



## **Determinants of Stress among Undergraduate Students at the Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin, Nigeria**

**Ologele Ibrahim (PhD.)**

Department of Health Promotion and Environmental Health Education,  
Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria

E-mail: [ologele2010@gmail.com](mailto:ologele2010@gmail.com), [ologele.i@unilorin.edu.ng](mailto:ologele.i@unilorin.edu.ng)

Tel: [+234\(0\)8063679928](tel:+234(0)8063679928),

**Abdulraheem, Adijat Mojisola (PhD.),**

Department of Health Promotion and Environmental Health Education,  
Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria

&

**Isiaka Garba**

Department of Physical and Health Education  
Federal College of Education Special Oyo

**Accepted February 2021**

**Published November 2021**

### **How to Cite:**

Ibrahim, O., Mojisola, A., & Garba, I. (2021). Determinants of Stress among Undergraduate Students at the Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin, Nigeria. *Msingi Journal*, 5(2), 1-11. <https://doi.org/10.33886/mj.v5i2.236>

### **Abstract**

*Stress has become part of students' academic life due to the various expectations placed upon their shoulders. Undergraduate students are particularly vulnerable to the problems associated with academic stress. It is essential to comprehend the factors that determine stress among undergraduate students if we are to gain sufficient and proficient intervention strategies. Therefore, the study investigates the factors that determine stress among Undergraduate students at the faculty of Education, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria. Descriptive survey design method was adopted for the study. The Undergraduate students at the faculty of Education, University of Ilorin, Nigeria constituted the study population. Two hundred and forty (240) Undergraduate students formed the sample size. The respondents were selected for the research using a multi-stage sampling technique. A structured questionnaire that had been validated by*

*3 experts from the related fields was used as a research instrument. Consistency of the instrument was established through a test-retest approach and the result of 0.86r was obtained. Inferential statistics of chi-square were used to analyze the outcomes of the data collected. The findings revealed that academic, environmental and personal factors constitute stress among undergraduate students. The researcher recommends among other things that the university authority should reduce the number of elective courses allocated for undergraduate students to ease their stress exposure to excess academic workload.*

**Keywords:** Factors, Determine, Stress, Undergraduate, University.

## **Introduction**

Stress is an important topic in the academic sphere as well as in our society. Many studies conducted by researchers in behavioural sciences indicate that stress as a topic needs more attention (Rees & Redfern, 2000; Ellison, 2004; Ongori & Agolla, 2008; Agolla, 2009; Joseph & Henry, 2009). Stress in the academic environment can have negative implications if not properly controlled (Smith, 2002; Tweed et al., 2004; Stevenson & Harper, 2006; Joseph & Henry, 2009). Stress affect learners as they make effort to adapt and adjust to different experiences which they have not encountered before while at school. Students in higher institutions enjoy some freedom which makes them take decisions on their own which are also stressful for them. A person's response towards stress depends on whether an event is appraised as a challenge or a threat. The challenging event brings positive results and it improve task performance while threatening ones lead to anxiety, social dysfunction and suicidal ideation. The increasing knowledge of the existence of stress by people and its consequences on Nigerian citizens aroused the interest of proficient bodies and educationists. Stress is a condition that occurs when some demands and pressures task an individual's ability to adjust. People believe that higher education is a period of fun and limited task. Changing in routine for learners in higher institutions in Nigeria is usually stressful especially resumption and vacation from school and returning to school or staying home after breaks create stress for learners. The students of higher learning need to adjust to the demands of coping with the academic activities without a guidance from families or parents ( Oduwaiye et al.,2017).

Students of higher learning face more academic activities scheduled to be completed in a short time. Effective handling of stress by students could lead to improvement in their academic performance but failure to handle it properly results in health problems such as anxiety, headache, stomach upset, high blood pressure and insomnia (Oduwaiye et al.,2017).

Body reaction to changes due to stress needs a response or an adjustment. Physical, mental, social and emotional responses of people are affected by stress. Nevertheless, stress is a normal part of life. Man experience stress through thoughts, body or from the environment. Even positive life changes such as a promotion, political appointment, students' admission, obtaining a loan or the birth of a child produces stress. Distress affects body balance leading to medical conditions such as headaches, increased blood pressure, an unpleasant stomach, depression, panic attacks, anxiety and worry. The condition contributing to health problems affecting man include, cancer, accidents, suicide, liver cirrhosis, lung disease and heart disease (Jeanne et al., 2019 ).

The outcome of a study carried out by Choudhury et al, (2015) on factors responsible for stress

among medical college students in Kolkata, India, revealed that the rate of students experience with stress was 91.1% and the academic reason was the main condition causing stress in students. Unfamiliarity with the local language, change in teaching method and life in the hall of residents were the factors that make academic stress to be higher among students in the study area. Indirat and Pargat (2017) opined that researchers across the world have already been alarmed about the increasing academic stress of students in the last few decades. Some learners' manage school stress well and some find it difficult to cope and this may lead to negative effects on their health. Elkind (2001) explained that "school burnout" is a situation where learners find it intricate to manage chronic stress experience in school which result in dropping out from school or abusing drugs for relief. Jiandong (2016) explained that academic stress is widespread among learners, a limited amount of stress is rather a motivation for the students which enable students to study more, but post-optimum stress is very hazardous as it may result in low academic performance, low self-esteem and low well-being. Moreover, protracted stress has the potential to cause serious psychological and physical damage to students' health.

Mostly, stress emanates from the environment in which an individual finds himself. The majority of the environmental stress is imposed upon us either directly by other individuals or indirectly by the social system or institution. If there is an opportunity to satisfy an individual wants but a basic psychological need is interfered with by society, considerable environmental stress is developed (Stoia, 2003). Frederick et al., (2014) explained that the availability of proper facilities is a requirement for creating a healthy environment in school. A school can only be considered a health-promoting institution when it has appropriate and adequate infrastructures as well as functional policies necessary for promotion and maintenance of the health of school population. Many students suffer implausible anxiety at school because of constant fear about whether or not they will be called upon by their lecturer to answer the question whose answer they don't know. Even when points are awarded for class participation, some students deliberately choose to forfeit those points rather than speak aloud or ask a question in front of other students. Some undergraduates compete with each other for a teacher's attention. They also work both collaboratively and competitively with peers at different times of the year as friendships coagulate as well as withdraw. Performance of students is seriously affected due to the level of stress experience in school. Some students drop out of school due to their failure to bear the problems they are undergoing. It is on the above premise that the researchers investigate factors that determine stress among undergraduate students in the faculty of education, university of Ilorin, Nigeria. Hopefully this will provide the solution to enable students to achieve maximum benefit from their education.

The general problems afflicting human being in our contemporary society is stress. Stress has become part of life right from childhood and is a crucial part of living. The primary condition which affects human health and causes illness or death today more than anything else is stress which an individual come upon in everyday life. The way an individual attempts to either avoid or solve their psychological problems determines the possibility of resolving the stress of life. A certain quantity of stress occurs every second of one's life through the environment. There is no life without stress. However, the crisis occurs when stress is not controllable. Some people think that stress only affects affluent people or people who hold senior positions such as corporate executives, lawyers, judges and politicians. Students, civil servants, housewives and even children all experience the

effects of stress (Oyerinde, 2004).

The exposure of students to a high level of stress while in school puts them in danger of developing medical problems later in life. Students who experience stress during test or examination periods not likely to be active and this can result in the development of health issues which include chronic non-communicable diseases due to decrease in physical activity and increase in unhealthy lifestyle habits. Bohat (2015) opined that students' academic learning and performance can be affected by numerous factors which include gender, age, teaching staff, family's income, parent's social status, total study hours, health issues and condition of hostel accommodation or day scholars.

Nakalema & Joseph (2014); Lumley & Provenzano (2003) pointed out that undergraduates experienced social, academic and interpersonal problems when changing from secondary school life to University which is stressful for many of them. Coping with academic challenges, getting the right friends and being far from parents are the major problems affecting new students in school. The author also stated that students perform better in academics if they can manage new challenges experienced in school successfully. They noted that the undergraduates are faced with many new social, interpersonal and academic demands during the transition from secondary school life to University which is stressful for many of them. The potential barrier from stress during the transition into university life is social support from friends, peers and religious peers that provide insulation from the harmful impact of tension.

## **Hypotheses**

1. Academic factors are not significant determinants of stress among undergraduate students of the Faculty of Education in the University of Ilorin.
2. Environmental factors are not significant determinants of stress among undergraduate students of the Faculty of Education in the University of Ilorin.
3. Personal factors are not significant determinants of stress among undergraduate students of the Faculty of Education in the University of Ilorin.

## **Study Methodology**

The descriptive survey research design method was employed for the study. The study population made up of all the undergraduates of the Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin, Nigeria. The target population therefore comprised all the five thousand two hundred and sixty-three undergraduate students from five selected departments out of nine departments in the study area. A multi-stage sampling technique made up of simple, proportionate, purposive and accidental sampling techniques was used for the study. At stage one, a simple random sampling procedure was used to choose five departments from the nine departments in the study area using simple balloting technique; the selected departments were as follows: department of Art Education, department of Counsellor Education, Department of Health Promotion and Environmental Health Education, Department of Educational Management and department of Human Kinetics Education. At stage two, a proportionate sampling procedure was used to pick twenty per cent of the population from five selected departments based on their populations; the proportionate sampling technique was a technique that ensured that each stratum has equal sampling representation. At stage three, the Purposive sampling approach used to choose 400 level students because they have more experience

of different types of stress affecting undergraduates' right from their resumption to date. Stage four, accidental sampling approach used to choose 400 level students during their departments' lectures and numbers of respondents selected were based on 20% population of the selected departments. The number of undergraduate students who participated in the study was as follows; eighty-one students selected from Art Education, forty-two students chosen from Counsellor Education, thirty-four students selected from Health Promotion and Environmental Health Education, fifty-seven students chosen from Educational Management and twenty-six students selected from Human kinetics Education. Two hundred and forty undergraduate students formed the study sample.

**Table 1: Calculation of the sample selected for the study**

S/N	Departments	No of Students from the selected Department	No of 400 level Students from the Selected Department selected	Number of Respondents selected based on (20%)
1	Art Education	1610	406	81
2	Counsellor Education	906	210	42
3	Health Promotion and Env. Health Education	848	170	34
4	Educational Management	1326	284	57
5	Human Kinetics Education	573	131	26
<b>Total</b>		<b>5263</b>	<b>1201</b>	<b>240</b>

Source: Researchers' data (2020)

The instrument used for the study was a researchers' developed questionnaire which was validated by the three experts in related fields. Both construct and content validity were ascertained. The consistency of the instrument was established using a test re-test method, 20 copies of the questionnaire administered on twenty (20) 400 level students from the department of social science in the faculty of Education which was not part of the study. Two weeks after, the instrument re-administered. Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was used to analyse the results. A reliability coefficient of 0.86r was obtained which was considered high enough and this made the research instrument reliable. The researcher administered the instrument with the help of three trained research assistants. Inferential statistics of chi-square were used to analyze the result of the data collected at 0.05 alpha level.

## Results

**Ho<sub>1</sub>:** Academic factors will not significantly determine stress among undergraduate students of the Faculty of Education in the University of Ilorin.

Table 2: Chi-square Analysis Showing the Academic Factors as a Determinant of Stress

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Row Total	Cal. X-VALUE	P-VALUE	df	REMARKS
1.	Some undergraduates are anxious about getting a good grade from the upcoming test especially if there are more than one tests	58 (24.2%)	63 (26.2%)	80 (33.3%)	39 (16.2%)	240				
2.	Undergraduates anxious about numerous homework where the students may not have enough energy or time to Complete the pile up an assignment and this lead to stress for Students	46 (19.2%)	130 (54.2%)	41 (17.1%)	23 (9.6%)	240				
3.	Students experience stress due to heavy academic work-load which involve a large amount of content to be learned	100 (41.7%)	56 (23.3%)	55 (22.9%)	29 (12.1%)	240	240.24	0.003	12	Rejected
4.	Student develop stress due to fear of getting poor marks from tests and examinations	93 (38.8%)	84 (35.0%)	52 (21.7%)	11 (4.6%)	240				
<b>Column Total</b>		<b>297</b>	<b>333</b>	<b>228</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>960</b>				

@ 0.05 alpha level

Table 2 revealed the calculated chi-square value of 240.24 and p-value of 0.003 with 12 degrees of freedom at 0.05 alpha level of significance. Since the p-value of 0.003 is less than 0.05, therefore, the non- hypothesis is rejected. This implies that Academic factors determine stress among undergraduate students of the Faculty of Education in the University of Ilorin.

**Ho2:** Environmental factors will not significantly determine stress among undergraduate students of the Faculty of Education at the University of Ilorin

**Table 3: Chi-square Analysis Showing the Environmental Factors as a Determinant of Stress**

S/N Items	SA	A	D	SD	Row Total	Cal. X-VALUE	P-VALUE	df	REMARKS
5. Inadequate number of toilet facilities contribute to stress for undergraduate students	60 (25.0%)	95 (39.6%)	47 (19.6%)	38 (15.8%)	240				
6. Congested lecture rooms contribute to stress for undergraduate students	60 (25.0%)	135 (56.2%)	30 (12.5%)	15 (6.2%)	240				
7. Shortage of potable drinking water contributes to stress for undergraduate students	103 (42.9%)	85 (35.4%)	44 (18.3%)	8 (3.3%)	240	369.70	0.000	12	Rejected
8. Transportation problems experienced by students in the school campus contribute to stress for undergraduates	82 (34.2%)	114 (47.5%)	26 (10.8%)	18 (7.5%)	240				
<b>Column Total</b>	<b>305</b>	<b>429</b>	<b>147</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>960</b>				

@ 0.05 alpha level

Table 3 revealed the calculated chi-square value of 369.70 and p-value of 0.000 with 12 degrees of freedom at 0.05 alpha level of significance. Since the p-value of 0.000 is less than 0.05, therefore, the non- hypothesis is rejected. This implies that environmental factors determine stress among undergraduate students of the Faculty of Education at the University of Ilorin

**Ho3:** Personal factors will not significantly determine stress among undergraduate students of the Faculty of Education in the University of Ilorin.

**Table 4: Chi-square Analysis Showing the Personal factors as a Determinant of Stress**

S/N Items	SA	A	D	SD	Row Total	Cal. X-VALUE	P-VALUE	Df	REMARKS
9. Lack of financial support from parents and family members contribute to stress for undergraduate students	65 (27.1%)	148 (61.7%)	17 (7.1%)	10 (4.2%)	240				
10. Health problems experienced by students while in school contribute to stress for undergraduates	32 (13.3%)	57 (23.8%)	106 (44.2%)	45 (18.8%)	240				

11. Some undergraduates develop stress due to change in sleeping habit	32 (13.3%)	53 (22.1%)	130 (54.2%)	25 (10.4%)	240	487.83	0.000	12	Rejected
12. Some undergraduates develop stress due to change in their living environment in their residence	61 (25.4%)	47 (19.6%)	119 (49.6%)	13 (5.4%)					
<b>Column Total</b>	<b>190</b>	<b>305</b>	<b>372</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>960</b>				

@ 0.05 alpha level

Table 4 revealed the calculated chi-square value of 487.83 and p-value of 0.000 with 12 degrees of freedom at 0.05 alpha level of significance. Since the p-value of 0.000 is less than 0.05, therefore, the non- hypothesis is rejected. This implies that personal factors determine stresses among undergraduate students of faculty of Education at the University of Ilorin.

### Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendations

The finding of hypothesis 1 revealed that academic factors determine stress among undergraduate students of the Faculty of Education in the University of Ilorin. The outcome of the finding supports the result of the study carried out by Khadijat, et al. (2015) on factors responsible for stress on medical students. The study conducted among 115 medical students of Islamabad in Pakistan. The result of the study indicated that major factors responsible for stress among medical students were increased academic workload towards the examination, enormous syllabus, not getting the expected marks and less time for revision and long-term learning. Medical students in the study area experience stress through the frightening talks and learning styles. Also, the result of the finding agrees with the view of Jayasankara et al. (2018); Saha (2017) who's opined that for the longest time, people assumed that the learner population was the least affected by any sort of strain or troubles. Stress is now understood as a lifestyle disaster disturbing an individual's regardless of their developmental phase. It was expected that the only job students would undertake was to learn and read was never perceived as stressful. What people proved to be demanding were the expectations parents had for their children who in turn grew into larger burdens that the children could not bear anymore. At least one student commits suicide every hour as a result of failing examination and an 80% increase in suicide rates occurs in one year.

The finding of hypothesis 2 indicates that environmental factors determine stress among undergraduate students of the Faculty of Education in the University of Ilorin. The outcomes of the finding corroborate with the view of the Centre for Evaluation and Education Policy Analysis (2020) which explained that a growing body of research has found that school facilities can have significant effects on students and teachers performance. For teachers, school infrastructure determines teacher commitment, performance and retention. For students, school infrastructures determine their health, behaviour, engagement learning and academic achievements. Most schools at all levels do not have enough school amenities such as laboratories, library and also have limited



classroom space that can accommodate the students' population. The provision of quality facilities in the school setting is a significant determinant of teacher performance and students achievement. Also, the finding supports the outcome of research carried out by Najmeh, et al (2018) among 246 female high school students of Shiraz schools in Iran. The results revealed that more than 60% of the ecological factors disturb students in their classroom. The study used the extracted factors of the four groups to measure the students' stress levels relative to different factors. The four groups factors were; thermal comfort condition which include, air temperature, humidity, wind and speed, physical condition include, space geometry, building age, space colour, green space and space materials, security include, space readability, privacy, space standards, crowd congestion and privacy, environmental interventions include, sound pollution, light, ventilation and visual contamination. Four groups of factors together with their micro-factors affect the learners stress in the school environment.

The finding of hypothesis 3 revealed that personal factors determine stress among undergraduate students of the Faculty of Education in the University of Ilorin. The result of the finding agreed with the findings of a study conducted by Kashif, et al. (2013) on major factors causing stress among undergraduates in Pakistan. The study verifies four factors that may hurt the mental and physical well-being of undergraduate students. The four factors that had been taken under consideration were family stress, emotional stress, financial stress and social stress. One hundred and eighty-eight (188) respondents' were chosen for the study. The results showed that students have to live compellingly according to rules and regulations and this can be sometimes stressful for students. Finding the right person to choose as a friend also causes emotional stress. Admiration and love from people is the desire of almost every student, so whenever they don't get it, they feel social stress. Financial stress is the least influencing factor affecting university students in the study area as their relatives support them. Also, the result of the findings supports the opinion of Scholarship American (2019) which explained that college students are always anxious about money. Money is a sensitive topic and is on about everyone's mind regularly. And that is especially true for college students getting through higher education which means constantly thinking, worrying and stressing about how to afford it. It wasn't just about paying the high price of tuition, either, nearly 60 per cent of respondents said they worry about having enough money to pay for school, while half are concerned about paying their monthly expenses. Because of money owed to the Univeristy, thirty-two per cent of Undergraduates reported neglecting their studies at least at times.

## **Conclusion**

The conclusion of the study indicates that all the three variables; academic, environmental and personal factors considered for the study contributed to stress for undergraduates in the study area.

## **The study recommendations were as follows:**

1. The university authority should reduce the number of elective courses allocated for undergraduate students to ease their stress exposure to registered excess academic workload.
2. The school authority should construct more lecture theatres and lecture rooms for each department in the faculty to reduce the hardship experienced by undergraduate students while receiving lessons to make the academic activities conducive for teaching and learning

in university settings.

3. The Government should look for measures to improve the standard of living for Nigerians to reduce the hardship experiencing by parents and guardians which make it difficult to provide all the financial and educational materials needed by undergraduate students while in school.

## References

- Agolla, J. E. (2009) Occupational stress among Police Officers: The case of Botswana Police service, *Res. J. Bus. Manage.* 2 (1), 25-35.
- Bohat, A. (2015). Effects of stress on academic performance of students. <https://bohatala.com/effect-of-stress-on-academic-performance-of-students/>.
- Centre for Evaluation and Education Policy Analysis (2020). The importance of school facilities in improving student outcomes. <https://sites.psu.edu/ceepa/2015/06/07/the-importance-of-school-facilities-in-improving-student-outcomes/>.
- Choudhury, S., Gupta, S., Das, M., Mondol, A. & Pradhan, R. (2015). Factors responsible for stress among medical college students in Kolkata, India. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/26261123>
- Elkind, D.(2001). *The Sudden Child: Mounting up too fast too soon* (3<sup>rd</sup> Ed.) Cambridge, MA: Perseus publishing.
- Frederick, O.O., Olukunmi, L.O. & Akintayo, O.O. (2014). Emerging and re-emerging health promotion problems for safe living, *Ibadan: Educational Facilities in Isru*, 254 – 260.
- Indirat, D., & Pargat, S. J. (2017). Academic stress and personality of adolescents studying in senior secondary schools. *Jamia Journal of Education*, 4(1), 1-8.
- Jayasankara, R., Karismara, J., & Janathattil, A.N. (2018). Sources of academic stress among university students. *Biomedical and Pharmacology Journal*, 11(1), 531-537.
- Jeanne, S., Melinda, S., Robert, S., & Lawrence, R. (2019). How does stress affect health? <https://www.helpguide.org/articles/stress/stress-symptoms-signs-and-causes.htm>
- Jiandong, S. (2016). Bullying and educational stress in eastern Asian schools in “ending the torment: Tackling bullying from the schoolyard into cyberspace”. *New York: United Nations*.131-138.
- Joseph, E. A. & Henry, O. (2009). An assessment of academic stress among undergraduate students: The case of the University of Botswana. *Educational Research and Review*, 4 (2), 63-70.
- Kashif, K., Shazia, G & Farzan, Y. (2013). Major factors affecting stress: A study among undergraduates in Pakistan. *International Journal of Asian Social Science*, 3 (2), 428-442.
- Khadija, Q., Najamus, S.K., & Muhammed, R.B.. (2015). Factors associated with stress among medical students. *Journal of Pakistan Medical Association*, 65 (7), 752-755.
- Lumley, M.A. & Provenzano, K.m. (2003). Stress management through emotional disclosure improves academics performance among college students with physical symptoms. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 95(2), 641-649.
- Najmeh, N., Khosro, M., Zahra, B. & Siamak, S. (2018). Environmental factors affecting students' stress in the educational environment: A case study of sharaz schools. *International Journal of School Health*, 5(2), 1-7.
- Nakalema, G. & Joseph, S. (2014). Academic stress: its causes and results at a Ugandan university.

- African Journal of Teacher Education, 3(3), 1-21.
- Oduwaiye, R., O., Yahaya, L. A., Amadi, E. C. & Tihamiyu, K. A. (2017). Stress Level and Academic Performance of University Students in Kwara State, Nigeria. *Makerere Journal of Higher Education*, 9 (1), 103 – 112.
- Ongori, H. & Agolla, J. E. (2008). Occupational Stress in organisations and Its effects on organisational performance. *Journal of Manage Research*, 8(3), 123-135
- Oxford Learning (2018). General causes of stress for students. <https://www.oxfordlearning.com/causes-of-school-stress/>
- Oyerinde, O.O. (2004) Problems in health education. Ibadan: Codat publication. P.175.
- Rees, C.J & Redfern, D. (2000). Recognising the perceived causes of stress – a training and development perspective, *Ind. and Commer. Train*, 32(4), 120-127
- Saha, D. (2017). Every hour one student commit suicide in India. <http://www.hindustantimes.com/health-and-fitness/every-hour-one-student-commits-suicide-in-india/story-7uffss6hllngin060fz20html>.
- Scholarship American (2019). Financial stress prevents college students from graduating. What can we do? <https://scholarshipamerica.org/blog/financial-stress-prevents-college-students-from-graduating-what-can-we-do/>
- Smith, A. (2002). The scale of perceived occupational stress, *Occup. Med.* (50): 294-298.
- Stevenson, A & Harper, S. (2006). Workplace stress and the student learning experience, *Qual. Assur. Educ.*, 14(2), 167-178.
- Stoia, R. (2003). *Your life and health stress*. New York: John Willey and Sons.
- Tweed, R.G., White, K. & Lehman, D.R (2004). Culture, stress, and coping. Internally and externally- targeted control strategies of European Canadians, East Asian Canadians, and Japanese, *J. Cross Cult. Psychol*, (35), 652-658.