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PREVALENCE AND SOURCES OF ACADEMIC STRESS AMONG UNDERGRADUATES IN KOGI STATE NIGERIA: A CROSS-SECTIONAL SURVEY

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ABSTRACT

Academic stress affects both psychological and physical health of Undergraduates. This study aimed to assess the prevalence of academic stress and identify various factors responsible for academic stress among undergraduates in Kogi State, Nigeria. The cross-sectional study was conducted among 134 randomly selected undergraduates from two Universities in the State. A self-administered questionnaire was used to collect data on the socio-economic, and academic stress score of all respondents. Descriptive and inferential statistics were employed to analyze the data. Using Rajendran and Kaliappan's 40-item Academic stress scale, we found 97.8% (131/134) of respondents reported some level of stress (where (44.8% (60/134) were slightly stressed 44.8% (60/134) were moderately stressed) and 8.2% (11/134) were highly stressed and none reported extreme stress on the overall scale. Personal inadequacy, poor interpersonal Lecturer-students relationship and fear of failure were significantly associated with stress (one-way ANOVA, $p<0.05$), while fear of failure ranked highest (8%) among factors responsible for extreme academic stress. There were no significant ($p> 0.05$) association between academic stress and socio-demographic variables. Based on the findings it was concluded that there is a high prevalence of academic stress among undergraduates in Kogi State, and personal inadequacy, poor interpersonal relationships with Lecturers as well as fear of failure are the major factors responsible for stress amongst these students. It is therefore recommended that intervention strategies should be developed, which will enable students identify, individual sources of stress and address it through self-management and coping skills.

Keywords: Academic stress, Interpersonal relationships, Intrapersonal relationships, Kogi State, Prevalence, Undergraduates

INTRODUCTION

Academic stress is defined as stress experienced as a result of academic activities. Academic stress can occur within the school environment, during study hours or outside the school after school period. Several studies have investigated the sources of academic stress among students and have identified many academic stressors which include; too many assignment, competition among students, failures, financial insufficiency (Fairbrother and Warn, 2003), poor relationships with other students or lecturers, family or domestic problems, poor parental monitoring or input (Akinyooye and Adesokan 2021), overwhelming academic loads, acclimatizing to academic expectations, home to school distance, the difficulty in solving some challenging assignments, poor interactions with lecturers, poor teaching facilities fear of failure, financial and emotional problems as well as parental factors (Ndidi *et al*., 2024).

Several studies have associated academic stress with some adverse health outcomes such as; depreciation in academic progress and reduced academic advancement (Akinyooye and Adesokan), low academic performance (Rafidah, et al., 2009; Talib and Zia-ur-Rehman, 2012), compromised physical and mental health, deteriorating health, depression, addictions and sleep disorders (Agolla and Ongori, 2009). There are also reports indicating a negative correlation between the high level of stress among students and negative eating pattern, such that an increase in academic stress leads to an increase in wrong eating habits (Al-Qahtani 2016; Mohammed, *et al*., 2019).

Most institutions across Nigeria, including Kogi State, have placed little emphasis on exploring the impact of academic stress on the welfare of their students. This could result from the believe that the period of stay of each student on campus is usually short and therefore individual stress has little or no direct influence on the activities of the institution as well as the quality of education obtained (Adegboyega, 2020). No prior estimate on the prevalence of academic stress has been conducted among tertiary institution students in Kogi State. It is therefore, imperative to identify the sources and impact of academic stress among the students in order to derive adequate and effective intervention strategies. The aim of the study is to assess the prevalence of academic stress and identify various stressor responsible for academic stress among undergraduates in Kogi state Nigeria.

Objectives

Primary Objectives of this study is to;

i. Determine the prevalence of academic stress among undergraduates' students in Kogi State Nigeria.

Secondary Objectives is to;

ii. Identify causes/sources of extreme academic stress among the Undergraduates
iii. Determine the relationship between some socio-demographic characteristics of respondents and academic stress.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study.

i. What is the level of academic stress among students of higher institutions in Kogi State?
ii. What are the factors responsible for the incidence of academic stress among these students?
iii. What is the correlation between academic stress, age, gender, field of study and level of education

Study Location
The cross-sectional study was conducted between 11th February and 10th March 2024 among a pool of undergraduates selected from Confluence University of Science and Technology Osara, Kogi State, and Federal University Lokoja located in Lokoja, Kogi State, Nigeria. These institutions were chosen randomly among the six tertiary institutions in the state.

Ethical Approval
Ethical approval for the study was obtained from the Federal Teaching Hospital Lokoja Ethical Review Committee. With approval number FMCL/HREC/Vol.1/2024/206. An informed consent form to participate in the study was obtained from all the study participants. Those who gave their consent were enlisted for the study. All participants were ensured that there are no reasonably foreseeable (or expected) risks. And the study is Confidential and anonymous. No information about their identity will be retained. Afterwards all results will be analyzed according to their group no individual result will be used separately. The decision to participate in this study is entirely up to the volunteers and they have right to ask questions about this research study and to have those questions answered by me before, during or after the research.

Inclusion Criteria
Full time undergraduate students within the ages of 18 and 26 and their age matched volunteers who agreed to participate in the study, with an informed, signed consent form were allowed to participate in the study.

Exclusion Criteria
Volunteers (undergraduates) who falls outside the age range (18-26) are excluded from the study, as well as those who are pregnant (for females), or on any form of medication, acutely ill or with known chronic diseases.

Study Participants
A total of one hundred and thirty-four (134) (Sixty-seven (67) from each University) participants which include male and female students were selected from the two universities using simple random sampling method. The sample size (n) was calculated using the sample size formula for estimation of independent cohort studies at significance level (α) of 5% and at a power of (1− β) 80%) as described by (Jaykaran and Tamoghna, 2013). Each questionnaire was given a specific number representing each participant with their phone numbers. A demographic profile questionnaire was given to all the participants and the objectives of the study were explained.

Sample Size Determination
Sample size (n=) was calculated as described by (Jaykaran and Tamoghna, 2013) using the sample size formula for estimation of independent cohort studies at significance level (α) of 5% and at a power of (1− β) 80%).

$$n = \frac{[Z_{1-\alpha/2}\sqrt{\{(1+1/m)\,p*(1-p)\}} + Z_{1-\beta}\sqrt{\{p_0*(1-p_0/m)\;p_1(1-p_1)\}}]^2}{(p_0-p_1)^2}$$

n = Total number of desired study subjects (case) to identify true relative risk with two-sided Type-I error
m = Number of subjects (control) per experimental subject
Z1-β = It is the desired power (0.84 for 80% power and 1.28 for 90% power)
Z1-α/2 = Critical value and a standard value for the corresponding level of confidence.
(At 95% CL it is 1.96 and at 99% CL or 1% type I error it is 2.58)
p0 = Possibility of event in controls
p1 = Possibility of event in experimental
p = p1+m*p0/m+1
Hence
Z1-β = 0.84
Z1-α/2 = 1.96
m = 1
p0 = Possibility of event in controls was 10% i.e. 0.1
p1 = Possibility of event in experimental 30% i.e. 0.3
Using p = p1+m p0/m+1 p0
p=0.2
Therefore
n =61.55
(n) = 61.55+ 6 = 68 (considering 10% dropout of study participants)
Sample size (n) = 68
So, 68 volunteers were studied in each group.

Academic Stress Scale
A quantitative research questionnaire (Academic Stress Scale) which was developed by Rajendran and Kaliappan (1990) was used for the determination of sources of academic stress among the student. The scale which comprises of 40 items, was used to measure the sources of stress mainly based on five dimensional factors (such as personal inadequacy, fear of failure, Lecturer/student relationship, interpersonal relationship with lecturers and colleagues, and inadequate study amenities. The 40 items had five rating scale as academic stress scale; No stress, slightly stress, moderately stressed, highly stressed and extremely stressed with scores '1', '2', '3', '4' and '5' respectively. Each of these factors contained 8 items. Therefore 200 (5 x 40) is the maximum possible score and the highest score on each factor would be 40 (5 x 8). Total score range for rating academic stress is therefore; No stress **1-40**, slightly stress **41-80**, moderately stressed **81-120**, highly stressed **121-160** and extremely stressed **160-200.** Hence the higher the value of the score obtained, the higher the level of academic stress and vice-versa.
Validity and Reliability of instrument of study: - There are various methods of estimating the validity of a measuring instrument. Based on the fact that the Students' Academic Stress Scale by Rajendran and Kaliappan is the measuring instrument we assumed that the adopted version is having validity and reliability. In addition, the test-retest correlation of 50 students with an interval of 25 days using this tool, has been found to be 0.82.

Statistical Analysis
Data obtained from the study were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20.0 software. Categorical variables such as sex, ethnicity, occupation, and level of education, were described using frequencies, tables, and percentages. Chi- Square tests were applied for comparison of proportions and for evaluating associations of categorical variables. One-Way ANOVA were used to explain the mean difference of sources of academic stress scores. Statistical significance was taken as p values < 0.05.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
Table 1, revealed that 52.2% of the undergraduate students in this study were males while 47.8% were females. The majority (45.5 %) of the undergraduate students were between the ages of 18 and 20 years, while 41.0% were within the ages

of 21 – 23 years and 13.4% were between 24-26 years. Few of the students 1.5% were Hausa, while 2.2% were Igbo, 26.9% were Yoruba and 69.4% were from other minor ethnic groups. Majority of the studied population were in 300 level (32.1%) followed by 400 level (31.3%), 200 level (23.1%) and 100 level (13.4%), Only a small proportion of the students were married (2.2%), while 96.3% were single and 1.5% were Divorced. Majority (56.7%) of the students were in the field of Science, 14.2% were in Art, 7.5% were in Education, 11.5% were in Engineering, 2.2% were in Health, while 8.2% were in the Management field. Majority of students were Christians (64.9) and (35.1%) were Muslims.

Table 1: Socio-demographic Characteristics of Studied Population

Variables	Frequency (N=134)	(%) Percentage
Age group (years)		
18 – 20	61	45.5
21 - 23	55	41.0
24-26	18	13.4
Gender		
Male	70	52.2
Female	64	47.8
Religion		
Christian	87	64.9
Islam	47	35.1
Ethnicity		
Hausa	2	1.5
Igbo	3	2.2
Yoruba	36	26.9
***Others	93	69.4
Marital status		
Married	3	2.2
Single	129	96.3
Divorced	2	1.5
Field of Study		
Art	19	14.2
Education	10	7.5
Engineering	15	11.2
Health	3	2.2
Management	11	8.2
Science	76	56.7
Year of education		
100	18	13.4
200	31	23.1
300	43	32.1
400	42	31.3
Cumulative Grade Point Average		
0 -1.0	2	1.5
1.0 – 2.0	11	8.2
2.0 – 3.0	44	32.8
3.0 – 4.0	52	38.8
4.0 – 5.0	25	18.7

***Others = Ebira, Igala, Ebira koton, Ebira Toto, Bassa, Nupe and Fulani

Table 2: The level of academic stress among the students was high, with a total of 131 (97.8%) experiencing a level of stress; where 8.2% of the student were highly stressed, 89.6% (44.8% = slightly stressed and 44.8% =moderately stressed) were slightly and moderately stressed. Only 2.2 % of students have good psychological well-being because they feel comfortable and do not experience stress during their study.

Table 2: Scale of Academic Stress Among Participants

Academic Stress Scale	Frequency	Percent (%)
No Stress	3	2.2
Slightly Stress	60	44.8
Moderately Stressed	60	44.8
Highly Stressed	11	8.2
Extremely Stressed	NIL	0

Table 3: Using the Rajendran and Kaliappan academic stress scale, the identified 40 sources of academic stress experienced by students, were grouped into 5 dimensions of 8 stressors each namely; Personal Inadequacy, Fear of Failure, Interpersonal relationship with Lecturers, Lecturer-student relationship/Teaching methods and Inadequate study facilities. In this study the major factors responsible for academic stress among the stressed students are; Personal Inadequacy, Fear of Failure, Interpersonal relationship with Lecturers and Lecturer-student relationship/Teaching methods $p<0.05$. While the stressor responsible for extreme stress among the students are in the areas of examination, as revealed by factor numbers 31, 7, 12 and 33, where 18.7% of the student population worry about examinations, 23.1% worry about grades after examinations and 11.4% finds it difficult to discuss academic failures with their parents.

Table 3: Sources of Academic Stress Among Participants, n=number of Students (%)

S/N	Sources of academic stress	No Stress n (%)	Total stressed n (%)	P value	Level of academic stress			
					Slightly Stressed n(%)	Moderately Stressed n(%)	Highly Stressed n(%)	Extremely Stressed n(%)
A	**LECTURER-STUDENTS RELATIONSHIP / TEACHING METHODS**							
1	Teachers make too many extra demands on students.	36(26.7)	98(73.3)		34(25.7)	43(32.1)	17(12.5)	4(3.0)
2	Poor interest in some subjects	38(28.4)	96(71.6)		54(40.3)	27(20.2)	12(8.9)	3(2.3)
19	Teacher shows socio-economic status on students	51(38.1)	83(61.9)		51(38.1)	26(19.4)	4(2.9)	2(1.5)
20	Slow in getting along with the curriculum.	40(30.5)	94(69.5)		43(32.8)	31(23.7)	12(9.2)	5(3.8)
24	Monotonous (boring or tedious) teaching Style by the teacher.	37(27.4)	97(72.6)		45(34.3)	31(23.8)	18(13.4)	3(2.2)
29	The teacher is fast and does not use blackboard legibly	51(38.3)	83(61.9)		35(26.3)	34(25.6)	6(4.5)	7(5.2)
31	Examination syllabus is too heavy in some subjects.	30(22.4)	104(77.6)		37(27.6)	34(25.6)	17(12.7)	16(11.9)
37	Importance of the subject matter.	60(44.8)	74(55.2)		37(28.2)	23(17.6)	10(7.6)	1(0.8)
	Mean ± SEM	**42.88±3.55**	**91.13±3.55**	**<0.001**				
B	**PERSONAL INADEQUACY**							
6	Difficulty in remembering all that is studied	33(24.6)	101(75.4)		39(29.1)	36(26.8)	18(13.4)	8(6.0)
8	Lack of self-confidence	50(37.3)	84(62.7)		38(28.4)	30(22.4)	10(7.5)	7(5.2)
13	Hesitate to ask the teacher for detailed explanation	46(34.3)	88(65.7)		40(29.9)	31(23.1)	9(6.42)	8(5.9)
17	Lack of assertiveness (confidence) in the class	55(41.4)	79(58.6)		43(32.4)	21(15.7)	8(6.0)	6(4.5)
27	Lack of fluency while speaking the language other than the mother tongue.	53(39.5)	81(60.5)		43(32.1)	23(17.2)	8(6.0)	7(5.2)
28	Difficulty in public speaking	47(35.1)	87(64.9)		34(25.5)	28(20.9)	16(11.9)	8(6.0)
32	Feeling of inferiority.	54(40.3)	80 (59.7)		36(26.9)	28(20.9)	11(8.2)	5(3.7)
38	Difficulty in adjusting with opposite gender	70(52.2)	64(47.8)		31(23.1)	23(17.2)	7(5.2)	3(2.2)
	Mean ± SEM	**51.00±3.67**	**83.00±3.55**	**<0.001**				
C	**INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH LECTURERS**							
4	The teacher is not humorous towards us	50(37.3)	84(62.7)		38(28.4)	34(25.5)	7(5.1)	5(3.7)
9	The teachers do not listen to our ideas.	60(44.8)	74(55.2)		40(29.9)	18(13.4)	11(8.2)	5(3.7)
14	Biased attitude of the teacher.	65(48.5)	69(51.5)		36(26.9)	21(15.7)	8(6.0)	4(3.0)
16	Not knowing how to prepare for the examinations.	57(42.5)	77(58.3)		39(29.1)	19(14.2)	12(8.9)	7(5.2)
18	Lack of opportunity to meet teachers	46(34.3)	88(65.7		46(34.3)	28(20.9)	8(6.0)	6(4.5)
23	Lack of communication between teachers and students.	65(48.5)	69(51.5)		33(24.6)	24(17.7)	7(5.2)	5(3.7)
25	Not enough discussion in the class.	52(38.8)	82(62.6)		39(29.1)	34(25.3)	8(6.0)	1(0.8)
30	Teachers lacking interest in students.	63(47.0)	71(53.0)		43(32.1)	16(12.0)	8(6.0)	4(3.0)
	Mean ± SEM	**57.37±2.56**	**76.75±2.56**	**<0.001**				
D	**FEAR OF FAILURE**							
3	Progress reports to parents	81(60.5)	53(39.5)		23(17.2)	23(15.7)	3(2.2)	4(3.0)
7	Worrying about the examinations	28(20.8)	106(79.1)		26(19.4)	30(22.4)	25(18.7)	25(18.7)
11	Teachers give more punishment in the class.	89(66.4)	45(33.6)		23(17.2)	17(12.7)	3(2.2)	1(0.8)
12	Worry about results after examinations	20(14.9)	114(85.1)		27(20.1)	31(23.1)	25(18.7)	31(23.1)
21	Exam papers are tough and not valued well	54(40.3)	80(59.7)		36(26.9)	31(23.1)	8(6.0)	4(3.0)
22	Unable to complete the assignment in time	55(41.0)	79(59.0)		38(28.4)	32(23.8)	8(6.0)	1(0.8)
33	Unable to discuss Academic failures with parents	53(40.1)	81(60)		25(18.9)	22(16.4)	17(12.9)	15(11.4)
34	Not able to grasp the subject matter.	57(42.5)	77(57.5)		41(30.6)	25(18.7)	6(4.5)	5(3.7)
	Mean ± SEM	**54.63±8.23**	**79.38±8.23**	**0.052**				
E	**INADEQUATE STUDY FACILITIES**							
5	Lack of concentration during study hours	44(32.8)	90(67.2)		41(30.6)	25(18.7)	18(13.4)	6(4.5)
10	Conflict with friends	82(61.2)	52(38.8)		31(23.2)	14(10.4)	3(2.2)	4(3.0)
15	Inadequate space or room for study at home	52(38.8)	82(61.2)		38(28.4)	22(16.4)	11(8.2)	11(8.2)
26	Lack of mutual help among classmates	42(31.3)	92(68.7)		40(32.0)	24(19.2)	12(9.6)	7(5.2)

S/N	Sources of academic stress	No Stress n (%)	Total stressed n (%)	P value	Level of academic stress			
					Slightly Stressed n(%)	Moderately Stressed n(%)	Highly Stressed n(%)	Extremely Stressed n(%)
35	Incomplete and confusing study material	35(26.1)	99(73.9)		52(38.8)	30(22.4)	10(7.5)	7(5.2)
36	Eleventh hour preparation for the examinations.	46(34.3)	88(65.7)		34(25.4)	24(17.9)	20(14.9)	10(7.5)
39	Inadequate subject knowledge of the teacher	49(36.6)	85(63.4)		43(32.1)	30(22.4)	10(7.5)	2(1.5)
40	Conflict with college authorities	97(72.4)	37(27.6)		14(10.4)	12(8.7)	7(5.11)	5(3.5)
	Mean ± SEM	**55.88±7.67**	**78.13±7.62**	**0.06**				

*p<0.05, statistically significant; n = number of respondents

Table 4: summarizes the factors causing academic stress. The results revealed that the major factor responsible for extreme stress among the students is fear of failure (8%) followed by Personal Inadequacy as well as Inadequate study facilities among other factors. Although 41% of the studied population still reported no fear of failure, the remaining 59% of the students reported fear of failure, where 22% are slightly stressed, 20% moderately stressed, 9% highly stressed and 8% are extremely stressed respectively.

Table 4: Summary of Factors Causing Academic Stress among Participants (%)

Dimension of academic stress	No stress (%)	Slightly stressed (%)	Moderately stressed (%)	Highly stressed (%)	Extremely Stressed (%)	Total
Personal Inadequacy	38	28	21	8	5	100
Fear of Failure	41	22	20	9	8	100
Interpersonal relationship with Lecturers	42	29	19	7	3	100
Lecturer-students relationship/Teaching methods	32	32	23	9	4	100
Inadequate study facilities	41	27	18	9	5	100

As shown in Table 5: Gender, age group, field of study, level of education and monthly allowance were tested for their association with academic stress level. The results indicated there are no significant association between academic stress and the socio-demographic variables with *P* values of 0.813 for gender, 0.113 for age group, 0.750 for field of study, 0.626 for level of education, and 0.813 for monthly allowance.

Table 5. Association between Academic Stress Level and Socio-demographics Characteristics of the Respondents

Socio-demographics characteristics		Stress level				Chi-Square Test
		No stress n (%)	Slightly stressed n (%)	Moderately stressed n (%)	Highly stressed n (%)	
Gender	Male	2(66.7)	30(50.0)	31(51.7)	7(63.6)	$\chi^2 = 0.951$
	Female	1(33.3)	30(50.0)	29(48.3)	4(36.4)	*P = 0.813*
	Total	3(100)	60(100)	60(100)	11(100)	*df = 3*
Age group	18 – 20	2(66.7)	20(33.3)	32(53.3)	7(63.6)	$\chi^2 = 10.277$
	21 – 23	1(33.3)	27(45.0)	24(40.0)	3(27.3)	*P = 0.113*
	24 – 26	0(00.0)	13(21.7)	4(6.7)	1(9.1)	*df = 6*
	Total	3(100)	60(100)	60(100)	11(100)	
Field of study	Art	1(33.3)	6(10.0)	9(15.0)	3(27.3)	$\chi^2 = 11.036$
	Education	0(0.0)	4(6.7)	5(8.3)	1(9.1)	*P = 0.750*
	Engineering	0(0.0)	4(6.7)	11(18.3)	0(0.0)	*df = 15*
	Health	0(0.0)	2(3.3)	1(1.7)	0(0.0)	
	Management	0(0.0)	6(10.0)	4(6.7)	1(9.1)	
	Science	2(66.7)	38(63.3)	30(50.0)	6(54.5)	
	Total	3(100)	60(100)	60(100)	11(100)	
Year of education	100	1(33.3)	7(11.7)	8(13.3)	2(18.2)	$\chi^2 = 9.882$
	200	1(33.3)	9(15.0)	19(31.7)	2(18.2)	*P = 0.626*
	300	0(0.0)	21(35.0)	17(28.3)	5(45.5)	*df = 12*
	400	1(33.3)	23(38.4)	16(26.7)	2(18.2)	
	Total	3(100)	60(100)	60(100)	11(100)	

Discussion

Academic stress faced by undergraduates are enormous, multifactorial and continuous, owing to the demands and pressures of academic life. Academic stress can be of emotional and physical sources, however meeting these expectations has become part of students' life due to the expectations to succeed, which is placed on them by the society and their family (Reddy *et al*., 2018; Karyotaki *et al*., 2020). Sources of academic stress include; extensive academic course load, having many things to study, poor time management, peer competition, financial concerns, difficulty in adjusting to a new environment especially for the freshman,

wrong choice of course of study, poor infrastructures, high academic expectation from parents, adapting to a new environment etc. (Ekpenyong *et al*., 2013; Reddy *et al*., 2018; Liu, *et al*., 2019; Freire *et al.,* 2020; Karyotaki *et al*., 2020).

It was revealed in this study that, 44.8% of the respondents are slightly stressed and another 44.8% are moderately stressed as well, while 8.2% of the studied population are experiencing high level of stress. This is similar to findings from a study by Saleem *et al*. (2023) who reported a moderate stress level among majority of the students who participated in their study. The indication of a moderate or slightly stress level by majority of the students calls for a serious concern, this is because low stress level is the most tolerable if stressless situation is not achievable (Ndidi *et al.,* 2024). Owing to the fact that academic stress can negatively impact the student's physical and mental health as well as their academic success. For example, academic stress has been to shown to reduce motivation, hinder academic achievement, as well as increased college dropout rates (Pascoe *et al*., 2020). In addition, previous study by Casuso-Holgado *et al.,* 2019, revealed that academic stress is positively associated with fatigue, sleep disorders, irascibility, harmful thoughts, and nervousness. While Yan *et al.,* in another study reported that there is a positive association between academic stress depression, school exhaustion and poor sleep quality among the students, in which sleep quality accounted for 63.31% of the total effect while depression accounted for 44.34% (Yan *et al*., 2018). As revealed in this present study, there is a significant correlation between academic stress and four major stressors among the respondents, these include; fear of failure, personal inadequacy, interpersonal relationship with Lecturers, Lecturers-students' relationship/teaching method. These factors can be grouped into two major factors as; intrapersonal related stressors and interpersonal related stressors.

Intrapersonal related stressors refer to stress caused by relationships of a person with him/herself, for instance self-conflict, feeling of inadequacy, low self-esteem and confidence, high self-desire to be better academically (Sailo and Varghese, 2024). Based on the findings from this study, 62% (n=83) of the respondent are experiencing stress due to personal inadequacy. This results from various factors such as; lack of self-confidence, hesitation to ask the teacher for detailed explanation, difficulty in remembering all that is studied, lack of fluency while speaking the language other than the mother tongue, inferiority complex, difficulty in public speaking, inability to relate with opposite gender as shown in Table 3. According to Sailo and Varghese, 2024, intrapersonal related stressors can result due to self-conflict, feeling of inadequacy, low self-esteem and confidence, high self-desire to be better academically, while other factors that cause intrapersonal stressors include; lack of financial support, lack of parietal support, distance from school, lack of social life, poor educational background, poor communication skills, lack of self-confidence and fear of failure of exams. Fear from inability to attain the expectations put in place by the parents is also a source of academic stress as reported in this current study. Deb, *et al.,* 2015 explained that family structure can lead to fear of failure because of the pressure placed upon students due to the expectations of parents for their child to succeed academically. Furthermore, the competition for grades and recognition, expectations set by peers, family, and society and fear of failure in exams is among one of the major causes of academic stress (Reddy *et al*., 2018). Other family determinant include; style of parenting, motivation and monitoring of their children, familial problems, socio-economic status of the family, educational level of parents etc. The educational background of the parents and the financial status of the parents can also influence whether the student will be highly stressed or not (Akinyooye and Adesokan, 2021). A study by Ang and Huan (2006) reported increased expectations as one of the factors responsible for increased stress levels.

In addition, academic performance is commonly measured by examinations or continuous assessment which reflects in terms of success or failure of course units, number of courses failed or passed, and the quality of the grades obtained (Surajo and Umar, 2023) In this study 8% of the respondents who reported extreme academic stress due to fear of failure, attributed the sources to factors which are examinations related as indicated in the items number 21, 7, 12 and 33 on the academic scale score, and these include; worrying about examination, worrying about grades, feeling that the examination questions are too tough and being unable to discuss academic failures with parents. Fear of failure from these factors could have resulted from lack of self-efficacy, self-confidence, problem solving skills, and feeling of inadequacy. This is similar to a previous study by (Abouserie, 1994) who reported that the students felt anxious about taking and studying for exams, they are anxious about grade competition, and the large amount of course content to master in a small amount of time.

Interpersonal stressors are stress caused by relationship other people, these include physical, verbal, mental and emotional abuse and troubles caused by instructors, staff, family members, peers, and associates (Sailo and Varghese, 2024). Most of the respondent 68% (n=91.1) in this study are experiencing interpersonal stress. As shown in Table 3: the major causes of stress due to interpersonal relationship with lecturers include; lack of opportunity to meet lecturers, lack of communication between lecturers and students, lecturers lacking interest in students, lecturers not listening to students' ideas and Biased attitude of the teacher, not having enough discussion time in the class. These results are in line with a previous study by Ong and Cheong (2009) who reported that teacher's character and attitude is one of the five strongest academic stressors for students. Many students have bad perceptions of their teachers. They alleged that their teachers are always angry, emotional, harsh, intolerant, uninteresting, and lacked proper teaching methods (too many note-taking activities, lack of practice, less explaining, biased, not humorous, unclear explanation) Kartika (2021). Another study by Dweck *et al.,* (2011) finds that students' insights of teacher's kind behavior towards students were the strongest predictors of student performance. The quality of the student-teacher relationship plays a significant role in the emotional state and responses of students towards academic and academic activities. There is a positive correlation between positive student-teachers' relationships and positive attitude towards academic and academic activities. Therefore, it is expected that teachers will be more proactive in developing positive relationships with students (Mc.Inerney and Mc.Inerney, 2006). Teachers having good relationship with their students usually results in low student-teacher conflict, low student dependence, mutual respect and support, acceptance, warmth, thoughtfulness, and friendship (Noble and McGrath, 2015).

To successfully complete a course of study in a university, students are required to engage in a number of Teacher and/or self-directed learning activities, which can be divided into three main types of modes of instruction. Which are; Teacher-directed learning activities which include; lectures, research seminars, practicals, laboratory work, tutorials, internships, placements, fieldwork, and project work. Student-directed

learning activities which include; attending lectures, performing specific assignments, practicing technical or laboratory skills, writing papers, independent and private study, reading books and papers, contributing to online discussion forums, and learning how to give constructive criticism of the work of others, and Assessments which involves Oral/written examinations, oral presentations, tests, papers/essays, portfolios, reports, continuous assessment, and (final) thesis/dissertation (Surajo and Umar, 2023). However, these activities are expected to be carried out at a pace that meets the teacher's expectations of the workload that should be completed at each stage of the course, as a result students have excess workload and limited time to study. In this current study (as shown in Table 3) majority 68% (n=91.1) of the students reported, having learning and teaching related stressor (situations pertaining to teaching or learning that cause stress to students), which is caused by having a poor Lecturer teaching methods; which include; having too heavy syllabus in some subjects, lack of knowledge or the importance of the subject matter by the lecturer, Monotonous (boring or tedious) teaching style by the lecturer, the lecturer being too fast without the use of teaching aids, Lecturers intimidating the students by showing socio-economic status and Lecturers making too many extra demands on students etc. this can impact the students' academic performance negatively. It should be noted that teaching and learning methods, frustration with the quality of education, ineffective feedback systems and supervision, lack of recognition to work done, and obscurity of what is expected from the students are caused by poor teaching methods (Sailo and Varghese, 2024). In addition, strained Lecturer-student relationship can also result from competency and personality of the lecturer, poor supervision abilities, lack of skills, delay or not providing study materials, and assigning of improper and dull tasks to students; which the students find boring (Sailo and Varghese, 2024).

The study equally revealed that there were no correlation between academic stress and socio-demographic data (age, gender, field of study and level of education) of the respondents. Some studies have similar results to the present study such as Graves *et al*. (2021) whose studies also found no significant differences in the association between stress, gender and background. However, these findings disagree with the studies of Aihie and Ohanaka (2019) and Saleem *et al*. (2023) which showed association between stress and age, gender, level of education.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion this study revealed that undergraduate students in Kogi State Nigeria are academically stressed. Personal inadequacy, poor interpersonal relationship with Lecturers, Lecturer-students relationship/poor teaching methods as well as fear of failure are the major factors causing stress among these students.

It is therefore recommended that;

i. Students should be encouraged to identify their individual sources of academic stress and find individual coping method to manage their stress.
ii. Students are to be encouraged to carry out their student-directed activities and at a pace that meets the teacher's expectations of the amount of work that should be completed at each stage of the course.
iii. Level advisers, Lecturers and Counsellors should organize orientation programmes for undergraduates especially the fresh-year students on how to cope and adjust to the new academic environment and on how to adjust to the pressure that is associated with academic life.
iv. Lecturers are expected to apply and improve aids used to give feedback, present learning materials, and build positive relationships with their students.
v. Students are to be encouraged to maintain good relationship with their peers and balance social activities with their academics.
vi. The academic board and school management should make sure the academic curriculum is easy and not complex for the students to assimilate.
vii. Stress management as a course should be included in the university curriculum for all programs to constantly train both students and faculty members on the high risks of excessive and poorly managed stress.

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