

**THE PERCEIVED EFFECTS OF STRESS ON THE ACADEMIC
PERFORMANCE OF UNDERGRADUATES OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF BENIN**

EDOBOR MARVELLOUS EGHOSASE

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**FACULTY OF EDUCATION,
UNIVERSITY OF BENIN**

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CERTIFICATION

We, the undersigned, acknowledge that this research work was carried out by Edobor Marvellous Eghosase in the Department of Health, Safety and Environmental Education, Faculty of Education, University of Benin.

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DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to God Almighty and to the Department of Health, Safety and Environmental Education.

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The researcher's deepest appreciation goes to his highly esteemed supervisor Mrs E.B Timbiri of the department of Health, Safety and Environmental Education, University of Benin, for her patience, guidance and intellectual inputs that were really helpful to me during the project's completion, The completion of the project would not have been possible without her corrections and insights which she took time from her busy schedule to attend to, May God almighty bless you in abundantly in all areas of your Life,Amen.

Specially gratitude goes to his mother Mrs Edobor who has been a source of encouragement throughout his life in this great institution, He is also grateful to his siblings, friends and loved ones for their support.

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ABSTRACT

This study was designed to examine the perceived effects of stress on academic performance of undergraduates of the University of Benin, Edo State. To guide this study, three research questions were raised. The survey research design was used in conducting the study. The main instrument for the study was a closed-end questionnaire.

The population of the study was 224. The validity of the instrument was established by giving it to the supervisor and two other experts in the field of the research study. The reliability of the instrument was established using the Cronbach's Alpha method of reliability which yielded a Coefficient of 0.638. The data obtained from the questionnaires were subjected to analysis using frequency counts and percentages. Results from the study from 224 respondents showed that the students

The study's recommendations encompass various aspects of improving the Nigerian polytechnic education system. It suggests establishing a dedicated committee to address students' conditions, advocating against tuition fee increases, fostering positive lecturer-student relationships, expanding facilities to combat overpopulation, encouraging students to work hard, exploring the provision of motivating facilities, and addressing security concerns, notably the rising violence on campuses. These measures aim to enhance the overall quality and experience of polytechnic education in Nigeria.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background of Study

University life can be a demanding and stressful period for students as they navigate academic responsibilities, social interactions, and personal challenges. The impact of stress on students' academic performance has been a subject of growing concern in recent years. Understanding the perceived effects of stress on academic performance is crucial for universities and educational institutions to provide effective support systems and interventions that promote student well-being and success.

Stress can be described as a state of mental or emotional tension caused by demanding or challenging situations. It is a natural and universal response that motivates us to confront and cope with the difficulties and threats that arise in our lives. Every individual, at some point, experiences stress to varying degrees.

The sources of stress can be diverse, ranging from academic or work-related pressures to personal relationships, financial worries, or health concerns. While some level of stress can be beneficial, driving us to perform better and adapt to

new situations, prolonged or excessive stress can negatively impact both our physical and mental well-being.

It is essential to recognize the individuality of stress responses, as what may be stressful for one person may not hold the same weight for another. Understanding and managing stress effectively is key to maintaining a balanced and healthy lifestyle.

To cope with stress, individuals can adopt healthy strategies like regular exercise, relaxation techniques, mindfulness practices, and seeking support from friends, family, or mental health professionals. By cultivating positive coping mechanisms, individuals can navigate stress more efficiently and lead fulfilling lives despite life's challenges. Embracing a proactive and mindful approach to stress management can promote well-being and resilience, empowering individuals to face life's ups and downs with greater ease and confidence.

In the contemporary fast-paced and highly competitive world, students face an array of challenges throughout their academic journey, and stress has emerged as a prominent concern among them. Stress, an inherent aspect of human existence, can manifest in various ways, impacting individuals both mentally and physically.

Within the academic sphere, students often find themselves navigating a relentless cycle of stress induced by the relentless pursuit of excellence, meeting deadlines, and achieving academic milestones. As a result, the mounting weight of stress has garnered substantial attention from educators and researchers, as they seek to understand its perceived effects on students' academic performance.

Numerous studies have explored the relationship between stress and academic performance, highlighting the potential negative consequences of high stress levels on students' ability to perform at their best (Damodaran, 1999, Julian, 2006). Stressors such as heavy workloads, time pressure, competition, and personal issues can significantly impact students' cognitive functioning, motivation, concentration, and overall engagement in learning.

While research has shed light on the stressors faced by university students, there is still a need for comprehensive investigations that consider the unique experiences and perspectives of students within specific academic contexts. Furthermore, understanding students' perceptions of stress and its effects on their academic performance is crucial as it can inform the development of targeted interventions and support services tailored to their needs.

Stress is becoming a major problem worldwide, especially among people who don't know how to cope with it. The link between stress and academic performance has garnered significant interest in educational psychology and mental health. While a certain level of stress can act as a motivating factor, prompting students to strive for excellence and push their boundaries, excessive and chronic stress can lead to adverse outcomes

Chronic stressors, while not as intense as acute stressors such as natural disasters or major accidents, persist over extended periods, making them more detrimental to health due to their sustained nature. As they demand the body's physiological response on a daily basis, they deplete the body's energy more rapidly. This extended exposure to stress can have significant consequences, particularly when individuals cannot avoid these microstressors, such as the stress of living in a dangerous neighborhood.

Perceived stress refers to an individual's subjective evaluation of the stress they experience in response to various life events, circumstances, or challenges. Rather than being an objective measure of stress itself, it centers on the person's perception and interpretation of the stressors they encounter.

As a highly subjective phenomenon, perceived stress can differ significantly from person to person. The way individuals perceive and respond to the same situation or event can vary, leading to distinct levels of stress experienced by each person. Factors such as personality traits, coping strategies, past experiences, and available support systems play crucial roles in shaping how individuals perceive and cope with stress.

Recognizing the concept of perceived stress is essential because it significantly impacts an individual's emotional and physical well-being. When individuals perceive higher levels of stress, it can lead to adverse effects on mental health, such as increased anxiety and depression, as well as physical health problems like elevated blood pressure and compromised immune function.

Statement of Problem

Stress is the body's reaction to any change that requires an adjustment or response. It manifests as a state of mental or emotional tension resulting from demanding situations.

It can lead to a number of negative outcomes. It might result in diminished academic performance, hindering students' ability to focus and retain information.

Often, this is paired with mental health challenges, including anxiety and depression. Physically, students may face issues such as headaches or a compromised immune system. Sleep disturbances, encompassing insomnia or subpar sleep quality, are not uncommon. Behaviorally, students could engage in risky behaviors or pull away from social engagements. Such stressors can also jeopardize relationships with peers, family members, or partners. If unchecked, this continuous strain can escalate into burnout, rendering students emotionally and mentally exhausted.

Currently, there are no studies addressing the perceived stress levels among students of the University of Benin. It is this gap in research, the researcher attempts to fill.

Research Questions

The following Research questions have been raised to guide the study;

1. What is the level of stress among undergraduates of the university of Benin?
2. What is the perceived effect of stress on the academic performance of students?

3. What are the factors influencing stress among undergraduates of the University of Benin?

Hypothesis

There is no significant relationship between perceived stress levels and academic performance among university students.

This hypothesis was formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study is to examine the perceived effects of stress on the academic performance of undergraduates in the University of Benin. Specifically, the study seeks to;

1. Identify the level of stress in undergraduates of the university of Benin
2. Identity the factors influencing stress among undergraduates of the University of Benin.

Significance of study

Understanding the effects of stress on the academic performance of university students is of paramount significance for several reasons. Firstly, this study

contributes to the existing body of knowledge in the fields of psychology and education. By investigating the relationship between stress levels and academic performance, it adds valuable insights that can inform future research and enhance our understanding of this complex interplay.

Secondly, the significance of this study lies in its potential to improve student well-being. Stress among university students has been linked to various mental health issues and diminished quality of life. By shedding light on the impact of stress on academic performance, this research can guide the development of targeted interventions and support systems aimed at mitigating stress and promoting student well-being.

Furthermore, this study holds practical implications for educational institutions. By identifying common stressors faced by students within the academic environment, it offers valuable information for universities to create tailored stress management programs and support services. By integrating these initiatives, universities can foster a healthier and more supportive learning environment, ultimately leading to improved student retention, success, and overall satisfaction.

Lastly, this research holds potential in shaping policy and practice. By emphasizing the importance of recognizing and addressing stress as a significant factor in students' academic performance, it advocates for prioritizing student mental health and well-being at the institutional level. This study can help inform policymakers, educators, and administrators about the need to integrate stress management and well-being initiatives into the broader educational system, resulting in positive changes in campus culture and support structures. This study will be a basis for further studies.

Scope and Delimitations of the Study

The scope of this study will focus on university students; the research will examine the perceived effects of stress on academic performance including factors such as grades, study habits and engagement in learning. This study will be delimited to the undergraduates of the University of Benin.

Definition of terms

1. **Stress** : Stress is a state of worry or mental tension caused by difficult situations

2. **Academic performance** : is the measure of a student's achievement in their educational endeavors.
3. **Stressors** : this refers to any agent, factor or condition that is seen as responsible for causing stress to an individual.
4. **Perceived stress** : this refers to an individual's subjective assessment of the level of stress they experience.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter will be discussed under the following subheadings

- The Concept of Stress and Stressors
- Perceived Stress
- Coping mechanisms for stress
- Common stressors faced by university students
- Stress management
- Level of stress amongst undergraduates of the university of Benin
- Perceived effects of stress on the academic performance of students
- Factors influencing stress levels among undergraduates of the university of Benin
- Summary of reviewed literature

The Concept of Stress and Stressors

The term "stress" traces its roots to the Latin words “strictus” (meaning “tight” or “narrow”) and “stringere” (meaning “to tighten”). These origins resonate with feelings of restriction and being under pressure. Stress is fundamentally a state of

worry or tension, either mental or physical, triggered by situations or events. It embodies a psychological response wherein individuals sense threats or discomfort, arising from fleeting situations like a traffic jam or ongoing challenges, such as demanding job roles. This tension emerges when there's a perceived imbalance between environmental demands and an individual's ability to cope, leading to emotional, physical, or behavioral manifestations.

Dr. Hans Selye, a pioneering figure in stress research, defined stress as the nonspecific outcome of any demand placed upon the body, be it mental or somatic (Selye, 1974). Further differentiating, he proposed two primary types of stress:

1. Acute Stress: This short-term stress is often intense and can be either thrilling or draining. Typical triggers include disagreements, impending exams, or challenging physical tasks like tackling a difficult skiing slope.
2. Chronic Stress: This long-lasting stress can slowly chip away at one's health. It arises from enduring issues like financial challenges, family disagreements, or ongoing marital troubles.

Expanding on his classifications, Selye (1974) also presented four variations of stress:

- Eustress (Good Stress)
- Distress (Bad Stress)
- Hyperstress (Over-stress)
- Hypostress (Under-stress)

His perspective emphasized that balancing hyperstress and hypostress while maximizing eustress is the ideal state for an individual.

Stressors however are a stimuli or events that provoke a stress response in an individual. They can be external (from the environment, society) or internal (due to illness, medical procedures, or hormonal changes). They can be acute (short-term) or chronic (long-term). Everyone reacts to stressors differently, and what may be a stressor for one person might not be for another. Identifying personal stressors and developing coping mechanisms is crucial for maintaining mental and physical health.

Culture and society also play a role in stress. How we experience stress can be shaped by our cultural background and the society we live in (Dressler, 2004). While the physiological reactions to stress might be similar across populations, the triggers, interpretations, and coping mechanisms are deeply rooted in cultural and societal contexts. Every culture defines stress differently, with what's perceived as stressful in one culture possibly being normative or even positive in another. Societal norms, including gender roles and expectations, can significantly shape stress perceptions, with deviations from these norms potentially leading to increased stress levels. Furthermore, Dressler introduced the idea of cultural consonance, which emphasizes the alignment of an individual's beliefs and behaviors with the overarching cultural models. High alignment, or high cultural consonance, typically results in lower perceived stress, while discrepancies can exacerbate stress. Economic disparities and systemic prejudices, deeply entrenched in societal structures, further contribute to the complexity of stress experiences. Thus, understanding stress requires recognizing these intricate interplays between individual experiences and the broader cultural and societal frameworks in which they reside.

Basically, Dressler's study on cultural Consonance states that if an individual's personal beliefs were aligned with their cultural values and societal norms then their psychological well-being would be improved thus reducing the level of stress they faced.

Another study by Wheaton (1999) explores the idea of stressors and discusses three models that help us comprehend stress and draws a distinction between stress and stressors. He divides stressors into categories along a continuum, from acute traumas to persistent stressors. Furthermore, Wheaton distinguishes between macro stressors, which have an impact on larger societal systems, and micro stressors, which are everyday events. He looks at how these pressures affect mental health and comes to the conclusion that ongoing stress and traumatic experiences as a youngster have a big impact.

Recent studies by McEwen and Gianaros (2011) have shown that ongoing stress can also affect our brain, especially areas related to memory and feelings. Chronic stress has notable effects on the brain, especially in areas associated with memory and emotions. Research by McEwen & Gianaros (2011) indicates that continuous stress elevates cortisol levels, which in turn can impede neuron formation in the

hippocampus, a key area for memory. Additionally, the amygdala, central to emotional processing, can become excessively active under consistent stress, leading to amplified emotional reactions and perpetuating a cycle of increased stress sensitivity. Moreover, the prefrontal cortex, essential for decision-making and emotional control, might experience diminished functionality. Chronic stress can also disrupt the equilibrium of mood-regulating neurotransmitters like dopamine and serotonin. However, the brain's adaptability offers hope for recuperation through targeted interventions, underscoring the need for proactive stress management in ensuring mental health.

It's essential to note that reactions to stressors are highly individualistic. What stresses one person might not affect another the same way. Recognizing personal stressors and cultivating coping strategies becomes vital for overall well-being.

Perceived Stress

Perceived stress refers to the feelings or thoughts an individual has about the amount of stress they are experiencing at a specific moment or over a certain time period. It is subjective rather than objective. That is, it centers on an individual's assessment or judgment of how much stress they're under at a given time.

The development of the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) by Sheldon Cohen in the early 1980s was itself part of a research effort to better understand and measure stress perception as it is a vital point in clinical studies

Sheldon Cohen's work on understanding and measuring stress perception has been influential in the field of psychology and health. He is best known for developing the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS), which is one of the most widely used instruments to measure the perception of stress.

The PSS measures the degree to which individuals perceive situations in their life as uncontrollable, unpredictable, and overloading. It does not focus on specific events but rather on a person's feelings and thoughts during the last month. The scale's broad nature allows it to be applied in a variety of populations and settings, making it versatile for different research purposes.

Several studies (Lee, 2012, Ramirez, 2007) have validated the PSS in different populations, showing its reliability and validity. The PSS has also been adapted into several languages and cultural contexts, further attesting to its utility.

Coping Mechanisms for stress

Coping mechanisms for stress refer to the diverse strategies or practices individuals employ to manage, mitigate, or adapt to the emotional and physical challenges posed by stressors. These mechanisms can be categorized as either adaptive or maladaptive. Adaptive coping strategies foster well-being, enhance resilience, and effectively mitigate stress. Conversely, while maladaptive coping can provide fleeting relief, it can intensify long-term stress or spawn additional issues. Coping efficiency is influenced by individual contexts, preferences, and the specific stressor. Over time, through experience and introspection, people fine-tune their coping methods to better tackle life's obstacles.

Adaptive Coping: Employing good stress management, like time management and seeking support, improves academic outcomes (D'Zurilla & Sheedy, 1991).

Maladaptive Coping: Resorting to unhelpful tactics, such as substance use or procrastination, often leads to subpar academic results (Rawson, Bloomer, & Kendall, 1994).

A study by Gross (2015) showed that understanding human emotional processes and their implications for wellbeing and mental health is based on an

understanding of emotion regulation. He discussed the ways in which people consciously and unconsciously control their emotional responses. Gross underlined the significance of these techniques for adaptive functioning and general wellbeing by highlighting the multi-dimensional character of emotion regulation, from cognitive reappraisal to expressive suppression. "Cognitive appraisal" is how we judge a situation. For example, seeing a cat might make one person think it's a threat, while another might see it as a chance to pet a cute animal. He also discusses "expressive suppression," where we hide our true feelings. Imagine being upset but holding back tears during a happy event. Gross suggests that the way we think about situations and control our emotional reactions can impact our well-being.

Garnefski & Kraaij(2018) explored how teenagers handle their emotions using their thoughts. They looked at how certain thinking strategies, like focusing on the positive or overthinking the negative, might relate to feelings of sadness or worry. For instance, a teenager who constantly replays a minor embarrassing moment in their mind might feel more anxious or depressed than another teen who just

shrugs it off and focuses on the positive parts of their day. The study aimed to understand which thinking patterns were related to mental well-being in teenagers. Ozbay et al. (2007) and his team studied the science behind why having supportive people around helps us handle stress better. For example, imagine you had a really bad day, and you tell a close friend about it. Just sharing your feelings and having someone listen can make you feel better. Ozbay and colleagues looked into the brain science behind this. They found that having friends and family who support you doesn't just make you feel good emotionally, but it also has positive effects on your brain, helping you bounce back from tough situations more effectively. Social supports serves as a dampener for the negative effects stress and improves individual resilience.

Common stressors faced by university students

Well known sources of stress for university students include academic pressures, financial difficulties, interpersonal relationships, and concerns about future career prospects (Ross, Niebling, & Heckert, 1999).

Academic pressure is one of the most immediate stressors for university students. Many feel a constant urge to excel in exams and maintain high grades, as their

future academic and career opportunities often hinge on their performance. The continuous flow of assignments, projects, and papers with set deadlines can make the academic environment quite pressuring. Furthermore, the complexity of some courses can be challenging, demanding intense concentration and effort to understand and retain information. A study by Misra and McKean (2000) explored the intricate relationship between the academic stress experienced by college students and its subsequent effects on their anxiety levels, time management skills, and satisfaction with leisure time. The research highlighted the strain and pressures associated with coursework, exams, and grades, and how these academic demands can lead to heightened feelings of worry and nervousness. Furthermore, the study examined the role of time management, suggesting that students' abilities to efficiently manage their academic and personal time could influence their stress levels. Additionally, the research probed into how academic stress might impact students' enjoyment and satisfaction during their free or leisure time, proposing that high academic stress could potentially diminish the quality of leisure experiences.

Another research by Ross, Niebling, & Heckert (1999) aimed to categorize and understand the myriad of stressors faced by college students. Among the stressors they identified, financial concerns stood out as a significant source of stress. This isn't surprising given the rising costs of tuition, textbooks, housing, and other related expenses. For many students, balancing academics with part-time jobs, concerns about student loans, and worries about future employment can exacerbate the typical stressors of college life. Financial challenges, therefore, play a crucial role in the overall well-being and mental health of university students.

In conclusion, mental health is a significant concern. The university age is when issues like anxiety or depression might first manifest for some individuals. Even with counseling services available, some students hesitate to seek help due to the stigma attached to mental health issues. These are the majority of common stressors that affect students. Less common ones can be understood through personal interviews and similar methods.

Stress management

Stress management encompasses a range of techniques and psychotherapies aimed at controlling an individual's stress levels, especially when dealing with chronic stress, to enhance daily functioning (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). The importance of managing stress cannot be understated, as prolonged exposure can lead to a plethora of negative health outcomes, including both mental and physical complications.

Several techniques and therapeutic approaches have been developed over the years. Kabat-Zinn (1990) emphasized the benefits of mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR), pinpointing its effectiveness in curbing negative emotional reactions and persistent rumination. Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), introduced by Beck (1976), has been a cornerstone in stress management, helping individuals alter and control negative thought patterns. Another approach, biofeedback, as described by Schwartz & Andrasik (2017), educates individuals on controlling physiological functions to bolster physical health and mental well-being. Beyond these, the simple act of regular physical activity remains a consistently effective technique for stress relief (Salmon, 2001).

In the realm of organizational settings, there's an increasing acknowledgment of the importance of stress management. Workplaces have begun implementing strategies such as offering flexible work schedules, rolling out employee wellness programs, and promoting team-building exercises to mitigate work-related stressors (Quick et al., 1997). However, it's essential to recognize barriers to effective stress management. Despite the myriad of available techniques, many grapple with managing their stress due to factors like a lack of awareness, time constraints, or the societal stigma attached to seeking therapy (Cohen & Janicki-Deverts, 2012).

The future of stress management seems promising with the advent of digital health and telemedicine. Innovative platforms, including apps and online sessions, provide tools like guided meditations and CBT techniques, making stress management more accessible than ever (Firth et al., 2017).

Finally, while the challenge of stress is not new, our understanding and methods for managing it have evolved considerably. With increasing societal recognition of its impacts and the availability of diverse management strategies, individuals are better equipped to handle daily pressures and challenges.

Level of stress amongst undergraduates in the university

The university environment, while fostering academic and personal growth, simultaneously introduces a myriad of challenges leading to heightened stress among undergraduates.

At Universiti Putra Malaysia, Elias, Ping, and Abdullah (2011) explored the relationship between undergraduate students' stress levels and their academic performance, as indicated by their Grade Point Average (GPA). The study revealed that a significant number of students experienced moderate to high levels of stress, with common stressors including academic pressures, personal relationships, and financial concerns. Crucially, higher stress levels were associated with lower GPAs, emphasizing the negative impact of stress on academic achievement. This research emphasizes the importance of universities implementing stress management interventions to foster student well-being and success.

Another study by Dahlin, Joneborg, and Runeson (2005) at the Karolinska Institute Medical University, Stockholm, Sweden; delved into the intricate relationship between stress and depression among medical students, a group

known for the demanding nature of their academic and clinical training. Utilizing standardized tools, the researchers uncovered a notable prevalence of both stress and depressive symptoms within this student population. Their findings revealed a strong correlation between heightened stress levels and increased symptoms of depression, emphasizing the pressing mental health challenges these students face. Such challenges highlight the crucial need for tailored mental health support and resources in medical educational settings to ensure student well-being.

In a 2015 study conducted by Kio, Omeonu, & Agbede at Babcock University in Nigeria, the stress levels of undergraduates were closely examined. Utilizing a multistage sampling technique, 605 students were chosen from five of the university's six schools. The study took into account factors such as age, gender, religious affiliation, marital status, and ethnicity. Notably, 78% of participants were under 20 years old, with 54% being female, 96% single, 56% from the Yoruba ethnic group, and 91% identifying as Christians. Participants were categorized into stress personality types using the Emotional Stress Inventory Questionnaire (ESIQ). The data revealed that a majority, 60%, fell under personality type A (this personality trait is marked by competitiveness, impatience

and a strong drive) , with the top ten stressors being academically oriented. The foremost stressor identified was the fear of graduating, with a mean score of (3.02 ± 1.11) . Given these findings, the researchers advocated for the implementation of policies and programs by educational ministries and university administrations to enhance stress coping strategies. They emphasized the importance of collaborative intervention education, suggesting that public and mental health experts should engage with students to foster personal coping skills and diminish campus stress.

In another study done in Chapman University, 166 college students' stressors and coping techniques were examined. Academic pressures, money worries, family troubles, social pressures, and everyday hassles were all investigated as stressors. A revised COPE model was used to group coping mechanisms into the following categories: self-help, approach, accommodation, avoidance, and self-punishment. The study discovered that compared to their male counterparts, female students reported higher overall stress levels and more frequent use of emotion-focused coping mechanisms. It's interesting to note that despite the fact that both genders reported using various coping techniques to deal with different stressors, emotion-

focused strategies were more common in both. These results imply that it may be beneficial to develop stress management programs that take advantage of the emotion-focused techniques that students already utilize, modifying interventions to increase their effectiveness and extend their application (Brougham et al., 2009).

Finally, a study conducted at the University of Benin by Aihie and Ohanaka (2019) aimed to assess perceived academic stress levels among undergraduate students. By purposively sampling three faculties and subsequently randomly selecting 427 students, the researchers gathered data through the Perceived Academic Stress Scale (PASS), an instrument adapted from Bedewy and Gabriel (2015). The study revealed that male students experienced more academic stress than females, students in the Faculty of Physical Sciences faced more stress compared to their counterparts in Education and Social Sciences, and final year students reported greater stress than those in earlier academic years. Interestingly, age was not a determinant in perceived stress levels. Aihie and Ohanaka's findings emphasized the role of gender, academic level, and faculty in influencing students' stress perceptions, highlighting the need for tailored student counseling

Across diverse studies, undergraduate students consistently report high levels of stress, influenced by factors such as academic pressures, personal challenges, and gender dynamics. This pervasive stress emphasizes the urgent need for proactive university interventions.

Perceived effects of stress on the academic performance of students

The links between academic stress, anxiety, time management, and leisure satisfaction were looked at among 249 university undergraduates in the Misra and McKean (2000) study, split by age and gender. The study found that effective time management techniques were a more effective stress reliever than leisure satisfaction activities. There were noticeable gender variations, with women showing superior time management skills but yet feeling more academic stress and anxiety than men. Males, on the other hand, benefited more from leisure activities. It's interesting to note that younger students (freshmen and sophomores) responded to stress more strongly than their senior peers (juniors and seniors). Anxiety, time management, and leisure satisfaction were highlighted as important predictors of academic stress in the multivariate analysis. The results point to a feasible technique to reduce academic stress among college students: an

integrated approach of anxiety reduction, effective time management, and leisure activities.

In the study conducted by Struthers, Perry, and Menec (2000), academic stress was found to have a significant and direct impact on students' course grades in college. Greater academic stress was associated with lower course grades. However, the influence of stress on performance was mediated by the coping styles students adopted.

Additionally, stress among students, particularly due to academic pressures, can also result in a series of negative outcomes. One prominent effect is disrupted sleep; the heightened stress often induces insomnia or irregular sleep patterns. As a result, cognitive functions are diminished, affecting students' alertness, memory, and reasoning capabilities. To cope, some students might resort to harmful activities, such as substance abuse or even self-harm which not only diverts their focus from academics but also poses long-term detrimental consequences. This diversion, combined with memory problems and reduced participation, frequently culminates in a notable decline in academic grades. Moreover, the persistent state of heightened alertness from stress impairs the brain's ability to engage in abstract,

lateral, or creative thinking, which is detrimental for assignments necessitating innovative approaches. Time management also becomes a struggle; the overwhelming stress makes it challenging for students to effectively allocate time, resulting in missed deadlines, last-minute cramming, and insufficient exam preparation. Ultimately, the consistent exposure to stress can lead to burnout, leaving students feeling emotionally, mentally, and physically drained, rendering even basic academic responsibilities as seemingly insurmountable challenges. (Arria et al, 2008, Lund et al 2010)

Factors influencing stress levels among undergraduates of the university

Undergraduates at the University of Benin encounter a myriad of stressors. A study by Misra & McKean(2000) at the university of south Dakota highlighted academic pressure as a factor that affected stress levels, it was characterized by relentless assignments, exams, and looming deadlines, often accompanied by a heightened emphasis on grades. This academic strain is exacerbated for those who opt for an intensive course regimen

Another research by Ross, Niebling & Heckert(1999) addressed financial concerns, with rising tuition fees and living expenses, compound the worries for

those already burdened by the prospects of future debts and uncertain job opportunities. Concurrently, many grapple with time management as they juggle classes, assignments, work, and social commitments. The university's social landscape can be both invigorating and daunting, with students frequently measuring themselves against their peers, potentially leading to feelings of inadequacy. Additionally, the transition to university often marks a student's first prolonged absence from home, ushering in feelings of homesickness and the responsibility of newfound independence. Staying healthy becomes an uphill battle for many, with erratic sleep schedules and poor dietary choices taking a toll on their well-being. Furthermore, personal relationships, spanning familial ties, friendships, and romantic involvements, present their own sets of joys and challenges. Career uncertainties and high expectations, both internal and external, add layers of stress. The very environment of university, from overcrowded housing to potential conflicts with roommates, can pose stress-inducing scenarios. Personal traumas, whether pre-existing or those encountered during university life, can further strain a student's mental state. International students or those from diverse backgrounds confront the added pressures of cultural adjustment, including navigating language barriers and unfamiliar societal norms. A study by

Dressler (2004) even posits that discrepancies between personal beliefs and cultural values can escalate stress levels. It's imperative for institutions to recognize and address these stressors to ensure the holistic well-being of their student populace.

In a study centered on first-year undergraduate students in Australia, Lee et al. (2016) found that a significant majority experienced varying degrees of stress. Notably, both mild and more intense stress levels were linked to socio-demographic traits, engagement in risky health behaviors, and suboptimal dietary patterns. These findings hold substantial implications for both academic research and the development of health initiatives aimed at university students.

Finally, a research conducted at a Pakistani university by Khan, Gulzar, & Yahya (2013) identified several stressors for undergraduates. The research emphasized that strict family rules and regulations can lead to familial stress. The lack of ideal life partners or choices contributes to emotional stress. Financial stress is evident among students with lower incomes who face challenges in making desired purchases. A pressurized lifestyle and lack of recognition or appreciation from peers contribute to social stress.

Summary of reviewed literature

Stress, originating from Latin terms implying constriction and pressure, is fundamentally a reaction to perceived threats. These threats can be momentary, like a challenging task, or persist over time, such as ongoing personal challenges. Dr. Hans Selye, a pioneer in stress research, classified stress into various types, including acute (short-lived) and chronic (long-lasting), further extending to variations like eustress (positive stress) and distress (negative stress). Different events or stimuli, termed stressors, can induce stress, and these can either come from the external environment, like work or social pressures, or from internal factors, such as health issues. The perception and experience of stress are deeply influenced by cultural backgrounds and societal norms, making it a multifaceted concept to understand and manage.

A notable contribution to understanding stress perception is the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) developed by Sheldon Cohen. This scale evaluates how uncontrollable, unpredictable, and overloaded individuals perceive situations in their life, focusing largely on their feelings and thoughts over a specific timeframe. The PSS has been adopted and validated across various cultures and contexts,

emphasizing its utility in stress research. To manage the emotional and physical challenges posed by these stressors, individuals employ various coping mechanisms. These strategies can be categorized as adaptive, promoting well-being and resilience, or maladaptive, potentially exacerbating stress or leading to other negative outcomes. Among the beneficial techniques are effective stress management and emotion regulation, both pivotal for overall well-being. Emotion regulation particularly emphasizes understanding and controlling emotional responses and perceptions of various situations.

University students, navigating the intricate academic and social landscapes, are particularly susceptible to a variety of stressors. These include academic pressures, such as maintaining grades or meeting deadlines, financial concerns related to tuition or personal expenses, interpersonal challenges, and anxieties about future career prospects. Several global studies have illuminated the myriad factors influencing students' stress perceptions, including academic pressures, socio-demographic traits, risky health behaviors, and cultural norms. Given the profound impact of stress on academic outcomes and mental health – leading to issues like disrupted sleep, reduced classroom engagement, and memory problems

– it becomes imperative for educational institutions to proactively recognize and address these stressors, championing the holistic well-being of their student populace. .

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

This chapter deals with the methods and techniques adopted in the collection. analysis of data for the research study. The various methods that will be use are discussed under the following manufacturer headings:,

- Research Design
- Population of study
- Sample and sampling technique
- Instrument for Data collection
- Validity of instrument
- Reliability of instrument
- Method of Data collection
- Method of Data Analysis

Research Design

This study will make use of Survey Research Design. The survey will enable data to be collected and analyzed by using a group of people considered to represent entire population. This design helps to obtain the needed information on the perceived effects of stress on the academic performance among students in the university of Benin. Also, this kind of research design reveals the current situations, points out the accessibility of present status quo and shows need for a change.

Population of Study

The population of the study is 22,448 comprising undergraduate students in the Federal University of Benin in Benin city, Edo state capital (Student affairs division, 2023)

Sample and sampling technique

Two stage sampling technique was used for this study. Firstly, simple random sampling of balloting with replacement was used to select five(5) faculties. Secondly, 1% of respondents will be purposively selected from each faculty.

This is shown in the table below

FACULTIES	POPULATION OF THE STUDY	SAMPLE OF THE STUDY
Faculty of Education	7470	70
Faculty of Art	4840	48
Faculty of Physical science	3658	36
Faculty of Engineering	4651	42
Faculty of Medical science	2829	28
Total	22,448	224

Instrument for Data Collection

Data will be collected by means of a close-ended questionnaire title; The Perceived effects of stress on the academic performance of students in the university of Benin.

The questionnaire is designed by the researcher and it contains three sections; A, B and C. Section A comprises of the Demographic data and. bio-data of the respondent. Section B consists of structured items on research questions to measure the level of perceived stress amongst the respondents and section C consisted of another set of structured questions where the respondents were asked to chose from the options: Strongly agree, Agree, Disagree and Strongly disagree.

Validity of the Instrument

The instrument (questionnaire) was designed by the researcher and will be validated by the researcher's supervisor in the department of Health Safety and Environmental Education.

The supervisor's corrections, suggestions and contributions will be included in the final draft of the instrument and also make sure that the questionnaire contained the relevant and reliable information needed for the study.

Reliability of the Instrument

The reliability of the instrument is determined by the use of test retest method. The questionnaires are administered to twenty (20) respondents outside the sample size. The questionnaires will be administered twice on different occasions. The reliability will be calculated using Cronbach's Alpha with a reliability coefficient of 0.638.

Method of Data Collection

The instrument will be personally administered to respondents by the researcher and will be collected immediately after the respondent have selected the response option that they consider to be appropriate.

Method of Data Analysis

Data gathered from the respondent will be analyzed using tables, frequency count and simple percentage.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF DATA, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

This chapter is devoted to the presentation, analysis and interpretation of the data gathered in the course of this study. The data are based on the number of copies of the questionnaire completed and returned by the respondents. The data are presented in tables and the analysis is done using the chi-square test.

Presentation and Interpretation of Result

Research Question 1: What is the level of stress among undergraduates of the university of Benin?

Table 1: Percentage Summary of University students responses on the level of stress among undergraduates of the university of Benin

S/N	ITEMS	Almost never	sometimes	Fairly often	Very often	Total
1	How often have you felt nervous and stressed?	43 19.2%	32 14.3%	67 30%	82 36.6%	224

2	How often have you felt confident about your ability to handle your personal problems?	69 30.8%	44 19.6%	33 14.7%	78 34.8%	224
3	How often have you felt that you were unable to control the important things in your life?	35 15.6%	80 37.7%	37 16.5%	72 32.1%	224
4	How often have you felt that things were going your way?	45 20%	67 30%	49 21.9%	63 28.1%	224
5	How often have you felt difficulties were piling up so high that you could not overcome them?	49 21.9%	67 30%	50 22.3%	58 25.9%	224
6	How often have you been overwhelmed by your academic responsibilities?	32 14.3%	45 20%	67 30%	78 34.8%	224
7	How often have you found that you could not cope with all the things that you had to do?	42 18.8%	32 14.3%	110 49.1%	40 17.9%	224
8	How often have you been angered because	45 20%	58 26%	64 28.6%	57 25.4%	224

	of things that happened that were outside of your control?					
9	How often have you been upset because of something that happened unexpectedly?	56 25%	51 22.8%	57 25.4%	60 26.8%	224
10	How often have you felt that you were in control of your life?	56 25%	60 26.8%	49 21.9%	59 26.3%	224
	Average total	21.06%	24.15%	26.04%	28.87%	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2023

This indicate that a good number of the participants acknowledge the stress faced by university student and that they occur very often. From section B of the research questions 1-10 on the research questionnaire were used for table 1 above. All the response put together indicate that an average of 21.06% feels that the stress almost never happens while 24.15% feels the stress sometimes happen. However 26.04% feels that the stress fairly often happens while 28.87% feels that the stress level very often happens.

Tables Based on Research Hypotheses

Research Question 2: What is the perceived effects of stress on the academic performance of undergraduates in the University of Benin?

Table 2: Percentage Summary of University students responses on the perceived effects of stress on the academic performance of undergraduates in the Univeristy of Benin

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	Total
1	I believe my grades have been affected negatively by my stress levels	97 43.3%	67 30%	23 10.3%	37 16.5%	224
2	When I'm stressed, I find it hard to concentrate on my studies	67 30%	68 30.3%	30 13.4%	59 26.3%	224
3	Stress affects my motivation to attend classes and complete assignments	68 30.3%	50 22.3%	45 20%	61 27.2%	224
4	I have skipped classes or exams due to feeling overwhelmed by stress	89 39.7%	67 30%	32 14.3%	36 16.1%	224
5	How often have you felt difficulties were piling up so high that you could not overcome them?	49 21.9%	67 30%	50 22.3%	58 25.9%	224
6	I often feel too stressed to participate in group projects or discussions	67 30%	82 36.6%	30 13.4%	45 20%	224
	Average Percentage	39.04%	29.84%	18.74%	26.4%	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2023

From the table the answers provided to the research item 1-5 we can deduce by putting together that an average of 39.04% and 29.84% strongly agreed and agreed to the perceived effects of stress on the academic performance of students. While 18.74% and 26.4% disagreed and strongly disagreed the perceived effects of stress on the academic performance of students.

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

H1: There is no significant relationship between perceived stress levels and academic performance among university students.

Significance: 0.05

Decision rule: Accept the hypothesis if the p-value is greater than the level of significance and do otherwise if not.

Test Statistics	
THERE IS NO SIGNIFICANT RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PERCEIVED STRESS LEVELS AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS.	
Chi-Square	38.2093
Degree of freedom (DOF)	12

Asymp. Sig. P-value	0.000142
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Source: Field Survey, 2023

Conclusion based on the decision rule:

Since the p-value (0.000142) is lesser than the level of significance (0.05), we accept the hypothesis (H1) therefore concluding that There is no significant relationship between perceived stress levels and academic performance among university students.

Research Question 3: What are the factors influencing stress among undergraduates of the university of Benin?

Table 3: Percentage Summary of University students responses on the factors influencing stress among undergraduates of the university of Benin

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	Total
1	Academic pressures (e.g., exams, assignments) significantly contribute to my stress	79 35.3%	65 29%	56 25%	24 10.7%	224
2	Personal relationships (e.g., friendships, family	45	69 30.8%	43 19.2%	67 30%	224

	issues) significantly contribute to my stress.	20%				
3	Financial pressures significantly influence my stress level	84 37.5%	67 30%	47 21%	26 11.6%	224
4	Future career concerns significantly add to my stress	62 39.7%	45 20%	55 24.5%	62 27.7%	224
5	Balancing extracurricular activities with academics significantly contributes to my stress	37 16.5%	48 21.4%	60 26.8%	79 35.3%	224
6	The pressure to meet societal or family expectations significantly contributes to my stress	56 25%	67 30%	61 27.2%	40 17.9%	224
7	Job prospects significantly add to my stress	45 20%	56 25%	69 30.8%	54 24.1%	224
	Average Percentage	27.71%	26.6%	24.9%	22.47%	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2023

This indicate that a good number of the participants agreed to factors influencing stress among undergraduates of the university of Benin. In an attempt to provide answers to the research questions items 1-7, I was able to put together that an

average of 27.71% and 26.6% strongly agreed and agreed to the list of factors influencing stress among university of Benin students. However an average of 24.9% and 22.47% disagreed and strongly disagreed the list of factors influencing stress among university of Benin students

Table 4: Reliability statistics

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.638	22

	Item	Statistics	N
	Mean	Std. Deviation	
ITEM1	3.15	.366	22
ITEM2	3.20	.410	22
ITEM3	3.10	.553	22
ITEM4	3.35	.489	22
ITEM5	3.30	.470	22
ITEM6	2.55	.510	22
ITEM7	3.10	.553	22
ITEM8	2.15	.366	22
ITEM9	2.45	.510	22
ITEM10	2.50	.607	22
ITEM11	2.55	.826	22
ITEM12	2.90	.852	22
ITEM13	3.11	.543	22
ITEM14	3.40	.479	22

ITEM15	3.32	.475	22
ITEM16	2.60	.525	22
ITEM17	3.30	.470	22
ITEM18	2.25	.386	22
ITEM19	2.63	.518	22
ITEM20	2.50	.607	22
ITEM21	2.65	.870	22
ITEM22	2.95	.868	22

Discussion of results

The findings from the questionnaire illuminate the prevailing sentiment among participants regarding stress levels faced by university students. It's evident that a significant majority of participants recognize the frequent occurrence of stress among university students, with more than half reporting that they believe stress occurs fairly often or very often.

A deeper examination of the data, specifically from Section B of the research questionnaire, reveals that a minority of participants feel that stress almost never happens. In contrast, a combined total of those who believe stress is experienced fairly often or very often outweighs them. This emphasizes the regularity and prevalence of stress among the student body.

Furthermore, in examining the perceived effects of stress on academic performance, it's intriguing to observe that a majority of participants either agreed or strongly agreed that stress affects academic outcomes. However, a significant proportion also disagreed or strongly disagreed, underscoring the existence of diverse opinions on the matter.

When discussing the factors contributing to stress among undergraduates at the University of Benin, a consensus emerges. A majority of participants concur on the listed factors as being contributors to stress, signifying a general acknowledgment of these stress inducers. Yet, a substantial group has contrasting views, either disagreeing or strongly disagreeing with the mentioned stressors. This suggests there might be other unlisted factors or a difference in personal experiences that influence these perceptions.

Moreover, the study further clarifies the nature of stress faced by students of the University of Benin. Stress emerges as both a personal and social problem. Factors contributing to this stress include economic difficulties, the occurrence of strikes, having to repeat several courses, and challenging weather conditions. Interestingly, while environmental conditions like exam pressures exert a strain on students, they aren't direct causes of stress but rather events that impact

individual adaptation. It's the reaction of each individual that determines their predisposition to stress. Among the triggering factors, insecurity and economic hardships stand out as particularly influential stressors affecting students.

In light of these findings, the researcher offers several recommendations to address the challenges faced by students. If adopted diligently, these suggestions have the potential to foster improvements related to the central concerns of this study.

In conclusion, while there's a general acknowledgment of the frequent stress faced by university students and its potential effect on academic performance, there's also a diversity of opinion about the factors causing this stress. This necessitates further exploration and potential consideration of individual experiences and perspectives.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents a summary of the research work, conclusion and recommendations. The study which aims at to analyze the Perceived effects of stress on the academic performance of students in the university of Benin. its potential to contribute valuable insights and practical implications to various stakeholders in the field of education and health education. As it was carried out with the students of university of Benin Edo state.

Summary

This study examined the perceived effects of stress on academic performance of undergraduates of the University of Benin, Edo State. The purpose of the study was: identify the level of stress in Undergraduates of the university of Benin, identify the factors influencing stress among undergraduates of the university of Benin. The study adopted the survey research design. The instrument for data collection was a questionnaire; it was built around the research question by the researcher and validated by the researcher's supervisor. Data collected were analysed using descriptive statistics by means of simple frequency and percentage and reliability tests were carried out on the research instrument.

Conclusion

The study has revealed that stress is both personal and social problem. Among the factors which contribute to stress on campus includes economic difficulties, strikes, carry over on so many courses and adverse weather conditions. The environmental conditions like exams pressure on students are not causes of stress but events which affect an individual an adaptation. It is the reaction of an individual that determine the degree of predisposition. Among the factors that' triggered stress, economic hardship appears to be the most potent factor that affects students. This is not in isolation with economic reality in Nigerian polytechnics students are adversely affected by the economic reality in the country. Adjusting to economic hardship is not easy especially for students; this usually leads them to bad academic end. Because student's economic demand has to do with survival and the basic necessity of life on campus. This disruption of academic activities and the attendance anxiety and the feeling of uncertainty crate a negative impact on students overall wellbeing especially their academic performance. These include strike action by academic and non academic staff of the Nigerian polytechnics contributes in no small measure to the stress experienced by students. Therefore, students always see strike as something recurrently dashing their hope of graduating within a reasonable period of time. The study shows that the students develop a nonchalant attitude towards their studies because of stress. Some give up the hope but students have always being coping with some of their life events and challenges that trigger stress. Stress coping techniques are having a positive outcome and to work toward it increase one's chance of getting desire results. The study revealed that Nigerian polytechnic students are studying under a challenging and stressful atmosphere and yet they cope.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study the following recommendations are put forward.

1. The Federal and State government should set up a special committee to look into conditions of the Nigerian polytechnic students with a view to proposing measures that will alleviate students suffering; some of the measures include meeting academic staff union of polytechnic (ASUP) demands for reequipping the institutions.

2. National association of Nigerian students (NANS) should resist the move by polytechnic to increase tuition fees. Already some, students are financially overstretched. If the move to introduce tuition fees is allowed, many students may not be able to cope and because of that will aggravate, stress them and lead to poor academic-performance

3. There is the need for an improved lecturer-students relationship on campus. Such a cordial atmosphere is paramount to enhance learning. Students should respect lecturer, lecturers should respect themselves as parents. Because as

parents, they cannot frustrate their own children. Therefore no good lecturer can frustrate his/her own students on no good ground.

4. Polytechnics are over-populated; there is a need for government to expand the facilities. A situation where a classroom is meant for fifty students and a hundred people happen to accommodate it, it is a big challenge and will lead to them doing bad academically. This problem needs urgent attention in the light of population increase in the Nigeria polytechnics especially when it comes to hostel facilities (accommodation).

5. Students should bear in mind that there is no gain without pain. Just as a farmer tills hard and when the harvest is ready he/she smiles so students should realize that they should work hard in order to the desired result.

6. National Board for Technical Education should explore the viability of providing necessary facilities in polytechnics that will motivate students to study effectively. This will help in reducing the span of many carry over.

7. The issue of security should be addressed properly; especially the case of violence which has become very rampant these days.

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APPENDIX
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, SAFETY AND ENVIRONMENTAL
EDUCATION

FACULTY OF EDUCATION

UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, BENIN CITY

QUESTIONNAIRE

THE PERCEIVED EFFECTS OF STRESS ON THE ACADEMIC
PERFORMANCE OF UNDERGRADUATES OF THE UNIVERSITY OF
BENIN

Dear Respondents,

This questionnaire is meant for a research work in the Department of Health, safety and environmental education, University of Benin. The topic of this research is **“The Perceived effects of stress on the academic performance of students in the University of Benin.”** And your candid response is highly solicited to aid the research process in gathering data for analytical purpose. All facts and information captured in this questionnaire will be treated with confidence and will only be used for the purpose of this research work. Thank you.

Edobor Marvellous Eghosase

SECTION A (Demographic Data) Please tick where appropriate.

1. **Sex** : Male () Female ()

2. **Age Range** : 15 - 20 () 21 - 25 () 26 - 30 () 31 - 35 () 36 - 40 () 41 and above ()

3. **Faculty/Department** : _____

4. **Academic level**: 100 () 200 () 300 () 400 () 500 () other _____

SECTION B : Please tick the appropriate option.

Note: Responses to this section should be taken within the duration of your last semester

S/ N	ITEMS	Almost never	sometimes	Fairly often	Very often
	Perceived level of stress among students				
1.	How often have you felt nervous and stressed?				
2.	How often have you felt confident about your ability to handle				

	your personal problems?				
3.	How often have you felt that you were unable to control the important things in your life?				
4.	How often have you felt that things were going your way?				
5.	How often have you felt difficulties were piling up so high that you could not overcome them?				
6.	How often have you been overwhelmed by your academic responsibilities?				
7.	How often have you found that you could not cope with all the things that you had to do?				
8.	How often have you been angered because of things that happened that were outside of your control?				
9.	How often have you been upset because of something that happened unexpectedly?				
10.	How often have you felt that you were in control of your life?				

SECTION C : Please tick the appropriate option

Note : SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, D = Disagree, SD = Strongly Disagree

S/ N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD
	Perceived Effects on Academic Performance				
1.	I believe my grades have been affected negatively by my stress levels				
2.	When I'm stressed, I find it hard to concentrate on my studies				
3.	Stress affects my motivation to attend classes and complete assignments				
4.	I have skipped classes or exams due to feeling overwhelmed by stress.				
5.	I often feel too stressed to participate in group projects or discussions				
	Factors Influencing Stress				
6.	Academic pressures (e.g., exams, assignments) significantly contribute to my stress				
7.	Personal relationships (e.g., friendships, family issues) significantly contribute to my stress.				
8.	Financial pressures significantly influence my stress level				
9.	Future career concerns significantly add to my stress				
10.	Balancing extracurricular activities with academics significantly contributes to my stress				
11.	The pressure to meet societal or family expectations significantly contributes to my stress				

12.	Job prospects significantly add to my stress				
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