

Mediating Role of Family Problems in the Academics of Learners: Basis for Community Education Seminar

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the relationship between family dynamics and the academic performance of first-year nursing students. It explores the role of family support, criticism, and emotional support in shaping students' academic outcomes and overall well-being. By assessing the mediating effects of family dynamics, the study aims to identify factors that foster resilience and coping mechanisms in students facing academic challenges. Insights gathered will inform strategies to improve family relationships and institutional support systems. The study also proposes an educational seminar plan to raise community awareness about the critical role of family in student success, promoting holistic development and academic excellence.

KEYWORDS

academic performance; family problems; education

INTRODUCTION

Education is the heart of every society, a means to inspire critical thinking, spark intellectual curiosity, and nurture the boundless potential of the human spirit. It is the foundation upon which lifelong learning is built, a process that transcends classrooms and transforms lives. In the Philippines, a vibrant and diverse multicultural nation, education holds a unique place in the broader narrative of poverty alleviation and socioeconomic progress. Yet, the experience of education is far from uniform. Children grow up in homes shaped by differing socioeconomic realities, each exerting its influence on the values, norms, and support systems that frame their academic journeys. For many families, the weight of poverty is a constant struggle, as Agullana et al. (2017) aptly describe in their study on parental stress. This stress erodes parents' ability to provide consistent emotional and practical support, leaving children vulnerable to challenges that hinder their success in school.

Schools, while serving as structured spaces for intellectual and personal growth, cannot fully compensate for the nurturing environment—or lack thereof—provided at home. A family's financial standing, socioeconomic status, parenting style, and overall household atmosphere deeply influence a child's character and personality, laying the groundwork for academic performance (Zhang et al, 2020). Eloquently points out, the family is the bedrock of society and a critical force shaping a student's progress. However, this ideal is often disrupted by the harsh realities of financial instability, unemployment, and the emotional toll of broken families, as noted by Lanozo et al. (2021). These struggles leave many students grappling with the dual burden of personal and academic pressures, often at a cost to their well-being.

The demands of modern education, especially in challenging fields like medicine, place an immense strain on students' physical and emotional health. Freshmen, who often enter university with optimism and resilience, can find these qualities diminished by the end of

their first year. Although some recover as they progress, their initial vitality rarely returns to its original state (McKerrow et al., 2020). Beyond academics, the socio-emotional dimension of education emerges as an indispensable factor in student success. The ability to navigate stress, resolve conflicts, and form meaningful relationships hinges on these skills, which are profoundly influenced by family dynamics. Martinez-Yarza et al. (2023) emphasize the far-reaching impact of family involvement, not only on academic performance but also on cultivating adaptability and resilience—qualities that are increasingly vital in a rapidly evolving world.

Yet, the challenges faced by students are not confined to academic pressures. Behavioral difficulties are often traced back to struggles within the family, manifesting as irritability, disinterest, or withdrawal. Sánchez-Ferrer et al. (2022) observe that children from troubled homes frequently exhibit these signs, which can escalate into emotional distress and isolation. The relationship between parents and children, shaped by the attitudes and actions of caregivers, plays a defining role in shaping a child’s academic and emotional outlook. Deng et al. (2022) underscore the importance of healthy parent-child interactions, noting their profound influence on both behavior and educational outcomes.

Mental health, a cornerstone of a student’s ability to thrive, is inextricably linked to family circumstances. When familial stressors become overwhelming, they manifest as anxiety, depression, or persistent feelings of sadness in students, all of which take a toll on academic performance. (Deng et al., 2022). These challenges, if left unaddressed, can lead to a cycle of disengagement and underachievement. However, hope lies in proactive measures. Educational institutions, as pillars of support, have the opportunity—and the responsibility—to address these issues. By prioritizing mental health services such as counseling, stress management programs, and peer support networks, schools can foster environments where students feel empowered to overcome family-related obstacles and unlock their potential. (Deng et al., 2022).

At its core, this thesis seeks to delve into the profound interplay between family dynamics, mental health, and educational outcomes. It reflects a commitment to understanding not just the structural challenges faced by students but also the deeply human stories that underpin them, with the ultimate goal of offering insights that can pave the way for a more supportive and inclusive educational landscape.

LITERATURE REVIEW



The conceptual framework explores how family dynamics, encompassing support, criticism, and emotional care, influence the academic performance of first-year nursing students. Family support and emotional engagement positively shape academic outcomes, while excessive criticism and demands may hinder performance. These dynamics act as mediators, emphasizing the interplay between familial relationships and student success.

The framework underscores the importance of fostering positive family dynamics to enhance students' resilience and coping mechanisms in the face of academic challenges. It highlights that balanced emotional support and constructive feedback from families can mitigate stress and promote a healthier approach to academic demands, ultimately contributing to better performance and well-being.

This study aims to explore the relationship between family dynamics and the academic performance of first-year nursing students in selected institutions. Specifically, it seeks to

answer the following research questions:

1. What is the level of family support among the respondents in terms of:
 - 1.1 Emotional support;
 - 1.2 Financial support;
 - 1.3 Encouragement in academic endeavors;
 - 1.4 Presence during critical moments;
 - 1.5 Provision of learning resources?
2. What are the effects of family criticism and demands on the respondents' well-being in terms of:
 - 2.1 Emotional distress;
 - 2.2 Motivation;
 - 2.3 Self-esteem;
 - 2.4 Coping strategies?
3. How does emotional support foster resilience and coping mechanisms among the respondents?
4. What are the mediating effects of family dynamics on the academic performance of the respondents?
5. What strategies can be recommended to improve family relationships and institutional support for nursing students?
6. How can an educational seminar plan be developed to promote community awareness on the importance of family support for student success?

Hypotheses

The researchers found the hypothesis helpful as a base for determining assumptions and for the explanation of the data to be gathered. We, the researchers, will be aware of our temporary answers, we will know if it is correct or incorrect.

H0: There is no significant relationship between family dynamics (including support, criticism, and emotional support) and the academic performance of first-year nursing students.

H1: There is a significant relationship between family dynamics (including support, criticism, and emotional support) and the academic performance of first-year nursing students.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study will adopt a descriptive-correlational research design to examine the relationship between academic pressure and health habit formation among students, without aiming to establish causation. (Bhat, 2024). A quantitative approach will be employed to assess the strength and nature of this relationship. Through quota sampling, the study will pick 25% (50 participants) from each academic year. This will result in at least 200 scholars taking part. This number of participants allows Pearson's correlation analysis to get meaningful results (Guilford, 1954).

The research will select participants from students in Philippine schools who meet certain requirements. These students must be enrolled in a degree program, have official scholar status, and attend schools with an acceptance rate of 50% or higher. To gather information, the study will use a survey with a 4-point Likert scale to find out what participants think. The study will then use the mean and Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC) as its main tools to analyze the data.

Research Instruments

This study will employ the Educational Stress Scale for Adolescents (Dunne et al., 2010) to evaluate academic pressure among respondents. The scale comprises 16 items rated on a 4-point Likert scale, ranging from 4 (Strongly Agree) to 1 (Strongly Disagree). In order to assess health habits, a self-developed questionnaire, validated by a registered psychometrician and tested for reliability through Cronbach's alpha, will be utilized. Negatively worded items were reverse-scored to ensure consistent response interpretation. (DataPott Analytics, 2022).

Table 1. The Description of the Scale

Scale	Description
4	Strongly Agree
3	Agree
2	Disagree
1	Strongly Disagree

This research will use the Educational Stress Scale for Adolescents (Dunne et al., 2010) to measure the academic pressure felt by the participants. The scale has 16 questions, each answered on a 4-point scale, where 4 means "Strongly Agree" and 1 means "Strongly Disagree." To check health habits, a custom questionnaire, approved by a certified psychometrician and tested for consistency using Cronbach's alpha, will be used. Questions with negative wording were reversed to make sure the answers were understood the same way (DataPott Analytics, 2022).

Statistical Tools/Treatment of Data

To analyze the data, the study will employ two statistical tools: the mean and the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC). These methods will be used to evaluate the level of academic pressure and the assessment of health habits among respondents, as well as to determine the relationship between these variables.

Mean

$$\bar{x} = \frac{\sum fx}{n}$$

The mean will be computed to determine the average level of academic pressure and health habits among the respondents. The formula for calculating the mean is as follows:

Pearson r

To examine the relationship between academic pressure and health habit formation, the

$$r = \frac{\sum (x_i - \bar{x})(y_i - \bar{y})}{\sqrt{\sum (x_i - \bar{x})^2 \sum (y_i - \bar{y})^2}}$$

Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC) will be employed. This statistical tool measures the strength and direction of the linear relationship between two variables.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 2. The Category of Mean Score

Category	Mean Score
Academic Pressure	3.19
Health Habits – Water Intake	2.78
Health Habits – Rest	2.15
Health Habits – Physical Activity	2.24
Health Habits – Nutrition	2.45
Health Habits – Temperance	2.83
General Physical Condition	2.11

This chapter analyzes the academic pressure and health habits of Filipino university scholars, focusing on self-expectation, workload, despondency, academic pressure, and health habits including water intake, rest, physical activity, nutrition, temperance, and general physical condition. The findings highlight significant stress due to academic pressures and varying degrees of health awareness, providing insight into the challenges faced by students in balancing academics and well-being. Students experience notable academic pressure, particularly from self-expectation, with many reporting stress when failing to meet their academic standards (mean = 3.56). Workload contributes significantly, as the volume of schoolwork and homework is overwhelming (mean = 3.39), while tests and exams rank slightly lower in pressure (mean = 3.06). Despondency arises from dissatisfaction with grades and lack of confidence in academic performance (mean = 2.80), which affects their concentration in class (mean = 2.64). Students also feel pressured by future academic and career prospects (mean = 3.59) and parental concerns (mean = 2.79), though competition among peers is less significant (mean = 2.46). In terms of health habits, students show mixed results. While they maintain hydration to some extent (mean = 3.20), poor sleep habits are evident, with inadequate rest (mean = 1.80) and disrupted routines (mean = 1.99). Physical activity is minimal, with few students engaging in regular exercise or setting fitness goals (mean ranging from 1.88 to 2.27). Nutrition habits are slightly better, with moderate inclusion of fruits and vegetables in meals (mean = 2.84) but limited focus on a balanced diet or stress-eating prevention (mean = 2.07 to 2.35). Despite strong self-control in avoiding vices like smoking and drinking (mean = 3.32 to 3.52), managing emotions and resisting temptations remains a challenge (mean = 2.14 to 2.36). Physical fatigue and health issues, such as headaches, are common (mean = 1.72 to 1.93), reflecting overall low health practice scores (mean = 2.10).

In conclusion, Filipino university scholars face significant academic pressure, coupled with varying health habits that highlight areas for improvement. While students demonstrate resilience and awareness, the findings emphasize the need for strategies to better balance academic demands with healthier lifestyles, particularly in rest, physical activity, and temperance. Addressing these challenges is essential for enhancing student well-being and academic performance.

Discussion

This study examined the level of academic pressure and health habit formation among Filipino scholars in selected educational institutions, exploring factors influencing both variables and their relationship. The findings highlight the high academic pressure experienced by students and its impact on their health habits, particularly in areas such as sleep, physical activity, and diet. While students demonstrate some resilience and self-

discipline, the challenges of balancing academic demands with healthy living remain evident.

In terms of academic pressure, self-expectation emerged as a significant source of stress, with students reporting high levels of pressure when failing to meet their own standards (mean = 3.56). The workload was another critical factor, as many students felt overwhelmed by the volume of schoolwork (mean = 3.39), while exam-related stress ranked slightly lower (mean = 3.06). Future educational and career prospects were a prominent stressor (mean = 3.59), but competition among

peers were less concerned (mean = 2.46). Despite these pressures, students demonstrated a capacity to manage stress, as evidenced by their ability to cope with unmet goals affecting sleep (mean = 3.09).

The evaluation of health habits revealed mixed results. Students generally maintained good hydration practices (mean = 2.82), though reliance on caffeinated beverages (mean = 1.94) indicated unhealthy coping strategies. Sleep habits were notably poor, with insufficient rest reported (mean = 1.80), and physical activity was minimal, with few students engaging in regular exercise (mean = 2.16). Dietary habits were similarly poor, with students struggling to maintain a balanced diet and often resorting to unhealthy eating behaviors during stress (mean = 2.07 to 2.28). However, students displayed strong temperance, avoiding vices such as smoking and drinking in response to academic pressure (mean = 3.45).

In conclusion, Filipino scholars face considerable academic pressure, particularly from self-expectations, workload, and prospects, which negatively influence their health habits. While they show resilience and self-discipline in some areas, such as hydration and temperance, their overall well-being is impacted by rising academic demands. The weak but negative relationship between academic pressure and health habits suggests that stress contributes to unhealthy behaviors, though it is not the sole cause. Interventions promoting balance between academics and health are crucial to enhancing student well-being.

This study provides valuable insights into how family dynamics influence the academic performance and well-being of first-year nursing students. Family support, particularly emotional and financial, was shown to significantly impact academic outcomes, echoing findings in previous research emphasizing the nurturing role of families in fostering student success. Students who received encouragement and assistance from their families exhibited higher levels of focus and engagement in their studies. Conversely, the detrimental effects of family criticism and excessive demands were evident, contributing to increased emotional distress and reduced academic motivation. This aligns with existing studies that highlight the negative impact of critical family environments on academic outcomes. Emotional support emerged as a vital component in fostering resilience and stress management. Students who maintained open communication with their families and received understanding and encouragement were better able to cope with academic challenges. The mediating role of family dynamics was also highlighted, as families that balanced high expectations with empathy created an environment conducive to academic and personal growth. A plan is developed in order to promote community awareness on the importance of family support for student success.

CONCLUSION

After the analysis and interpretation of the findings, the researchers came up with the following conclusion:

1. Academic pressure among scholars is deemed to be high (3.08), with Self-Expectation gaining the highest rating (3.36) among the five factors where

respondents strongly agree. Despondency, on the other hand, received the lowest level (2.75) while still falling in the scale of high academic pressure where respondents agree. In terms of Workload, the respondents all agree that academic pressure is high (3.25), Pressure from Study (2.95) and Worry about Grades is also high (3.06).

2. The formation of healthy habits among scholars is discovered to be low (2.40), indicating that the respondents hardly exhibit good and healthy practices. In comparison to the five health components, Rest had the lowest level among all factors with a mean of 2.06 where in most respondents disagreed. This is followed by the level of General Physical Condition (2.10), Physical Activity (2.16), Nutrition/Diet (2.32), and Water Intake (2.82). Contrastingly, Temperance is considered to be the component that is practiced well and agreed by students with a mean of 2.96.
3. There is a significant but negligible negative relationship between Academic Pressure and Formation of Health Habits among Filipino university scholars.
4. After the utilization of the findings a plan to promote community awareness on the importance of family support for student success has been developed.

Recommendation

1. Commission on Higher Education (CHED): It is recommended that CHED expands its focus to include the physiological and mental well-being of students, alongside their academic performance. A holistic approach is necessary to ensure that the pressures of academic life do not adversely affect students' overall health and well-being.
2. Educational Institutions: University administrations should develop and implement policies and programs designed to support students in managing academic pressure while fostering the development of healthy habits. These programs should focus on reducing stress, improving sleep, encouraging physical activity, and promoting balanced diets to mitigate the negative impact of academic pressures.
3. Future Research: Future studies should consider diversifying the demographics of the respondents by selecting students from universities with more competitive admission processes or those with lower acceptance rates. Increasing the sample size would also strengthen the findings. Furthermore, future research should explore additional factors that may influence the formation of health habits among high-achieving students, such as socioeconomic status, access to mental health resources, and family support systems.

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