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COLLEGE OF HEALTH SCIENCES

FACULTY OF ALLIED HEALTH SCIENCE

DEPARTMENT OF NURSING

DIPLOMA PROGRAMMES



**EFFECT OF STRESS ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF SECOND YEAR
NURSING AND MIDWIFERY STUDENTS DURING THEIR FIRST ACADEMIC
YEAR IN HOLY FAMILY NURSING AND MIDWIFERY TRAINING COLLEGE,
BEREKUM**

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BEREKUM]**

AFFILIATED TO KNUST, KUMASI

HOLY FAMILY NURSING AND MIDWIFERY TRAINING COLLEGE, BEREKUM



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DECLARATION

We hereby declare that this submission is our own work towards the Diploma in General Nursing and that, to the best of our knowledge, it contains no material previously published by another person nor material which has been accepted for the award of diploma of the University, except where due acknowledgement has been made in the text.

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ABSTRACT

The study aimed to identify the effect of stress on academic performance of second year nursing and midwifery students during their first academic year in Holy Family Nursing and Midwifery Training College, Berekum. A cross-sectional design was used to collect in-depth information for the study. The sample population was obtained using a proportionate stratified sampling technique. A total of 58 students were sampled for the study. The data for the study was collected by administering the questionnaire to the participants.

The study found that the majority of respondents indicated that causes of stress in the academic environment were academic workload 50 (86.2%) and fear of failing in examination 47 (81.0%). Over half of the respondents indicated that lack of confidence 29 (50%) and unable to manage study and leisure time 30 (51.7%) were causes of stress in the academic environment. Majority 56 (96.6%) of the respondents indicated that long-term stress reduces one's ability to concentrate on studies.

The study recommended that management of the school should make room for stress management courses in the school curriculum and also organizing stress management forum and campaign to help address stress among students.

The study concluded that the major cause of academic stress is academic load on students. stress have negative impact on the students' academic success such as reduced ability to concentrate on studies. employing effective coping strategies is pertinent to their academic success and general life.

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ABBREVIATION

DES	Dental Environment Stress Questionnaire
HFNMTC	Holy Family Nursing and Midwifery Training College
KNUST	Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology
PSS	Perceived Stress Scale

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background of the study

Globally, stress is pervasive in all aspects of undergraduate nursing and midwifery education. Nursing and midwifery educators need to be aware of this impact and provide appropriate support to students in both the clinical and academic environments (McCarthy et al., 2018). The very mention of the word 'stress' brings thoughts such as an increased rate of depression, anxiety, cardiovascular disease, and other potentially life-threatening issues to one's mind. Oftentimes, a student rushes from one end of campus to the other, trying to make their next class on time. Since classes are scheduled back-to-back, there is less or no time to even eat (Essel & Owusu, 2017). It is also worth noting that stress is an inevitable part of student life; as it takes a toll on most students' physical health, emotional wellbeing, and academic performance. The rise of this pandemic in students is on account of factors such as the somewhat sudden change in lifestyle, increased study load, new responsibilities among others (Essel & Owusu, 2017). A publication on stress by the University of New York (2016) buttresses the notion that extreme levels of stress can hinder studies' effectiveness and lead to poor academic performance and attrition. It goes on to affirm that, students who experienced stressful life events also reported worse health outcomes and reduced quality of life.

Academic performance is of great importance to parents, teachers, and students themselves. Even the larger society is aware of the long-term effects of positive or negative academic performance since graduates from educational institutions are expected to shape the future of society (Salami, 2016). Unfortunately, the academic achievements of students have become a matter of grave concern to many educationists (Aremu, 2017). Students have many obstacles to overcome to achieve their optimal academic performance (Womble, 2018).

Research conducted in Finland by Essel and Owusu (2017) revealed that 94.2% of students perceived their training as being stressful. The major stressors identified by the respondents were related to the academic and social environments. They include; excessive school work (82.3%), lack of holidays (76.4%), lack of time for recreation (76.2%), poor learning environment (74.9%), and lack of electricity (74.7%). Hence, students attributed stressors as the cause of their low performance in academics (Binder & Smith, 2017).

In Nigeria, Labrague et al. (2017), reported that the degree of stress and the type of stressors and coping styles utilized by nursing students differ according to their place of origin. The study added that strengthening nursing students' positive coping skills may be helpful for them to effectively deal with various stressors during their educational experiences while maximizing learning. Implementing empirically tested approaches may be useful to prevent the recurrence of stress and lessen its impact such as stress management counseling, counseling programs, establishing peer and family support systems, and formulating hospital policies that will support nursing students.

Studies in Ghana have revealed that about 86.5% of nursing and midwifery students of Health Training Institutions suffer stress during their college lives (Dusselier, Dunn, Wang, & Shelley, 2017).

1.1 Problem Statement

Undoubtedly, stress has become the number one reported impediment to academic performance, as fellow students now report being more stressed out than ever. The New York University Publication continued its affirmation that 55% of students claimed their biggest stressor to be academic. Six (6) in 10 college students report having felt so stressed they could not get their studies done on one or more occasions (Essel & Owusu, 2017). Additionally, many of the emotional and physical symptoms that occur commonly in the

student population, such as headaches, fatigue, depression, anxiety, and the inability to cope, can be attributed to or exacerbated by stress (Dusselier et al., 2017).

Surveys conducted by Kansas State University reveal a 58% increase in stress-related mental health issues reported to campus counsellors between 2015 and 2017 (Hoover, 2018).

Nursing students have been identified as a population with an elevated stress level. Stressors for student nurses, identified by Beck, Hackett, Srivastava, Mckim, and Rockwell (2018), included adjusting to a rigorous program of theory, long hours of study, and pressures of student clinical practice requiring emotional and personal maturity. According to Beck et al. (2018), the practicum portion of nursing education was identified by nursing students as more stressful than didactic courses. For nursing students, these real-life situations are stressful because patients can be affected negatively or positively.

Over the years stress has become the topic of discussion among students in Holy Family Nursing and Midwifery Training College, Berekum, as students move up and down just to get their pass mark at the end of the academic year. First year students in the school have received their share of the stress on campus in that they have already seen who were repeated and are now among them. Seniors on campus tell them how difficult the academic work could be.

Although there have been numerous researches being conducted on stress and its impact worldwide, however, there has been limited research being conducted on the impact it has on student performance and some possible management techniques of stress. Therefore, this research is carried out to identify the effect of stress on academic performance of second year nursing and midwifery students during their first academic year in Holy Family Nursing and Midwifery Training College, Berekum.

1.2 General Objective

To identify the effect of stress on academic performance of second year nursing and midwifery students during their first academic year in Holy Family Nursing and Midwifery Training College, Berekum.

1.3 Specific Objectives

1. To determine the causes of academic stress among second year nursing and midwifery students during their first academic year
2. To identify the impact of stress on academic performance among second year nursing and midwifery students during their first academic year
3. To identify techniques second year nursing and midwifery students used to deal with stress during their first academic year

1.4 Operational Definition of Terms

Techniques: Concept that will serve as a device or means for coping of the nurses while they provide mental healthcare.

Coping: Efforts made by nurses to minimize the impact of stress.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Overview

Stress is the process by which an individual or a person reacts when opened to external or internal problems and challenges. An organism processes numerous systems to coordinate such adaptive responses both at systematic and cellular levels. By this, stress has a direct effect on the brain and the whole anatomy of the body as such failure to adapt to a stressful condition can result in brain malfunction, physiological problems, and also many areas of psychological challenges in the form of depression, anxiety, pain and burnout (Hellhammer, 2018).

According to Wheeler (2017), stress is a physics word that refers to the amount of force used on an object and it relates in real life as to how certain issues that carry force are applied to human life. Examples like financial difficulties, health challenges, conflicts with friends, all carry force or pressure on a person's body, mind, and spirit. Some of the pressure or force originates from the environment but most often comes from within a person's head in the form of worry, anxiousness, regret, discouragement, and low confidence.

2.2 Causes of Stress

Academic stress is a product of a combination of academic related demands that exceed the adaptive resources available to an individual (Kadapatti & Vijayalaxmi, 2012). Academic stress echoes individual's perception of academic frustration, academic conflict, academic pressure and academic anxiety which are synonymous with the components of academic stress. Indeed, students have a unique cluster of stressful experiences. Students' academic performances can be affected by many factors. Beck et al. (2018) define the sources of stress as every circumstance or event that threatens to disrupt people's daily functioning and causes

them to make adjustments. Similarly, Phinney and Haas (2017) stressed out sources of stress more specifically as a unique set of stressful encounters among students which includes: difficult financial challenges, domestic responsibilities, responsibilities related to holding a job while in school, and a heavy academic load.

There are various stressors such as time management, financial problems, sleep deprivation, social activities, and for some students even having children can all pose a threat to their academic performance. Academic institutions have different work settings compared to nonacademic and therefore one would expect the difference in symptoms, causes, and consequences of stress (Lu, Kao, Siu, & Lu, 2019).

Stress results from the interaction between stressors and the individual's perception and reaction to those stressors (Romano, 2019). The amount of stress experienced may be influenced by the individual's ability to effectively cope with stressful events and situations. For instance, In Finland 451 undergraduate medical trainees from the University of Calabar were studied. The vast majority (94.2%) of respondents perceived their training as being stressful with over three-fifth (70.3%) perceiving it as being very stressful. The major stressors identified by the respondents were related to the academic and social environments. They include; excessive school work (82.3%), lack of holidays (76.4%), lack of time for recreation (76.2%), poor learning environment (74.9%) and lack of electricity (74.7%). Struthers, Perry and Menec (2000) also reported that a high level of academic stress was associated with lower course grades. Students experience a high level of academic stress due to exams, assignments, time pressure, and uncertainty. In summary, this stress has a detrimental effect on their academic performance (Laal & Aliramaie, 2020).

Most of the empirical investigations on causes of academic stress are found to be concentrated around external stressors, i.e. financial factors, social factors, and institutional factors. Stress results from the interaction between stressors and the individual's perception and reaction to those stressors. The amount of stress experienced may be influenced by the individual's ability to effectively cope with stressful events and situations (Romano, 2020).

It is not necessary that stress only occurs due to workplace problems rather there can be many other stresses which leave a poor impression on their academic performance. Many nursing students go through various kinds of stressors during their nursing education and training. It can directly lead them to have problems in their learning and performance (Tim, 2019).

A phenomenological study was conducted by Tim (2019) in Australia among nursing students. A purposive sampling method was employed to recruit 542 participants for the study. A well-structured questionnaire was used for data collection. The study found that students of nursing have been observed being stressed at the time of their academic or clinical hours due to several reasons which also affect their capabilities. Poor sleep or poor satisfaction towards performance or work or discomfort, nervousness or tiredness, or decreased financial aid leads to stress. Fear of failure, no future planning, lack of confidence, and constant negative issues are causes of constant stress among students. The study concluded that many nursing students go through various kinds of stressors during their nursing education and training. It can directly lead them to have problems in their learning and performance.

A descriptive, cross-sectional study was conducted by Alghamdi et al. (2019) on sources of stress among undergraduate female nursing students in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. Convenience sampling was used to select 87 female nursing students. A questionnaire was used to gather the data for the study. Statistical analysis was performed using the SPSS program. The data

were entered and cleaned. Study variables were analyzed using descriptive statistics. The study found that the major source of stress was academic load followed by interface worries, clinical concerns, and personal problems. In conclusion, nursing students' stress resulting from their academic load was higher than the other sources of stress, and it was related to a large number of materials, assignments, or subjects required for nursing students. It is recommended that undergraduate nursing students be supported by having schools organize the amount of academic work required for each subject. Given that the students' academic load was the most common source of stress, coordination between the students and faculty about the requirements of each course is warranted.

A quantitative descriptive cross-sectional research was conducted by Parveen and Inayat (2017) on nursing students in Allied Hospital, Faisalabad to identify the factors of stress. The targeted population of the study was the students of the nursing school of Allied Hospital Faisalabad. The sample size for this study was 150 students which were calculated according to Slovin's formula. The study was done through a convenient sampling method. A questionnaire was used to collect data for the study. The study found that most of the respondents (84.6%) strongly agreed and agreed that stress level increases due to getting lower grades than anticipated. Most of the respondents (70%) strongly agreed and agreed to another question of an academic factor of stress "Inability to balance study and leisure time is a source of stress". The majority of students (84%) agreed and strongly agreed to the statement "lack of expected career advancement, fear of future create stress". Clinical factors of stress were another factor in which 39.3% of respondents strongly agreed that maintaining a balance between clinical work and studying increases stress. However, 36.7% of the students agreed, 8% were neutral, 8.7% disagreed, and 7.3% of the respondents strongly disagreed on this question. In response to another question of this contrast in which 44% of respondents strongly agreed and 39% agreed which shows a positive response that

humiliating behavior of physicians and being criticized in front of the patient is the reason for stress. Few respondents (11.3%) were neutral about this statement, 8.7% of respondents disagreed, and only 6% strongly disagreed with the statement. The majority of students (78%) agreed and strongly agreed that stress is due to fear of making mistakes in clinical placement. The majority of the students (87.3%) agreed and strongly agreed that stress increases through criticism from peers and senior staff. The majority of the students (82.6%) agreed and strongly agreed that stress is due to inadequate and poor equipment. The majority of the students (84.6%) agreed and strongly agreed that stress is due to inadequate information about patients from doctors. There are environmental factors that also produced stress among nursing students. The majority of students (64.7%) strongly agreed and 32.7% agreed that lack of recreational facilities during the semester is a source or factor of stress. The study concluded that the nursing students of Allied Hospital, Faisalabad are mainly facing academic stress which shows positivity in the students, clinical and environmental stressors have an also great impact on students' learning.

A cross-sectional study was conducted by Hirsch, Barlem, Tomaschewski-Barlem, Lunardi, and Calcada de Oliveira (2014) on stress and coping strategies adopted by nursing students in Rio Grande, Brazil. Data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences Software, Version 22.0. Pearson's correlation coefficient was used to analyze correlations between the two variables, stress and coping. A non-probability convenience sample was used to select 146 nursing students. Participants were selected according to their presence and availability at the location and time of data collection. The following predictors of stress were identified: professional education, acquired practical knowledge, and free time and leisure. In conclusion, the most common strategies used by students in stressful events were considered negative and of poor effectiveness, as efforts were focused on emotions and not on the problem, compromising students' professional training process.

A cross-sectional study was conducted on the experiences of stress among nursing students in nursing training colleges in Tamale, Ghana. A total of 273 State Registered Nursing, Community Health Nursing, and Midwifery students were selected using the stratified random sampling strategy. Data collection was done using a self-constructed survey questionnaire. Data were analyzed using a One-Way ANOVA, One-Way repeated measures ANOVA, and Independent sample t-test on SPSS Version 17. The study found that only 7% of students who attempted suicide attributed it to academic problems or factors while 75% cited social and personal problems. Personal stressors identified among the students included lack of time management, control of emotions, and confidence. Finally, the financial limitation was identified as a key stressor for students (Abasimi, Atidanbila, Mahamah, & Gai, 2015).

A descriptive design was used to conduct a study among nursing students of Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Ghana. Eighty-nine (89) students from the Department of Nursing, KNUST were selected using systematic sampling methods. Data were collected using self-administered questionnaires, which were pre-tested with students in another nursing school. Data were analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The study found that out of the 89 respondents, 88 of them indicated their ages and programmes of study. The majority of the respondents (58%) were between 20-25 years, single (84.5%), and were mostly Christians. The study reported the following as stressors encountered by nursing students; nurses instruction differ from what was taught in school (86.6%), feeling of being ignored by clinical nurses (85.4%), standing throughout clinical hours (79.8%), intimidation from health staff (76.4%), inadequate nursing skills (44.9%) and inability to help patients with their problems (36.0%). In conclusion, stressors exist in students' clinical training. The main stressors were differences between theory and clinical

instruction and the feeling of being ignored by clinical nurses (Bam, Oppong, & Ibitoye, 2014).

A cross-sectional research design was employed to conduct a study in Ho Polytechnic, Ghana. In all, 275 students were sampled through the use of a multistage sampling procedure. Descriptive statistics such as mean scores and standard deviations were used to determine the most dominant sources of stress. The study found that the three most important intrapersonal and self-stressors were “fear of failing”, “dealing with personal issues” and “study skills”. However, “feeling like I don’t belong at the Polytechnic”, “my writing skills” and “lack of self-discipline” scored very low regarding these factors (Azila-Gbetteh, Atasi, Danku, & Soglo, 2015).

2.3 Impact of stress on academic performance

There are many studies that examined how stress influenced college students. Studies over the years have demonstrated that student’s poor performance and stress are positively related (Sohail, 2021). Student’s living environment impacted on his or her academic performance. Performance within the school system is measured by academic performance, which is a function of student’s study habit (Sveinsdottir, Biering, & Ramel, 2016).

Stress affecting students academically leads them to have bad performance in school work. Stress in college students can affect their ability to concentrate. Ironically stress improves concentration for a short term because when students are a little stressed up they then focus to try to get the issue in question which stresses them away but these concentrations do not last for long since they will have more schoolwork or other assignments to do which demand long-term concentrations rather than the short term (Essel & Owusu, 2017). Stress is a major obstacle to academic success (Dusselier et al., 2017).

Memory is vital to students' academic success, and forgetfulness is one of the symptoms of being stressed. It is clear then that this could adversely affect students' quality of work. When students are unable to recall necessary details to answer questions, this could lead to poor exam results and limited participation in class activities (Ross, 2018).

Students who are experiencing stress, are likely to be consistently thinking about the adverse situation that they find themselves in. They could also be constantly be focused on their failures and weaknesses. These self-defeating thoughts affect how they feel and how they behave. This results in lack of confidence in their abilities which hinders them from performing to their highest potential and succeed in school (Dziegielewski et al., 2019).

A descriptive study was conducted by Struthers, Perry, and Menac (2017) on the relationship among academic stress, coping mechanisms, motivation, and performance in college among students of York University Toronto, Canada. Two Hundred and Three (203) college students were selected using a simple random sampling method. Data were collected using self-administered questionnaires. Data were analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS 22). The study found that a high level of academic stress was associated with lower course grades. Students experience a high level of academic stress due to exams, assignments, time pressure, and uncertainty. The study concluded that stress has a detrimental effect on their academic performance.

A cross-sectional study was conducted by Lin et al. (2020) in Fujian Province, which is located in the southeast region of China. This study was carried out among all the preclinical dental undergraduate students. A total of 396 students were surveyed with the Dental Environment Stress Questionnaire (DES) and the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) using an online survey system. Statistical analyses were performed using PASW Statistics for Windows Version 18. The findings showed that stress levels negatively predicted the

academic performance of dental undergraduate students. The study concluded that the amount of stress did not differ by year of study, the sources of stress did differ. Stress scores and sex were negatively correlated with academic performance. Measures are needed to reduce stress for the improved academic performance of the students.

A cross-sectional research design was employed to conduct a study in Ho Polytechnic, Ghana. In all, 275 students were sampled through the use of a multistage sampling procedure. A questionnaire was used in gathering data for the study. Descriptive statistics such as mean scores and standard deviations were used to determine the most dominant sources of stress. Spearman's correlation coefficient was used to determine the effects of stress on students' academic performance. The level of stress was found to be significant for all demographic variables evaluated. However, the causal factors for stress categories have been mixed. Finally, no significant effects were found between stress and academic performance (Azila-Gbettor et al., 2015).

A descriptive research design was used to conduct a study on the relationship between stress and the academic achievement of biology students in Nigerian universities. The sample consisted of 164 biology undergraduates from the Tai Solarin University of Education, Ijagun, Ogun State. A simple random sampling technique was used to select the participants. The research instrument used for gathering data was a questionnaire. The study reported that stress causes students to be confused and also suffer from amnesia. The study concluded that stress affecting students academically leads them to have bad performance in schoolwork (Awofodu & Emi, 2018).

In conclusion, Stress affecting students academically leads them to have bad performance in school work. Students experience a lack of concentration. Stress in college students can affect the ability to concentrate, and there have been studies conducted that prove that stress

interferes with a student's ability to concentrate, Stress in students is not something we can take likely. Ironically stress improves concentration for a short term because when students are little stressed up they then to focus to try to get the issue in question which stresses them away but these concentrations does not last for long since they will have more school work or other assignments to do which demand long-term concentrations rather than the short term (Frazier & Schauben, 2019).

2.4 Stress Management Techniques

Understanding the types of stressors and coping mechanisms for nurses is fundamental to designing interventions to reduce them. Stresses may come from meeting patient needs as well as from within the complex teams that deliver health care (Chan, So, & Fong, 2019). If nurses are able to manage their stress well, they will be able to have a more positive impact on the lives of people around them and the stressors from other persons will have a less negative effect on them (Dapaah, 2014).

Academic stress is something to be managed rather than eliminated. To manage stress properly it is necessary to understand its antecedents as well as consequences. Consequences of stress have no more a mystery though there are plenty of alternatives to describe its causes. Most of the empirical investigations on causes of academic stress are found to be concentrated around external stressors, i.e. financial factors, social factors and institutional factors. Ability to manage stress is really an important issue when it comes to the topic of stress (Sohail, 2021).

The extent to which nurses experience occupational stress is determined by the success of stress coping mechanisms adopted by the nurses to be able to cope with stressors related to their job situation (Sveinsdottir, Biering, & Ramel, 2016). Coping strategies include problem focused coping (which involves the act of confronting or dealing directly with the source of stress); reappraisal (thus reflecting on the import of actions taken to deal with workplace

stress); avoidance coping (thus actions taken to avoid or get one distracted from the problem at hand); and then emotional coping (thus actions geared towards addressing or controlling how one responds emotionally to stressful situations). If nurses are able to manage their stress well, they will be able to have a more positive impact on the lives of people around them and the stressors from other persons will have less negative effect on them (Dapaah, 2014).

Academic stress is something to be managed rather than eliminated. It takes a lot more than just studying to achieve a successful college career. Stressors such as time management, financial problems, sleep deprivation, social activities, and for some students even having children, all pose threats to students' academic performance (Badu, 2016). Identifying effective coping methods is imperative to reducing stress (Lazarus & Folkman, 2016).

A cross-sectional observational study was conducted by Jordan, Khubchandani, and Wiblishauser (2016) in the United States to examine the relationship between stress, coping, and the combined influences of perceived stress and coping abilities. Participants for the study included all full-time and part-time nurses employed by a community hospital in the Midwestern United States. A total of six hundred (600) participants were selected for the study using a simple random sampling method. The data from the completed surveys were analyzed using SPSS for Windows Version 22.0. The study revealed that the five most common ways that nurses cope with stress were as follows: talking with friends and loved ones (79%), listening to music (46%), watching TV (43%), praying/meditating (43%), and eating more of their favorite foods (42%). In general, nurses believed that they were coping well with work-related stress. The majority (71%) reported dealing with stress well or very well. In contrast, only 4% of nurses believed they were dealing with stress poorly or very poorly. Nearly one in four nurses (24%) believed that their coping skills were neither good nor bad, thus indicating that there is room for improvement in their coping skills.

Meditation is a cognitive exercise used to enhance the quiet mind and recognize and control intrusive thoughts. Meditation is a widely used method for stress prevention and reduction (Lazar, Kerr & Wasserman, 2017). Deep Breathing, another way which is easy to practice and do is deep breathing. Deep breathing releases tension from the body and clears the mind, improving both physical and mental wellness. We tend to breathe shallowly or even hold our breath when we are feeling anxious. Sometimes we are not even aware of it. Shallow breathing limits your oxygen intake and adds further stress to your body. Breathing exercises can help to reduce this stress (Laal & Aliramaie, 2020).

The key to deep breathing is to breathe deeply from the abdomen, getting as much air as possible into your lungs. When you take deep breaths from the abdomen, rather than shallow breaths from your upper chest, you inhale more oxygen. The more oxygen you get, the less tense, short of breath, and anxious you feel. This kind of breathing is called diaphragmatic breathing. It means to breathe from the depths of your belly, rather than from your chest and nose (Laal & Aliramaie, 2020).

In the USA, a study was conducted on coping adequacy of nurses. Nurses were asked to select from list of 13 common methods of coping with stress. The five most common ways that nurses cope with stress were as follows: talking with friends and loved ones (79%); listening to music (46%); watching TV (43%); praying/meditating (43%); and eating more of their favorite foods (42%) (Jordan, et al., 2016).

Jordan et al. (2016) in their study asked nurses to rate how well they typically cope with work-related stress. In general, nurses believed that they were coping well with stress. The majority (71%) reported dealing with stress “well” or “very well.” In contrast, only 4% of nurses believed they were dealing with stress “poorly” or “very poorly.” Nearly one in four nurses (24%) believed that their coping skills were neither good nor bad, thus indicating that there is room for improvement in their coping skills.

A study done in Sanford indicated that while the three most frequently used coping behaviors were verbalizing (45%), exercising (30%), and taking time for self (17.5%) (Ko & Kiser-Larson, 2016).

A descriptive, cross-sectional design was used to identify stress levels and stressful factors for outpatient oncology nurses, investigate differences in stress levels among nurses' demographic characteristics and explore coping behaviors of the nurses in Sanford, USA. Participants completed the Nursing Stress Scale (NSS), three open-ended questions, and a demographic questionnaire. Five Hundred and Fifty-six (556) participants were selected using the purposive sampling method. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistical analyses. The study found that the three most frequently used coping behaviors were verbalizing (45%), exercising (30%), and taking time for self (17.5%). In conclusion, oncology nurses frequently experience various stressful situations in the workplace that can lead to physical, mental, and psychosocial health problems. Nurses must be able to care for themselves to maintain their optimal health conditions and to reduce or prevent stress (Ko & Kiser-Larson, 2016).

In a study entitled "Nursing and Coping with Stress", Laal and Aliramaie (2010), assessed how Iranian nurses coped with stressful situations (thus with regard to the application of both positive and negative coping strategies) and its relationship with how nurses cope and the health outcome of nurses. The Adolescent Coping Orientation for Problem Experiences (A-COPE) questionnaire was adopted and used in this study to assess coping strategies used by the nurses. The positive coping strategies found to be used by the Iranian nurses included listening to music, buying of books, cassettes or tapes, going on shopping spree with friends and family, watching of movies at home or at the cinema, spending time to read books, singing or composing songs, having enough rest, going for hiking including other sporting events.

Negative coping strategies that were found among the Iranian nurses included having disputes, engagement in profanity or the use of insults, yelling at others and making of negative speeches about self, taking of tea or coffee in excess, intake of alcohol in excess, smoking, abuse of abuse, having suicidal ideations, impatience, reckless driving, eating too much or not eating enough food, social isolation distancing oneself from others, negative expectations about self, crying spells, nail biting and tossing of objects (Laal & Aliramaie, 2020).

A descriptive study conducted in Nigeria focused on coping strategies nurses in an Accident and Emergency Department use in coping with stress. The sampling technique used for this study was convenience sampling since the population was small. A sample size of 120 students was used for the study. A structured questionnaire was used in this study to elicit information from the respondents. The method of data analysis was by the percentages and the use of Pearson product-moment correlation for hypothesis by an independent analyst. The study found that friends were the key sources of support during stressful periods (91.5%). Most of the respondents (88%) indicated that personal time alone helped to cope with stress followed by support from families and friends (79%). The conclusion was based on the findings of this study which was recommended amongst others that hospitals should provide a counsellor through employee assistance programs to help nurses during burnout (Umoe, Ella, Esienumoh, Ndukaku, & Cathrine, 2020).

A study was conducted in Ghana on coping mechanisms of nurses for work related stress. The study found that some coping mechanisms by nurses were support from family (78%), praying to God those difficulties at the working environment will end (75%), engage in diversion therapies (69%) and the least of all was exchanging words angrily with colleagues (28%) (Dapaah, 2014).

CHAPTER THREE

MATERIALS AND METHODS

3.0 Introduction

This chapter talks about the study area and population, the study design, sampling techniques, data collection method and instrument, data analysis techniques, ethical considerations, and limitations encountered during the study.

3.1 Study area

The study was conducted at the Holy Family Nursing and Midwifery Training College Berekum, a tertiary institution located in Biadan, a suburb of Berekum Municipality. Berekum Municipality is located in the Bono region of Ghana. The school shares boundary with the Holy Family Hospital, Berekum, and Freeman Methodist School. The college was established in the year 1957 by Sr. Catherine Shean of the Medical Mission Sisters. The major inhabitants of the College are the staff and Nursing and Midwifery trainees. The college offers three programs thus Registered General Nursing, Registered Midwifery, and Post NAC/ NAP Midwifery. The most spoken languages on campus are English and Twi.

3.2 The study population

The target population of the study were the trainees of the College. The accessible population, however, were second year nursing and midwifery students.

3.3 Study design

A cross-sectional design was adopted for the study. A cross-sectional study design was used because it is not costly to perform, does not require a lot of time, captures a specific point in time and the data can be used for various types of research.

3.4 Sampling technique and size

Convenience sampling was used to select participants for the study. The total population of second year nursing and midwifery students is one hundred and ninety students (190) so therefore, purposefully, selected 60 which is quarter of the population

However, 60 students were sampled for the study due to financial constraints.

3.5 Data collection methods and instruments

Each selected student was contacted and given an information sheet detailing what our study was about. Students who agreed to participate were given the data collection instrument. For this study, questionnaire was used to collect data from respondents. The questionnaire contained closed-ended questions that required respondents to choose from already listed possible answers. The data for the study was collected by administering the questionnaire to the participants during their free hours at the various lecture halls. Participants used approximately 30 minutes in answering the questionnaire.

3.6 Data analysis techniques

Microsoft excel was used to analyze the data in this study. This data analysis software was used because it is an extremely powerful tool for manipulating and deciphering research data. The data was presented in frequency distribution tables and figures.

3.7 Ethical consideration

Ethical clearance was sought from the Holy Family Nursing and Midwifery Training College, Berekum. Participants were informed about their right to withdraw from the study at any point without penalty. All participants agreed voluntarily to be part of the study.

3.8 Limitation of the Study

The study coincided with academic work and hence made it very difficult to give full attention to the which caused a delay in submitting the final work.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter deals with analysis of data collected from the field of study and the results obtained from the analysis. It provides a descriptive summary of the demographic data of students, causes of stress and impact of stress on academic performance. The results of the research are presented under various headings using various graphical presentations notably pie chart, bar graphs etc.

4.1 Demographic Data of Respondents

In trying to find the demographics background, respondents were enquired about their gender, 70% (40) of the respondents were females, 30% (20) of the respondents were males, again respondents were engaged about their age, 75.9% (44) of the respondents were aged 22-24 years, 15.5% (9) were 18-21 and above 8.6% (5) were 25 years and above, in trying to find the marital status of the respondent, superiority of 96.6% (56) were single and 3.4% (2) were married, the ethnicity of the respondents, many 91.4% (53) of respondents were Akan's, Ewe 3.4% (2), Frafra 3.4% (2) and Kusasi 1.7% (1), in trying to find the religion of the respondents majority 96.6% (56) of the students were Christians and 3.4% (2) are Islam, in trying to find the program studied by the respondents, most 60.3% (35) of respondents were midwifery students whiles 39.7% (25) were nursing students. As shown in the tables below.

Table 1 Respondents on the Demographic Data.

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age	18-21	9	15.5
	22-24	44	75.9
	25 years and above	5	8.6
Marital status	Single	56	96.6
	Married	2	3.4
Ethnicity	Akan	53	91.4
	Ewe	2	3.4
	Frafra	2	3.4
	Kusasi	1	1.7
Religion	Christian	56	96.6
	Islam	2	3.4

4.2 Causes of Stress among Students

In trying to find the causes of stress among the respondent in academic environment, where multiple selections were allowed, greater number of respondents indicated that causes of stress in the academic environment were academic workload 86.2% (50) and fear of failing in examination 81.0% (47). The respondents indicated that lack of confidence 50% (29) and unable to manage study and leisure time 49.2% (30) were causes of stress in the academic environment, again 32.8% (19) of the respondents mentioned dissatisfaction with academic performance as a cause of stress in the academic environment, then 1.7% (1) mentioned other cause of stress in the academic environment to be chew and pour method of learning.

Again, in soliciting on the causes of stress in the clinical environment; respondents indicated nurses' instructions differ from what is taught in school than what is taught at the clinical environment 74.1% (43), standing for long periods during clinical hours 70.7% (41) and afraid of getting infection 60.3% (35), and 41.4% (24) of the respondents revealed that striking a balance between clinical practice and studying is a cause of stress in the clinical environment. The respondents' lack of nursing skills 29.3% (17), not able to help patients with their problems 27.6% (16), caring for serious ill patient 24.1% (14) and nursing dying client 24.1% (14) as causes of stress in the clinical environment. As shown in the tables below.

Table 2: Respondents on causes of stress in the academic environment

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Afraid of failing in examination	47	81.0
Lack confidence	29	49.2
Dissatisfaction with academic performance	19	32.8
Academic load	50	86.2
Unable to manage study and leisure time	30	50
Chew and pour	1	1.7

Table 3: Respondents on causes of stress in the clinical environment

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Nurses' instructions differ from what is taught in school	43	74.1
Lack of nursing skills	17	29.3
Not able to help patients with their problems	16	27.6

Standing for long periods during clinical hours	41	70.7
Striking a balance between clinical practice and studying	24	41.4
Caring for serious ill patient	14	24.1
Nursing dying client	14	24.1
Afraid of getting infection	35	60.3
Lack of equipment	3	5.2

4.3 Impact of Stress on Academic Performance of Students

In soliciting of the impact of stress on academic performance of respondents and multiple selections were allowed, 96.6% (56) of the respondents indicated that long-term stress reduces one's ability to concentrate on studies. The respondents indicated that stress results in lower grades 70.7% (41), confusion of students 68.9% (40) and impedes academic success 68.9% (40). As shown in the table below.

Table 4: Respondents on impact of stress on academic performance

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Stress serves as a significant impediment to academic success	40	68.9
High degree of academic stress leads to lower grades	41	70.7
Stress cause students to be confused	40	68.9
Long-term stress reduces one's ability to concentrate on studies	56	96.6
Poor performance in quizzes and mid semester exams	2	3.4

4.4 Techniques to Deal with the Stress Among Students

In soliciting, the depicts techniques respondents use in dealing with stress and multiple selections were allowed, more of 89.6% (52) of the respondents listen to music when stressed

up and 77.5% (45) of the respondents indicated they watch movies at the hostel when stressed up, and the respondents indicated that praying or meditating 39.7% (23) and other measures such as psychological therapy 22.4% (13) as ways of dealing with stress. As shown in the table below.

Table 5: Respondents on techniques to deal with the stress

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Listening to music	52	89.6
Watching movies at the hostel	45	77.5
Praying or meditating	23	39.7
Psychological therapy	13	22.4

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter provides an in-depth look at the major findings that emerged out of the research study, comparison of the analyzed data with findings from other literatures, conclusion and recommendations.

5.1 Discussions

The main focus of this study was to identify the effect of stress on the academic performance of students and some coping mechanisms they can employ.

5.1.1 Causes of Stress Among Students

In the current study mass of respondents indicated that causes of stress in the academic environment were academic load (86.2%) and fear of failing in examination (81.0%). These studies showed similar results, Alghamdi et al., (2019) reported that the major stress was academic load. Also, Parveen and Inayat (2017) found that the most common source of stress among nursing students was getting lower grades. Tim (2019) shares similar view as he reported that the most observed stressor was fear of failure were causes of stress in the academic environment. This is in line with a study conducted by Parveen and Inayat (2017), they found that most of the respondents (50%) strongly agreed and agreed to another question of an academic factor of stress “Inability to balance study and leisure time is a source of stress”. Academic (Classroom and ward) in the clinical setting the respondents viewed the following as causes of stress in the clinical environment; nurses' instructions differ from what is taught in school (74.1%), standing for long periods during clinical hours (70.7%) and afraid of getting infection (60.3%).

5.1.2 Impact of Stress on Academic Performance

The current study indicated the impact of stress on academic performance it was laudable that the respondents were not able to concentrate on their studies (96.6) which led to lower grades (70.7%), which impedes their academic success (68.9. %) as well as setting confusions among respondents (. (68.9%). Similarly, Dusselier et al. (2017) reported that stress is a major obstacle to academic success. Again, Struthers et al., (2000) also reported that a high level of academic stress was associated with lower course grades. Frazier and Schauben (2018) opined that stress cause students to be confused and also suffer from amnesia.

5.1.3 Techniques to Deal with the Stress Among Students

The impact of stress on both academic and clinical setting was high which has negative impact on the general academic performance, in trying to find how these can be keep, music (89.6%) and movies (77.5%) were the better options according to the respondents. Though most schools have these, we wonder how it implementation will be successful without impeding academic work. Bakhsh et al (2018) on students from different departments of the Islamia University concluded that their respondents agreed that they reduced stress by watching movies, listening to music or take part in other leisure time activities. Similarly, Jordan et al (2016) found that listening to music was one of the most common method of coping with stress.

5.2 Conclusions

The following conclusions were drawn from the study;

1. The study revealed that the major cause of academic stress is academic load on students.
2. The study also revealed that stress have negative impact on the students' academic success such as reduced ability to concentrate on studies.

3. The study also revealed that employing effective coping strategies like listening to music and watching movies at the hostel are pertinent to their academic success and general life.

5.3 Recommendations

1. They could be research carry on how causes of stress in clinical settings.
2. Student's Representative Council in collaboration with the sport committee should organize games and social programs for students to help students relieve stress.
3. They tutor should apply peer group studies to help the students to improve their academic performance.

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**HOLY FAMILY NURSING AND MIDWIFERY TRAINING COLLEGE
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Our Ref.

Your Ref.

February 16, 2023

Date

Martha Kyeremaa
Holy Family NMTC
Post Office Box 21
Berekum

Dear Ms. Kyeremaa

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

With reference to your Memorandum dated November 15, 2022, I write to notify you that the students listed below have been granted permission to conduct their research in the College on the topic 'Effect of Stress on Academic Performance of Second Year Nursing and Midwifery Students during their first Academic Year in Holy Family Nursing and Midwifery Training College, Berekum.'

1. Rebecca Kusi
2. Priscilla Afrane Duffie
3. Claudia Asubonteng

Thank you.

Yours sincerely

ACADEMIC CO-ORDINATOR - NURSING
HOLY FAMILY NURSING & MIDWIFERY
TRAINING COLLEGE, BERKUM

Rev. Sr. Margaret Afrifa
Academic Coordinator for Nursing
For: Principal

APPENDICES

QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Respondent,

We are students of Holy Family Nursing and Midwifery Training College, Berekum conducting research on the topic of; **effect of stress on academic performance of second year nursing and midwifery students during their first academic year in Holy Family Nursing and Midwifery Training College, Berekum.**

Any information given will be kept secure and confidential. Your name is not necessary for the sake of confidentiality and anonymity. This study is completely voluntary, and you have complete discretion over whether or not to participate.

Thank you.

Please tick [✓] the most appropriate response to the question in the space provided and/or write in the space provided

SECTION ONE: DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

1. What is your gender?
(a) Male (b) Female
2. Indicate your age..... in years as at last birthday
3. What is your marital status?
(a) Married (b) Single
4. Ethnicity: (a) Akan (b) Other (specify).....
5. Religious background: (a) Christian (b) Islam (c) Traditionalist (d) Other (specify).....
6. What is your program?

(a) Nursing (b) Midwifery

SECTION TWO: Causes of Stress Among Students

(a) Academic Environment

7. Which of these causes stress in the academic environment? (select all that apply)

Afraid of failing in examination

Lack confidence

Dissatisfaction with academic performance

Academic load

Unable to manage study and leisure time

Others (specify).....
.....
.....

(b) Clinical Environment

8. Which of these causes stress in the clinical environment? (select all that apply)

Nurses' instructions differ from what is taught in school

Lack of nursing skills

Not able to help patients with their problems

Standing for long periods during clinical hours

Striking a balance between clinical practice and studying

Caring for serious ill patient

Nursing dying client

Afraid of getting infection

Others (specify).....
.....
.....

SECTION THREE: Impact of Stress on Academic Performance of Students

9. Indicate the impact stress has on academic performance, select as many as you want

Stress serves as a significant impediment to academic success

High degree of academic stress leads to lower grades

Stress cause students to be confused

Long-term stress reduces one’s ability to concentrate on studies

Others (specify).....

.....

.....

.....

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.....

SECTION FOUR: Techniques to Deal with the Stress Among Students

10. Indicate how you cope with stress, tick as many as you want

Listening to music

Watching movies at the hostel

Praying or meditating

Others (specify).....

.....

.....

.....