



ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Family Resilience, Academic Stress, and Coping Strategies Among University Students

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Nursing students face an intensive academic workload, including clinical practice demands and high competency standards that can trigger academic stress. The stress experienced by individual students not only has a personal impact but can also affect the dynamics and resilience of the family system. Therefore, effective coping strategies are needed to maintain a balance between academic demands and family functionality. **Objective:** This study aimed to analyze the correlation of academic stress and student coping strategies on family resilience among nursing students. **Methods:** A quantitative correlational approach with a cross-sectional design was employed. The study population consisted of active nursing students, selected using purposive sampling. Instruments were used to measure academic stress, coping strategies, and family resilience. **Results:** The Spearman correlation test indicated no significant relationship between students' academic stress and family resilience ($p=0.527$). However, a significant relationship was found between students' coping strategies and family resilience ($p=0.04$). **Conclusion:** Academic stress does not directly affect the family resilience of nursing students; however, coping strategy capacity is significantly associated. Given that most students still have inadequate coping skills, educational institutions are advised to facilitate training in stress management and adaptive coping to help students handle academic pressures while maintaining their family stability.

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1. Introduction

Nursing students face much higher stress than most other college students. Their education is uniquely demanding because they must manage heavy classroom studies alongside intense hospital practice, long shift hours, and the emotional challenge of caring for sick patients. Facing both tough academic tests and real-world medical responsibilities makes nursing students especially vulnerable to severe stress. If this stress is not managed well, it does not just affect the student, it can also strain their relationships at home and disrupt their family life. Globally, stress is a major problem among health students, with 38% to 71% reporting high stress levels (1). Nursing programs consistently show higher stress rates than non-health majors because taking care of patients is physically and emotionally exhausting (2).

In Indonesia, the situation is not much different. The prevalence of academic stress among students is reported to be in the range of 36.7–71.6%, indicating that most students experience varying degrees of academic stress (1). A study of students at Muhammadiyah University of Sidoarjo also found that 66% of students fell into the



moderate academic stress category and 22% into the high academic stress category, reinforcing the notion that academic stress is a real problem among the Indonesian student population (3). Furthermore, research on student mental health in Indonesia during the pandemic showed that a significant proportion of students experienced severe stress and high levels of anxiety, indicating the psychological vulnerability of this group (4).

When academic stress lasts for a long time, it leads to brain fatigue, mistakes in clinical practice, emotional burnout, and lower overall happiness (4). According to Family Systems Theory and the Stress Spillover-Crossover Framework, a person's stress does not stay isolated within themselves. Instead, stress from school and hospital shifts "spills over" into the home. When nursing students feel constantly anxious or exhausted, their stress "crosses over" to family members, leading to more household arguments, poor communication, and extra emotional strain on the family (7). As a result, high student stress is directly linked to lower family resilience, which is the family's shared ability to stay strong, adapt, and support each other through hard times (7).

When facing stress, students use various coping strategies. Coping mechanisms are mechanisms that can modify stress so that the adaptation process can be facilitated. Individual approaches to dealing with stress include emotion-focused coping and problem-focused coping (5). Adaptive coping strategies can help individuals manage stress and emotions effectively, while maladaptive coping can actually increase vulnerability and lead to negative mental health outcomes (6). Research shows that coping skills play a significant role in determining how stress affects an individual's well-being.

Even though these issues are important, there are three major gaps in past research that most past studies only viewed the family as a source of support or pressure for the student, ignoring how the student's stress damages the family's resilience. Most research only looked at individual outcomes like grades, GPA, or anxiety, rather than looking at how academic stress, coping strategies, and family resilience connected in one complete picture. There is very little real-world evidence exploring these connected relationships specifically among nursing students, who deal with unique clinical and emotional demands.

Nursing students are an important population to study due to their unique learning characteristics: a rigorous curriculum, demands for clinical competency, long practicum schedules, and the emotional pressures of healthcare. This combination of factors has the potential to increase academic stress while also requiring effective coping skills. If not managed effectively, this situation can impact the resilience of students' families. Based on this description, research is needed to analyze the correlation of academic stress and student coping strategies on family resilience in Nursing Science Study Program students.

2. Methods

The research used was quantitative descriptive research. The study design was correlational. The design used is correlation, namely data collection of independent and dependent variables is carried out at the same time to determine the relationship and correlation between academic stress and student coping strategies on family resilience in Nursing Science Study Program students. The population in this study



was all active students in the Nursing Science Study Program at Universitas Katolik De La Salle, Manado. The sample size was calculated using Slovin's formula. The research sample consisted of 100 fourth-semester students who met the inclusion and exclusion criteria. The data collection began with obtaining research permits and testing the validity and reliability of the instruments. Subsequently, respondents were selected based on established inclusion and exclusion criteria. Eligible respondents received an explanation of the study and provided informed consent. Data were then collected via an online questionnaire using Google Forms and statistically analyzed using the Spearman's Rank correlation test ($\alpha < 0.05$).

Inclusion criteria include active students, willing to be respondents, and completing the questionnaire completely. Exclusion criteria are students who are on academic leave or do not complete the questionnaire. The sampling technique uses purposive sampling. Research Variables The variables in this study consist of independent variables: Student academic stress and student coping strategies. The dependent variable is student family resilience. The research instrument for data collection was carried out using a structured questionnaire consisting of: Respondent characteristics questionnaire (age, gender, semester level, etc.), academic stress scale, coping strategy scale, family resilience scale. Scoring methods using Likert scale.

3. Results

Table 1. Frequency Distribution Based on Demographic Characteristics of the respondents

Characteristics	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)	Mean	SD
Gender				
Male	13	13	1.87	0.338
Female	87	87		
Age				
< 20 Years Old	73	73	1.27	0.446
≥ 20 Years Old	27	27		
GPA				
3.51-4.00	22	22.0		
3.01-3.50	61	61.0	2.04	0.816
2.75-3.00	8	8.0		
< 2.75	9	9.0		
Residential Status				
Living with Parents/Guardians	23	23.0		
Dormitory	23	23.0	2.31	0.825
Boarding	54	54.0		
House/Rental				
Organizational Involvement				
Active	32	32	1.68	0.469
Inactive	68	68		
Mother's Occupation				
Civil Servant / Military / Police Officer	18	18.0		
Private-Sector Employee	9	9.0		
Entrepreneur / Trader	10	10.0	3.72	1.602
Other	9	9.0		
Homemaker	54	54.0		



Based on the table 1 the demographic characteristics of the respondents showed that most respondents were female (87%). Most respondents were younger than 20 years (73%). The majority had a cumulative GPA (GPA) of 3.01–3.50 (61%).

Table 2. Frequency Distribution Based on Coping Strategies of the respondents

Coping Strategy	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Good	11	11
Poor	89	89

Based on the frequency distribution, most respondents had poor coping strategies (89%).

Table 3. Frequency Distribution Based on Academic Stress of the respondents

Academic Stress	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Low	18	18
Moderate	72	72
High	10	10

Based on the table 3 most respondents experienced a moderate level of academic stress (72%).

Table 4. Frequency Distribution Based on Family Resilience of the respondents

Family Resilience	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Poor	3	3
Good	97	97

Based on the table 4 almost all respondents demonstrated good family resilience (97%).

Table 5. Spearman Test for Academic Stress and Family Resilience

Variable	n (100)	Correlation Spearman	p value
Academic Stress and Family Resilience	100	0.064	0.527

Spearman's correlation analysis between academic stress and family resilience yielded a correlation coefficient of 0.064 with a p-value of 0.527. Since the p-value was greater than 0.05, there was no statistically significant relationship between academic stress and family resilience.

Table 6. Spearman Test for Coping Strategy and Family Resilience

Variable	n (100)	Correlation Spearman	p value
Coping Strategy and Family Resilience	100	0.286	0.04



Spearman's correlation analysis between coping strategies and family resilience produced a correlation coefficient of 0.286 with a p-value of 0.04. Because the p-value was less than 0.05, there was a statistically significant positive relationship, although the strength of the association was weak to moderate.

4. Discussion

The student coping strategy variable shows a less-than-ideal condition, where most respondents fall into the "Poor" category, and the remainder possess a "Good" coping strategy. This figure indicates a major phenomenon where students are not yet able to identify, select, or implement adaptive problem-solving mechanisms when dealing with academic stress. The coping strategies commonly used by individuals to face stress are problem-solving-focused *coping*, where they actively take alternative actions to solve problems by eliminating the conditions or situations that cause stress, and the second strategy is *emotion-focused coping*, where individuals attempt to regulate their emotions to adjust to the impacts caused by stressful conditions (8). They tend to get trapped in maladaptive coping (such as avoiding, denying, or destructively venting negative emotions). This tendency toward limited coping abilities may be influenced by age, as most respondents were under 20 years old a developmental stage typically characterized by ongoing emotional maturity and limited experience in managing acute stress independently (9). Furthermore, low engagement in student organizations and co-curricular activities may limit students' opportunities to build supportive peer networks, refine conflict-resolution skills, and develop effective problem-solving strategies outside formal academic settings (10,11).

Judging from the statistical results, the academic stress level of nursing students is dominated by the "Moderate" category, followed by the "Low" category, and the "High" category. These findings explain that the workload of lectures, laboratory assignments, and clinical practice preparations in the Nursing Study Program indeed exerts tangible psychological pressure on students. This aligns with research by Pulido that nursing students also experience academic stress within the educational process they undergo (12). Sources of stress in students originate from their academic life, especially from external and internal demands. External demands come from college assignments, course loads, parental demands, academic competition, and the increasing complexity of course materials that become progressively difficult, while internal demands stem from the students' ability to follow the teaching and learning process in the classroom. Stress in the moderate category is a reasonable form of anxiety as students struggle to maintain their academic performance, which is evident from most respondents' GPAs being in the satisfactory range. Based on research that most students experience moderate academic stress matches previous nursing research, which shows that mild-to-moderate stress often motivates students to maintain their grades rather than harming their performance (13). Similarly, (14) found that health science students under moderate stress still perform well academically when they have effective coping mechanisms in place." Although challenging, the stress level being on a moderate scale shows that students still possess the psychological resilience to not fall into severe/depressive stress levels.

Statistical results for the family resilience variable show a very positive condition. Almost all families of the respondents have family resilience in the "Good" category, and only a small portion is rated as "Poor". This strong family resilience indicates that the families of nursing students likely possess solid internal foundation. Family resilience



indicates a strength from the input, process, and outcome/output sides, where even the impact of the output benefits the family, along with the family's fighting strength (*coping strategies*) in adapting to the surrounding environment. In this case, the family is able to carry out its function as the primary support system and a safe haven for students, even when their children are struggling with academic pressure away from home (15).

The very weak relationship strength between academic stress and family resilience indicates that the high or low academic pressure experienced by students on campus is not a determining factor in changing the condition of their family resilience at home. Although most nursing students experience academic stress at moderate and high levels, this condition is proven not to erode their family resilience, which mostly sits in the good category. This means most respondents live separately from their parents. This physical distance functions as an emotional buffer. On average, students have good GPAs. They tend to filter information and do not bring academic tension back into immediate family interactions when communicating. Most students are not active in organizations. This prevents their concentration of energy from being divided between campus organizational activities and academics.

Unlike the academic stress variable, coping strategies and family resilience show that there is a statistically significant positive relationship between students' coping strategies and family resilience. The positive correlation coefficient indicates a unidirectional relationship: the better the coping strategies possessed by students, the better the level of their family resilience will be. This correlation is the most crucial finding because, at the same time, univariate data show that students have coping strategies in the "Poor" category. This relationship phenomenon can be analyzed through several demographic viewpoints, namely that respondents are in late adolescence (<20 years old). In this transitional phase of development, emotion regulation and problem-focused coping abilities are not yet fully mature.

When students have poor coping mechanisms (such as avoiding, complaining excessively, or withdrawing when contacted), it transmits negative energy to parents. Given that most of the respondents' mothers are housewives who share a very close emotional bond with their children, the child's poor coping response while living away can trigger deep anxiety for parents at home, which could gradually disrupt the psychosocial stability of the family. Conversely, if students can develop good coping mechanisms (such as being open and asking for moral support), it will enhance interpersonal communication, mutual trust, and strengthen family resilience.

5. Conclusion

This study shows that the majority of nursing students have a "Poor" coping strategy due to the limitations of emotional maturity at a young age and organizational inactivity, even though their academic stress level is in the "Moderate" category stemming from course workloads and is supported by family resilience levels that are almost entirely in the "Good" category. Bivariate analysis results prove that there is no significant relationship between academic stress and family resilience because the physical housing distance (boarding houses/dormitories) acts as an emotional buffer. Conversely, a significant positive relationship was found between coping strategies and family resilience. If students' coping capacities are not immediately enhanced by educational institutions through stress management training or optimizing the role of academic



advisors, it is feared that students' long-term coping inability may begin to disrupt their family resilience.

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