Original Research Article

# Stress Among University Students in Osun State, Nigeria

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**ABSTRACT**

**Background:** Stress is an unavoidable fraction of existence that generally reaches a broad spectrum of population groups with no concern for their age, gender, educational status, or socioeconomic status. University students undergo several educational, environmental, social, and psychological adjustment problems in the modern campus environment, influencing their psychosocial well-being and learning outcomes. This study focuses on examining the stress level of university students in Osun State.

Purpose: The purpose of the study is to assess the level of stress experienced by university students in Osun State.

**Method:** A cross-sectional survey was used to study 111 University students in Osun State with the aid of Google Form (an online data collection tool). Questionnaire was used to find out the level of stress among students using the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) which is a ten-item questionnaire that measures the degree to which life situations are appraised as stressful.

**Result:** Findings suggest that majority of the students reported a moderate level of stress. The causes of social, academic, physical, and psychological stress showed that Social Stress (6.14) and Academic Stress (8.05) had higher mean score compared to Physical (5.08) and Psychological Stress (3.44).

**Conclusion:** Stress among students can result in defective judgment, absenteeism self-medication, and addiction to substances like smoking cigarettes, and alcohol drinking. Persistent susceptibility to stressful situations leads to deterioration of academic performance, poor relationship with friends and family members, loss of memory, and severe health problems. To achieve an improved mental well-being, university decision makers should provide an enabling physiological, psychological, social, and academic environment coupled with counselling to reduce student's stress.

*Keywords:* Stress, Stressors, Stress factors, University students

## BACKGROUND

Over the years, stress has been defined in diverse ways. Firstly, it was perceived as pressure from the environment, then as strain within the person. The largely accepted definition today is one of interaction between the situation and the individual. Stress evolved from the Latin word 'stricture' meaning strict. The exact meaning of stress is "distress", hardship and coercion. Stress ascends from internal or external events of life which may be physiological, psychological, physical, mental, spiritual, or behavioral which describes individuals' response toward a force. It can be renowned through various characteristics such as when heartbeat and breath are increased, the person feels nervous and depressed, headaches, fatigue, dryness of mouth, the person remains confused forgetfulness, fells apathetic, develops a negative temperament, feels

lethargic, lack of concentration, doubts about the self-ability, etc. When the resources of an individual are not adequate to cope with some strains and pressure, it then results in a physical and psychological state.

Elizabeth (2020), defined stress as "any category of change that results in physical, emotional, or psychological strain". Stress is the body's reaction to anything that compels scrutiny or action (1). The National Association of Mental Health distinguishes stress from pressure by defining pressure as a subjective feeling of tension that is triggered by a potentially stressful situation while stress is when pressure exceeds an individual's ability to cope. The global prevalence estimate for stress was 36.5% (2). People are affected by stress differently and so, what is stressful for one person may not be stressful for another. It can depend on your personality type and how that individual has learned to respond to pressure (3). Stress is not continuously damaging or detrimental and certainly, the absence of stress is death (4).

According to International Labor Organization (2016), stress is the harmful physical and emotional response induced by an inequality between the perceived stresses and the perceived resources and capacities of people to withstand those demands (5). A "stressor" according to Joshua is known as any event or stimulus that causes stress. Anything can be a stressor as long as it is perceived as a hazard. Students are the people who are going to grow up and matter to the world. Countries need prospective professional and experts as well as the people who are good human beings and demonstrate help for the nation. University students are at that level of academic career where they are about to join the skilled nations. At this phase, they are confronted with several difficulties. At university point, there may be stressors like syllabus load, overcrowded lecture hall, semester system, anxiety, financial problems, relationships with classmates, and employment requirements are the potential indicators.

Stress is an unavoidable fraction of existence that generally reaches a broad spectrum of population groups with no concern for their age, gender, educational status, or socioeconomic status. Despite this validity, stress, depression, and anxiety are existing mental health problems among university students (6). University students undergo several educational, environmental, social, and psychological adjustment problems in the modern campus environment, influencing their psychosocial well-being and learning outcomes. These transpire because the new tertiary education system has a huge discrepancy in its techniques of teaching, academic requirements, type of connections between faculties, and even relations among students themselves (7). Stress seems to be extremely civil in students` life because university students need to assure their academic survival and equip themselves for the additional career. Stress also results in mental and emotional tension, anxiety, pressure, or stress that happens due to the needs of university life and can in turn negatively affect academic performance (8). Stress can be a healthy, and adaptive people's response to the danger by mobilizing their energy toward the stressors (9). It is crucial to point out that a distinct level of stress is important for students in a way, as it motivates and encourages students to improve in their academic journey actively. Globally, 80% of university students have stress after exams, papers, problem sets, and other assignments (10). Stress among students can be perceived as the bodies' reaction both neurologically and physiologically to adapt to a new situation (11, 12).

Studies accomplished in Malaysia indicated that 41% of the participants suffered from psychological stress which relates directly to depressive symptoms and 84% of respondents were under serious stress, especially with the academic-related stressors (13). Due to differences in the environments, students can potentially encounter numerous types of stress that can

affect their mental and social health and their academic achievement. Stress is one of the major facets of our modern life, resulting from the immediate changes in human life. This age is called the age of stress.

Out of 37 female students in Ghana, whose age of 46% was in a span of 18-19 years, 19% 19-20 years, 32% more than 20 years, and 3% less than 18 years, 97% of them have moderate stress and 3% have severe stress. The main factors contributing to stress were environmental factor 40%, intrapersonal factor 30%, academic factor 19%, and interpersonal factor 11%. For 78 % of subjects, the dearth of a calm and quiet environment and apexes of climate were stress-inducing factors (14).

Stress among students also results in defective judgment, absenteeism self-medication, and addiction to substances like smoking cigarettes, and alcohol drinking (15). Persistent susceptibility to stressful situations leads to deterioration of academic performance, poor relationships with friends and family members, loss of memory, and all-around dissatisfaction with life (16). It can also lead to severe health problems like stroke and heart attack, hypertension, diabetes mellitus and obesity, impaired immune system, digestive problem, loss of appetite, increased anxiety, suppressed fertility, and depression that eventually leads to suicide (17). Students also encounter social, emotional, physical, and family problems which may affect their learning ability and academic performance (18).

Hamaideh (2011) in his study identified stress and responses to stress among university students and assess the correlations between student stressors and study variables. The findings implied that the highest group of stressors encountered by students was self-imposed stressors followed by pressure. Cognitive responses were found to be the highest responses to stressors experienced by students (19). Tajularipin, et.al (2009) found that (29%) of the students experienced medium stress, and

there is a substantial difference in the level of stress associated with gender, and between students in urban and rural secondary schools, the findings also revealed that many factors influence students' stress such as parenting style, and parents' education background (20)

Waghachavare, et al (2013) researched a large sample of 1200 and indicated that college students experienced a certain level of stress associated with healthy lifestyles and academic factors (21). Bhat U et al. (2018) also concluded that psychological stress is highly prevalent among university students, especially among engineering and art students and those who are living with their families (22). Azila-Gbettor, et.al (2015) conducted a cross-sectional study on 275 business students in Ghana and found that academic factors such as exam stress, inadequate educational materials and attaining academic goals), intrapersonal and self-stressors (e.g., fear of failure, dealing with a personal issue, and study skills), relationship interpersonal and social stressors (e.g., social support and academic competition), teaching quality, relations with and support from teachers stressors (e.g., delaying in marking and feedback, accessing learning materials, comprehending the expectation of teaching staff) and environmental, campus, administration and transition stressors (e.g., college transition and campus adjustment) are among the generally stress-producing factors in the students. Also, the study divulged that environmental, campus, administration, and transition stressors were the most stressful sector (23).

An additional study was aimed at academic stress among college students in the faculty of education at King Saud University. The outcome of the study indicated that inadequate time to study, academic overloads, course, and exam awkwardness, workload every semester, low motivation, and high family expectations generated a moderate level of stress among students. It was also found that fear of failure was the primary source of stress among students

(Bataineh, 2013).

## Significance

Stress is one of the serious issues that affect university student's life, its effects could be reflected in students' social, academic, and mental health. Stress can lead to academic decline, poor relationships with peers and family members, and overall dissatisfaction with life. This study will provide stakeholders with scientific information related to stress levels to help students avoid stress from the beginning and for them to take measures. Assessing stress is a critical aspect of making sure students have a positive university experience.

## General Objectives

The purpose of the study is to assess the level of stress experienced by university students in Osun State

## Specific Objectives

1. To identify the different types of stress among university students in Osun State
2. To identify the main causes of stress among university students in Osun State
3. To assess the level of stress among university students in Osun State

## Research Questions

The following research questions are formulated to guide the study.
What are the different types of stress among university students in Osun State?
What are the main causes of stress among university students in Osun State?
What is the overall level of stress among university students in Osun State?

## METHODOLOGY

### Study Design

A descriptive cross-sectional study design was used for this study. This involves the study of a small population in order to discover the relationship among the variables universally while focusing on the following: observation, description, and present situation.

## Study Area

Osun State is a state in southwestern Nigeria; bounded to the east by Ekiti and Ondo states, to the north by Kwara State, to the south by Ogun State, and to the west by Oyo State. The state was formed from the southeast of Oyo state on 27 August 1991 and has its capital as the city of Osogbo.

### Study Population

The study population comprises university students enrolled in several universities in Osun State.

**Inclusion Criteria:** University students in Osun state who will be willing to participate in the survey.

**Exclusion Criteria:** University students outside Osun state who will not be willing to participate in the survey. People who aren't students were excluded from the study.

### Sampling Method

The research employed a purposive sampling technique to choose the schools based on the number of students available to get the desired target. The sampling technique was used to study 111 students from universities in Osun State, with the aid of an online semi-structured questionnaire developed by use of google forms with a consent attached to it. All participants included in this study lived in Nigeria and the link to the e-questionnaire was sent via emails, WhatsApp, and other social media platform, to students in Osun State.

### Participants

One hundred and eleven (111) students with a minimum age of 17 years and above participated in the study. The participants comprised 37 (33.3%) males and 74 (66.7%) females. Categorization based on the level of education, only 12.6% of the participants were 100 level, 28.8% were in 200 level, the majority with 38.75% were in 300 level, 18.9% in 400 level, and 0.9% were in 500 level. In terms of religious affiliation, the majority (64.9%) are Christians, while 28.8% are Muslims, and

6.3% of the respondents identified themselves with other religions. Finally, in terms of ethnicity, the majority of the participants (61.3%) identified with ethnic groups in the Southwestern region of Nigeria, while 13.5% indicated they were from ethnic groups in Southeastern Nigeria, 9.9 were from Northern Nigeria, the remaining 15.3% indicated that they were from other Nigerian ethnic affiliation.

## PROCEDURES
Data collection took place from 22nd April 2022 to 5th May 2022 among university students in Osun state using an online questionnaire platform (Google form) to obtain the view and opinions of individual responses. Primary data was collected from the students sampled from universities within the constituency as regards stress among them. Questions were written in simple language that every participant was able to understand. Participants then completed an online questionnaire pack which includes the demographic information, measures the level of stress among students, and the types and causes of stress that existed among students.

### Data Collection Instrument
A quantitative method of data collection was used. A semi-structured questionnaire was used- a main source for the primary data collection to collect information on stress among university students in Osun State. The questionnaire was divided into sections - in the first section, background information/personal details of the participants were collected. The Section II of the questionnaires was used to find out the different types of stress among students using the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS), developed by Cohen et al. (1983). PSS is a ten-item questionnaire that measures the degree to which life situations are appraised as stressful (Cohen et al. 1983) 25. One-half of the items are written in positive form (e.g., in the last month, how often have you felt that you were on top of things?). The other half of the questionnaire is written in a negative form (e.g., in the last month, how often have you found that you could not cope with all the things that you had to do?). Item responses range from never (0) to very often (4). The PSS can be completed in 2–4 min. In this study, the internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha) for the total scale was 0.68. Section III was used to find out the causes of stress among university students. The participants were asked to choose the most appropriate 'top-of-the-mind' response for each statement.

### Data Analysis
All data were analyzed using SPSS (IBM, Version 21). First, data were screened and cleaned to check for missing data and outliers. The collected data were thoroughly examined and checked for completeness and comprehensibility. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies and cross-tabulation were useful to help create patterns, trends, and relationships, and to make it easier for the researcher to understand and interpret the implications of the study.

### Validity of the Instruments
The instrument was given to experts in the department of Public Health to ascertain face validity of the instrument. This was done in order to check for appropriateness of the items in terms of the language used. They went through the objectives of the study, research questions, and the semi-structured questionnaire. This enabled the validators to determine whether the content is in line with the objectives of the study.

### Reliability of the Research Instruments
Reliability is a measure of the degree to which a research instrument yields results after repeated trials. Cronbach's alpha coefficient value is calculated for internal consistency of the instrument, by determining how all items in the instrument related to the total instrument. The reliability coefficient for Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) developed by Cohen et al. (1983) is (0.69).

## Expected Output

This research generated very useful recommendations regarding stress among university students. The research project report was realized, which contains the research findings, conclusions, inferences, and suggestions that the stakeholders can employ. The research also recommends areas for further research studies by the world of academia.

## Ethical Consideration

Ethical approval was obtained from Adeleke University Ethical Review Committee, Ede Osun State. Written informed consent was obtained from the participants before responding to the questionnaire. Giving informed consent to the respondents to ensure that they first agree to be in the study out of their own free will. To maintain high ethical standards, the protection of participants was treated as a central issue. Anonymity and confidentiality were certain. Interviewees were informed that the data would be used for scientific and publication purposes. To protect participants' anonymity and confidentiality, they were reassured that personal information and transcripts are kept and stored confidentially, that subjects remain nameless, and that any elements that might reveal interviewees' identities will be removed in the course of data analysis and reporting. The participants read the consent note and agreed to participate in the study before responding to the study survey.

## RESULTS

This chapter analyses the data obtained as responses to the level, causes, and types of stress among university students in Osun State, Nigeria.

One hundred and eleven (111) students with a minimum age of 17 years and above participated in the study. On personal profile of participants, the following were found: The majority belongs to ages 17-20 with 59.5% response, and the least was 25 to 29 age brackets with 4.5%. The participants comprised 37 (33.3%) males and 74 (66.7%) females. Categorization based on the level of education, only 12.6% of the participants were 100 level, 28.8% were in 200 level, the majority with 38.75% were in 300 level, 18.9% in 400 level, and 0.9% were in 500 level. In terms of religious affiliation, the majority (64.9%) are Christians, while 28.8% are Muslims, and 6.3% of the respondents identified themselves with other religions. Finally, in terms of ethnicity, the majority of the participants (61.3%) identified with ethnic groups in the Southwestern region of Nigeria, while 13.5% indicated they were from ethnic groups in Southeastern Nigeria, 9.9 were from Northern Nigeria, the remaining 15.3% indicated that they were from other Nigerian ethnic affiliation.

The level of stress (frequency distribution) showed that 0.9% of respondents have low-stress level. The majority of the students 69.4% reported a moderate level of stress, while 29.7% have high stress. Association between stress and sociodemographic variables showed that age-group 17-24 years, females' gender, 300 level university education, and the Christian religion are associated with Moderate Stress but not statistically significant (p value<0.005).

To determine the causes of social, academic stress, physical and psychological stress score, the study employed descriptive statistics (frequency distribution). Social (6.14) and Academic Stress (8.05) had higher mean score compared to Physical (5.08) and Psychological Stress (3.44).

## I. SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

**Table 1 Age (Descriptive Statistics)**

| | |
|---|---|
| **Minimum Age** | 17 years |
| **Maximum Age** | 29 years |
| **Mean** | 20.44 years |
| **Std. Deviation** | 2.126 years |

**Table 2 Sociodemographic Characteristics (Frequency Distribution)**

| Variable | Category | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|---|
| Age Group | 17-20 years | 66 | 59.5% |
| | 21-24 years | 40 | 36.0% |
| | 25-29 years | 5 | 4.5% |
| | Total | 111 | 100.0% |
| Gender | Male | 37 | 33.3% |
| | Female | 74 | 66.7% |
| | Total | 111 | 100.0% |
| Level | 100 | 14 | 12.6% |
| | 200 | 32 | 28.8% |
| | 300 | 43 | 38.75 |
| | 400 | 21 | 18.9% |
| | 500 | 1 | 0.9% |
| | Total | 111 | 100.0% |
| Religion | Christianity | 72 | 64.9% |
| | Islam | 32 | 28.8% |
| | Others | 7 | 6.3% |
| | Total | 111 | 100.0% |
| Ethnicity | Yoruba | 68 | 61.3% |
| | Igbo | 15 | 13.5% |
| | Hausa | 11 | 9.9% |
| | Others | 17 | 15.3% |
| | Total | 111 | 100.0% |

## Sociodemographic Characteristics (Bar Charts)
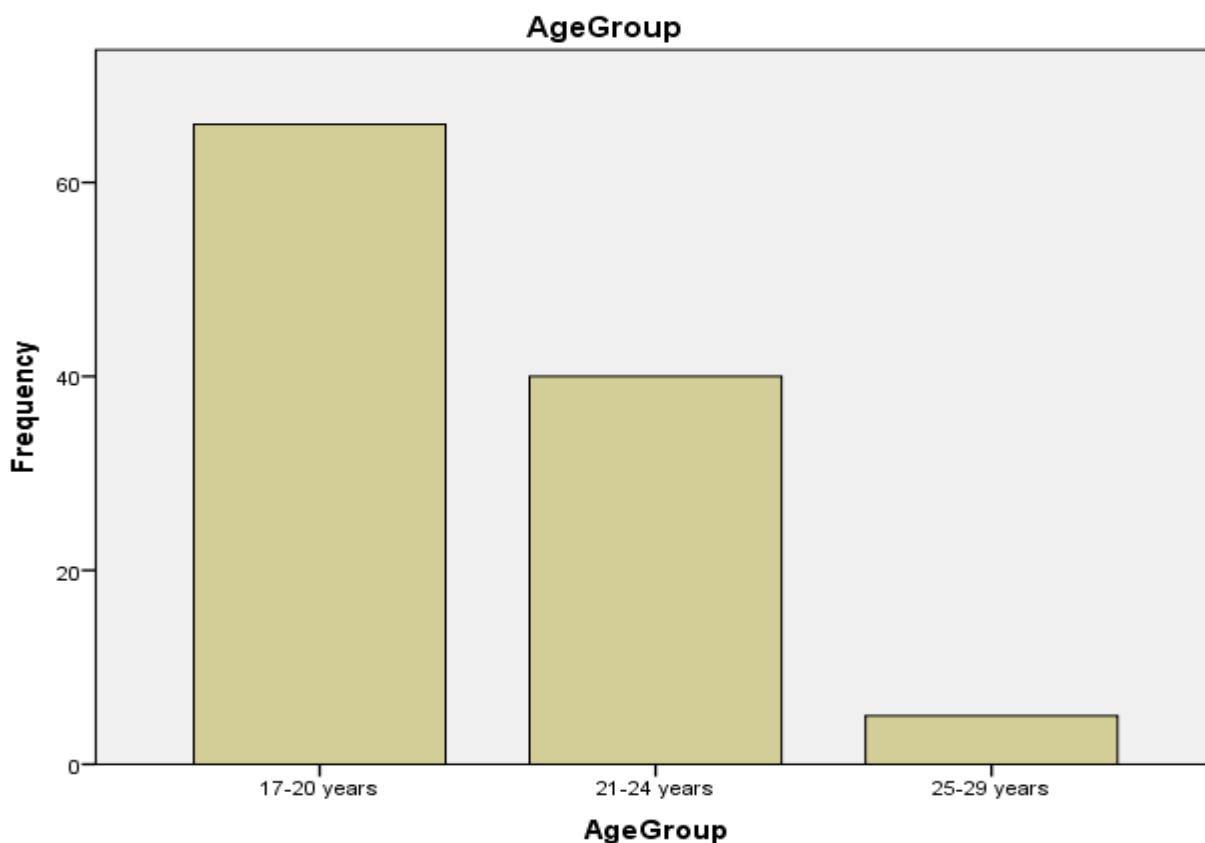


**Figure 1. Age group (N=111)**

The bar chart below is about the gender of people who took part in the survey. A total of 111 respondents were involved, out of this, females took the greater percentage of 66.7% and the remaining 33.3% went to the males. This survey was conducted among students at the University.
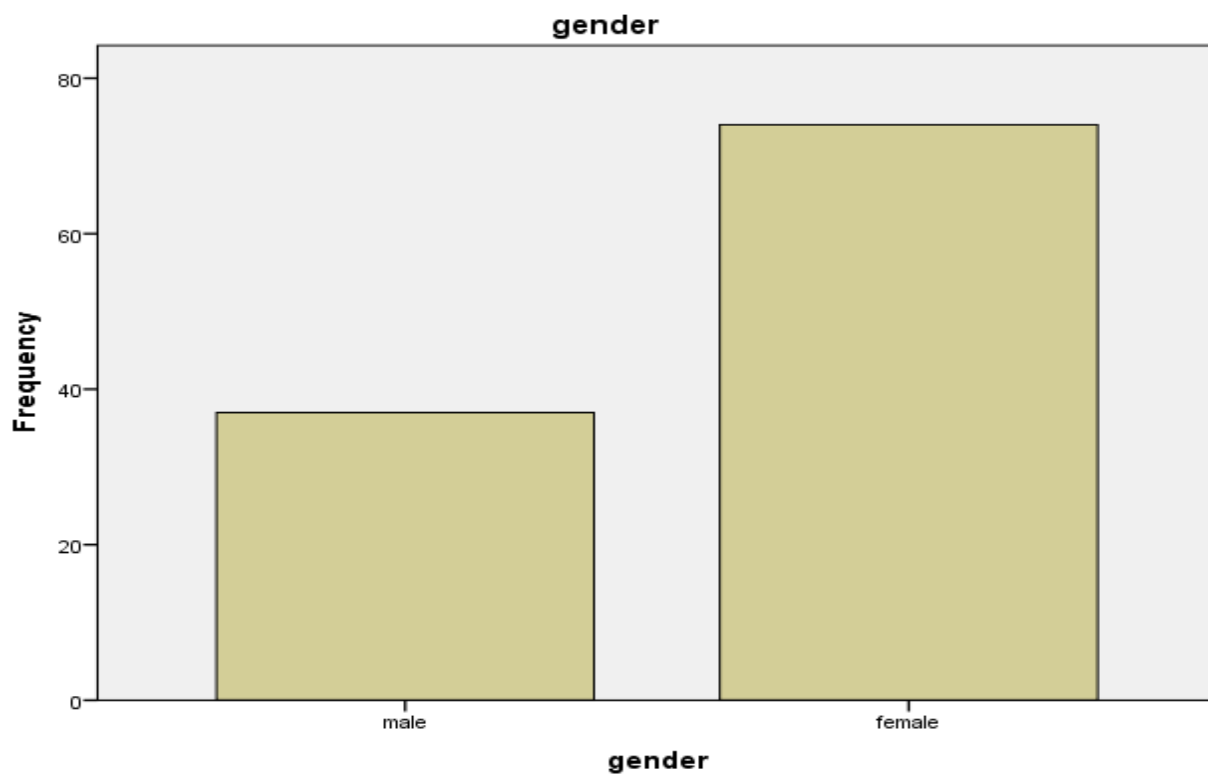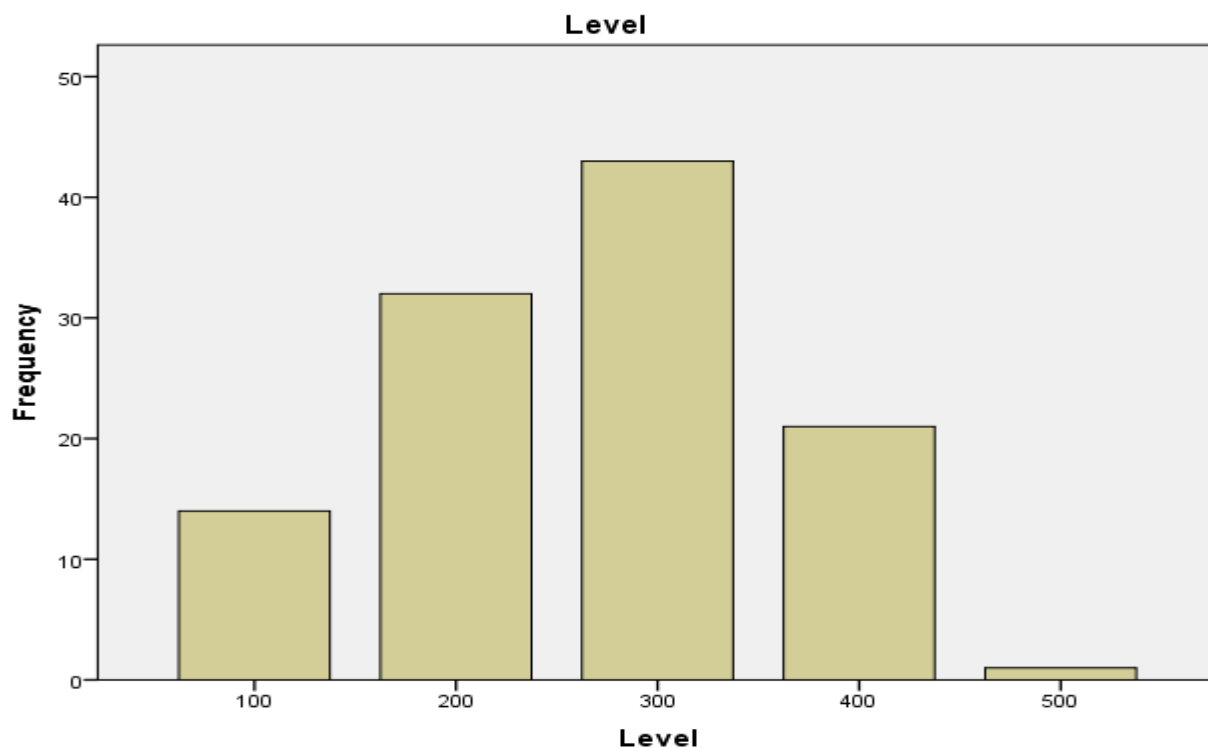
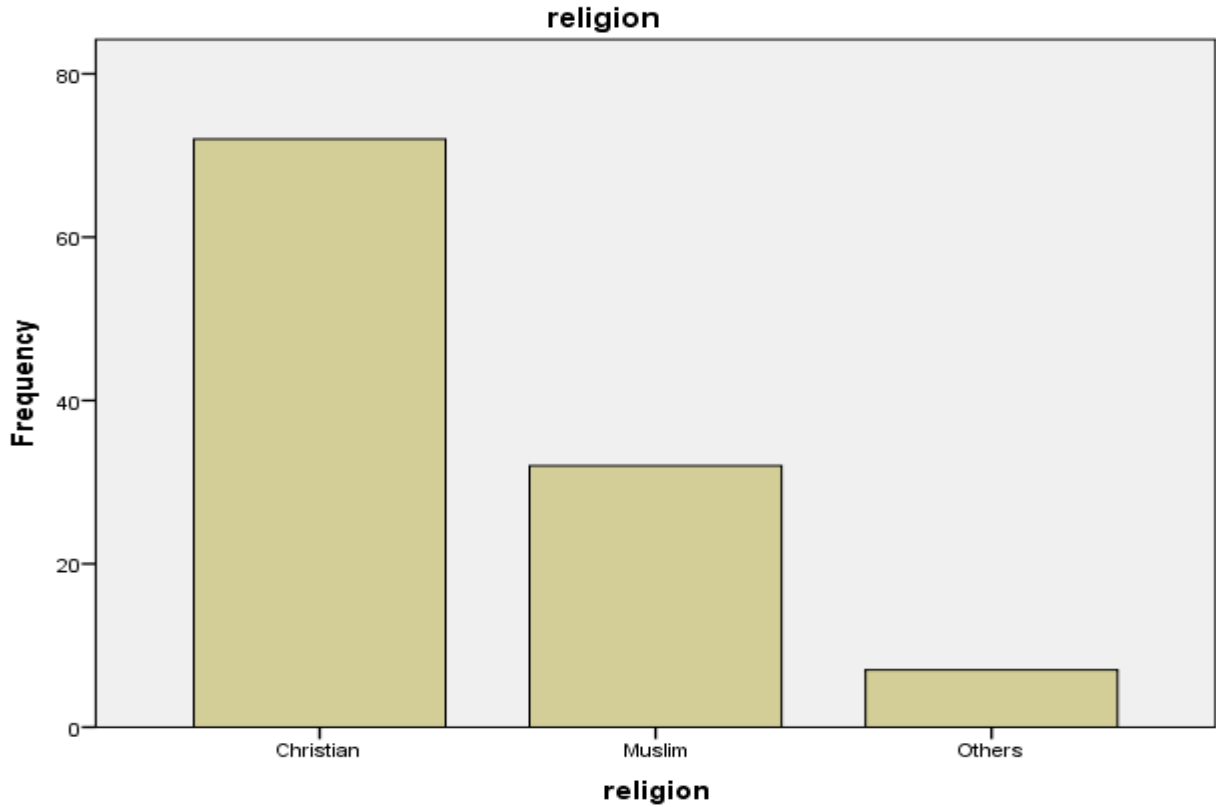**Figure 2. Gender (N= 111)**



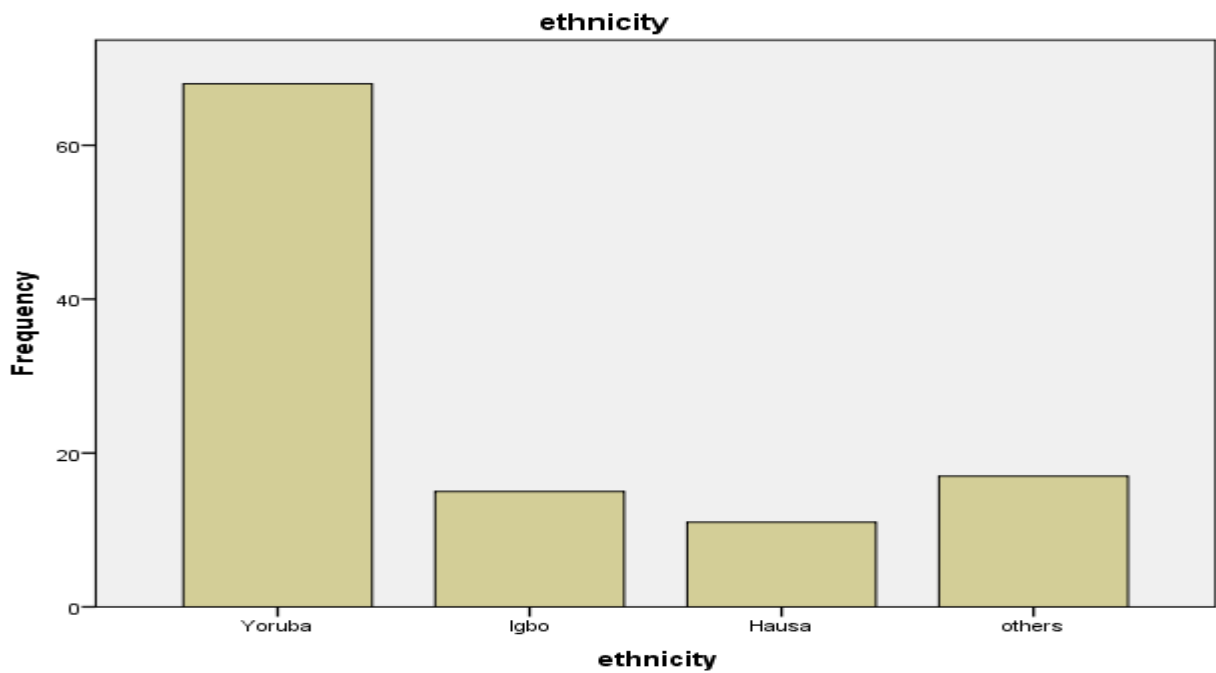**Figure 3. Class level (N=111)**

**Figure 4. Religion**



**Figure 5. Ethnicity**

## I.  LEVEL OF STRESS

**Table 3 Level of Stress (Descriptive Statistics)**

| | |
|---|---|
| **Possible Range of Scores for Stress using PSS** | 0-40 |
| **Minimum Score** | 5 |
| **Maximum Score** | 37 |
| **Mean Score** | 24.57 |
| **Std. Deviation of Scores** | 4.5 |

**Table 4 Level of Stress (Frequency Distribution)**

| Stress Level & Score | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Low Stress (0-13) | 1 | 0.9% |
| Moderate Stress (14-26) | 77 | 69.4% |
| High Stress (27-40) | 33 | 29.7% |
| Total | 111 | 100.0% |

69.4% of respondents have Moderate Stress

**Level of Stress (Overall)**

The research determined the general level of stress of the students as a result of the several components of stress taken in the present study. Table 4 depicted that most of the students 77 (69.4%) have a moderate level of overall stress. The rest of the students 33 (29.7%) and 1 (0.9%) have experienced a higher and lower level of stress respectively.
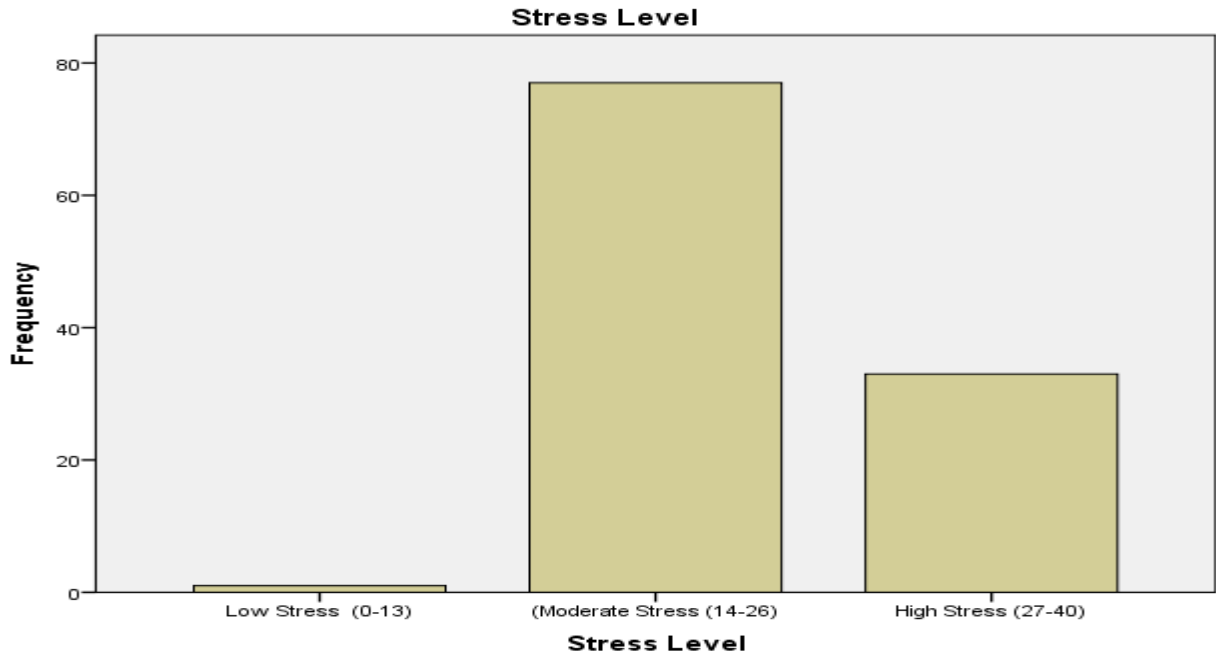
**Level of Stress (Bar Chart)**



**Figure 6. Stress Level**

**Table 5 Association between Stress and Socio-demographic Variables**

| Variable | Category | Stress Level | | | P Value |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | **Low Stress (0-13)** | **Moderate Stress (14-26)** | **High Stress (27-40)** | |
| Age Group | 17-20 years | 0 | 49 | 17 | 0.292 |
| | 21-24 years | 1 | 24 | 15 | |
| | 25-29 years | 0 | 4 | 1 | |
| Gender | Male | 0 | 22 | 15 | 0.144 |
| | Female | 1 | 56 | 18 | |
| Education | 100 | 0 | 10 | 14 | 0.851 |
| | 200 | 0 | 23 | 9 | |
| | 300 | 1 | 29 | 13 | |
| | 400 | 0 | 15 | 6 | |
| | 500 | 0 | 0 | 1 | |
| Religion | Christianity | 0 | 50 | 22 | 0.983 |
| | Islam | 1 | 22 | 9 | |
| | Others | 0 | 5 | 2 | |

Age-Group 17-24 years, Females Gender, 300 Level University Education, and Christian Religion are associated with Moderate Stress but not statistically significant (p value<0.005)

## II. TYPES/ CAUSES OF STRESS

**Table 6 Type/ Cause of Stress (Descriptive Statistics)**

| Variable | Possible Range of Scores | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Physical Stress Score | 0-16 | 0 | 13 | 5.08 | 2.439 |
| Social Stress Score | 0-12 | 3 | 11 | 6.14 | 1.762 |
| Academic Stress Score | 0-16 | 1 | 16 | 8.05 | 2.995 |
| Psychological Stress Score | 0-14 | 0 | 14 | 3.44 | 2.384 |

Social and Academic Stress had higher mean score compared to Physical and Psychological Stress. Academic and social stress are major types/ causes of stress based on higher mean score and frequency distribution.
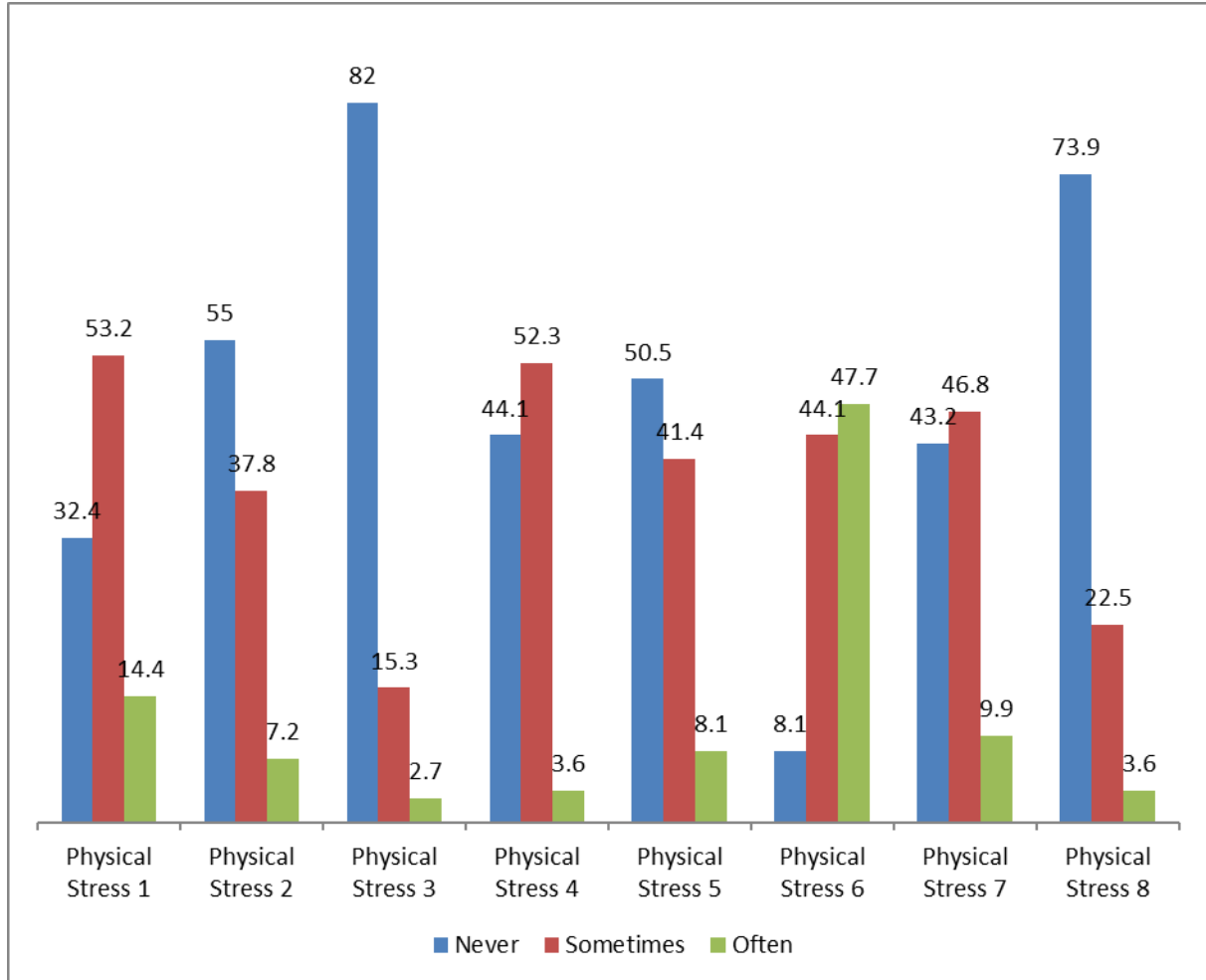
**Physical Stress (frequency distribution)**



**Figure 7. Physical stress**

More proportion of respondents has never had physical stress compared to sometimes and often. The majority of the participant responded that they experienced a low level of stress as a result of physiological stressors. Though most of the stressors have been found to have less contribution to the levels of stress of the students, 47.7% of the participants have agreed that item 7 (I feel tired) contributes to high causes of stress among students. Item one (daily headache), item four (can't sleep), item 7 (sometimes low or high temperature) sometimes contributes most to a high level of stress. Item two (neck pain), item three (heart problem), item five (back pain), and item eight (blood pressure) were found to have the least contribution to the students' causes of stress. Therefore, the results reflected that physiological factor in the present study was found to have less contribution to the high level of stress of the students.

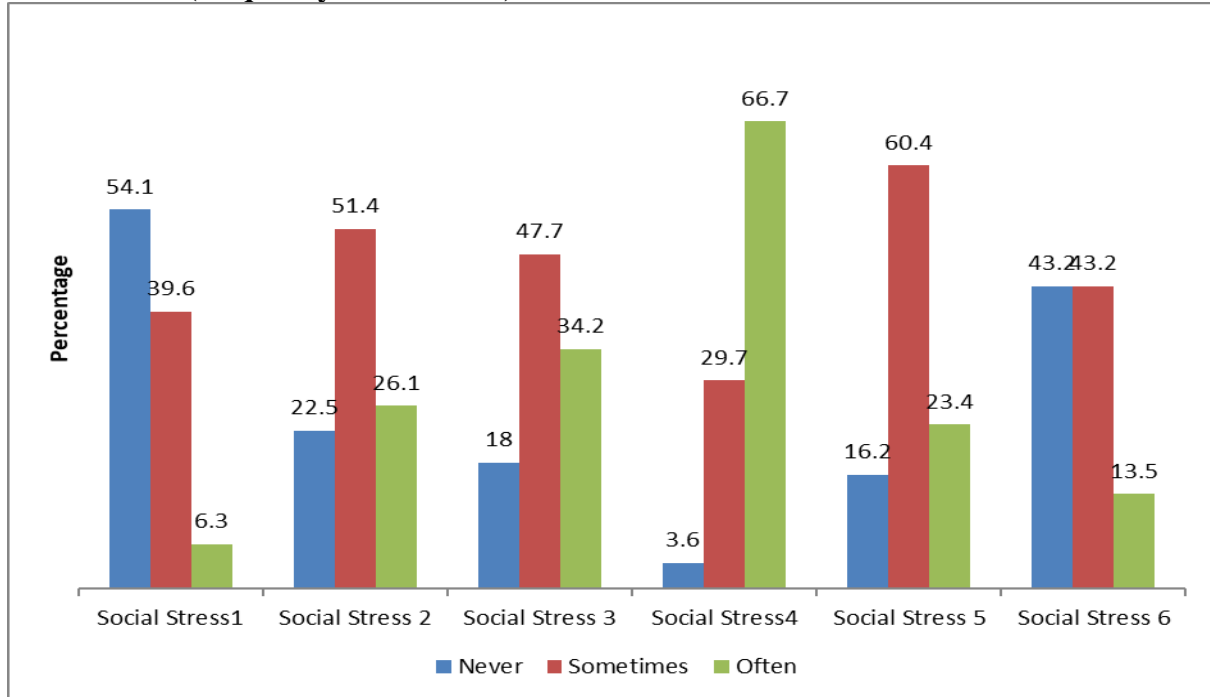## Social Stress (frequency distribution)



**Figure 8. Social Stress**

More proportion of respondents have had social stress sometimes and often compared to never. Most of the respondents (6.14%) have agreed that they sometimes experience a high level of stress as a result of social factors. The frequency distributions of specific factors that contribute to students' social stress show that even though all the social stressors had high contribution to the low level of stress of the university students but some stressors were exceptionally having much least contribution. 54.1% of participants have responded that they do not have conflict with others. item two (social life become limited) 51.4%, item 3 (I enjoy meeting people) 47.7%, item 5 (relationships with other relatives and friends) 60.4 and item 6 (deal with others nervously) 43.2 were found to have an average contribution to students causes of stress. 66.7% also responded that their family has a good relation.
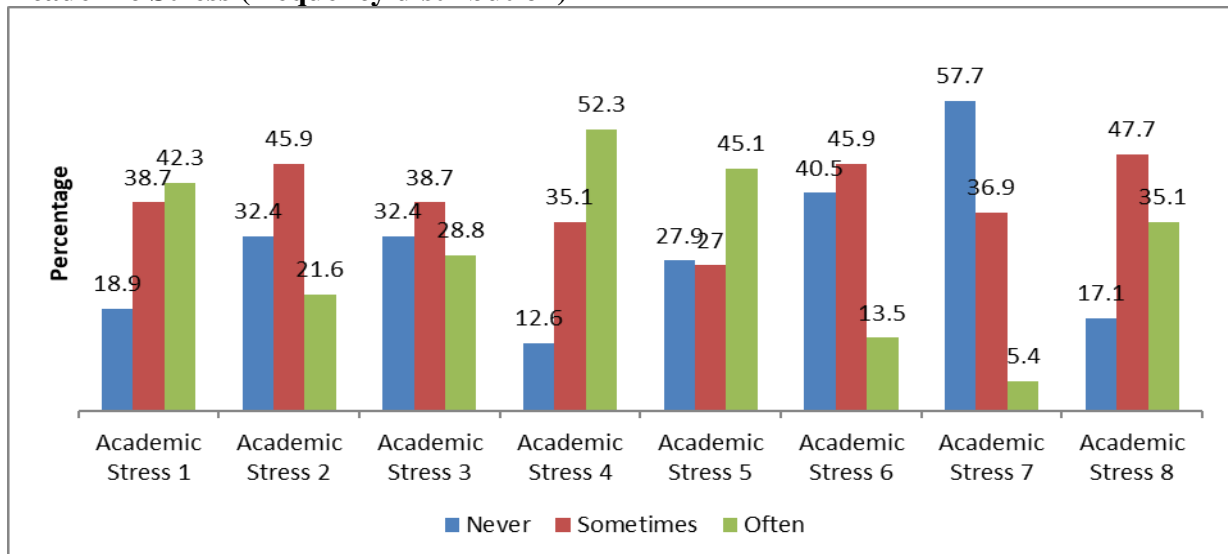
## Academic Stress (frequency distribution)



**Figure 9. Academic Stress**

More proportion of respondents have had Academic stress sometimes and often compared to never. More academic stressors have been found to contribute to the causes or level of stress of the students. However, a high percentage of the students have responded that they most of the time experience worry about academic progress - item 1 (42.3%), fear of failure -item 4 (52.3%), financial problem - item 5 (45.1%). Many participants have also pointed out that they sometimes experienced stress due to being depressed because of low cumulative average - item 2 (45.9%), duties accumulate and can't complete - item 3(38.7%), feel stress and mental fatigue from numerous homework - item 8 (47.7). Item 7 - I think leaving the hospital (57.7%) on the other hand, was found to contribute to a lesser extent to the causes of students' stress in comparison with the rest of the stressors.

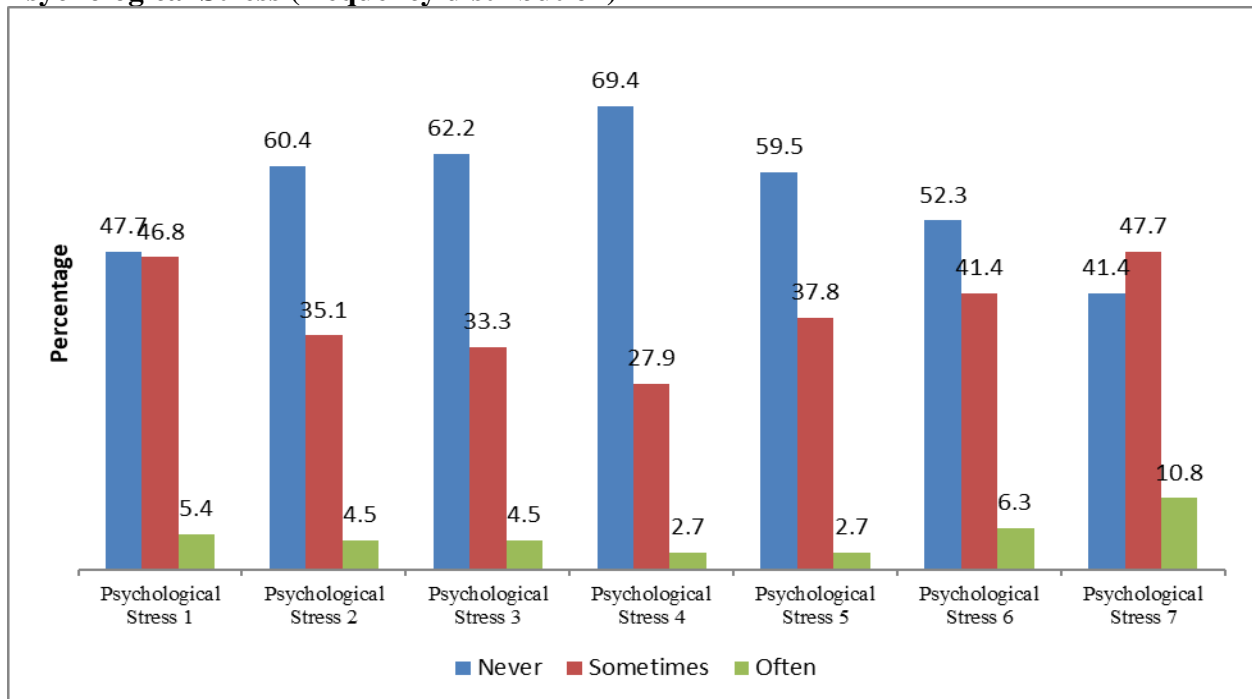**Psychological Stress (frequency distribution)**



**Figure 10. Psychological Stress**

More proportion of respondents has never had psychological stress compared to sometimes and often. The majority of participants have responded that they experienced a low level of stress as a result of physiological stressors. The results reflected that physiological factor in the present study was found to have less contribution to the high level of stress of the students. The results revealed that item one – a feeling of inferiority (47.7%), item two – lack of clear vision (60.4%), item three- a feeling of incompetence (62.2%), item four – low self-esteem and self-concept (69.4%), item five – poor memory power and concentration (59.5%), were found having the least contribution to the high level of stress of the students. On the hand, item ten – irrational thoughts (53.7%) and item six – lack of motivation (52.3%). Item 7 – pessimistic or negative thought (47.7%) was found to sometimes cause stress among the students.

## DISCUSSION

This research aimed to assess the levels of stress experienced by university students. The results showed that majority of the students experienced moderate to high levels of academic and social stress, but low levels of psychological and physiological factors stress. The present findings delineated that academic stress and social stress component had a higher mean score

of stress. Fear of failure was reported to be the most academic stress-causing factor. Similar to this finding, Misra and Castillo (26) reported that students experience academic stress at predictable times each semester with the highest causes of academic stress resulting from taking and preparing for exams, grade competition, and a great amount of content to master in a small amount of time. Additionally, in agreement with this finding, Bataineh (27) reported that university students are more stressed by financial difficulties, insufficient resources like books, computers, lecturers, and overload hours every semester as an academic stressor. Thawabieh and Qaisy (28) also found that university students experienced a moderate stress level and the main factor is the social factor, and this may be because students come from different cities and they have new relations.

Majority of the participants reported that they are worried about their academic progress. The present finding on social stress pronounced that the majority of the students reported that their family has a good relationship and sometimes have a moderate relationship with family and friends. The students also reported that their social life has become limited due to stressors. The findings in this study also showed that majority of the participants reported a lower level of stress as a result of various physiological problems. As opposed to previous studies such as Walton (29); reported that college students with poor health habits like poor diet, inconsistent sleep patterns, and lack of exercise inflict high-stress levels. The high level of physiological stress in this sample is "feeling of tiredness".

The present finding concerning a psychological component of stress showed that the majority of the participants experienced a low level of stress as a result of psychological factors. The findings of Bhosale (30); and Omoniyi and Ogunsanmi (31) was in line with present study which showed no statistical significance between students' stress scores and socio-

demographic characteristics but are associated with moderate stress. Thawabieh and Qaisy (7) also presented that female student are more susceptible to stress than males. This could be clarified by the fact that females are more exposed to community pressure and are still under the pressure of cultural habits. On the other hand, Khan et al. (32) found that male students are more vulnerable to stress than female students which might be due to the high standard of parental and social expectations.

Numerous studies documented that students' high level of stress is negatively related to their academic performance (Elias et al. (33); Veena & Shastri, (34). In the present study, the students' overall level of stress (i.e., averaged stress level for all the four components of stress) was found to be moderate, and this is similar to some previous findings (27 & 35). This moderate level of stress seems to arise as the students in the university have difficulty with various problems and several university academic demands. Stress can result in distress in an individual's health, even more precisely their sleep habits, which can lead to increased poor academic performance. Trying to take on many tasks could leave students deprived of sleep, which can have a negative impact on physical and mental health (36).

## CONCLUSION
This research indicates that the majority of university students have a moderate level of stress. It also showed that social and academic components of stress were found to be higher among the students. The financial problem, worry about academic progress, feeling depressed because of my low cumulative average, accumulation of course duties, fear of failure, feeling of stress and mental fatigue were among the academic stressors that inflict high academic stress. On the other hand, students reported a low level of psychological and physiological components of stress. The findings of this study reveals that there is no

statistically significant association between stress and socio-demographic variables. To achieve better and have good mental health, university decision-makers have to provide students with physiological, psychological, social, and academic counselling to decrease the students' stress. They have to involve students in different activities to reduce the gaps between them; also, they have to provide students with suitable teaching and learning methods to decrease their academic stress. Universities should provide more support and care to help students cope with various stressors and identify students having stress reactions as soon as possible and can also refer students to professional consulting institutions. They should pay attention to their physical and mental health and inspect their emotions at all times to avoid physical disorder and onset of stress-induced depression or physical disorders.

University students can also learn to understand, accept, and recognize themselves, take a positive attitude toward getting along with their friends, learn to express and manage their emotions, and effectively manage their stress to develop positive relations and an optimistic view of life, examine their problems, and seek solutions. University students should play an active role in stress management and can learn numerous stress coping measures from various channels caused by inadequate adaptation to stress.

**Study limitation**
The limitation of this study was that the study participants represented students from one state. Therefore, the results might not be generalizable to students from other states or areas and they may not be reflective of other students at other universities. Including students from other areas may contribute to knowledge and deeper understanding of the nature of stress. The lack of information on students who did not respond to the survey may have created a response bias. Therefore, the results may not be reflective.

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