reported stress stemming from clinical rotations, time constraints, and assignment overload. This stress led to increased absenteeism and reduced academic participation. According to the study, 42% of students who experienced consistent stress missed at least one major academic deadline, while 28% failed to submit assignments on time, resulting in lower course grades. Wu et al. (2021) explored the effects of perceived stress on course failure rates among nursing students. Their study of 312 students revealed that those with high perceived stress were 40% more likely to fail at least one course. The authors emphasized that stress not only affects academic performance through cognitive impairment but also through a decline in psychological well-being, leading to demotivation, procrastination, and reduced class attendance. Alshareef et al. (2024) investigated the neurological and psychological consequences of chronic academic stress among final-year nursing students. The study found that long-term exposure to stress

impaired memory recall, reduced attention span, and compromised problem-solving abilities. Students under chronic stress performed significantly lower in clinical skill evaluations and theory-based examinations compared to those with effective stress management practices. Additionally, Awosoga et al. (2020) reported that stress among nursing students could be attributed to a combination of academic, emotional, and environmental stressors. Their study, which included both qualitative and quantitative data from 310 participants, showed that stress contributed to feelings of burnout and academic fatigue. Over 55% of students acknowledged that stress directly influenced their decision-making processes during clinical placements and assessments. A similar trend was observed in a multi-center study by Kaya et al. (2022), which revealed that 70% of nursing students who experienced high stress levels also reported a decline in their academic self-efficacy. The study highlighted that students with lower self-efficacy were more likely to avoid academic challenges, delay tasks, and perceive academic success as unattainable, thus perpetuating a cycle of academic underperformance. The empirical evidence consistently shows that stress has a multidimensional impact on the academic lives of nursing students. It interferes with mental clarity, disrupts sleep patterns, decreases motivation, and can even lead to mental health issues such as anxiety and depression—all of which compound academic difficulties. These findings point to the urgent need for targeted interventions such as mental health services, stress reduction programs, and time management training within nursing curricula to support academic resilience and performance.

### **2.3.3 Factors Contributing to Stress Among Nursing Students**

Nursing students face a unique set of academic and clinical demands, which often result in high stress levels that can adversely affect their mental health and academic performance. Research has consistently identified multiple sources of stress, ranging from academic

workload and clinical responsibilities to financial challenges and personal life issues. A study conducted by Fauzi et al. (2021) in Malaysia among 396 nursing students found that 72% identified academic workload as a major stressor, followed by 64% citing clinical responsibilities, 58% struggling with financial issues, and 45% experiencing personal life-related stress. These stressors, especially when overlapping, can lead to emotional exhaustion, decreased academic engagement, and eventual burnout. Marsch et al. (2024) conducted a cross-sectional study involving 600 nursing students across three universities and found that 70% of students reported coursework deadlines as the most pressing stressor. Clinical placements were cited by 62% of students, while examination pressure affected 55%. The study highlighted that final-year students tended to report higher stress levels due to cumulative academic responsibilities and preparation for national licensure exams. Similarly, Gutiérrez-Puertas et al. (2021), in their study of Spanish nursing students, reported that 80% experienced elevated stress and anxiety levels due to clinical responsibilities, especially during patient care interactions. The anticipation of making mistakes, performing procedures under supervision, and dealing with real patients heightened students' anxiety, often leading to reduced confidence and impaired clinical performance. In Canada, Lavoie-Tremblay et al. (2021) examined stressors specific to nursing students in their final year and identified time management difficulties (67%) and fear of making clinical errors (53%) as critical contributors to stress. These concerns were particularly pronounced during intensive care rotations and emergency room postings, where the stakes were high, and support was sometimes insufficient. Additionally, Younas et al. (2022) highlighted that first-year nursing students experience heightened stress while adjusting to the rigorous demands of the nursing curriculum. Their study, which included 520 students across four universities, found that 61% of first-year students struggled with adapting to academic expectations, while 49% reported difficulties transitioning into clinical environments. This adjustment phase often leads to

anxiety and self-doubt, especially among students without prior healthcare experience. Furthermore, Shaban et al. (2023), in a study of Jordanian nursing students, found that 68% reported interpersonal conflicts with peers and instructors as a notable stressor. These relational issues were often rooted in competition, communication gaps, and perceived lack of faculty support. Students who lacked effective coping mechanisms were more prone to emotional distress and disengagement. Collectively, these studies reveal that stress among nursing students is multifaceted and dynamic, influenced by both internal and external factors. The intensity of stress often varies by academic level, individual coping capacity, institutional support, and personal circumstances. Therefore, a holistic approach that includes academic counseling, time management training, peer mentorship, and financial aid programs is necessary to mitigate these stressors effectively.

#### **2.3.4 Coping Strategies and Interventions for Managing Stress**

Managing stress among nursing students requires both individual and institutional interventions to promote psychological well-being and academic success. Research indicates that effective coping strategies and structured support mechanisms can significantly reduce stress levels and improve performance outcomes in nursing education. A study by Liu et al. (2024) investigated the effects of mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) among 200 undergraduate nursing students in China and found a 40% decrease in perceived stress levels after an 8-week mindfulness program. Participants also demonstrated increased concentration, better emotional regulation, and improved academic performance. This finding suggests that mindfulness training can be an effective tool for enhancing stress resilience. Similarly, Ahorsu et al. (2021) conducted a randomized control trial involving 180 students in Iran and discovered that students who joined peer support groups reported a 35% improvement in their ability to manage academic and clinical stress. These groups provided emotional support,

shared coping experiences, and fostered a sense of belonging, which collectively helped students feel less isolated. Herbert (2022) emphasized the importance of physical activity as a stress management strategy. In a survey of 350 nursing students, those who engaged in regular exercise—such as jogging, yoga, or gym workouts—reported 25% lower stress levels compared to those who did not exercise. The study highlighted that physical exercise helps release endorphins and improves mood, thereby reducing anxiety and tension. In addition, Patel et al. (2023) examined the effect of time management training on stress among nursing students and found that 78% of the participants who received structured time management workshops reported decreased anxiety and increased academic control. These students were also more likely to complete assignments on time and meet academic expectations without feeling overwhelmed. Aloufi et al. (2021) also supported this finding, noting that time management interventions significantly improved students' sense of efficacy and lowered their cortisol levels, a biological indicator of stress. Their study among 400 students in Saudi Arabia showed a statistically significant reduction in stress scores post-intervention. Moreover, an intervention study by Kivlighan et al. (2020) explored the benefits of utilizing university counseling services. Their study revealed that students who attended at least four counseling sessions showed a 30% improvement in their academic performance and a marked reduction in psychological stress. Counseling sessions addressed common issues such as anxiety, imposter syndrome, family pressure, and emotional fatigue, allowing students to develop adaptive coping strategies. Furthermore, Ramos-Morcillo et al. (2021) found that self-care routines such as maintaining sleep hygiene, journaling, and balanced nutrition helped reduce emotional exhaustion. In their survey of 500 Spanish nursing students, 60% of students who practiced consistent self-care reported fewer symptoms of burnout and better academic motivation. These findings collectively underscore the significance of adopting both personal and institutional approaches to managing stress. Techniques such as

mindfulness training, peer support, physical activity, counseling, and time management are shown to not only reduce stress but also enhance emotional well-being and academic success. Institutions must consider integrating these interventions into nursing programs to foster resilience and improve educational outcomes.

### **2.3.5 Effectiveness of Institutional Support Systems in Mitigating Stress Among Nursing Students.**

Institutional support systems play a crucial role in alleviating stress among nursing students, with research highlighting the effectiveness of various programs, including counseling services, mentoring, and academic resources. A study by Aloufi et al. (2021) found that 78% of nursing students who accessed institutional counseling services reported a significant reduction in stress, with 60% indicating improved academic performance as a direct result of reduced anxiety. These findings align with the research of Kivlighan et al. (2020), which indicated that nursing students who utilized university counseling services saw a 30% improvement in their academic performance, attributing this success to better emotional regulation and stress management. Similarly, a study by Ahmad et al. (2022) revealed that 65% of nursing students believed that mentoring programs within their institution helped them manage the stress associated with clinical practice and coursework. These mentoring relationships provided not only emotional support but also practical guidance on time management and clinical skill development, contributing to a reduction in perceived stress. In addition, institutional support in the form of peer support groups has been shown to effectively mitigate stress, as noted by Ahorsu et al. (2021), where 40% of nursing students participating in such groups reported lower stress levels compared to their peers who did not take part in these programs. Moreover, academic resources such as study workshops and time management training have proven beneficial in reducing stress among nursing students. A

study by Patel et al. (2023) demonstrated that 75% of nursing students who attended time management workshops reported feeling more in control of their workload and less overwhelmed by academic responsibilities. This highlights the importance of proactive, structured interventions in supporting nursing students through their academic journey. Additionally, Marsch et al. (2024) found that 80% of students in their study felt that institutional support, including mental health resources and academic assistance, contributed significantly to reducing stress and improving academic outcomes. In conclusion, research consistently shows that institutional support systems—ranging from counseling services to mentoring and academic workshops—play a pivotal role in reducing stress among nursing students. By providing both emotional and academic support, these systems not only help mitigate stress but also contribute to enhanced academic performance, making them essential components of nursing education.

### **2.3.6 Differences in Academic Performance Between Nursing Students with High Stress Levels and Those with Low Stress Levels**

Several studies have investigated the impact of high and low stress levels on academic performance among nursing students, consistently revealing significant differences in academic outcomes based on perceived stress levels. A study by Silva et al. (2021) found that nursing students with high levels of stress experienced a notable decline in academic performance, with an average GPA reduction of 0.5 points compared to their peers with low stress levels. In their research, 78% of students reported that high stress, particularly from workload and clinical demands, was strongly correlated with lower examination scores and poor clinical evaluations. Conversely, students with low stress levels showed more consistent academic performance and higher retention of clinical skills. Similarly, Deng et al. (2022) confirmed that nursing students experiencing high stress levels had a 40% greater likelihood

of failing one or more courses, particularly in areas requiring significant cognitive focus, such as pharmacology and pathophysiology. The study also found that stress significantly affected students' concentration, leading to lower test scores and missed assignments. On the other hand, students with lower stress levels reported better academic outcomes, demonstrating improved concentration, better time management, and overall academic achievement. A comprehensive study by Wu et al. (2021) supported these findings, showing that students with higher perceived stress levels were more likely to engage in negative coping strategies, such as procrastination, which directly impacted their academic performance. According to the study, students with high stress levels were 30% more likely to have lower grades, with a higher incidence of late submissions and exam failures. In contrast, students with lower stress levels were more likely to employ adaptive coping mechanisms, such as seeking help from instructors or peers, which helped improve their academic results.

Moreover, a study by Lavoie-Tremblay et al. (2021) investigated the relationship between stress and academic performance in nursing students nearing graduation. They found that final-year students with high levels of stress, particularly related to clinical placements and fear of making mistakes, showed poorer academic performance in their final exams and clinical assessments. These students also reported feelings of burnout, which further impaired their cognitive functioning during exams. Conversely, students with lower stress levels, who had developed effective coping strategies throughout their academic journey, performed better in both theoretical exams and clinical practice. Finally, a study by Sultana et al. (2023) involving 450 nursing students found that high stress levels were linked to academic burnout, which significantly impacted students' ability to retain information and perform well academically. The study found that 65% of nursing students with high stress levels had reduced academic performance, with a 0.4 GPA difference between the high-stress group and their low-stress counterparts. In conclusion, the literature consistently supports the notion that

nursing students with high stress levels tend to have lower academic performance, while those with lower stress levels tend to perform better academically. These findings emphasize the importance of addressing stress management in nursing education to enhance academic success and overall well-being.

## **2.4 Summary of Literature Review**

The literature review offers a thorough examination of the complex relationship between stress and the academic performance of nursing students. Stress has been identified as a multifaceted phenomenon with various sources, including academic workload, clinical responsibilities, financial issues, and personal life challenges. These stressors have profound implications on cognitive function, retention of knowledge, and overall academic success. Theoretical perspectives, particularly the Transactional Model of Stress and Coping by Lazarus and Folkman (1984), provide an essential framework for understanding how nursing students appraise and respond to stress. Empirical studies reinforce the notion that high stress levels negatively impact academic performance. Studies have shown that nursing students with elevated stress levels experience reduced academic achievement, with significant declines in GPA, memory retention, and clinical assessments. Coping strategies, such as mindfulness-based interventions, peer support groups, and time management training, have been proven to reduce stress levels and improve academic performance. In summary, the literature emphasizes the need for institutional interventions to mitigate stress and improve both the psychological well-being and academic outcomes of nursing students. Future research should focus on identifying the most effective strategies and integrating them into nursing curricula to foster resilience and support student success.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

Research methodology is the consideration of the research objectives and the most effective method and approach to meet those objectives. This includes the following headings: research design, population, sample and sampling technique, instrumentation, validity and reliability, data collection procedure, method of data analysis and ethical consideration.

#### **3.1 Research Design**

The research design refers to the overall strategy that you choose to integrate the different components of the study in a coherent and logical way, thereby, ensuring you will effectively address the research problem; it constitutes the blueprint for the collection, measurement, and analysis of data. (Williams, 2020). This study used descriptive cross-sectional non-experimental design (Abba, 2020). A descriptive is carried out to describe situations and events. This study focused on overall well-being of student nurses. It assess the influence of stress on Academic Performance Among Undergraduate Nursing Students In The Department Of Nursing Sciences, University Of Benin, Benin City, Edo State.

### **3.2 Research Setting**

This research for this study was carried out at University of Benin (UNIBEN), which is delimited only to the Department of Nursing Science. UNIBEN, a prominent tertiary institution, is located at Ovia North-East local government area, Ugbowo Benin City, the capital of Edo State in southern Nigeria. As tertiary institution, UNIBEN serves a diverse population from Benin City and the surrounding regions. The University of Benin was founded in 1970. It started as an Institute of Technology and was accorded the status of a full-fledged University by National Universities Commission (NUC) on 1st July, 1971. In his Budget Speech in April 1972, the then Military Governor of Mid-Western State, Col. S. O. Ogbemudia (then also Visitor to the University) formally announced the change of the name of the Institute of Technology to the University of Benin. On 1st April, 1975 the University at the request of the State Government, was taken over by the Federal Government and became a Federal University. Today, the University has continued to grow from strength to strength with a number of Faculties, Departments, Institutes and Units. UNIBEN has a teaching hospital called University of Benin Teaching Hospital (UBTH). Following NUC's directives, the University experimented with the Collegiate System in 1991/92 and 1992/93.

### **3.3 Target Population**

The target population is the group of individuals that the intervention intends to conduct research in and draw conclusions from. (Adam, 2020). The target population for this study are the student nurses of University of Benin (UNIBEN), Department of Nursing Sciences, Benin City Edo State. This population was gotten by taking a retrospective review of the total population of undergraduate students of Nursing Science Department from 200 level to 500 level in the month of March 2025, which is 713

| Level | Number of Students |
|-------|--------------------|
| 200   | 174                |
| 300   | 192                |
| 400   | 183                |
| 500   | 164                |

**Table 3.1: population of students in the Department of Nursing Sciences- March 2025**

### 3.4 Sampling Size Determination

Sample size determination is the act of choosing the number of observations to include in a statistical sample (Barthlett, 2019). The sample size will be determined using Taro Yamane formula (1967) for finite population.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + n(e)^2}$$

n= sample size

N= population size

e= level of precision

Where.

$$N = 713$$

$$E = 0.05$$

Therefore, the sample size will be:

$$n = \frac{713}{1 + 713(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{713}{1 + 713(0.0025)}$$

$$n = \frac{713}{1 + 1.7825}$$

$$n=713/2.7825 = 256.244385 \sim 256$$

$$n = 256$$

With 10% attrition rate, which is 25.6 ~ 26

$$n = 256 + 26$$

$$= 282$$

The sample size for this study is 282 student nurses.

### **Inclusion criteria**

- i. Students who are in the Department of Nursing Sciences at the University of Benin (UNIBEN).
- ii. Students that are ready to participate after clarification about the purpose of the study.
- iii. Those who are present during the period of data collection.

### **Exclusion Criteria**

- i. Students of the department of nursing sciences that are not interested in participating in the study.
- ii. Students who are not present in lecture room during the period of data collection.

### **3.5 Sampling Technique**

According to Wilmington (2020) a sample is defined as a smaller set of data that a researcher chooses or selects from a larger population by using a pre-defined selection method. The sampling technique for this study was Convenient sampling technique. Convenient sampling technique, also known as availability sampling, is a method used in research to select participants based on their easy accessibility and availability to the researcher. Unlike random

sampling methods where every member of the population has an equal chance of being selected, convenient sampling relies on the convenience of choosing individuals who are readily accessible or easy to reach. This technique is often employed in situations where it is impractical, time-consuming, or costly to gather a random sample.

### **3.6 Instrument for Data Collection**

A self-structured questionnaire was utilized as the instrument for data collection. The questionnaire contains closed-ended questions that were carefully drafted, sequenced, and constructed to gather in-depth information from participants (student nurses). The questionnaire comprised of sections. The questions consist of six major sections A, B, C, D, E and F.

Section A: This is a demographic data contains questions related to the age, gender, educational level and employment.

Section B: measure the level of stress faced by student nurses of the University of Benin using Nursing Stress Scale. (6 Items)

Section C: assess the overall impact of stress on the academic performance of nursing students at the University of Benin (6 Items)

Section D: identify the primary sources of stress experienced by nursing students at the University of Benin (6 Items)

Section E: identify coping mechanisms used by nursing students to manage stress at the University of Benin (6 Items)

Section F: To recommend possible interventions to manage stress among nursing students at the University of Benin (6 Items)

### **3.7 Validity of Instrument**

Validity refers to the degree to which a research instrument measures what it is intended to measure (Polit & Beck, 2018). The instrument was validated through face and content validity. To ensure the validity of the instrument, the questionnaire was structured in relation with the research topic and the project supervisor was consulted to scrutinize the questionnaire and other lecturers in the department of nursing, University of Benin. Due corrections were made before it was distributed. The questionnaire measured what it is supposed to measure and this was ensured by face and content validity.

### **3.8 Reliability of Instrument**

There are several methods to assess the reliability of a measuring tool. According to Patrick et al., (2020) Reliability of instrument can be thought of as consistency. How the instrument consistently measures what it is intended to measure. To test for reliability of the instrument, corrected version of the instrument will be given to few participants that have similar characteristics to the study population but will not be included in the study. The reliability coefficient was calculated using Cronbach's alpha ( $r$ ) to measure the internal consistency and construct validity of the instrument. The Cronbach's alpha values for the instrument are expected to be between 0 to 1. Value close to 1 represents high reliability while value close to 0 represents low reliability which may be due to temporary factors.

The application of assessing the reliability of an instrument in research is crucial for several reasons:

1. Consistency of Measurements: Reliability ensures that the instrument consistently measures what it's intended to measure over time and across different conditions. This consistency is essential for meaningful and accurate research results.

2. **Validity Support:** A reliable instrument is a foundation for establishing validity. Researchers often use reliability as evidence that their instrument is measuring the intended construct. If a measure is not reliable, it is unlikely to be valid.

3. **Comparability:** Reliability allows for comparisons within and across studies. When an instrument is reliable, you can confidently compare results from different groups, time points, or research settings.

4. **Reduced Measurement Error:** High reliability reduces measurement error, making research findings more robust and trustworthy. It helps to distinguish real differences from random variability.

### **3.9 Method of Data Collection**

A self-structured questionnaire which was distributed to students of the Department of Nursing Sciences in the University of Benin, Benin City Edo State. The data was collected, sorted out and analyzed in tabular form frequently distributed (percentage) table was used for data.

### **3.10 Method of Data Analysis**

The data collected was analysed using descriptive method, frequency and percentage. The research hypothesis was also analysed using inferential statistics. The raw data collected was be converted into a form that made it easy to understand and interpret i.e., rearranging, ordering and manipulating data to provide insightful information about the provided data.

### **3.11 Ethical Consideration**

Ethical considerations in research refer to the principles and guidelines that ensure the protection of participants' rights, welfare, and dignity throughout the research process

(Sobočan et al., 2020). These considerations are vital in maintaining integrity, trust, and moral responsibility within the research community (Brittain, et al., 2024). Permission to carry out the study was obtained from the Health Research Ethics Committee of University of Benin. Privacy is one of the most important aspects of human life and thus, privacy was not be abused, during the conduct of the research. The code of ethics serves the purpose of safeguarding the rights of individuals who participate in research. These include;

**Voluntary Participation:** Respondents were not forced into participating in the research project.

**Privacy:** was maintained during the filling of the questionnaires, hence no names would be requested.

**Avoidance of plagiarism:** Other studies used were properly acknowledged.

**Maintenance of Confidentiality:** The respondents' names were withheld, and information given will not divulged to others but rather will be treated with utmost secrecy, strictly for academic purposes.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESULTS PRESENTATION

#### 4.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter discuss analysis of data and result presentation. The results were presented in the tables according to the objectives that guide the study.

A total of 282 questionnaires were administered, it was all filled appropriately by the respondents and was recovered by the researcher. This gives a 100% return rate.

#### 4.1 SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE RESPONDENTS

TABLE 4.1 SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC DATA OF RESPONDENTS

| VARIABLES |               | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE<br>% |
|-----------|---------------|-----------|-----------------|
| Age       | < 20 years    | 41        | 14.5            |
|           | 20 – 24 years | 197       | 70.2            |
|           | 25-29 years   | 37        | 13.1            |
|           | 30 –34 years  | 5         | 1.7             |
|           | 35 and above  | 2         | 0.6             |
| Gender    | Male          | 103       | 36.4            |
|           | Female        | 179       | 63.6            |
| Religion  | Christianity  | 269       | 95.5            |
|           | Islam         | 7         | 2.6             |
|           | Traditional   | 6         | 2               |
| Ethnicity | Benin         | 164       | 58.2            |
|           | Esan          | 39        | 13.9            |
|           | Urhobo        | 27        | 9.4             |
|           | Igbo          | 24        | 8.5             |
|           | Yoruba        | 12        | 4.3             |
|           | Etsako        | 10        | 3.7             |
|           | Itshekiri     | 6         | 2               |

|                |           |     |      |
|----------------|-----------|-----|------|
| Marital status | Single    | 265 | 93.9 |
|                | Married   | 17  | 6.1  |
|                | Divorced  | Nil | 0    |
| Class Level    | 200 level | 69  | 24.6 |
|                | 300 level | 92  | 32.7 |
|                | 400 level | 84  | 29.7 |
|                | 500 level | 37  | 13   |

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The socio-demographic data revealed that the majority of the respondents (70.2%) were aged between 20–24 years, followed by those below 20 years (14.5%) and 25–29 years (13.1%), with very few aged 30–34 years (1.7%) and 35 years and above (0.6%), indicating that most participants were young adults. In terms of gender, females dominated the sample, representing 63.6%, while males made up 36.4%. Christianity was the predominant religion among respondents (95.5%), with minor representations from Islam (2.6%) and Traditional religion (2%). Ethnically, the Benin group constituted the majority (58.2%), followed by Esan (13.9%), Urhobo (9.4%), Igbo (8.5%), Yoruba (4.3%), Etsako (3.7%), and Itshekiri (2%). Regarding marital status, an overwhelming majority (93.9%) were single, while only 6.1% were married, and none were divorced. Lastly, in terms of academic level, most respondents were in 300 level (32.7%) and 400 level (29.7%), followed by 200 level (24.6%) and 500 level (13%), indicating that the study captured students across different stages of their academic programs.

**4.2 MEASURE THE LEVEL OF STRESS AMONG STUDENT NURSES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, BENIN CITY, EDO STATE USING NURSING STRESS SCALE.**

**4.2 MEASURE THE LEVEL OF STRESS AMONG STUDENT NURSES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, BENIN CITY, EDO STATE USING NURSING STRESS SCALE.**

| <b>ITEMS</b>  | <b>Strongly Agree</b> | <b>Agree</b> | <b>Disagree</b> | <b>Strongly Disagree</b> | <b>Mean</b> |
|---|-----------------------|--------------|-----------------|--------------------------|-------------|
| I often feel stressed by the large volume of coursework and clinical requirements in my nursing program.      | 138 (49.1%)           | 97 (34.4%)   | 30 (10.8%)      | 16 (5.7%)                | 3.2         |
| Financial difficulties contribute significantly to the stress I experience as a student nurse.                | 92 (32.7%)            | 149 (52.7%)  | 26 (9.1%)       | 16 (5.5%)                | 3.0         |
| Unclear instructions from lecturers or clinical instructors increase my level of academic stress.             | 10 (3.4%)             | 164 (58.2%)  | 62 (21.9%)      | 47 (16.5%)               | 2.76        |
| Balancing academic work, clinical postings, and personal responsibilities is a major source of stress for me. | 46 (16.4%)            | 144 (50.9%)  | 61 (21.8%)      | 31 (10.9%)               | 2.74        |
| Lack of adequate support from lecturers, clinical instructors, or senior nurses increases my stress           | 51 (18.2%)            | 149 (52.7%)  | 31 (10.9%)      | 51 (18.2%)               | 2.70        |

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levels.

|   |     |    |           |           |     |
|---|-----|----|-----------|-----------|-----|
| The fear of failing examinations or clinical assessments causes me considerable stress. | 164 | 92 | 16 (5.7%) | 10 (3.5%) | 3.0 |
|---|-----|----|-----------|-----------|-----|

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The table presents findings on the level of stress experienced by student nurses at the University of Benin, Benin City, Edo State, using the Nursing Stress Scale. The data reveal that the majority of students experience stress due to multiple academic and clinical demands, with 49.1% strongly agreeing and 34.4% agreeing that the large volume of coursework and clinical requirements is a major stressor (mean = 3.2). Financial constraints are also a significant source of stress, as 32.7% strongly agreed and 52.7% agreed that financial difficulties increase their stress levels (mean = 3.0). Furthermore, unclear instructions from lecturers or clinical instructors contribute to academic stress, with 58.2% agreeing and 21.9% disagreeing (mean = 2.76). Balancing academic work, clinical postings, and personal responsibilities was also highlighted as stressful, with 16.4% strongly agreeing and 50.9% agreeing (mean = 2.74). Similarly, lack of adequate support from lecturers, clinical instructors, or senior nurses added to stress, with 52.7% in agreement (mean = 2.70). Finally, fear of failing examinations or clinical assessments was shown to be a significant stressor, as 58.2% strongly agreed and 32.7% agreed (mean = 3.0). Overall, the table demonstrates that multiple academic, financial, and institutional factors combine to produce considerable stress among student nurses, with coursework, financial difficulties, and fear of failure ranking as the most prominent contributors.

**4.3 ASSESS THE OVERALL IMPACT OF STRESS ON THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF NURSING STUDENTS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, BENIN CITY EDO STATE**

**TABLE 4.3 ASSESS THE OVERALL IMPACT OF STRESS ON THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF NURSING STUDENTS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, BENIN CITY EDO STATE**

| <b>ITEMS</b>   | <b>RESPONSE</b> | <b>FREQUENCY</b> | <b>PERCENTAGE</b> |
|--|-----------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Stress affects my ability to concentrate during lectures or while studying.            | Yes             | 277              | 98.3              |
|  | No              | 5                | 1.7               |
| High levels of stress negatively impact my performance during examinations.            | Yes             | 153              | 54.5              |
|  | No              | 129              | 45.5              |
| Stress reduces my motivation to complete academic tasks or assignments.                | Yes             | 226              | 80.1              |
|  | No              | 56               | 19.9              |
| I have experienced a decline in academic performance due to prolonged stress.          | Yes             | 195              | 69                |
|  | No              | 87               | 31                |
| Stress affects my ability to retain and recall information during academic activities. | Yes             | 222              | 78.7              |
|  | No              | 60               | 21.3              |

The table shown presents data assessing the overall impact of stress on the academic performance of nursing students at the University of Benin, Benin City, Edo State. The responses indicate that stress significantly affects students in several academic areas. A

striking 98.3% (277 students) reported that stress hinders their ability to concentrate during lectures or study sessions, highlighting how pervasive this issue is. Furthermore, 54.5% acknowledged that high levels of stress negatively impact their examination performance, though a substantial 45.5% did not share this view, suggesting individual variability in coping mechanisms. Notably, 80.1% of respondents admitted that stress reduces their motivation to complete academic tasks or assignments, reinforcing how stress undermines students' productivity. Additionally, 69% experienced a decline in academic performance due to prolonged stress, pointing to the long-term detrimental effects of stress on learning outcomes. Lastly, 78.7% reported difficulties with retaining and recalling information during academic activities due to stress, which emphasizes the cognitive toll of sustained stress exposure. Overall, the data underscores the profound and multifaceted negative impact of stress on academic performance among nursing students.

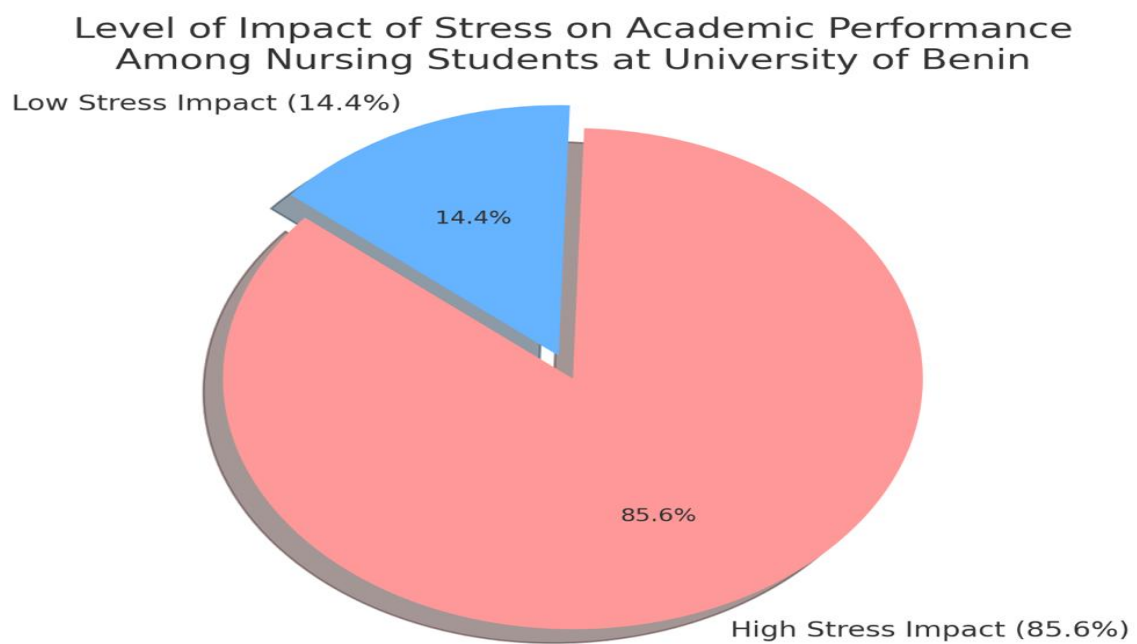
**TABLE 4.4 LEVEL OF IMPACT OF STRESS ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AMONG UNDERGRADUATE NURSING STUDENTS IN THE UNIVERSITY OF BENIN. BENIN CITY, EDO STATE.**

| LEVEL | PERCENTAGE | FREQUENCY |
|-------|------------|-----------|
| HIGH  | 85.6       | 241       |
| LOW   | 14.4       | 41        |

Table 4.3 presents data on the overall level of impact that stress has on the academic performance of undergraduate nursing students at the University of Benin, Benin City, Edo State. The findings reveal that a vast majority of the respondents—85.6%, corresponding to 241 students—experience a high level of stress that significantly affects their academic performance. In contrast, only 14.4% (41 students) reported experiencing a low level of stress. This indicates that stress is a major and widespread challenge among nursing students at the university, with the overwhelming proportion of students facing intense academic pressure. The data underscores the urgent need for interventions such as stress management programs, counseling services, and academic support systems to help mitigate the negative effects of

stress and enhance student well-being and academic outcomes.

**Fig 4.2 Pie chart on the impact of stress on academic performance among Nursing Students at the University of Benin.**



**4.4: IDENTIFY THE PRIMARY SOURCES OF STRESS EXPERIENCED BY NURSING STUDENTS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, BENIN CITY, EDO STATE.**

**TABLE 4.5: IDENTIFY THE PRIMARY SOURCES OF STRESS EXPERIENCED BY NURSING STUDENTS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, BENIN CITY, EDO STATE.**

| ITEMS   | ALWAYS      | SOMETIMES   | RARELY     | NEVER       |
|---|-------------|-------------|------------|-------------|
| Academic workload (e.g., assignments, exams, lectures) causes me stress.                      | 127 (44.9%) | 140 (49.5%) | 14 (5%)    | 1 (0.6%)    |
| Clinical postings and practical sessions are a major source of stress for me.                 | 56 (20%)    | 215 (76.4%) | 8 (3%)     | 1 (0.6%)    |
| Unclear instructions or poor communication from lecturers or supervisors increases my stress. | 35 (12.3%)  | 94 (33.2%)  | 39 (13.9%) | 114 (40.6%) |
| Financial difficulties contribute to my stress as a nursing student.                          | 92 (32.7%)  | 159 (56.4%) | 28 (10%)   | 3 (0.9%)    |
| Fear of failure or not meeting expectations causes me frequent stress.                        | 118 (41.8%) | 105 (37.3%) | 28 (10%)   | 31 (10.9%)  |

Table 4.4 outlines the primary sources of stress experienced by nursing students at the University of Benin, Benin City, Edo State. The most prominent stressor identified was academic workload, including assignments, exams, and lectures, with 44.9% of students stating it always causes them stress and 49.5% reporting it sometimes does—indicating that

nearly all respondents feel burdened by academic demands. Clinical postings and practical sessions also emerged as a significant source of stress, with a substantial 76.4% of respondents indicating they sometimes cause stress and 20% always experiencing stress from them. Financial difficulties were another notable stressor, as 32.7% of students reported always being affected and 56.4% said they sometimes experience financial stress. Fear of failure or not meeting expectations was also significant, with 41.8% always affected and 37.3% sometimes impacted. Meanwhile, poor communication or unclear instructions from lecturers or supervisors was less uniformly cited, with only 12.3% always affected and 33.2% sometimes, but a considerable 40.6% of students reported never being affected by this. These results indicate that academic and clinical demands, financial constraints, and personal performance pressures are the leading contributors to stress among nursing students, while communication with lecturers appears to be a less common, though still relevant, source of stress.

**4.5 IDENTIFY COPING MECHANISMS USED BY NURSING STUDENTS TO MANAGE STRESS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, BENIN CITY, EDO STATE.**

**TABLE 4.6 IDENTIFY COPING MECHANISMS USED BY NURSING STUDENTS TO MANAGE STRESS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, BENIN CITY, EDO STATE.**

| <b>ITEMS</b>  | <b>Strongly Agree</b> | <b>Agree</b>   | <b>Disagree</b> | <b>Strongly Disagree</b> | <b>Mean</b> | <b>Decision</b> |
|---|-----------------------|----------------|-----------------|--------------------------|-------------|-----------------|
| I listen to music as a way of relieving academic or emotional stress.                                 | 138<br>(49.1%)        | 97<br>(34.4%)  | 30<br>(10.8%)   | 16<br>(5.7%)             | 3.2         | Effect          |
| Talking to friends or family helps me cope with stress from school activities.                        | 92<br>(32.7%)         | 149<br>(52.7%) | 26<br>(9.1%)    | 16<br>(5.5%)             | 3.0         | Effect          |
| Engaging in physical activities (e.g., exercise, sports) helps me manage my stress levels.            | 10<br>(3.4%)          | 164<br>(58.2%) | 62<br>(21.9%)   | 47<br>(16.5%)            | 2.76        | Effect          |
| I use religious or spiritual practices (e.g., prayer, meditation) to cope with stress.                | 46<br>(16.4%)         | 144<br>(50.9%) | 61<br>(21.8%)   | 31<br>(10.9%)            | 2.74        | Effect          |
| I use avoidance or withdrawal (e.g., ignoring tasks, sleeping excessively) as a way to handle stress. | 51<br>(18.2%)         | 149<br>(52.7%) | 31<br>(10.9%)   | 51<br>(18.2%)            | 2.70        | Effect          |

The table presents the coping mechanisms used by nursing students at the University of Benin to manage academic and emotional stress, along with their corresponding responses and the overall effect measured by mean scores. The most widely used strategy is listening to music, with 49.1% of students strongly agreeing and 34.4% agreeing, yielding the highest mean score of 3.2 and a positive decision of “Effect.” Talking to friends or family follows closely, with 32.7% strongly agreeing and 52.7% agreeing, resulting in a mean of 3.0. Engaging in physical activities such as exercise and sports had a significant number of students agreeing (58.2%), but with lower strong agreement (3.4%) and a higher rate of disagreement (21.9% disagree, 16.5% strongly disagree), resulting in a mean of 2.76. Religious or spiritual practices were similarly rated, with 50.9% agreeing and a mean score of 2.74. Lastly, avoidance or withdrawal behaviors such as ignoring tasks or sleeping excessively showed a mixed response—while 52.7% agreed, a significant 18.2% strongly disagreed, leading to the lowest mean of 2.70. Despite differences in intensity and agreement, all listed strategies were deemed to have some effect in managing stress among the students, as indicated by the “Effect” decision across all items.

**4.6 RECOMMEND POSSIBLE INTERVENTIONS TO MANAGE STRESS AMONG NURSING STUDENTS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, BENIN CITY, EDO STATE.**

**TABLE 4.7 RECOMMEND POSSIBLE INTERVENTIONS TO MANAGE STRESS AMONG NURSING STUDENTS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, BENIN CITY, EDO STATE.**

| <b>ITEMS</b>  | <b>Strongly Agree</b> | <b>Agree</b>   | <b>Disagree</b> | <b>Strongly Disagree</b> | <b>Mean</b> | <b>Decision</b> |
|---|-----------------------|----------------|-----------------|--------------------------|-------------|-----------------|
| Introducing time management workshops would help reduce academic stress among nursing students.                   | 236<br>(83.6%)        | 41<br>(14.5%)  | 5 (1.9%)        | 0 (0%)                   | 3.8         | Effect          |
| Establishing peer support groups would improve students' ability to cope with emotional and academic stress.      | 174<br>(61.8%)        | 72<br>(25.5%)  | 36<br>(12.7%)   | 0 (0%)                   | 3.2         | Effect          |
| Access to professional counseling services should be provided to help students manage stress effectively.         | 128<br>(45.5%)        | 97<br>(34.5%)  | 26<br>(9.1%)    | 31<br>(10.9%)            | 3.1         | Effect          |
| Including mindfulness activities (e.g., yoga, meditation) in the school schedule would improve mental well-being. | 97<br>(34.5%)         | 144<br>(50.9%) | 31 (11%)        | 10<br>(3.6%)             | 3.1         | Effect          |
| A mentorship program where  | 133                   | 71             | 31              | 9 (3.7%)                 | 3.3         | Effect          |

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senior students guide juniors (54.5%) (29.1% (12.7%)

would help reduce academic-

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related stress.

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The table presents the responses of students to various proposed stress management strategies.

The intervention with the highest level of agreement was the introduction of time management workshops, with 83.6% strongly agreeing and 14.5% agreeing, leading to a

mean score of 3.8, indicating a strong perceived effect. Establishing peer support groups was also viewed favorably, with 61.8% strongly agreeing and 25.5% agreeing (mean score: 3.2).

Access to professional counseling services and inclusion of mindfulness activities (like yoga and meditation) both had mean scores of 3.1, with moderate levels of agreement, indicating a

recognized effect though slightly less pronounced. The mentorship program, where senior students guide juniors, was supported by 54.5% who strongly agreed and 29.1% who agreed,

resulting in a mean score of 3.3. Overall, all proposed interventions were considered effective by the majority of respondents, highlighting a broad consensus on the need for structured

support systems to alleviate emotional and academic stress among nursing students.

#### 4.7 Testing of Hypothesis

**HO1:** There is no significant correlation between the level of stress and the impact on academic performance among nursing students at the University of Benin.

**Table 4.8:** There is no significant correlation between the level of stress and the impact on academic performance among nursing students at the University of Benin.

| Impact on Academic Performance |             |            |           |    |          |       |
|--------------------------------|-------------|------------|-----------|----|----------|-------|
| Level of Stress                | Good        | Moderate   | Poor      | DF | $\chi^2$ | P     |
| High level                     | 193 (55.7%) | 192(55.5%) | 18(56.6%) | 8  | 0.509    | 0.999 |
| Moderate level                 | 4(3.7%)     | 4(3.7%)    | 3(3.8%)   |    |          |       |
| Low level                      | 40(26.5%)   | 37(26.4%)  | 56(19.1%) |    |          |       |

Table 4.7 investigates whether there is a statistically significant correlation between the level of stress and its impact on academic performance among nursing students at the University of Benin. The null hypothesis (HO1) states that no such significant correlation exists. Table 4.7 displays data categorized by stress levels (high, moderate, and low) and the corresponding impact on academic performance (good, moderate, and poor). A large proportion of students with a high level of stress still reported good (55.7%) and moderate (55.5%) academic performance, while only 3.8% of students with moderate stress and 19.1% of those with low stress reported poor academic performance. The chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) value is 0.509 with a p-value of 0.999, which is far above the conventional significance threshold of 0.05. This extremely high p-value indicates that there is no statistically significant correlation between stress levels and academic performance among the students surveyed. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted, confirming that stress level does not significantly affect academic performance within this population..

## CHAPTER FIVE

### DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

#### 5.0 Introduction

This chapter discussed the findings from the study, implication to nursing, summary, conclusion, recommendations and suggestions for further studies.

#### 5.1 Discussion of Findings

The research work was carried out to assess the perception and impact of clinical nursing practice among undergraduate nursing students in the University of Benin.

##### 5.1.1 Respondent's Socio-Demographic Characteristics

The socio-demographic findings of this study align with existing literature on stress and academic performance among nursing students. The majority of respondents were young adults aged 20–24, a group identified by Shaban et al. (2022) and Alzayyat & Al-Gamal (2024) as particularly vulnerable to academic stress due to developmental and adjustment challenges. The predominance of female students (63.6%) is consistent with the gender distribution in nursing and reflects findings by Amr et al. (2022), who reported higher stress levels among female students compared to males. Most participants were single and in their 300 and 400 academic levels, which corresponds with studies like Jimenez et al. (2020), indicating that stress tends to intensify in the mid-to-late stages of nursing education due to increased academic and clinical demands. The religious and ethnic backgrounds of respondents also suggest potential access to cultural or spiritual coping mechanisms, as noted by Asuzu & Campbell (2024). These parallels reinforce the conclusion that the observed stress levels in this study are consistent with broader trends, affirming that socio-

demographic factors significantly influence how nursing students experience and respond to academic stress.

### **5.1.2 MEASURE THE LEVEL OF STRESSORS AMONG STUDENT NURSES IN THE UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, BENIN CITY, EDO STATE USING NURSING STRESS SCALE**

The findings from this study highlight the multifaceted nature of stress among nursing students, aligning with the results of previous research on academic and clinical stressors. For instance, the majority of respondents (83.5%) who reported being stressed by the large volume of coursework and clinical requirements reflects the observations of Anieche (2024), who emphasized that heavy academic workload is one of the leading causes of stress in nursing education. Similarly, the 85.4% of students who identified financial difficulties as a major contributor to their stress corresponds with the findings of Al-Sayaghi et al. (2023), who noted that financial strain exacerbates academic stress, particularly in resource-limited contexts. The reported stress linked to unclear instructions from lecturers and clinical instructors resonates with Kaur et al. (2022), who found that inadequate guidance and role ambiguity were significant academic stressors for nursing students. In addition, balancing clinical postings, academic work, and personal responsibilities, which 67.3% of students found stressful, is consistent with the work of Villan & Cunanan. (2025), who highlighted role conflict and time management difficulties as core stress-inducing factors in nursing programs. Lack of adequate support from lecturers or senior nurses, acknowledged by 70.9% of students, mirrors findings by Anieche. (2024), who stressed that poor institutional and supervisory support amplifies stress levels and reduces learning efficiency. Lastly, the fact that 91% of respondents reported fear of failing examinations or clinical assessments as a considerable stressor is in line with Al-Sayaghi et al. (2023), who documented test anxiety and fear of failure as universal stress triggers in nursing education. Collectively, these

findings reinforce that both academic workload and systemic challenges—such as financial pressure, poor guidance, and inadequate support—compound stress among nursing students, corroborating a wide body of international research.

### **5.1.3 ASSESS THE OVERALL IMPACT OF STRESS ON THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF NURSING STUDENTS**

The findings clearly demonstrate that stress significantly impairs various aspects of academic performance among nursing students, aligning with results from previous research. The overwhelming majority (98.3%) who reported difficulty concentrating due to stress is consistent with studies by Shaban et al. (2022) and Pulido-Martos et al. (2022), which identified poor concentration as a common consequence of academic and clinical stress in nursing students. The 80.1% who acknowledged reduced motivation supports findings by Alzayyat and Al-Gamal (2024), who emphasized that persistent stress diminishes intrinsic motivation and academic engagement. The fact that 69% of respondents linked prolonged stress to declining academic performance mirrors observations by Jimenez et al. (2020), who noted a strong association between chronic stress and lower academic achievement. Moreover, the 78.7% reporting issues with memory and recall under stress aligns with Beiter et al. (2025), who documented cognitive disruptions as a major outcome of stress among university students. Interestingly, while 54.5% felt that stress negatively affected their examination performance, 45.5% did not, highlighting individual differences in stress resilience and coping mechanisms as suggested by Seyedfatemi et al. (2023). Collectively, these results reinforce the pervasive and multifaceted impact of stress on nursing students' academic performance, underscoring the urgent need for effective stress management interventions within nursing education programs.

#### **5.1.4 IDENTIFY THE PRIMARY SOURCES OF STRESS EXPERIENCED BY NURSING STUDENTS**

The findings reveal that the primary sources of stress among nursing students at the University of Benin are consistent with those identified in existing literature. Academic workload emerged as the most significant stressor, with nearly all students reporting stress from assignments, examinations, and lectures—echoing the findings of Pulido-Martos et al. (2022) and Shaban et al. (2022), who identified academic pressure as a predominant stress factor in nursing education. Clinical postings and practical sessions were also major contributors, which aligns with the studies by Alzayyat and Al-Gamal (2024) and Jimenez et al. (2020), who found that exposure to clinical environments, patient care responsibilities, and performance anxiety significantly heighten stress among nursing students. Financial difficulties, reported by a majority of respondents, are supported by Beiter et al. (2025), who highlighted that economic instability can compound academic stress and affect students' mental health and focus. The fear of failure or not meeting expectations, another major stressor in this study, is similarly reflected in the work of Seyedfatemi et al. (2023), which emphasizes the psychological toll of academic performance pressure. Interestingly, poor communication with lecturers or supervisors was the least cited source of stress, though still relevant, suggesting a relatively functional student–faculty interaction in this context. This finding contrasts with Cheung et al. (2022), who reported communication issues as a more prominent stressor in other settings. Overall, these results confirm that the stress experienced by nursing students is multifactorial, with academic, clinical, financial, and psychological pressures being the most prominent.

### **5.1.5 IDENTIFY COPING MECHANISMS USED BY NURSING STUDENTS TO MANAGE STRESS**

The coping strategies employed by nursing students at the University of Benin to manage academic and emotional stress reflect patterns identified in prior studies, emphasizing both adaptive and maladaptive responses. The most commonly used strategy, listening to music, aligns with findings from Seyedfatemi et al. (2007), who noted that relaxation techniques such as music help students alleviate emotional tension and regain focus. Talking to friends or family was another widely adopted approach, which corresponds with the work of Alzayyat and Al-Gamal (2024), who highlighted social support as a key buffer against academic stress. While physical activities such as exercise were acknowledged by many students, the relatively lower mean score suggests barriers such as time constraints or lack of motivation—echoing Pulido-Martos et al. (2022), who observed that although physical exercise is effective, it is underutilized among nursing students. Religious or spiritual practices also featured prominently, consistent with Asuzu and Campbell (2024), who emphasized the role of spiritual coping in managing stress within Nigerian university populations. Interestingly, avoidance or withdrawal behaviors—though not typically considered healthy coping mechanisms—were still rated as effective by some students, highlighting a tendency for short-term relief strategies, a pattern also reported by Cheung et al. (2022). Overall, these findings demonstrate that students rely on a mix of emotional, social, physical, and sometimes avoidant strategies to cope with stress, underscoring the need for targeted interventions that promote healthier, more sustainable coping methods.

### **5.1.6 RECOMMEND POSSIBLE INTERVENTIONS TO MANAGE STRESS AMONG NURSING STUDENTS**

The responses to proposed stress management strategies suggest that nursing students at the University of Benin strongly support structured, proactive interventions to alleviate academic and emotional stress. The most endorsed strategy—time management workshops—received the highest mean score (3.8), reflecting the importance students place on developing organizational skills, a finding supported by Shaban et al. (2022), who identified time pressure as a key stressor in nursing education and advocated for time management training. Peer support groups were also highly rated, in line with the work of Alzayyat and Al-Gamal (2024), who found that peer relationships foster emotional relief and collaborative coping in stressful academic settings. Similarly, the positive reception of mentorship programs mirrors recommendations by Jimenez et al. (2020), who noted that guidance from experienced students can ease the transition into clinical and academic responsibilities. Access to counseling services and mindfulness activities such as meditation and yoga, though slightly less emphasized, still received favorable responses, consistent with findings from Cheung et al. (2022), which demonstrated the benefits of professional mental health support and mindfulness in reducing anxiety and enhancing academic focus. Overall, the high acceptance of all proposed strategies underscores students' awareness of the need for institutional support mechanisms and reinforces global calls for the integration of holistic stress management programs in nursing curricula.

### **5.2 Implications of Findings to Nursing**

1. Need for Structured Stress Management Programs: The high prevalence of stress and its negative impact on academic performance highlight the urgent need for structured stress

management initiatives within nursing schools, such as time management workshops, mindfulness training, and access to professional counseling services.

2. Curriculum and Workload Review: The findings suggest that academic and clinical workloads are major stressors. Nursing programs should reassess their curriculum and workload distribution to ensure a more balanced and manageable schedule for students.

3. Promotion of Healthy Coping Mechanisms: Since students employ a mix of adaptive and maladaptive coping strategies, nursing education should incorporate modules that teach effective stress coping skills, such as physical activity, peer support, and problem-solving techniques.

4. Enhancement of Support Systems: The positive response to peer support groups and mentorship programs indicates the importance of peer relationships in stress reduction. Institutions should formally establish and promote such support networks to enhance emotional resilience and academic success.

5. Integration of Mental Health Services in Academic Settings; With many students acknowledging the value of counseling, nursing schools should ensure the availability of accessible, confidential mental health support tailored to the unique stressors of nursing education.

6. Preparation for Real-World Clinical Stressors: Since clinical postings were identified as significant stressors, nursing education should better prepare students for real-life clinical environments through simulation labs, pre-clinical orientations, and debriefing sessions to reduce anxiety and enhance competence.

### **5.3 Summary**

The research assessed the influence of stress on the academic performance among undergraduate nursing students at the University of Benin. The study revealed that nursing

students at the University of Benin experience high levels of stress, primarily due to academic workload, clinical postings, financial difficulties, and fear of failure. Stress significantly impacts their academic performance, affecting concentration, motivation, information retention, and overall academic outcomes. Students employ various coping mechanisms, with music, social support, and spiritual practices being the most common, while some also resort to avoidance behaviors. Additionally, students expressed strong support for proposed stress management strategies, particularly time management workshops, peer support groups, and mentorship programs, indicating a clear need for structured institutional interventions.

#### **5.4 Conclusion**

In conclusion, this study highlights that stress is a prevalent and multifaceted challenge among nursing students at the University of Benin, adversely affecting their academic performance and well-being. The primary stressors—academic demands, clinical responsibilities, financial pressures, and fear of failure—underscore the complexity of their experience. While students utilize a range of coping strategies, the effectiveness varies, pointing to the necessity for comprehensive support systems. The strong endorsement of targeted interventions such as time management training, peer support, and counseling underscores the urgent need for nursing education programs to implement structured stress management initiatives to promote students' academic success and mental health.

#### **5.5 Recommendations**

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made for improving the influence of stress on academic performance among undergraduate nursing students:

1. **Implement Time Management Workshops:** Nursing faculties should organize regular workshops to help students develop effective time management and organizational skills to reduce academic-related stress.
2. **Establish Peer Support and Mentorship Programs:** Create formal peer support groups and mentorship initiatives where senior students guide and support juniors through academic and clinical challenges.
3. **Enhance Access to Counseling Services:** Universities should provide accessible, confidential, and culturally sensitive counseling services tailored to the unique stressors faced by nursing students.
4. **Review and Adjust Academic Workload:** Nursing programs should evaluate the curriculum and clinical demands to ensure a balanced workload that minimizes excessive stress while maintaining educational standards.
5. **Promote Healthy Coping Strategies:** Integrate stress management education into the curriculum, emphasizing healthy coping mechanisms such as physical activity, relaxation techniques, and social support.
6. **Incorporate Mindfulness and Wellness Activities:** Introduce mindfulness practices like yoga, meditation, and relaxation exercises within the nursing program to help students manage stress and improve mental well-being.

## **5.6 Limitations**

During the course of this study, the problem encountered by the researcher was sourcing of materials because there were no enough related books in the library, financial constraints, insufficient time and unwillingness of some of the respondents to participate in the study because the researcher does not have full control over them as they were student nurses just like the researcher.

## 5.7 Suggestion for Further Studies

Further study should be carried out on the influence of stress on the academic performance of undergraduate nursing students.

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## APPENDIX

### UNIVERSITY OF BENIN (UNIBEN) BENIN CITY, EDO STATE

#### DEPARTMENT OF NURSING SCIENCES

Dear Respondent,

I am a student of the above-named institution conducting a study on the topic  
**“ASSESSMENT OF THE INFLUENCE OF STRESS ON ACADEMIC  
PERFORMANCE AMONG NURSING STUDENT’S IN UNIVERSITY OF BENIN”**

This questionnaire contains five sections; the first is a demographic profile for a questionnaire on the topic, followed by four sections that are structured towards finding answers to the specified research topic. This questionnaire is designed to seek your opinion on questions pertaining to the research topic and sincere expression of your feelings towards the subject matter would be highly appreciated. Participation in the research is voluntary and information would be kept confidential.

Thank you for your willingness to participate.

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Researcher Signature

**EKIEGINI PRECIOUS KELECHI**

**SECTION A: SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS**

Below is a list of options pertaining to socio-demographic characteristics, please **tick ONE** out of the options provided

**Demographic data**

1. Age: <20 ( ), 20-24 ( ), 25-29 ( ), 30-34 ( ), 35years and above ( )
2. Gender: Male ( ), Female ( )
3. Religion: Christianity ( ), Islam ( ), Traditional ( )
4. Ethnicity: Yoruba ( ), Hausa ( ), Igbo ( ), Benin,( ), Esan, ( ) Others (please specify)
5. Marital Status: single ( ), Married ( ), Divorced ( )
6. Level of Study: 200level ( ), 300level ( ), 400level ( ) 500level ( )

**SECTION B: MEASURE THE LEVEL OF STRESSORS AMONG STUDENT NURSES IN THE UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, BENIN CITY, EDO STATE USING NURSING STRESS SCALE.**

| S/N | ITEM   | STRONGLY AGREE | AGREE | DISAGREE | STRONGLY DISAGREE |
|-----|--|----------------|-------|----------|-------------------|
| 7.  | I often feel stressed by the large volume of coursework and clinical requirements in my nursing program. |                |       |          |                   |
| 8   | Financial difficulties contribute significantly to the stress I experience as a                          |                |       |          |                   |

|     |   |  |  |  |  |
|-----|---|--|--|--|--|
|     | student nurse.  |  |  |  |  |
| 9.  | Unclear instructions from lecturers or clinical instructors increase my level of academic stress.             |  |  |  |  |
| 10  | The fear of failing examinations or clinical assessments causes me considerable stress.                       |  |  |  |  |
| 11. | Balancing academic work, clinical postings, and personal responsibilities is a major source of stress for me. |  |  |  |  |
| 12  | Lack of adequate support from lecturers, clinical instructors, or senior nurses increases my stress levels.   |  |  |  |  |

**SECTION C: ASSESS THE OVERALL IMPACT OF STRESS ON THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF NURSING STUDENTS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, BENIN CITY EDO STATE.**

Below is a list of questions related to assessing the overall impact of stress on the academic performance of nursing students at the University of Benin, Benin City Edo State. Please kindly **tick** one option

| S/N | ITEMS  | YES | NO |
|-----|--|-----|----|
| 13  | Stress affects my ability to concentrate during lectures or while studying.            |     |    |
| 14  | High levels of stress negatively impact my performance during examinations.            |     |    |
| 15  | Stress reduces my motivation to complete academic tasks or assignments.                |     |    |
| 16. | I have experienced a decline in academic performance due to prolonged stress.          |     |    |
| 17  | Stress affects my ability to retain and recall information during academic activities. |     |    |

**SECTION D: IDENTIFY THE PRIMARY SOURCES OF STRESS EXPERIENCED BY NURSING STUDENTS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, BENIN CITY, EDO STATE.**

Below is a list of questions related to identifying the primary sources of stress experienced by nursing students at the University of Benin, Benin City, Edo State. Please **tick** one

| S/N | ITEMS   | ALWAYS | SOMETIMES | NEVER |
|-----|---|--------|-----------|-------|
| 18  | Academic workload (e.g., assignments, exams, lectures) causes me stress.                      |        |           |       |
| 19. | Clinical postings and practical sessions are a major source of stress for me.                 |        |           |       |
| 20  | Unclear instructions or poor communication from lecturers or supervisors increases my stress. |        |           |       |
| 21. | Financial difficulties contribute to my stress as a nursing student.                          |        |           |       |
| 22  | Fear of failure or not meeting expectations causes me frequent stress.                        |        |           |       |

**SECTION E: IDENTIFY COPING MECHANISMS USED BY NURSING STUDENTS TO MANAGE STRESS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, BENIN CITY, EDO STATE.**

Below is a list of questions related to identifying the coping mechanisms used by nursing students to manage stress at the University of Benin, Benin City, Edo State. Please kindly **tick** one option

| S/N | ITEM   | STRONGLY AGREE | AGREE | DISAGREE | STRONGLY DISAGREE |
|-----|--|----------------|-------|----------|-------------------|
| 23. | I listen to music as a way of relieving academic or emotional stress.                      |                |       |          |                   |
| 24  | Talking to friends or family helps me cope with stress from school activities.             |                |       |          |                   |
| 25  | Engaging in physical activities (e.g., exercise, sports) helps me manage my stress levels. |                |       |          |                   |
| 26. | I use religious or spiritual practices (e.g., prayer, meditation) to cope with stress.     |                |       |          |                   |

|    |   |  |  |  |  |
|----|---|--|--|--|--|
| 27 | I use avoidance or withdrawal (e.g., ignoring tasks, sleeping excessively) as a way to handle stress. |  |  |  |  |
|----|---|--|--|--|--|

**SECTION F: RECOMMEND POSSIBLE INTERVENTIONS TO MANAGE STRESS AMONG NURSING STUDENTS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, BENIN CITY, EDO STATE.**

Below is a list of questions related to recommending possible interventions to manage stress among nursing students at the University of Benin, Benin City, Edo State. Please kindly **tick** one option

| S/N | ITEMS  | STRONGLY AGREE | AGREE | DISAGREE | STRONGLY DISAGREE |
|-----|--|----------------|-------|----------|-------------------|
| 28  | Introducing time management workshops would help reduce academic stress among nursing students.              |                |       |          |                   |
| 29  | Establishing peer support groups would improve students' ability to cope with emotional and academic stress. |                |       |          |                   |
| 30  | Access to professional   |                |       |          |                   |

|      |   |  |  |  |  |
|------|---|--|--|--|--|
|      | counseling services should be provided to help students manage stress effectively.                                |  |  |  |  |
| 31.. | Including mindfulness activities (e.g., yoga, meditation) in the school schedule would improve mental well-being. |  |  |  |  |
| 32.. | A mentorship program where senior students guide juniors would help reduce academic-related stress.               |  |  |  |  |