



**THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTRESS AND
STRESS MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES AMONG YEAR 3 FCSHD IN UNIMAS**

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ABSTRACT

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTRESS AND STRESS MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES AMONG YEAR 3 FCSHD IN UNIMAS

This research explores the exposure of stress experience and stress coping mechanism of Year 3 students in Faculty Cognitive Sciences and Human Development (FCSHD) Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS). A) with Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) Transactional model of Stress and Coping as the theoretical framework and the Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) approach as the conceptual framework, the current study will allow a better understanding on intrapersonal factors in coping aging parents and eventually might shape the development of interventions aimed particularly at improving emotion-focused and problem-focused coping styles as predictor of psychological distress. A cross-sectional, correlational quantitative design was applied to 325 students of which data was collected by means of Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (K10), Brief COPE Inventory, and Social Support Questionnaire (SSQ6). Results of Pearson correlation and regression analysis, respectively, indicated that active coping correlates significantly negatively with psychological distress, highlighting that students who actively manage their stress experience lower distress. There was a positive association between support and distress indicating that people found to distance themselves could use the support reactively rather than preventively. The results of one-way ANOVA revealed that Human Resource Development students reported significantly higher levels of distress when compared with Counselling, Psychology and Cognitive Science. The results illustrate the complexity of the relationships between the coping with stress, academic stress and mental wellbeing, providing practicable implications for interventions targeting on affected students in counselling and academic mentoring services at UNIMAS.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This chapter will cover the introduction, which will include background of the study, problem statement, research objective, research question, research hypothesis, theoretical framework, conceptual framework, definitions of terms, significance, limitations and summary.

1.1 Background of Study

The general impact of stress on mental health and well-being have drawn a lot of attention to stress management in the FSCHD year 3 students. Students in UNIMAS, especially those enrolled in Human Resources Development, Science Cognitive, Counselling and Psychology program in year 3 are especially exposed to stress. The completion of assignments, time management such as member of authority in faculty or college, and preparation for FYP are among the most critical academic times when university student's stress levels typically reach their highest. The reduction of stress-related symptoms and the development of resistance depend on effective stress management measures, such as cognitive-behavioral tactics, relaxation techniques, and social support networks (Brown et al.,2020). Financial types, social expectations, and academic responsibilities are just a few of the many types of stress that can lead to psychological distress (Kelifa et al.,2020)

Then, the expectations of academic pressure increase for Year 3 FCSHD students in UNIMAS by the need to complete research projects, chasing deadline for assignments, and get ready for future career path. Many students still report significant levels of psychological distress despite the availability of stress management options like peer support groups and counselling services, suggesting limitations in the methods applicability, accessibility, or efficacy (Zajenkowski & Szymaniak, 2019). The importance for more research into stress management techniques tailored to this group's unique requirements is highlighted by this.

1.2 Problem Statement

Psychological distress among university students has been extensively studied and often connected to long-term mental health problems, poor academic achievement, and a decreased standard of life. For Year 3 FSCHD students at UNIMAS, the requirements of difficult education, the conclusion of large research projects, and the time management to do a lot of work when joining member of the authority faculty or college. Students who are under a lot of stress are more likely to develop signs of depression, anxiety and burnout (Pelizza et al.,2021).

Although many stress management techniques such as cognitive restructuring and relaxation training, have been shown to be beneficial in theory, their practical application and efficacy among Year 3 FSCHD students remain underexplored (Tang et al.,2020). According to preliminary findings, students appear to employ a combination of emotion-focused and problem-focused coping mechanisms. However, their efficacy varies, possibly as a result of individual variances in coping mechanisms and stress perception. If these gaps remain unfilled, psychological distress may persist, which would have negative impact on retention rates, academic achievement, and general well-being.

Moreover, research evidence is desperately needed to find and validate stress management strategies that are especially suited to this group. In order to fill this gap, this study investigates the connection between psychological distress and stress management strategies, offering practical advice to university students.

1.3 Research Objectives

1. To examine the relationship between stress management techniques and psychological distress among Year 3 FSCHD students in UNIMAS.
2. To identify the cause of stress among Year 3 FSCHD students in UNIMAS.
3. To assess the effectiveness of specific stress management techniques in reducing psychological distress

1.4 Research Questions

1. What is the relationship between stress management techniques and psychological distress among Year 3 Psychology students in UNIMAS?
2. Which stress management techniques are most commonly used by Year 3 FCSHD students in UNIMAS?
3. How effective are stress management techniques in reducing psychological distress among Year 3 FCSHD students in UNIMAS?

1.5 Research Hypotheses

H₁: There is a significant relationship between stress management techniques and psychological distress among Year 3 FCSHD students in UNIMAS.

H₂: There is a significant preference for emotion-focused coping strategies (e.g., emotional support, avoidance) over problem-focused coping strategies (e.g., active coping, planning) among Year 3 FCSHD students in UNIMAS.

H₃: There is a significant predictive effect of problem-focused coping strategies on lower levels of psychological distress compared to emotion-focused strategies among Year 3 FCSHD students in UNIMAS.

1.6 Theoretical Framework

This study aimed to explore the experience and coping strategies of academic stress particularly psychological distress among which is the Year 3 students in the Faculty of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development (FCSHD) in University Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS). The only theoretical framework we purport to apply is that of Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) Transactional Model of Stress and Coping to guide this enquiry. The transactional model posits that stress is an individual's interactive transaction with the environment and emphasizes that the emotional response to a stressor is determined by the individual's appraisal of the stressor and the perceived availability of coping resources.

The framework is applied to the final year university students because they experience the final year project (FYP); the placement of internship; the CGPA requirement; amongst others that need to be coped in the pressure of time and society. The model's two-step appraisal process (initial and secondary) can explain why some students respond with increased psychological distress, while others are more resilient. Cognitive-behavioural oriented interventions and self-regulated coping strategies are thus crucial to restructure academic challenges and emotional balance. The flexibility of this model enables researchers and educators to not only know what stressors students are facing, but also how students' perceptions of these stressors may lead to emotional responses and coping responses.

These are the kinds of questions the current study intends to address by using this approach, namely focus on which stress management strategies are most effective at reducing psychological distress and how appraisal-based coping varies across individuals who have differing trauma experience. Such knowledge will facilitate the design of specific interventions and support structures to enhance mental well-being and successful academic progress of the Year 3 FCSHD students.

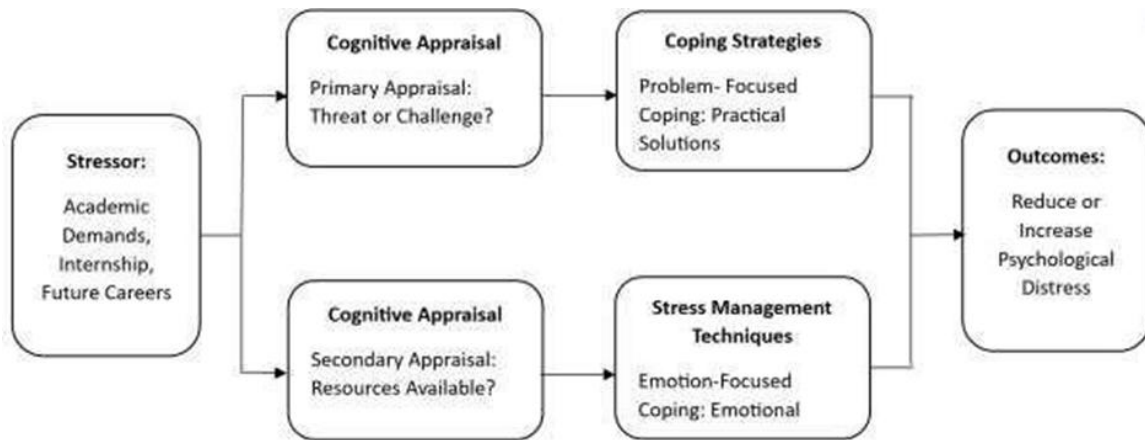


*Figure 1.1: Transactional Model of Stress and Coping
by Lazarus and Folkman (1984)*

Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) Transactional Model of Stress and Coping, is a useful framework in the counselling area because it provides the basis for understanding how people evaluate and manage stress. Stress is seen as a dynamic process that arises in the continuous interaction between a person and their surroundings rather than as an essential characteristic. This approach is especially useful in counselling because it helps determine how clients view and respond to stressors and how these views can guide coping mechanisms to improve their mental health and overall wellbeing (Folkman, 1984).

This model provides a way to comprehend the particular academic and personal difficulties faced by Year 3 FCSHD students in UNIMAS. Students have a number of stresses throughout their final year, including managing their final year project (FYP), and getting ready for their future professions. High levels of stress and anxiety are frequently brought on by these stressors, necessitating the use of efficient coping mechanisms. The transactional model offers a framework for evaluating these kid's perceptions of stress and coping strategies, two critical components in a counselling setting that support adaptive functioning.

1.6.1 Primary Appraisal: Primary appraisal is the first cognitive process through which a person determines whether a situation is dangerous, threatening, or insignificant (Folkman, 1984). In order to comprehend how clients view their stressors. Academic restriction such as FYP and impending tests may be viewed as either a challenge or a risk by Year 3 FCSHD students in UNIMAS. A student who perceives their FYP as a threat, for instance, may feel anxious, which could result in a sense of powerlessness and poorer

academic achievement. However, students may feel less stressed and behave more adaptably if they view the FYP as a chance for both academic and personal development.

Furthermore, interventions in counselling that assist students in reframing how they view challenges may be helpful. Counsellors can lessen the emotional impact of stressors by helping students change maladaptive cognitive evaluations into more realistic and positive ones by investigating their ideas and beliefs (Folkman, 1984). Cognitive behavioral techniques, which motivate clients to question illogical beliefs and swap them out for more positive assessments, can accomplish this. Additionally, student's feeling of threat can be fostered by assisting them in realizing that stress is frequently a typical aspect of academic life.

1.6.2 Secondary Appraisal: Secondary appraisal includes evaluating the coping mechanisms and resources available to address a perceived stressor (Folkman, 1984). Secondary appraisal is essential in the counselling environment for identifying areas where a client could feel overburdened or empowered. Moreover, Year 3 FCSHD students in UNIMAS can assess their resources, including academic guidance, social support, and time management abilities, to see if they have the capacity to handle stress. They may feel more stressed, feel overburdened, and potentially even burn out if they believe they do not have enough resources, including time, peer support or academic guidance.

In the counselling profession, helping students complete a secondary assessment can improve their capacity for coping. Academic advisors, study group and stress reduction methods are just a few examples of the tools that counsellors may assist student in identifying and developing strategies. Moreover, through examining both internal resources, such self-efficacy and resilience, as well as external resources, like time management tools and social support, counsellors can help young people feel more capable of handling the pressures of education. According to Folkman (1984), student's coping resources can also be greatly enhanced by offering time management training and promoting the use of social media.

1.6.3 Stress Management Techniques: People use coping strategies to lessen the effects of stress after evaluating a stressor. Stress management techniques are divided into two main categories by Lazarus and Folkman (1984).

1.6.3.1 Problem-Focused Coping: In problem-focused coping, the stressor is directly addressed by coming up with workable solutions or taking steps to lessen its effects (Folkman, 1984). For Year 3 FCSHD students, this can entail activities like planning study schedules, asking instructors for clarification, or dividing complicated assignments into smaller, simpler sections. Students can lessen emotions of uncertainty and increase their sense of control over academic work by implementing these proactive measures (Folkman, 1984).

In a counselling setting, assisting students in using problem-focused coping mechanisms can boost self-esteem and encourage better stress reduction. For example, counsellor can help students to prioritize their work, set reasonable objectives, and seek academic support all of which can lessen stress and enhance academic performance in general.

1.6.3.2 Emotion-Focused Coping: People frequently utilize emotion-focused coping methods to control their emotional reactions to situations when they cannot be openly addressed (Folkman, 1984). These tactics could be journaling, mindfulness exercises, relaxation techniques, or reaching out to others for assistance. For instance, a student under stress from FYP might talk to their academic advisor about their worries or practice mindfulness meditation to control their emotions.

Emotion-focused coping is especially helpful in the counselling context for handling the emotional and psychological effects of stress when problem-solving is not always feasible. Furthermore, counsellors can help students learn how to relax, promote self-care practices, and support emotional expression through peer support groups or journaling. Although the stressor is not removed by these techniques, they do assist students in preserving.

1.7 Conceptual Framework

This research was undertaken to assess the association between stress coping techniques and the psychological distress of Year 3 students enrolled in the Faculty of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development (FCSHD) at University Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS). The conceptual framework on which the analysis reported here is based upon is Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT), a widely known psychological intervention targeting the interplay between thoughts, emotions, and behaviour (Beck, 1975). CBT offers a systematic way to think about stress management not as a series of coping techniques but as a constantly evolving series of cognitive and behavioural changes.

For graduating students, stressful academic demands, culminating projects (FYP/internship), the prospect of employment uncertainty are often stressors leading to maladaptive cognition and avoidance behaviour. Cognitive-behavioural stress management interventions particularly cognitive restructuring, behavioural activation, and mindfulness interventions provide specific strategies to help students reframe pessimistic thoughts, engage in enjoyable activities and moderate their emotional response. These practices are not only healing, but also applicable, which is quite relevant to students guided to hotbeds of competitive intellectual pressure.

The objective of the present investigation is to conceptualize stress management using the CBT model; and investigate the extent to which these strategies contribute to psychological distress, as experienced in the form of anxiety, depression or emotional exhaustion. The model places stress management strategies as the IV and psychological distress as the DV.

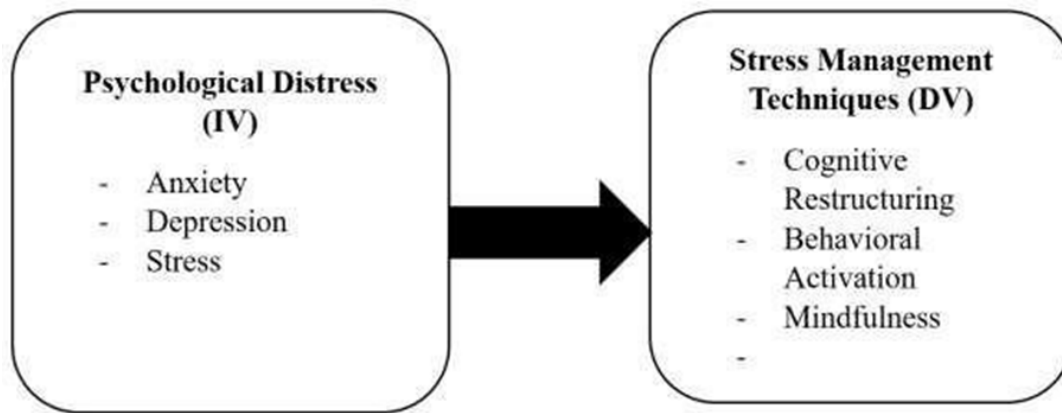


Figure 1.2 Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)

This study uses the concepts of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) to create a conceptual framework for understanding how stress management practices relate to psychological distress. Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) is a structured, based on study method that highlights how ideas, actions, and emotions interact (Beck, 1975). The independent variable (IV) in this framework is stress management techniques, while the dependent variable (DV) is psychological distress, which can take the form of stress, anxiety or depression.

For Year 3 FCSHD students in UNIMAS, who frequently deal with academic pressures like assignments, internships and uncertain career paths, CBT-based methods offer a focused method or tackling their particular stressors. The three main CBT elements of cognitive restructuring, behavioral activation, and mindfulness are the emphasis of this framework, which defines stress management.

1.7.1 Cognitive Restructuring

Cognitive restricting involves identifying, challenging, and replacing maladaptive thoughts with constructive alternatives (Beck, 1975). This process helps students reframe their perspectives on stress management situations. Negative thought habits are common among students throughout difficult academic times. A student might believe, for example “*I will never finish my final year project on time*”. They may dispute this assumption and replace it with a more balanced idea by using cognitive restructuring, like “*If I break this final year project into smaller tasks, I can complete it*”.

step by step”. This method not only lessens hopelessness but also improving problem-solving skills, empowering children to face pressures with more clarity and confidence (Beck, 1975).

1.7.2 Behavioral Activation

Behavioral activation focuses on encouraging engagement in productive and meaningful activities to counteract avoidance or procrastination (Hofmann et al.,2012). Academic stress frequently results in avoidance behaviors like distraction or procrastination. By developing organized routines, establishing realistic objectives and integrating physical activities like exercise to improve mood and concentration. The behavioral activation assists students in returning. For example, a student who is overburden by deadlines could find it helpful to make a daily work schedule that arranges important tasks in order of importance and includes regular breaks. Using a systematic approach helps combat emotions of overwhelm and promotes a sense of achievement (Hofmann et al.,2012).

1.7.3 Mindfulness

Mindfulness involves teaching students to focus on the present moment and accept their thoughts and feelings without judgement. This technique lessens worrying and eases anxiety and stress symptoms (Hofmann et al.,2012). Stress increased when students obsess over past mistake in academic or worry excessively about the future. Then, the meditation, deep breathing, and grounding exercises are examples of mindfulness practices that can help students stay in the moment and better handle stress. A student who is worried about upcoming internship review. For example, can practice mindfulness to keep their attention on the activity at hand rather than worrying about the worst-case scenario. This exercise strengthens resilience and encourages emotional control (Hofmann et al.,2012).

1.8 Definition of Terms

1.8.1 Psychological Distress

Conceptual Definition: Psychological distress is a state of emotional suffering characterized by symptoms of depression, anxiety and stress. It reflects an individual's inability to effectively cope with life's challenges, resulting in significant emotional or mental strain (Kessler et al.,2002)

Operational Definition: Psychological distress is the type of emotional distress that Year 3 FCSHD students in UNIMAS endure, as evidenced by the stress, anxiety, and depression symptoms that are seen during a given time period.

1.8.2 Stress Management Techniques

Conceptual Definition: The term “Stress Management Techniques” refers to the variety of methods and approaches used to regulate and lower stress levels in order to support general mental, emotional, and physical health. These tactics, which assist people in successfully navigating and reducing pressures, may include time management, mindfulness exercises, relaxation techniques, and problem-solving techniques (Folkman, 1984).

Operational Definition: Stress management techniques is defined as the frequency and kind of coping techniques used by Year 3 FCSHD students in UNIMAS that show their ability to use effective ways to manage both academic and personal demands.

1.8.3 Academic Stress

Conceptual Definition: Academic stress refers to the stress and anxiety that students feel as a result of academic pressures including tests, homework, deadlines, and uncertainty about their future careers. It frequently arises from a perceived disparity between the expectations set on students and their capacity to fulfill those expectations (Misra et al.,2000).

Operational Definition: Academic stress is the level of stress that Year 3 FCSHD students in UNIMAS experience as a result of their coursework, deadlines, and academic conflicts with one another.

1.8.4 Social Support

Conceptual Definition: Social support refers to the practical, emotional, and information support that peers, family, and friends can offer, which may reduce the negative effects of stress and advance psychological health (Cohen & Wills, 1985).

Operational Definition: Social support is the point to which Year 3 FCSHD students in UNIMAS believe that friends, family and academic advisor can provide them with both practical and emotional support in handling their personal and academic stress.

1.9 Significance of Study

In terms of both theory and practice, this study is very important for addressing the problems of stress management techniques and psychological distress among Year 3 FCSHD students in UNIMAS. It offers practical insights that can immediately improve academic programs especially at University Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS). The study provides university counselling centers with evidence-based advice to create focused therapies by analyzing the connection between stress management practices and psychological distress.

Programs on cognitive restructuring, mindfulness exercise, and behavioral activation techniques are a few examples of these interventions, which are designed to lessen the particular stressors that Year 3 FCSHD students in UNIMAS encounter. For instance, organized stress management programs based on the results of this study may be helpful for students who are having trouble with academic demands like research deadlines and internships (Hofmann et al.,2012).

Additionally, the results have greater implications for educational initiatives. By integrating stress management strategies into the curriculum, educators may provide students with the knowledge and abilities they need to overcome both personal and academic obstacle. Then, prepare students for the demands of academic life and to promote their long-term mental health and well-being, the teaching framework can include modules on time

management, problem- solving and resilience (Folkman, 1984).

In addition, to its useful uses, this study advances psychology by providing empirical data on coping mechanisms that are relevant to university students. The study advances the theoretical knowledge of stress and stress management.

1.10 Limitations of the study

Although this study offers valuable insights into stress management and psychological distress, it is essential to recognize a number of limitations that could restrict its applicability and generalizability. The study's relevance to other batches or institutions is limited because it only includes Year 3 FCSHD students in UNIMAS. This study does not account for the distinct stressors and coping mechanisms that students from different faculty of years may encounter. This focus might limit the findings applicability to larger groups of university students (Misra et al.,2000).

Furthermore, the study uses self-reported data from tools such as the Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (K10) and the Brief COPE Inventory. Despite their widespread usage and validation, self-reported data is inevitably subject to response bias. Because of things like social desirability or inaccurate personal recollection, participants may over-report or underreport their stress levels and coping mechanisms. Such biases should be taken into account when interpreting the results because they may compromise their dependability (Carver, 1997)

A further limitation of the study is its cross-sectional nature. The study offers a glimpse of the connection between stress management and psychological distress by collecting data at one particular moment in time, but it precludes drawing conclusions about cause. To investigate how these associations change over time and in various contexts, longitudinal research is required (Hofmann et al.,2012). Furthermore, outside contextual factors that might reduce the effect of stress management techniques on psychological distress, such as cultural background, socioeconomic level, or previous mental health issues, are not taken into consideration.

1.11 Conclusion

This study explores the relationship between stress management techniques and psychological distress among Year 3 FCSHD students in UNIMAS. It integrates Lazarus and Folkman's Transactional Model of Stress and Coping and Cognitive Behavioral Therapy principles. The findings have practical implications for university counselling services, academic programs, and policy development. The research identifies effective stress management techniques for Year 3 FCSHD students, aiming to alleviate academic stress, improve coping skills and enhance mental health.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter provides a thorough analysis of the body of research on stress management techniques and psychological distress, with a particular focus on how these two topics interact among Year 3 FCSHD students in UNIMAS. Due to their significant impact on individual mental health and academic achievement, stress and coping are extensively researched topics in psychology. University students, especially those in their third year, frequently encounter additional difficulties like managing time for member of the authority, academic obligations, and getting ready for future employment chances.

2.1 Psychological Distress

Psychological distress is a multifaceted emotional state characterised by a collection of symptoms including anxiety, depression, irritability, and ongoing stress (Kessler et al., 2002). It's not a medical diagnosis, it's not even really a thing that is consistently described by doctors, but it's the kind of discomfort that can ruin peoples' lives. This dis-tress frequently arises when people believe that demands placed on them are greater than their coping abilities, especially in situations having few supports and high expectations. University life particularly in the last year of study is a case in point: students negotiate academic, social and personal difficulties simultaneously.

The final-year students are a population at risk for psychological distress because of a combination of various stressors. These factors include the pressure to pass capstone projects such as the Final Year Project (FYP), to find internship or job positions and the overall consideration of attaining a competitive Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA). The uncertainty that transitional stages of academic life bring about (such as transitioning from the academic to the professional or postgraduate worlds) can fuel anxiety and feelings of powerlessness. This issue, known as transition anxiety, is characterized by the fear of the unknown, self-doubt, and anxiety around future roles and duties (Pelizza et al., 2021).

In the FCSHD at UNIMAS, the above stressors are amplified. Students enrolled in this faculty are expected to have a solid foundation in theoretical perspectives, the ability to carry out research empirically, and to show competence in applying knowledge in areas like counselling, human resource development, and cognitive science. The workload is intense students are reading be immersed in the literature, collecting data, running stats and preparing oral presentations of their work. These demands can be very difficult for students with minimal experience of performing research (Tchee, 2020), and thus can induce increased levels of psychological burden (Hall et al., 2020).

2.1.1 Conceptualization of Psychological Distress

The conceptualisation of psychological distress has expanded to include both the subjectively experienced emotional state and the objectively observable behavioural dysfunction. It is “a constellation of painful thoughts and feelings” experienced in response to a natural shift in mood, and can be “a precursor to more serious mental health disorders, such as depression, anxiety disorders, or somatization disorder” (APA Dictionary of Psychology).

Psychological distress is common in academic environment owing to the intense pressures students are subjected to. These issues include over-academic, performance anxiety, financial pressure and social isolation. Students in distress would generally show impaired concentration, sleep disturbances, affective exhaustion and hopelessness, which would compromise their academic achievement and general functioning (Pelizza et al., 2021; Schmits et al., 2021). These are not only obstructive to learning but predictive of long-term mental health outcomes if left unchallenged.

For the evaluation of psychological distress in student populations, researchers often use standardised self-report instruments, such as the Depression Anxiety Stress Scales (DASS-21) and the Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (K10) (1, 5). The DASS-21 is a 21-item measure of three separate.

2.1.2 Academic Workload

Workload in academic context can be defined as total tasks completed by student through scheduled learning activities, assessment and extra-curricular activities (Tayoto, 2025). Such activities include going to lectures, doing assignments, studying, and engaging in group work. In the context of FCSHD, students are also being required to participate in community-based programs, take on leadership roles, engage in internships, which also increases their responsibilities. The need to perform for grades at the same time as planning for what comes after university can be a high-pressure environment, which may lead to emotional issues.

Pelizza et al. 2021) discovered that FSs reported more anxiety and depression when compared with JRs, suggesting that this might be related to the worrisome momentum of academic duties and future perspective. Moreover, Yazdanpanah and Marashian (2023) noted that academic overload and uncertainty about post-graduation routes are the main predictors for psychological distress in recent graduates. These are corroborated by the findings in the local context as students often report to be stress due to thesis deadlines, logistical arrangements for internship and maintenance of CGPA (Lee et al., 2021).

Transition anxiety negative feelings of emotion triggered by graduation and the transition from university to working life is an additional psychological pressure added to academic stress. It covers fears about employability, financial independence and shifts in identity. According to Geirdal et al. in press, 2019), practice shock is common whereby students feel that there is discrepancy between their academic preparation and the workplace expectations. This inconsistency can produce inferiority, self-doubt, and an elevated sense of anxiety. In a longitudinal analysis, medical students' mental health improved as they became professional, although they were initially very psychologically distressed.

The COVID-19 pandemic has magnified transition anxiety due to the dismantlement of typical learning environments and the delay of internship placements. Ren et al. (2025) identified that participants who found themselves switched suddenly from online to in-person learning reported higher stress and emotional fatigue. These disturbances impacted not only the studies, but also weakened the belief of students on their ability to become professionals.

In addition, you have society and family expectations to account, in addition to a very serious time-crunch factor. Many students also feel pressured to line up a great job or apply for postgraduate studies right out of the gate with little career advice or emotional care. This extrinsic pressure has the potential to prompt unskilful coping strategies such as avoidance, procrastination, and emotional distancing (Cordova Olivera et al., 2023).

2.1.3 Malaysian context: Cultural and Institutional Stressors

Psychological distressing on university students in Malaysia is influenced by not just personal attributes and academic related pressure, but also from larger sociocultural, geographical, and political themes. These stressors are ingrained within Malaysian higher education milieu and present a systemic problem which impacts the students' emotional well-being, academic outcomes, and future prospects.

One of the most significant stress contributors is financial pressure, and this hits low-income students particularly hard. There are many students from Malaysia who pay for their education based on the government loan such as PTPTN, scholarship, or part-time work. But such monies are generally not enough to afford increased living expenses, tuition and school-related costs. A study by Wong et al. (2024) indicated that financial self-efficacy, daily expenses and family background predicted financial stress significantly among university students. In a worst-case scenario, students reported missing meals, working late in the night or asking others for money so that they could meet their fundamental needs, all of which severely hamper the ability to concentrate, the quality of sleep and emotional control.

Psychological distress is also influenced by family expectations. In Malaysian society, a child's academic accomplishments are seen as a source of family pride and affluence. Students are encouraged to succeed not only for their own fulfilment, but to meet a parent's expectation. This pressure can also lead to perfectionism, fear of failure, and emotional inhibition. In the study by Johnston et al. (2020), social pressures from the Malaysian youth to graduate with an excellent academic performance played a major role in causing academic stress. When they are not met, the student may feel lacking or guilty for not measuring up, thus activating more distress.

The other systemic problem is the lack of access to mental health support at universities. Even though most schools provide counselling, it may be underfunded, understaffed and stigmatized. A study by Arifin et al. (2023) found that 68.9% of Malaysian university students experienced moderate to high psychological distress and many of them were not aware of the available support services or reluctance to seek help on the account of stigma. A lack of proactive mental health education and outreach causes low utilization rates, and many struggling students to go unsupported.

The existing academic environment can also produce institutional stress. This highly competitive environment is driven by inflexible curricula and high-stake examinations, and schools have lacked the autonomy needed to promote and prioritize student well-being. Lee et al. (2021) reported robust evidence of a relationship between emotional stress and academic underachievement among Malaysian undergraduate students, indicating that distress does not only affect mental health but also reduces cognitive ability and motivation. It also created new problems in relation to digital, exhaustion-reduced engagement, and decreased peer interactions-all of which aggravated feelings of loneliness and anxiety-percolated in the firmament of pandemic-transformed e-learning environment (Ng et al., 2023).

All these difficulties are further intensified in the higher education urban-rural divide as rural students also suffer from poor internet connectivity, lack of access to the academic resources, and difficulties in acclimatizing to the culture. These differences indicate that there ought to be more inclusive policies that can cater to the different needs of Malaysian students in various locations and socioeconomic categories.

In sum, psychological distress in Malaysian university students should be considered not as an individual struggle, but as a manifestation of the system, which are ingrained deep within the pockets of financial insolvency, social cultural expectations, institutional constraints and academic unfairness. Response to these stressors necessitates a multilevel effort that includes policy change, expansion of mental health resources, culturally informed counselling, and placing emotional health in the calculus of academic life. For Year 3 FCSHD students at UNIMAS, it is important that they are able to acknowledge and respond to these contextual factors in order to support resilience and academic outcomes.

2.1.4 Specific Stressors Among Year 3 FCSHD students

The final year students of the Faculty of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development (FCSHD) at University Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS) are exposed to a unique group of discipline-specific stressors that may substantially contribute to psychological disturbance. These pressures are inculcated in the academy in the form of the research competence and praxis expectations of staff and the academia's ethos of academic excellence. The pressures of the Final Year Project (FYP), internships, and for an acceptable Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) are among the very important stress factors.

FYP is a final year academic project that entails literature review, designing research, collecting information, analysing data and presenting the formal report. For many children, this is their initial encounter with independent inquiry, a venture that can be intellectually invigorating and emotionally exhausting. Time management is a major issue especially when the students have FYP works alongside their other units and co-curricular commitments to attend. And supervisor's expectations for methodological strictness and theoretical alignment frequently increase performance anxiety. As per Mok (2019), students who had greater academic stress were found to have significantly lower CGPA, thus indicating academic pressure detracts from performance outcomes.

Another huge source of anxiety is finding an internship placement. These internships are meant to simulate counselling, human resource development, or cognitive science environments. But securing internships worth it can be competitive and logistically demanding. Application process, interviewing and placement requirements must still be met while also keeping up with academic deadlines. The twin requirements of fieldwork and coursework are frequently reported to result in emotional fatigue and diminished academic discipline. Offline interns are also burdened with transportation and interpersonal problems, while the factors "relationships with the staff" and "ugly surroundings" were identified to challenge them psychologically [24]. These results emphasize the importance of well-designed support mechanisms for the prevention of stress during internships.

The stress to keep a good CGPA is ever-present among FCSHD students. Scholarship eligibility, postgraduate options and employment are all inextricably linked to academic performance. It's no surprise that students tend to internalize this high standard and become perfectionists. In the long run, this is a recipe for chronic stress, burnout, and emotional

dysregulation. There are studies (Eugenie Mok, 2019) showing that those with poor sleep quality and high stress were found to have lower CGPA scores, thus signalling that psychological distress is a threat to academic performance. Additionally, involvement in a competitive academic atmosphere may dissuade help-seeking behaviour out of fear of being seen as incompetent or weak by other students.

Personality characteristics also will become influential in how students respond to these stressors. Another Final Year Project done by Tchee (2020) from UNIMAS revealed a positive strong relationship existed between neuroticism and psychological distress among FCSHD students ($r = .651, p < .001$). They are on the sensitive side, and are prone to self-doubt and problems coping with stress. This result is consistent with extensive psychological research, which reports that neuroticism is consistently associated with a higher risk of developing anxiety, depression, and academic burnout (Yusoff et al., 2021; Kong et al., 2023).

In conclusion, students in FCSHD year 3 experience a complex of academic, experiential, and psychological stressors. The pressure of FYP, internship logistics, attraction of CGPA, personality traits all come together to produce higher levels of psychological distress. These challenges need to be multifaceted, involving academic mentoring, mental health support and personal strategies designed to meet the needs of final year students.

2.2 Stress Management Techniques

This research was done to investigate the effects of stress management skills on psychological distress among third year students at the Faculty of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development (FCSHD), University Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS). As students in last few years of their higher education, they are faced with an amalgam of academic, personal and professional challenges. These would involve their Final Year Project (FYP), internship placements secured and completed, as well as managing a decent Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA). The accumulation of these expectations can surpass students' ability to deal with them, and therefore, they experience elevated psychological stress in terms of anxiety, burnout, and academic disengagement (Tchee, 2020; Mok, 2019).

Psychological distress in these circumstances is not simply a time-limited emotional reaction; it is an ongoing state that may well interfere with concentration, motivation, and general psychological health. According to Kessler et al. (2002), psychological distress is a generic psychological problem consisting of symptoms of emotional discomfort and the patient's inability to function normally. In final year students, concerns about having to conform to academic expectations and preparing for life beyond university may further compound distress. This double load of challenges exposes members to a high emotion dysregulation environment, in particular in departments such as FCSHD, where students need to bridge theoretical with real world applications in counselling, cognitive science, and HRD.

It becomes necessary to prevent the detrimental consequences of academic stress through stress coping strategies. These methods encompass a variety of cognitive, behavioural, and emotional styles that extend resilience and foster psychological well-being. Evidence suggests however that students who actively utilise stress management techniques (such as time management, mindfulness, relaxation exercises, and cognitive restructuring), report lower levels of psychological distress, as well as making better academic progress (Brown et al., 2020; Kristensen et al., 2023). In UNIMAS, interventions like PMR and GB have shown marked reduction of stress among FCSHD students (Abu & Omar, 2010).

Furthermore, the efficiency of stress coping strategies depends on the personal characteristics, such as the personality traits, emotional intelligence, or coping mechanisms. Tchee (2020) also reported that neuroticism was closely associated with psychological distress in FCSHD students, highlighting that specific vulnerabilities may need to be addressed using focused interventions. In conclusion, it would be interesting to take a multidimensional view of Stands to consider the design of a stress management not only based on the number of tasks, but also considering personal stressors and other environmental demands.

Overall, the objective of this study is to pinpoint and assess stress management strategies that are capable of reducing the psychological distress in Year 3 FCSHD students effectively. In doing so, it fosters the creation of mental health approaches that are tailored to the student context, which in turn support student resilience, academic achievement, and well-being.

2.2.1 Time Management Strategies

The term time management refers to the prioritization, planning, scheduling, organizing, and exercising of conscious control of time spent on specific activities, especially to increase effectiveness, efficiency or productivity. Stress Management Stress management is one of the most commonly used and accessible tools among university students (Wolters & Brady, 2021). Given that in the FCSHD environment learners frequently wear many different hats (i.e., student, leader, individual) it is possible that they experience cognitive overload when time is not managed appropriately, resulting in greater affective dysregulation.

There is evidence suggesting that poor time management skills are associated with increased psychological distress. This is especially true during academic crunch-time periods when students need to submit their FYPs and secure internships. Mok (2019) discovered that UNIMAS students with poor time management experience lower CGPA, together with higher stress and sleep disturbance. The results of the present study indicate time mismanagement is related not only to underachievement in academia, but also to emotional instability and decreased quality of life.

Structured time management approaches (time-blocking, weekly planning, the Eisenhower Matrix) on the other hand have demonstrated some initial success in decreasing psychological distress. Kristensen et al. (2023): students that engaged in time-blocking and weekly planning showed significantly lower anxiety and higher academic satisfaction. These tactics work to help students see their work visually, avoid procrastination and make room for rest and relaxation time.

According to Sharifah Safiqah's (2018) research in UNIMAS, students with good time management are better at controlling academic stress and anxiety and hence they have achieved better academic result. The effect was small, yet the results emphasize the necessity of including training in time management in student support programs.

Furthermore, time management has a strong connection with self-regulated learning, which includes goal setting, strategic planning, and reflection (Wolters, & Brady, 2021). Those who use self-regulated learning-time management White 159 practices are more apt to control their emotions and maintain emotional equilibrium, meet school expectations, and respond appropriately to dilemmas. These are of particular relevance to FCSHD students, who as part of their course work might carry out an individual project, field study or participate in a co-operative project.

Time management interventions are key in the prevention of psychological distress among Year 3 FCSHD students as a whole. Applying techniques of structured planning and focusing on self-regulation, students may improve their academic resilience and emotional health. Academic institutions should also consider integrating time management workshops and digital planning tools within academic support services in order to enable students to better manage their stress.

2.2.2 Mindfulness-Based Techniques

Mindfulness is the process of attending to present-time experience with an open and nonjudgmental stance toward one's thoughts, emotions, and sensations in the body (Kabat-Zinn, 2003). It teaches people to pay attention to what's affecting them inside and not to react reflexively or push it out of consciousness. Strategies such as mindfulness (mindful breathing, body scanning, and guided meditation) have demonstrated to lower cortisol levels as well as improve emotional regulation and psychological resilience (Galante et al., 2018). These strategies are especially pertinent to Year 3 FT FCSHD students who commonly experience increased stress during thesis deadlines and internship appraisals.

A randomised controlled trial conducted by Galante et al. (2018) found decreased stress, as measured by the Depression Anxiety Stress Scale (DASS- 21), and anxiety following 8 weeks of mindfulness-based intervention among university students. The intervention led to increased tolerance to academic stress and enhanced general well-being in students. Consistent with the present results, Van den Bergh (2021) reported that students practicing mindfulness at least three times a week enhanced their focus level, lower anxiety level, and work through emotions during academic tasks.

In UNIMAS, a qualitative investigation carried out by Choo et al. (2024) investigated the experiences of student therapists in FCSHD integrating mindfulness activities in their internships. Qualitative findings suggested that mindfulness interventions that included journal reflection, mindful breathing, and mindfulness communication were key to addressing anxiety, awareness, and improving counselling skills. Such results indicate that mindfulness practice may not only be beneficial for stress management but also in terms of professional and client focused engagement.

In addition, mindfulness practice has been associated with improved sleep quality, reduced rumination and better learning performance (Zuo et al., 2023). According to a systematic review and meta-analysis, mindfulness-based interventions had a significant effect on depression ($SMD = -0.33$) and anxiety ($SMD = -0.35$) and stress ($SMD = -0.39$) in university students. Of particular significance to FCSHD students is the results from Conclusion 2, highlighting a clear challenge faced by FCSHD students for emotional regulation during high stakes academic periods.

Overall, mindfulness-based interventions provide a pragmatic and empirically supported method of dealing with psychological distress in Year 3 FCSHD students. By cultivating emotional regulation, decreasing psychophysiological stress responses and improving attention to academic tasks, mindfulness could be a useful intervention for mental health and academic resiliency among college populations.

2.2.3 Problem-Solving and Cognitive-Behavioural Techniques

Problem-solving skills are active measures where individuals must identify stressors and then tackle them through coping mechanisms and solutions. These are skills that help students reassert a sense of control over their academic struggles and which mitigate helplessness and emotional fatigue. In the context of UNIMAS, Tchee (2020) revealed that students who participated in problem solving with structured guidance when preparing for the FYP, reported lower emotional exhaustion and greater competence academic. This indicates that problem solving is useful to reduce distress and increase sense of efficacy and motivation.

Cognitive behavioural (CBT) strategies help by enabling students to re-frame maladaptive thought processes and foster more healthful emotional responses. CBT is based on the concept that thoughts, feelings, and behaviours are interconnected, and that changing unhelpful cognitions result in better psychological well-being (Beck, 2013). In college students, CBT approaches have been found to be effective for reducing anxiety and depressive symptoms, as well as academic burnout (Canapari et al., 2015).

In a systematic review of the literature, Sharif Mudin et al. (2024) verified that the application of CBT is highly successful in reducing stress among the Malaysian university students, especially in a structured modules or digital platforms. The systematic review indicated that CBT is flexible enough to be provided across different delivery modes (face-to-face, online, or hybrid) and is effective in promoting coping skills, emotional regulation, and resilience. Such results have particular implications for FCSHD students, who tend to suffer from cognitive overload in thesis writing and field practice.

Weiss et al. conducted a randomized controlled trial to investigate. (2025) piloted a CBT-based stress management app in college students and observed reductions in perceived stress, better emotion regulation, and reduced rumination. This intervention proved more

helpful to students who experienced high academic pressure, and CBT could be embedded in digital wellness programs at UNIMAS for final year cohorts.

Additionally, CBT promotes cognitive restructuring, which involves challenging students to dispute irrational thoughts by, for instance, opening up a space for them to dismantle catastrophizing thoughts (like “If I kill this presentation, I’ll never graduate”) or perfectionist thoughts (like “My FYP needs to be perfect”). Such replacement can lead to the students becoming less emotionally reactive and to an increase in their ability of problem solving, replacing thoughts that tend to promote catastrophic, extreme, catastrophic thinking with thoughts that are more balanced (Freire et al., 2020).

2.2.4 Psychoeducational and Peer Support Interventions

Psychoeducational programmes are programmes that provide students with information and skills required for stress management, seeking social/ emotional support and engaging in help-seeking activities. Such programmes generally include workshops, seminars and digital modules that train students to spot the triggers of their stress, reframe negative thoughts and learn practical techniques for handling academic pressure. Psychoeducational stress management intervention reduced perceived stress and increased coping capacity for final-year students in a number of studies (Berdida & Grande, 2022). The review highlighted that such interventions are effective in maximizing the stress process and in promoting students’ adjustment to the academic challenges (Berdida & Grande, 2022).

In the context of UNIMAS, psychoeducational workshops were included in the development programmes for students, which included time management, emotional intelligence and academic resilience programme. These programs have yielded some positive results on anxiety and self-efficacy level in managing thesis-stress of students (Abu & Omar, 2010). Furthermore, psychoeducation works to destigmatize psychological difficulties and promote help-seeking behaviour among students who would otherwise experience psychological distress in silence.

Peer support strategies supplementing psychoeducation helps to create a community and promote shared understanding among students. Peer support is free emotional and practical support offered by people who have had similar experiences, like other students

with a shared experience of the same academic milestone. The groups provide a forum for students working through the common challenges to talk about their anxieties, share coping methods, and reassure one another that they are not alone. According to Pointon-Haas et al. (2023), peer-led social support groups are highly effective in addressing loneliness, emotional regulation, and mental health among tertiary education students. The study concluded that peer support is most effective when incorporated as part of an overall mental health strategy, which includes professional services and organisational support (Pointon-Haas et al., 2023).

In the context of FCSHD, more informal approaches such as peer mentoring and reflexive groups during intern placements and thesis writing have been experienced in practice. And these efforts enable students to provide feedback, talk about their feelings of emotional struggle and create a sense of unity. Zhang and Ling's (2025) concept paper pointed out that peer support is highly effective in lowering the psychological distress among college students by increasing social connectedness and emotional resilience. Peer support proves to be particularly helpful to those students without familial or institutional support, and, therefore, should be integrated in overall strategy for student mental health (Zhang & Ling, 2025).

And peer support can even help eliminate the stigma around mental health challenges. Students from peer support programs were more likely to help-seeking and to increased self-esteem, confidence and coping (Student Minds UK 2020). These results are especially applicable to FCSHD students, who frequently adopt academic pressure and may be reluctant to seek formal counselling service.

In conclusion, psychoeducational and peer support interventions provide complementary means of reducing psychological distress for Year 3 FCSHD students. Psychoeducation imparts structured knowledge and coping tools, whereas peer support cultivates emotional validation and community resilience. Such integration of the methods of these two approaches directly into the curricula of the university's faculty -based academic and wellness programs may well be instrumental in students' successful stress management, as well as in improved academic performance and mental well-being through the university transition point of first major study program.

2.3 Academic Stress

This research was carried out to examine the association of academic stress and psychological distress of Year 3 students FCSHD UNIMAS. Academic stress is a common and multidimensional problem in higher education, especially for final-year students who are experiencing the completion of their undergraduate studies. These students are confronted by the intersection of high-stake academic requirements such as undertaking their FYP, engagement in internship, and the need to maintain a competitive CGPA. The experience of these stressors can be too much for students to manage so that they become emotionally drained, anxious, and disengaged with the academic content (Tchee, 2020; Mok, 2019).

Academic stress is described as an individual's emotional and psychological response to pressure generated by the scholastic demand placed on an individual which exceeds his or her ability to cope successfully (Misra & McKean, 2000). It involves experiencing a state of tension and stress in anticipation of a threatening event related to an academic situation (exam, deadline, etc.), and feelings of anxiety and worry about not being able to cope (Cassady and Johnson, 2002). On final-year students' academic stress increases due to the expectation of graduating, uncertain about their professional future and having to ensure academic and family-related requirement (Córdova Olivera et al., 2023). Such stressors become more severe in FCSHD course work when students are required to apply theoretical principles and practices to the work in counselling, cognitive science, and human resource development.

A study conducted by Manishaa Rreddy (2022) from UNIMAS found that academic stress was significantly associated with psychological distress amongst undergraduate students, and female students experienced higher emotional symptoms. The application of the Perception of Academic Stress Scale (PASS) and the Depression Anxiety Stress Scales (DASS-21) revealed that academic workload, time pressure, and fear of failure affected the mental health of students. These results highlight the importance of recognizing discipline-related sources of stress and providing targeted interventions to promote student well-being.

Another important factor is that school-related stress has been found to cause cognitive dysfunction, lack of motivation, burnout and mental illnesses (Córdova Olivera et al., 2023; Mustafa et al., 2023). Students with insufficient coping strategies may suffer

chronic stress and experience long-term psychological effects, which can affect students' ability to succeed in an academic environment. Accordingly, basic information about the correlates and implications of academic stress is a necessary first step toward the development of effective stress management programs to foster resiliency, emotional regulation, and academic achievement.

In summation, this research seeks to examine the role of academic stress in the psychological distress of the Year 3 FCSHD students in UNIMAS. Through investigating detailed stressors and the effect on mental health, the research aims to inform evidence-based intervention design for improving student well-being and academic performance.

2.3.1 Key Academic Stressors in FCSHD

One of the stressors that stands out most is the Final Year Project (FYP) that requires large amount of literature review, " research design, data collection and statistical analysis. For some students, this is their maiden journey into independent research and the difficulty of marrying theoretical theoretically theoretical approach with rigor in practice is insurmountable. Additionally, limited time to complete tasks, pressures for timely completion from advisors, and a fear of failure create additional sources of stress. Mok (2019) has indicated students prepared for their FYP with low time management and sleep quality, leading to lower CGPA and higher level of psychological distress.

A future stressor is where interns are placed and how they are to apply what they have learned. The combination of field responsibilities alongside continued academic deadlines is emotionally tiring and extremely difficult to coordinate. The focus on FCSHD is often clinical internships as in counselling centres, HR departments, or schools where a student is expected to display professional competences, managing their personal stress. Internship exercise stress was positively associated with anxiety and negatively with academic motivation, and posted in the offline or high-demand condition (Nangia and Garg, 2025).

FCSHD students experience continuous pressures for attaining a high CGPA. Scholarship availability, job opportunities and eligibility for continued education can be centred around academic performance. This sets an environment of competition where students are themselves pressured to internalise such high expectations and in turn become perfectionist. In a study by Manishaa Rreddy (2022), academic stress experienced by

UNIMAS students was found to be significantly associated with emotional distress, where female students had a greater chance of experiencing psychological symptoms as compared to male students. The perception of academic stress and the Depression Anxiety Stress Scales DASS-21 were used by the study, which found fear of academic failure and time constraints to be the most commonly cited stressors.

These results are consistent with more general research demonstrating that self-induced academic stress in the form of fear of disappointing others and not meeting self-standards is an excellent predictor of deteriorated mental health (Córdova Olivera et al., 2023). Predisposition to the FCSHD In the FCSHD culture, students are highly stressed not just because they are under pressure to succeed for their own sake, but also for family and society; in that sense, emotional burden becomes heavier.

On a whole, psychological distress is highly associated with main academic stressors of Year 3 FCSHD students (i.e. FYP requirements, internship pressure, and CGPA concerns). Addressing these stressors through focus interventions (e.g., time management training, emotional regulation workshops, academic mentoring) is critical for the development of student resilience and well-being.

2.3.2 Psychological Impact of Academic Stress

Córdova Olivera et al. (2023) discovered that self-imposed academic stress such as perfectionist beliefs and fear of underachieving was the most significant predictor of languishing mental health in college students. Languishing describes a state of being down, of inactivity and reduced bouncebackability. This is particularly problematic for FCSHD graduate students, who commonly internalize perfectionistic academic standards, as well as experience emotional distress during thesis writing and fieldwork. The research also highlighted students who held overly high expectations for themselves were more likely to suffer anxiety, emotional exhaustion and lack of academic engagement.

In relation to UNIMAS, Manishaa Rreddy (2022) found that academic stress was strongly associated with emotional distress in final-year students and that female students demonstrated more severe psychological symptoms. Based on PASS and DASS-21, time pressure, fear of failure and academic overload were the most commonly reported stressors. This result is in line with the research that suggests academic stress provokes cognitive

performance and problematic sleep and gives rise to depressive symptoms and anxiety (Pascoe et al., 2020; Bernal-Morales et al., 2015)

In addition, well-being is negatively associated with burnout, a psychological syndrome involving emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and a sense of lack of personal accomplishment. A study by Scribner et al. (2020) observed that undergraduate students who demonstrated lack of positive disposition were more prone to burnout and disengagement in academic tasks. This is especially pertinent for FCSHD students who are exposed, through their studies, to independent research, practicum, and theoretical integration which demand prolonged emotional and cognitive exertion.

The emotional consequences of academic stress also affect self-image and the development of identity, particularly for students who are in transition such as those about to graduate from high school or start a career. Students who consider themselves to be unsuccessful according to academic or social standards may feel disbelief, less confidence and will withdraw themselves emotionally. These consequences are not limited to mental health poor academic and professional preparation as well (Zajenkowski & Szymaniak, 2019).

To conclude, academic stress has severe psychological effects on Year 3 FCSHD students; has increased alarming levels of stress and anxiety, emotional exhaustion and a decline in academic.

2.3.3 Stress Management Coping Strategies

Stress management skills include cognitive, adopted, or behavioural activities that facilitate individuals to modifying their reactions to stressors. In college students, these strategies are keys to support against the negative effects of academic demands, emotional exhaustion, and anxiety. Mustafa et al. (2023) investigated Malaysian university students and found cognitive coping strategies to be the most used, followed by behavioural and emotional strategies. In particular, female students were found to use emotional coping (i.e., seeking support from others or venting), while male students favoured behavioural strategies (i.e., physical activities, and problem solving that distanced them from the stress) (Mustafa et al., 2023).

In the FCSHD environment, use of cognitive coping strategies including thought

control (reappraisal of negative thoughts), goal setting, and self-monitoring can also prove especially useful for preparing theses and competing evaluation of internships. They support students to stay on task, manage emotions, and mitigate the effects of academic pressures. A study by Freire et al. (2020) found that greater mental distress and poorer academic engagement were predicted by low self-efficacy and positive adaptation. Students who also adopted planning, positive reappraisal and support-seeking strategies had a stronger emotional resilience (Freire et al., 2020).

Behavioural coping, such as physical activity, time management, and orderliness, has also been reported to reduce stress and enhance academic success. Scribner et al. (2020) revealed that active coping behaviours defined as goal-directed action and seeking instrumental support were associated with the capacity to manage academic transitions and lower burnout (Scribner et al., 2020).

Emotional tactics for dealing with stress, although not as effective in the long-term, will give you some immediate relief. These can be the process of emotion, the search of empathy from friends, having creative outlets through keeping a diary of their expression or music. Graves et al. (Graves et al., 2021) found females were more likely to engage in emotion-focused coping (i.e., self-distraction, venting), which supported their coping with academic stress, in high-stress periods (2021).

Crucially such coping is dependent upon the flexibility and ecologic validity of strategies. Another study has showed problem-focused coping to be positively related with mental well-being, whereas avoidant coping (denial, disengagement) was associated with elevated psychological distress (Meijer, 2024). This underscores the necessity of FCSHD students to utilize adaptive coping strategies which correspond to their academic stressors and personal resources.

Conclusion Effective stress management and coping skills are important in ameliorating psychological distress in Year 3 FCSHD students. Cognitive, behavioural, and affective strategies provide diverse advantages, and integrating them could deliberate academic resilience and emotion regulation in academic settings. Instructors may benefit from incorporating coping skills training as part of student development in an effort to promote mental health and academic achievement.

2.4 Social Support

Social support can be emotional, informational, and instrumental help available from peers, family, and faculty. It has a long-involved story in the buffering of stress and the facilitator of resilience. According to Cohen and Wills (1985), buffering model, social support functions as a psychological buffer in the face of stress, decreasing the appraisal of the severity of stressor and increasing coping capabilities. This is especially important for FCSHD students, who frequently work together on the writing of their thesis and for whom emotional buffer may be needed at the time of the intern evaluation.

Evidence from Malaysian universities supports the protective effect of social support on student mental health. In research conducted by Nurul Azizah et al. (2023) observed a significant negative association between perceived social support and stress among Health Sciences undergraduates ($r = -0.432$, $p < .001$), and family support was the strongest predictor of emotional stability. These findings are consistent with those of FCSHD students, who often report family encouragement and peer support as important drivers of emotional stamina during tense academic times.

Furthermore, supportive environment (school) also increases students' sense of belonging and self-efficacy related to their studies. It enables maladaptive coping skills, for instance problem solving skills and emotional regulation, required to cope with academic transitions. In relation to UNIMAS-specific factors, students reporting higher peer and faculty support during FYP and internship also reported lower levels of emotional exhaustion and higher academic efficacy (Manishaa Rreddy, 2022).

To conclude, social support is a building block on stress coping and psychological well-being in FCSHD Year 3 students. By nurturing emotional wellbeing, building coping ability and generating academic resilience, supportive relationships help to create more healthy learning environments and higher levels of student achievement. The objectives for this study are to better understand the pathways by which social support affects psychological distress and to develop interventions to bolster the support networks in the FCSHD community.

2.4.1 Types of Social Support and Their Functions

Social support has been classified into three primary forms: emotional, informational, and instrumental support. They both serve their own purpose, both having a different way to better handle stress. Within a sample of FCSHD students, the latter are more likely to demonstrate that all these kinds of support particularly types from peers, family, and faculty mitigate academic stress and promote resilience.

Emotional attention includes empathy, comforting, caring, and supportive expressions that make a person feel heard, accepted, loved. Within the context of FCSHD, emotional support is evident in peer encouragement through FYP datelines, empathic comments from lecturers or positive pep talk with family. This supportive dialog helps students to mediate their responses and to avoid feeling alone or incapable. Based on Nurul Azizah et al. (2023) reported a significant relationship between emotional support and stress among Health Sciences undergraduates, thus implying importance of the variable beyond academic faculties in Malaysia.

Informational support refers to advice, guidance, and feedback shared to assist students with problem-solving, decision-making, and expectation management. Obviously, FCSHD students frequently seek informative support toward research methods development, statistical data analyses, or internships duties. Such support can come from teachers or academic tutors and even from senior peers, who make research procedures and professional norms explicit. A study by Permatasari et al. (2021), where teacher and peer support played a significant role in contributing to academic resilience among Malaysian students, especially during the period of transition into remote teaching due to the COVID-19 outbreak.

Instrumental support refers to concrete and specific aid offered to students to enable them to perform a task or meet a commitment. For students in FCSHD, this could entail contributions to group projects, assistance with obtaining data analysis tools, support for travel to internship sites, or assistance with making posters. This instrumental support eliminates the logistic task burdens of students and lets them concentrate effectively on high-level cognitive and affective activities. Zhang and Ling (2025) pointed out that the students who received instrumental support during final year transition were found to experience superior academic performance and decreased psychological strain.

The interaction between these forms of support is particularly important in a final-year context where demands are high, and time is frequently limited. Emotional support helps confirming students' internal emotional condition, informational support improves cognitive clarity and readiness, and instrumental support helps practical convenience. They combine to form a broad buffering protection, allowing students to cope with academic stressors more effectively with less emotional vulnerability.

Overall, emotional, informational, and instrumental support contribute to both the academic and psychosocial experiences of the Year 3 FCSHD students. By identifying the unique role of each of these support systems, and developing them within the academy, UNIMAS can support student well-being and contribute to the successful transition of students into the professional and postgraduate worlds.

2.4.2 Social Support as a Buffer Against Psychological Distress

Social support (Cohen & Wills, 1985) may insulate the effects of stress by promoting emotional regulation and problem-solving ability. Supportive connections offer people a sense of security, embeddedness, and comfort, which allows them to reframe stressors as containing rather than catastrophic (Major et al., 1992). This theory is especially applicable for FCSHD students, who frequently depend on peers, family, and faculty members for support as they progress through rigorous academic periods.

In another FYP related study in UNIMAS, by Manishaa Rreddy (2022), it was found that students who received good peer and family support in the preparation for the FYP will show lower levels of emotional exhaustion and anxiety. Perception of Academic Stress Scale (PASS) and Depression Anxiety Stress Scales (DASS-21) were used and the students with more perceived social support were more emotion regulation and academic motivation. The buffering effect of social support in psychological distress and academic resilience is particularly highlighted in these results.

Additionally, social support is the foundation for feelings of connectedness and emotional well-being that are crucial for students that make academic transitions. In research conducted by Nurul Azizah et al. (2023) discovered that, in Malaysian Health Sciences students, the association between perceived social support and stress levels was

negatively significant ($r = -0.432$, $p < .001$); the strongest predictor of emotional well-being was family support. These results are consistent with our own FCSHD students' experience, where students report family support and peer encouragement as major sources of psychological strength in thesis writing and internship assessments.

It was also shown by Saleem and Zia (2024) that the respect and motivational support have a notable influence on the academic persistence and adaptive coping in Malaysian undergraduates. Their research indicates that programmatic peer mentoring and faculty involvement can improve resilience among students and decrease anxiety and depression. This is particularly critical for FCSHD students whose course content requires significant self-regulation and emotional resilience.

In conclusion, social support buffers psychological aberrations of academic stress in Year 3 FCSHD students. Social support leads to benefits on both mental health and academic performance by the effects of emotional regulation, sense of belonging, and adaptive coping mechanisms. Increasing peer support, involving families, and encouraging faculty involvement with the FCSHD community all contribute to their ability to cope with stress and to be successful in their senior year.

2.4.3 Empirical Evidence from Malaysian Universities

According to research of Nurul Azizah et al. (2023) noticed a negative relationship between perceived social support and stress level among Health Sciences students in Malaysia ($r = -0.432$, $p < .001$), indicating that students with higher perceived support reported less distress. It used the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS-10) and the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS) and showed that family support was the most significant predictor of emotional adjustment, followed by peers' and faculty members' s depend on familial motivation during thesis deadlines and peer support during internship evaluations.

In the same vein, perceived social support was positively related to self-efficacy and negatively correlated with academic stress in the study of Amanda Lim (2023) in University Tunku Abdul Rahman, as well as in Malaysian undergraduates. A greater quantity of social support from peers and faculty has been associated with greater perceived competence in handling academic activities and less emotional exhaustion among students. This resonates

with the experiences of FCSHD students who are engaged in independent research, field, and theoretical integration, all which rely on emotional resilience and academic self-confidence.

More evidence by Samir Muhazzab Amin et al. (2024) among Klang Valley universities found that both family and teacher support for students were significant predictors of mental health, wherein family support was the most influential. The study found that individuals with strong family social support and academic performance were less likely to report stress, anxiety, or depressive symptoms. These results support the value of college interventions that encourage faculty-student relationships and family involvement in students' transitions to college.

Another study by Salwa Abdul Patah et al. (2024) among six public universities in Malaysia which showed positive relationship between social support, emotional intelligence and resilience. The study revealed that the students who perceived more social support were more adaptive and resilient to academic stress. This may be particularly important for FCSHD students, with the co-occurrence of both cognitive challenges and emotional regulation during their final year of study.

In conclusion, empirical evidence in the Malaysian universities provides a consistent view on the significance of social support in reducing psychological distress and improving academic resilience. Family support, peer support, and faculty support as buffering factors for academic stress and burnout in junior college Year 3 nursing students in a FCSHD College Supportive factors In Year 3 FCSHD students, the protective features of family encouragement, peer collaboration and faculty mentorship buffer the impact of academic stress and enhance emotional well-being. The present findings underscore the importance of UNIMAS in providing formative personal and social support to its students via programmed mentoring, psycho-educational workshops, and inclusive academic policies support. These results are particularly meaningful for FCSHD students, who may

2.4.4 Social Support and Academic Resilience

Social support helps to promote Academic resilience as students are emotionally supported, practically assisted, and informationally guided as they collectively come to terms with high-stake academe. Based on the work of Saleem and Zia (2024) esteem and motivation support, including verbal encouragement, recognition of effort and belief in the student capabilities was found to affect perseverance and adaptive coping among Malaysian undergraduates. This indicates that ones who have a sense of 'worth' and 'care' are less likely to leave the room, no matter how difficult and stressful the terms become.

Within a FCSHD framework elucidated by these themes, participants discuss how peer, faculty, and family support fosters thesis composing and internship transition resilience. Peer mentorship involves the sharing of personal experiences, emotional affirmation and solutions to problems collaboratively. Faculty involvement, in contrast, provides focused academic assistance and motivational support. A study by Patah et al. (2024) found that social support and emotional intelligence had a positive relation with resilience while among Malaysian undergraduates, which translates into the fact that supportive relationships improve students stress coping ability and facilitate their academic focus.

In addition, resilience is not only an individual characteristic but also a socially nurtured ability. Supportive networks allow students to reframe their academic failures as learning opportunities rather than threats. This is consistent with the work of Idris et al. (2019), which found that 48.2% of the variance in psychological well-being of Malaysian university students was accounted for by resilience. The research showed that more physically supportive students were better able to manage their emotions and engage in school.

In the UNIMAS context, the programs such as group reflection sessions, counselling workshops, and faculty-student mentoring programs have demonstrated successes for promoting resilience. These are interventions where the students are allowed to voice their concerns, get feedback, and learn coping strategies that are specific to their academic needs. Promoting such support systems in FCSHD could potentially decrease psychological unhealth and enhance students' ability to flourish in stressful school experience.

As a summary, social support has a significant role in determining Academic

Resilience for Year 3 FCSHD's students. Supportive relationships enable students to cope with academic stressors, and manage their psychological condition by promoting feelings of respect, motivation, and emotional balance. Inclusion of peer mentoring and faculty involvement in FCSHD programs may be a strategic intervention to promote resilience and attenuate distress during final-year transitions.

2.5 Theory Transactional Model of Stress and Coping by Lazarus and Folkman (1984)

The purpose of this research was to use the Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) Transactional Model of Stress and Coping as the base model to explore the phenomenon of psychological distress and coping with stress experienced by Year 3 students in Faculty of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development (FCSHD) at Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS). Such a model provides a more complex view of stress, one that highlights the reciprocal and dynamic interplay between the person and their environment, rather than a view of stress as a uniform response to external life events.

According to the Transactional Model, stress results when a person appraises the demands of a situation as exceeding their available coping resources. Cognitive appraisal This evaluation is the result of a cognitive appraisal process, two primary appraisals and then a secondary appraisal. It is at the level of the primary appraisal that people decide if a situation is irrelevant, benign, or stressful. Whether the situation is appraised as stressful, they also evaluate if it is perceived as threat, harm/loss, or challenge to their well-being (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). In the second appraisal process, individuals assess their competence in dealing with the stressor, using resources inside (e.g., self-efficacy, emotion regulation) and outside (e.g. support from friends, support from the teacher).

In this sample, the ACM is particularly pertinent to Year 3 FCSHD students who encounter multiple academic stressors such as FYP, internship placements and pressure to maintain CGPA. These stressors are not inherently negative; rather it is students' perception shaped by a process including their own beliefs, ability to cope, and others' support that determines whether distress results. For instance, a student who considers his or her FYP as a challenge might feel motivated and engaged, while a student who views his or her FYP as a hindrance to their academic status may be anxious and emotionally exhausted.

The model further differentiates between problem-focused coping (e.g. time

scheduling; seeking academic assistance) and emotion-focused coping (e.g. mindfulness, relaxation). Research by Freire et al. (2020) found that university students who employed adaptive coping skills including planning and positive reappraisal were likely to experience lower levels of psychological distress and high engagement with their academics. These results are consistent with the coping responses of FCSHD students, who frequently employ either problem-focused or emotion-focused responses according to the characteristics of the stressor.

For UNIMAS, Tchee (2020) reported that students who contributed to structured problem-solving and cognitive reframing during FYP preparation were less emotionally exhausted and felt more confident in their academic support. This result aligns with the claim of the model that coping is not a uniform response but a dynamic process which can be primed by both an individual assessment and context-specific feedback.

In short, the Transactional Model of Stress and Coping offers a robust framework for examining Year 3 FCSHD students' experiences of and responses to academic stressors. By focusing on cognitive appraisal and coping flexibility, the model provides important contributions to the understanding of the processes that cause psychological distress as well as for the design of specific stress management interventions.

2.5.1 Cognitive Appraisal and Stress Perception

The model suggests that cognitive appraisal takes place in two components: primary appraisal and secondary appraisal. In primary appraisal, students judge a particular academic stressor as irrelevant, benign-positive, or stressful. For example, a third year could construe an upcoming honours presentation as an opportunity for educational expansion or a potential source of academic humiliation. If the student rates an event as stressful, that stressor is further categorized as a threat (suggesting future damage), harm/loss (suggesting that and event caused damage), or as a challenge (involving potential or mastery and gain). Common academic stressors such as negative supervisor feedback or pressured submission dates are frequently perceived as threatening for FCSHD students whose 'academic skin is in the game'.

Once the stressor is appraised as relevant, secondary appraisals are made. This includes the rationalization of what resources are available for coping (i.e. emotional resilience, social

support, academic mastery, past experience etc.) The students assess if they have internal and external resources available to respond to the stressor adequately. Where coping capacity is felt to be insufficient, psychological distress is likely to rise. For example, a student who has limited statistical skills may perceive the data chapter of their FYP to be particularly challenging, while another who is well-prepared and has ready access to supervisor support might consider the same task as being quite the contrary.

The relationship between cognitive appraisal and stress reactions has also been supported by recent research. Korbmacher and Wright (2020) revealed that negative appraisal and coping with emotion were three key predictors of stressful experience for the dissertation students from the UK Academies. Appraisal of academic demands as threatening and use of passive coping strategies (e.g., avoidant coping and rumination) were found to be associated with increased emotional distress among participants. While the study was based among UK, its implications reflect the difficulties being faced by UNIMAS students in comparable high-pressured learning circumstances, particularly students in FCSHD to work independently on sophisticated research-related tasks.

Also, cognitive appraisal is not fixed; it can change by reappraisal (also called secondary appraisal), in which students can re-evaluate by reappraisal (also called secondary appraisal) a stressor using new information and emotional changes. A student may perceive critical feedback on their FYP for example, as discouraging when they receive it, but might also appraise this feedback as helpful at a later time point, resulting in more adaptive coping. This dynamical nature of evaluation underscores the relevance of psychological flexibility in school settings.

In general, Year 3 FCSHD students filter through a psychological screen of cognitive appraisal to understand and react to academic stressors. This process decides whether a stressor will lead to greater psychological distress or be utilized as an opportunity for academic development. Inclusion of adaptive appraisal and additional coping resources (e.g., time management; mentoring; availability of peer support) may also be important in reducing perceptions of stress and aiding emotional well-being. The understanding of this appraisal process would allow institutions such as UNIMAS to develop interventions that improve survival and emotional regulation in response to academic stress in students.

2.5.2 Coping Strategies: Problem-Focused vs Emotion-Focused

Problem focused coping consists of direct responses to the cause of the stressor. These strategies are the efficient management of time, planning of study, seeking of practical support, and initiating of proactive solutions. In FCSHD students, thesis planning, literature review and analysis are the most typical situations in which the use of problem-focused coping is recorded. These students are likely to dismantle complex tasks rather than work on the task as a whole, they have a tendency to ask the supervisors queries to seek clarification, and they also utilize academic resources such as spss workshops or peer support/consultations. Such an approach is most beneficial when the stressor is viewed as controllable, and when students have good social support networks.

In comparison, emotion-focused coping describes strategies to manage the emotional distress that the stressor has caused. These have been described as mindfulness, relaxation, journaling, letting the emotions out, or on certain occasions, cognitive restructuring. FCSHD students engage in emotion-focused coping to a greater degree when experiencing emotionally difficult times, such as getting negative feedback from supervisors, facing difficulty at their internships, or experiencing setbacks in their academic careers. Although, this is not a direct way to get rid of the stressor, it helps students in managing their emotional state and staying fit psychologically.

Freire et al. (2020) conducted a person-centered investigation of university students and discovered that students marked by adaptive coping strategies (e.g., planning, positive reappraisal, support-seeking) reported less psychological distress and greater academic engagement. The study highlighted that high self-efficacy students were likely to deal with problems using problem-focused coping; while for students with low self-efficacy, the tendency to use emotion-focused coping was higher. Findings have implications for FCSHD students, who typically are required to perform academic work necessitating emotional regulation and strategic planning.

In addition, flexible coping (capability to use problem-focused or emotion-focused coping styles as situation demands) is needed to sustain resilience. For instance, a student might employ problem-focused coping to structure the timeline for working on a thesis while

using emotion-focused coping to deal with anxiety in response to intern evaluations. This mutual relationship also illustrates that stress and coping are transactional processes in which people continuously evaluate and revise their responses in view of the available resources and contextual demands (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

In the UNIMAS setting, Tchee (2020) reported that students who were involved in structured problem-solving and cognitive reframing skills experienced less emotional exhaustion and were more confident in their academic abilities in preparing for FYP. Accordingly, the results indicate the need to include the training of coping skills in the development of students, taking into account the planning of strategies and emotional control.

On the whole, problem-focused and emotion-focused coping strategies appear to provide synergistic options for coping with academic stress in Year 3 FCSHD students. Educational institutions can empower students to manage academic demands in a resilient and psychologically healthy manner by promoting coping flexibility and self-efficacy.

2.5.3 Application to FCSHD Students

The cognitive appraisal theory underlies this model and emphasizes that the-way in which students interpret a circumstance, influence how he/she would respond to that condition. When students appraise the demands posed by their academic work as challenges (rather than threats) they are more likely to engage in proactive coping and experience psychological well-being. These learners have strong internal resources including self-efficacy, emotional regulation and time management, and also rely on external resources such as peer collaboration and faculty mentorship. In comparison, students who view academic demands as stressful, overwhelming or threatening and who possess limited coping resources are at risk of experiencing burnout as reflected by high levels of emotional exhaustion, anxiety, and academic disengagement.

In the UNIMAS setting, Tchee (2020) has established that FYP preparation can discriminate students based on certain personality traits, such as high neuroticism, and have

a heightened likelihood of psychological distress. The study highlighted that students without established coping strategies, and those who perceived low control of academic task, had the most intense anxiety and emotional fatigue. These results are consistent with the Transactional Model's premise that stress responses are not determined by the stressor, but by the individual's appraisals and coping resources.

In addition, the model's focus on coping flexibility may be especially applicable to FCSHD youth with differing degrees of cognitive challenge and emotions rigour (Baker, 2000). For instance, a student might utilize problem-focused coping to structure their thesis timeline and request supervisor feedback and emotion-focused coping (e.g., through mindfulness or peer social support) in emotionally stressful situations, such as internship evaluations or public presentations. This capacity to adapt coping styles to the requirements of the situation has been identified as a significant editor of resilience and lower psychological distress (Freire et al., 2020).

Recent research also demonstrated the importance of social support in increasing coping ability. Nurul Azizah et al. 4Psychological factors social support Perceived social support, including from family, peers were negatively associated with the stress of Malaysian undergraduates (Nurhazlini et al., 2023). These results suggest that enhancing supportive experiences in FCSHD (e.g., peer mentoring and faculty involvement) may mitigate the detrimental effects of academic stress and facilitate emotional wellness.

In conclusion, the Transactional Model offers a strong base for conceptualising the subjective experiences of FCSHD Year 3 students. The model accounts for why some students thrive with academic stress while others experience distress by focusing on the role of cognitive appraisal and coping resources. The model can be incorporated into student development plans by, for example, stress management workshops, or by implementing assistance programs for students, the use of mentors, and by offering courses that help students become more resilient

2.5.4 Strength and Limitations of the Model

A major strength of the model is making stress highly individualized and dynamic. In contrast to previous models which framed stress as a predictable response to environmental stimuli, the Transactional Model highlights the subjective nature of stress, and thus the fact that people may interpret and react to stress in different ways, depending on their beliefs, experiences and resources (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). This is even more significant among FCSHD students, as their academic sources of stress such as FYP, internship placements, and CGPA concerns are perhaps interpreted and handled in various fashions. For instance, a student with excellent time management skills and peer support may perceive FYP deadlines as a challenge, whereas one with poor time management and little social support may view the same FYP deadline task as a threat.

Another merit of the model is that it attaches value to coping flexibility, which implies that working individuals can switch between problem-focused and emotion-focused strategies according to the type of stressor. This flexibility is particularly important to Year 3 students as they seek to negotiate the demands of practical academic tasks, as well as emotionally laden encounters. Freire et al. (2020), those utilizing an adaptive coping mechanism planning and positive reappraisal showed lower psychological distress and higher academic engagement which suggests that the model is applicable to academic domain.

Yet the model also has significant weaknesses. One major criticism is that it downplays cultural and systemic factors. The model is reductionistic in that it emphasizes the individual as responsible for the outcomes of stress and coping, and tends to deemphasize broader contextual factors such as institutional rules, societal values, and cultural norms that influence the experience of stress and the adoption of coping strategies. For example, place the Malaysian university setting, students can become stressed because of the rigid and predetermined way in which the curriculum is structured, or because of the need to secure a scholarship or meet family expectations, factors that are not fully considered in the model's framework (Biggs et al., 2017).

Moreover, the model supposes that persons possess the ability to assess stressors and to choose suitable tactics of coping. This premise may not apply to those who are students and who report high distress, because distorted appraisals or maladaptive coping may interfere. Scribner et al. (2020) noted that the students with little emotional regulation skill tended to deny or avoid emotional activities, which might actually elevate stress rather than reduce it.

Additionally, the use of self-report as the measure of appraisal and coping in the model introduces bias, which may compromise its empirical accuracy. It is claimed that the subjective nature of appraisal creates problems, as it is difficult to quantify so it may be challenging to compare different people or situations (Biggs et al., 2017).

Overall, the Transactional Model (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) is a useful conceptual framework for understanding stress and coping for Year 3 FCSHD students, with noted inferences. For broad utility, cultural competence, prospective institutional climate and systemic support are needed to integrate into future research and interventions. This will gain a comprehensive insight on student stress and enhance effective coping mechanism in UNIMAS.

2.6 Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)

This research is intended to examine Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) in the context as a method of stress management which addresses psychological distress among the Year 3 students at the Faculty of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development (FCSHD) of University Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS). CBT, a structured and focus on-goal intervention, has been found to be effective in decreasing symptoms of anxiety, depression, and academic-related distress among those in a high-pressure academic environment. As opposed to traditional psychotherapies that delve into past experiences, CBT targets maladaptive thinking patterns that foster emotions and contributing to academic disengagement.

Final-year FCSHD students experience discipline-related pressures (e.g., managing their FYP, internships, competitive CGPA for scholarships and their future careers). These stressors frequently generate cognitive distortions, such as catastrophizing, fear of failure, and negative decimal assessment. CBT is particularly applicable to this scenario as students can learn to challenge these unconstructive thoughts with more realistic and positive interpretations, which would further decrease burnout and increase coping skills. A study by Freire et al. (2020) showed that both cognitive restructuring and planning led to lower level of psychological distress among university students and higher level of academic engagement and self-efficacy.

The methods used in CBT for management of academic stress increased exposure are suitable for Year 3 FCSHD students. Cognitive restructuring assists students in pinpointing irrational beliefs like prospects of catastrophic failure, such as “If I fail this assignment my academic future is over” and then replaces those thoughts with balanced thoughts, such as “This assignment is important but I can get some help and do better.” Behavioural activation facilitates the breaking of this pattern of avoidance via their participation in rewarding academic and non-academic activities (e.g. dedicated thesis writing time, time to meet with their peers, physical activity).

CBT also involves thought diaries and goal-setting exercises which encourage self-reflection and clarity, which in turn will help to reduce rumination and solve problems at times of pressure. These interventions can be offered as individual counselling, psycho-educational workshops or e-mental health technologies, lending themselves to integration within college support services.

In the Malaysian university context, CBT was also found to be effective in decreasing the levels of psychological distress among final-year students. A systematic review from Sharif Mudin et al. (2024) reported that CBT treatment relieved stress significantly in undergraduate students, whether it was faced or online CBT. A randomized controlled trial conducted by Nwadi et. (2025) showed that higher test anxiety, and lower scores in emotional regulation and academic achievement can be reduced in a population of Malaysian vocational students exposed to mindfulness-based CBT programmes.

Additionally, Weiss et al. (2025) found that a CBT for stress management app increased resilience and decreased perceived stress among a sample of university students in Malaysia. Taken together, these studies provide support for the idea that this type of CBT is an effective, scalable means of targeting high-stakes academic stress for students.

CBT also fits conceptually with Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) Transactional Model of Stress and Coping, which was the theory guiding this current research. The model proposes that experience of psychological distress occurs when an imbalance exists between the amount of stress perceived and the coping resources available. CBT allows learners to reinterpret their stressors and develop effective ways to deal with stress in advance. It focuses on agency, teaching students that although they may not always be able to control their academic burdens, they can control how they interpret and respond to them.

In summary, CBT provides structured, empirical evidence-based counteraction to the distress of Year 3 FCSHD students. Its focus on cognitive flexibility, behavioural activation, and emotional control is highly relevant to the type of stress experienced in end-of-year academic transitions. "CBT is a treatment with demonstrated effectiveness for many conditions including depression, anxiety disorders, stress and adjustment problems," according to the study, and if it were incorporated into the sort of wellness efforts offered at many universities, such as psycho-education workshops, peer mentoring and digital resources, it could help students succeed both academically and emotionally in the toughest semester of their lives

2.7 Summary

Chapter 2 addresses stress management techniques, psychological distress, academic stress, social support and theory the Transactional Model of Stress and Coping by Lazarus and Folkman (1984) for Year 3 FCSHD students in UNIMAS. Cognitive-behavioral methods, time management, mindfulness, and relaxation techniques are some of stress management techniques. Anxiety, depression and emotional pain are symptoms of psychological distress, which has a negative impact on student's mental health and academic achievement. Burnout and decreased cognitive functioning are the results of academic stress, which is caused by severe workloads and juggling obligations. The consequences of stress are lessened and emotional resilience is fostered via social support. It is necessary to take comprehensive approaches that incorporate social support, institutional initiatives, and stress management techniques.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodology framework for examining the connection between stress management techniques and psychological distress among Year 3 FCSHD students in UNIMAS. The population, sample size, sampling method, instruments, data collection procedures and data analysis are all covered in detail. The chosen approach is designed to guarantee the study's validity, reliability. The study will be guided by a quantitative correlational method which seeks to offer evidence of the pattern and intensity of relationship between variables in this study.

3.1 Research Design

A quantitative correlational approach will be used in this study, which is ideal for analyzing connections between variables without the need for direct manipulation (Ishtiaq, 2019). This method gives researchers a systematic and quantitative tool to look at the direction and intensity of relationships between stress management techniques and psychological distress. Understanding practical problem dynamics particularly in an academic atmosphere where stress management and psychological distress are common concerns is in line with the study's focus on naturally generating variables (Bryman, 2012).

Additionally, the use of statistical techniques, such as regression analysis to predict the extent to which stress management techniques may impact psychological distress and Pearson correlation to assess the linear relationship between variables. These techniques offer reliable information about the extent to which students who use stress management techniques express being less psychological distress (Tabachnick et al., 2018). This method improves the detail of the results by enabling the investigation of the differences among sections, such as gender or academic year (Tabachnick et al., 2018).

Furthermore, this method is perfect for examining stress management techniques and psychological distress in academic settings since correlational studies are especially useful for examining variables in organic, real-world contexts (Pattern & Newhart, 2017). Then, using this design, the study provides an overview of current connections and advances our understanding of student's psychological distress.

Moreover, it is important to recognize, though, that correlational research cannot demonstrate connection. The results are unable to verify that changes in one variable directly result in changes in the other, but they can highlight correlations and influence future research (William, 2022). This restriction emphasizes how important it is to evaluate results in context with observable data and take into account different study designs, including experimental studies, in order to prove connection in future studies.

3.2 Research Subject

Research subject in psychological research, those on whom behavioural, emotional or cognitive phenomena are thwarted or derived for purposes of comparison. These topics are crucial to the scientific enterprise, as they represent the source of data on which hypotheses are tested and theories are honed (Cuttler et al., 2019). In human-focussed studies, characteristics of participants may be selected on the basis of criteria relevant to the study's aims (e.g. age, academic standing or psychological risk).

In the APA Dictionary of Psychology, a research subject is described as “the organism (animal or human) constituted as a subject of or entity in relation to research” and may also relate to the field or discipline of inquiry. From the viewpoint of psychological research, also, sampling for research purposes in respect to ethics and methodological adequacy must be carried out to have valid and generalizable results (Jhangiani et al., 2019).

In this research, the participants are year 3 students from the FCSHD, UNIMAS, having to face a crucial academic phase, with final year projects, internship and career preparation. These students are of interest for the study of psychological distress and stress-management strategies because they are faced with high academic stressors and transitional stress, and there is much evidence showing that psychological stress is closely associated with stress management (co) variables.

This specific population provides for a concentrated examination of coping within a highly competitive academic setting, which can inform both theoretical and applied work in the area of student mental health.

3.2.1 Population

The population for this study includes all Year 3 FCSHD Students in UNIMAS. Due to the particular academic and professional difficulties, they face, these students represent a significant group within the larger psychology population. Managing advanced research projects, internship obligations, and getting ready for future career chances are a few of these, and they are frequently linked to high stress levels. Because of their backgrounds, they are a perfect group to study how stress management techniques relate to psychological distress (Ishtiaq, 2019).

Furthermore, Year 3 FCSHD students are suitable for this study because they are in a critical phase of their academic careers. They must deal with increasing responsibilities in their careers and academics, which could influence their psychological distress and stress management techniques (Bryman, 2012). By concentrating on this group, the study is guaranteed to be relevant and focused, gathering information at an important point in their academic journey.

3.3 Sample and Sampling Method

A stratified random sampling technique will be used in this study to choose participants from among Year 3 FCSHD in UNIMAS. This approach reduces selection bias and improves the generality of results by ensuring accurate representation of various groups, including gender and academic achievement (Tabachnick, 2018). The study makes sure that data accurately represents the range of these students' experiences with stress management techniques and psychological distress by stratifying the sample.

The sample size was chosen using accepted standards, such as the table by Krejcie and Morgan (1970), the power analysis by Yamane (1967), and the formula by Steven Thompson (2012), to make sure it satisfies the minimal standards for statistical validity and efficiency. In order to further improve the findings' reliability, the study uses a sample size that raises the accuracy of the results and takes into consideration possible non-responses. This method gives more understanding into the experiences of Year 3 FCSHD students in UNIMAS while ensuring the data's representativeness and dependability (J. Cohen, 1992; Adam, 2020).

According to Krejcie and Morgan (1970), for a population size of 533 and confidence

level of 95% with a margin error of 5%, the recommended sample size is 217 participants. Therefore, the Yamane's (1967) formula for populations, the sample size is calculated as 229 participants. For Steven Thompson formula, an estimate population proportion of 0.5 and a margin of error of 5%, the sample size is calculated to be 224 participants.

3.4 Instrument

This study, there are three commonly used and trustworthy tools were selected to collect information on psychological distress and stress management techniques among Year 3 FCSHD in UNIMAS. These tools were chosen because they can ensure the validity and reliability of the evaluation while offering thorough information on the participant's psychological, academic experiences and social. These tools include the Demographic Questionnaire, the Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (K10), the Brief COPE Inventory, and the Social Support Questionnaire (SSQ6). With its unique function in measuring different aspects of stress, stress management techniques, psychological distress, and social support. Each tool provides a comprehensive understanding of the variables affecting university student's mental health.

3.4.1 Brief COPE Inventory

The Brief COPE Inventory is a 28-item measure created by Carver (1997) to evaluate stress management techniques people employ in stressful situations. Emotion-focused coping and problem-focused coping are the list's two main subscales. Likert scales of four points, ranging from "I haven't been doing this at all" to "I've been doing this a lot", are used to rate each item. The different stress management techniques that students employ to deal with stress, such as preparing, avoiding the issue, or seeking support, can be assessed with this scale.

Furthermore, in the context of university students, the Brief COPE Inventory is especially helpful because it sheds light on both healthy and unhealthy stress management techniques. While dysfunctional stress management techniques like self-blame and denial can worsen distress, research has connected adaptive stress management techniques like active coping and social support to improve mental health outcomes (Carver, 1997). A

thorough analysis of the relationship between stress management techniques and the student's psychological distress levels is made possible by this technique.

According to Carver (1997), its strong psychometric qualities, such as its high internal consistency and reliability, make it a perfect tool for both academic and clinical research. In order to better understand student's mental health, the Brief COPE Inventory assists in determining which stress management techniques are most successful in reducing stress.

3.4.2 Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (K10)

The Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (K10) is a popular 10-item instrument for assessing psychological distress that was created by Kessler et al. (2002). With the responses score on a five-point Likert scale from "None of the time" to "All of the time," this tool focuses on the anxiety and depression symptoms that were experienced over the course of the previous four weeks. Higher scores correspond to higher psychological distress levels.

Therefore, the K10 scale has been used in various cultural and demographic contexts, including among university students, and is well-regarded for its validity and reliability in evaluating mental health (Clark & Watson, 1995). This questionnaire is useful for assessing general distress levels and identifying students who could be at risk for mental health problems. The K10 is particularly helpful in checking for signs of anxiety and depression in non-clinical populations, such as university students.

3.4.3 Social Support Questionnaire (SSQ6)

The Social Support Questionnaire (SSQ6) is a 6-item measure used to evaluate a person's level of social support satisfaction and availability. Two important components of social support are measured by the SSQ6, which was created by Sarason et al. (1983): the quantity of social support sources that are accessible and the degree of satisfaction with those sources. Participants are asked to rate how satisfied they are with the support they receive and to name the individuals they may turn to for assistance in each topic.

Moreover, social support is essential for stress management since it may reduce the negative effects of stress and lower the risk of psychological distress. High levels of

perceived social support have been linked to lower levels of anxiety and depression in a number of studies, especially in stressful situations like university life (Sarason et al.,1983). Because it offers a straightforward yet efficient method of assessing the perceived availability and quality of social support two factors that are essential to comprehending how adolescents manage stress the SSQ6 is especially useful in this situation.

Then, the SSQ6 is a perfect instrument for studying social support and how it relates to psychological distress since it has demonstrated great psychometric qualities, including high validity and reliability (Sarason et al.,1983). This tool contributes a distinctive perspective to the research by evaluating the amount and quality of social support, shedding light on the function of interpersonal connections in stress management techniques and mental health prevention.

3.4.4 Demographic

The Demographic is an essential instrument for gathering important participant's background information. Personal and academic information including age, gender, course program, CGPA and frequency of meetings with academic advisors are all included in this questionnaire. It also records details about the individuals in charge, including how the students have interacted with professors, academic advisor, or other leaders during their academic careers. Since these connections are frequently essential to university student's interactions with their social support such as family member, academic advisor and friends.

These demographic characteristics offer important background information for comprehending the stress management techniques and psychological distress on Year 3 FCSHD students in UNIMAS. The authority figures involved can have a significant impact on how students handle stress and their educational obligations. Regular interactions with faculty or academic advisors, for instance, may provide students with a sense of academic support and guidance, which may then have an impact on their capacity for effective stress management (Ishtiaq, 2019). On the other hand, if students struggle academically without sufficient help, a lack of interaction with authoritative figures may exacerbate feelings of stress.

Furthermore, in order to investigate possible connections between background factors

and stress-related effects, it is essential to comprehend how these associations work. Students who have good, beneficial connections with academic advisor, for example can use better stress management techniques which would lessen psychological distress. Student who received less assistance, on the other hand, can turn to unhealthy stress management techniques, which would make their stress levels worse. The questionnaire provides a broader perspective of the elements influencing student's stress management techniques and psychological distress by including information on the members of the authority involved.

Additionally, this demographic data makes subgroup analysis easier, allowing researcher to investigate how interacts with authority figures affect various student group's distress level and stress management techniques. It ensures a thorough and contextualize analysis of the psychological and academic experiences of the participants (Bryman, 2012).

3.5 Data Collection Procedures

This study's data collection will be conduct through the use of an online survey platform, which is Google Forms, which offers a quick and easy approach to collect participant replies. Particularly for addressing college students, Google Forms is select because of its cost- effectiveness, accessibility, and user-friendly interface (Sue & Ritter, 2012). Higher response rates are guarantees while keeping consistency in data collection thanks to the online survey mode, which offers participants the comfort of doing the survey at their own pace and permits flexibility in both time and locale. Because schedules can vary widely and ease is crucial for participation, this is especially advantageous in research aim at university populations (Sue & Ritter, 2012).

3.6 Participants Recruitment

This study participants were recruited using direct web invitation and primarily targeted the Year 3 students of FCSHD from University Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS). Recruitment was initiated the recruitment by sharing a WhatsApp Google Form survey link to individual student who met the inclusion criteria.

The e-mail contained a short description on the study's objective and stressed on the voluntary nature of the participation. To increase circulation and participation, the researcher was asked that recipients send the link to the other eligible Year 3 FCSHD students. This snowball sampling method also provided a natural spread of the survey through peer network channels, increasing the chance of reaching a wide and appropriate sample.

Recruitment through WhatsApp was feasible and effective, taking into account that the WhatsApp application is highly popular among university students. This allowed the survey to be spread rapidly and facilitated participation at the time of the students' choosing. This is consistent with recent research evidence that has shown social media platforms such as WhatsApp to be of benefit in reaching hard to-reach populations and increased response rates in academic studies (Mavhandu-Mudzusi et al., 2022; Jones et al., 2023).

3.7 Pilot Study

A pilot study is an essential step in the research process because it provides an opportunity to test and improve the tools and methods before the primary data collection phase starts. Assessing the validity and reliability of the study's instruments is its main goal in order to make sure that the research instruments are efficient and suitable for the intend audience. For instance, the pilot study was used to identify any logistical or procedural problems that may arise during the data collection process, assess the survey item's clarity and comprehensibility, test the instrument's reliability (specifically the K10 Scale, the Brief COPE Inventory and Social Support Questionnaire SSQ6), and estimate the average time need to complete the survey. This preliminary stage is essential to the research's overall success since it enables possible issues to be identify ahead of the major study being carry out.

Then, assessing the questionnaire item's comprehensibility and clarity is the pilot study's primary goal. Every survey question must be simple enough for respondents to understand and express the intend meaning. Any confusing or perplexing questions may lead to inconsistent or inaccurate answers, which was ultimately compromise the reliability of the data. As a result, the pilot study was assisted in identifying any problematic elements and enable adjustments to enhance the question's clarity. According to Dillman, Smyth, and Christian (2014), who underline the significance of accessibility and relevance in questionnaire design, survey instruments must include clear and straightforward wording to guaranteed that participants can understand the questions. The researcher can make the require corrections and get insightful participant input on each item's clarity during the pilot testing phase.

Therefore, evaluating the reliability of the K10 Scale, the Brief COPE Inventory and Social Support Questionnaire in the particular setting of Year 3 FCSHD students in UNIMAS is another important goal of the pilot study. the consistency and stability of an instrument's result are referred to as reliability, and it was crucial to make sure that the instrument employ in the study produce data that was be rely upon. Cronbach's alpha, a commonly use in statistical technique for assessing a scale's internal consistency, were used in the pilot project. The scale's items are consistently assessing the same construct when the Cronbach's alpha coefficient is high, usually above 0.7. The K10 Scale, the Brief COPE

Inventory and Social Support Questionnaire were worked well in the target population's unique academic and cultural environment, which is why this reliability evaluation is so crucial. Reliability testing is an essential step in confirming that instruments are suitable for usage in particular populations (Taber, 2018).

The pilot study was to determine the average amount of time need for participants to finish the survey in addition to assessed its clarity and dependability. Making sure the survey is not too lengthy can lead to participant tiredness and partial responses, which one of the issues in survey research. An excessively lengthy survey may also result in lower quality data because participants may lose interest or concentrate as they go through the questions. The researcher can estimate the time require to complete the survey and assess whether it falls within an acceptable range by distributing it to a small sample during the pilot phase. Since this is widely regard as the ideal time frame that for thorough responses without overwhelming the participants, the survey should ideally take 15 to 20 minutes to complete (Bryman, 2012). The pilot study's duration estimate was assisted make sure the survey is not too long and will let the researcher make any necessary changed.

The pilot study's fourth goal is to find and fix any procedural or logistical problems that might come up after gathered data. This covers any difficulties with data entry, technical difficulties with the online survey platform, and any difficulties obtaining consent and recruiting participants. As an illustration, users may experience problems using the online platform or comprehending how to answer specific questions. Early detection of these problems enables the researcher to modify the platform or survey design before the start of the primary data collecting. It was crucial to solved logistical concerns like these during the pilot phase since they can have a substantial impact on how smoothly the study runs. Additionally, the pilot project was examined logistical issues connect to participant recruitment, such as getting informed consent and ensuring a sufficient sample size. This guaranteed that the researcher can resolve any possible issues before to starting the primary investigation (Sue & Ritter, 2012).

Furthermore, a small sample of 20-30 Year 3 FCSHD students in UNIMAS were participated in the pilot project, they were chose using convenience sampling. It is because a practical and makes it easy for the researcher to find willingly and available participants,

convenience sampling is frequently employed in pilot studies (Etikan, 2016). After completing the online survey, these students' opinions were compiled to evaluate the topic's relevancy and clarity. In order to evaluate the internal consistency of the K10 Scale, the Brief COPE Inventory and Social Support Questionnaire, the researcher will also conduct reliability analysis using Cronbach's alpha. Before to the extensive data collection, participant input will be crucial in improving the survey's instruments and design.

The results of the pilot study will be thoroughly examined after it is finish, and any necessary changes to the questionnaire will be made. Clarifying unclear questions, changing item phrasing to enhance comprehension, or altering the survey design to handle practical concerns could all be part of this. In order to ensure that the entire study runs well and that the data gather is of the highest quality, the outcomes of the pilot study will serve as a strong basis for the primary data gathering phase. Through proactive resolution of any possible problems, the pilot study ensures that the primary research procedure will be productive, efficient, and free of significant obstacles.

3.8 Validity & Reliability

Validity and reliability of measurement instruments are important elements in quantitative studies to assess the quality of the research. Uapay can conceptualize from the largest to the smallest (from the concept until the indicator) to determine the value (validity) of how a tool is able to correctly measure the concept that it will measure so that the result can be achieved well and can we apply to the research objectives (Tresa, 2024). It includes different types, such as content, construct, and criterion-related validity. Reliability, meanwhile, is about the uniformity and stability of measurements over time, items, and observers. A valid instrument produces consistent results under stable conditions and thereby increases trustworthiness of data obtained (Bannigan & Watson, 2009). Taken together, these principles protect scientific findings for accuracy and reproducibility and enable them to serve as bases for scientific conclusions.

3.8.1 Validity

Since then, the present study covered three types of validity: construct, criterion and content (Cohen, 1992). Validity of content: The sample and the instruments of measurement were designed to be representative enough in order to reflect the phenomenon in sufficient totality (Cohen, 1992). Stratified random sampling was used so that the target population, which is the Year 3 students of FCSHD at UNIMAS, was well represented. The present design improved construct validity by using a broad range of participants (i.e., male, female, with varying level of academic achievement) so that the results could be generalized. As also mentioned by Tabachnick (2018), stratification made it possible to minimize selection bias and increase the external validity.

To justify statistical validity, this study utilized well-established sampling formulas and protocols (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970; Yamane, 1967; Thompson, 2012). An inner reliability ((Krejcie & Morgan, 1970)) was used to determine sample size with respect to population size, margin of error, and confidence level. Furthermore, Yamane's and Thompson's equations based on proportionate and representative sampling technique were used to cross-check the sample size and avoid under-sampling that might influence the precision of the findings (Yamane, 1967; Thompson, 2012).

They also took into consideration possible non-response and tried to minimize the effects of sampling error by using multiple methods to estimate sample sizes. A 5% error margin has been introduced, providing the widely-accepted practice in social science research (Cohen, 1992). The estimated sample sizes of 217, 224, and 229 of participants were also consistent via various formulas, and therefore this will help to validate the study.

3.8.2 Reliability

Reliability in this research indicated the ability of measurement results to be reproduced over repeated applications or analogous forms of instruments (Cohen 1992). The stratified random sampling contributed to the composition of sample being the appropriate representation of strata in the population, thus reducing potential systematic errors and maximizing generalizability and reliability of the results (Tabachnick, 2018).

Moreover, the robustness of the study was enhanced by the use of established sampling methods (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970; Yamane, 1967; Thompson, 2012) that had been thoroughly tried and tested in previous studies. These strategies made u... 58. Open Access article This article is distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons license, and indicate if changes were made.

Further, the sample size of 229 participants used was more than Yamane's (1967) recommended minimum sample size needed for factorial analysis. This tended to reduce the standard error and enhance the consistency of the estimates. Moreover, the use of different sample sizes (217, 224, 229) in various formulas enhanced the validity of the present study (Thompson, 2012).

Standard and uniform data collection tools were promoted to improve measurement consistency. Before full implementation the tools were pilot-tested for clarity and inconsistent measurement; unclear items or measurement were revised as necessary. This initial testing helped with the overall credibility of the data collection (Cohen, 1992).

3.8.3 Pilot Study Reliability Analysis

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.171	10

Table 3.1 Pilot Study Reliability Analysis

Item-Total Statistics				
	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Q29	27.76	14.833	.178	.095
Q30	28.34	15.091	.092	.136
Q31	28.03	16.463	-.072	.232
Q32	28.14	14.337	.126	.111
Q33	28.07	18.352	-.247	.327
Q34	28.28	14.064	.187	.076
Q35	28.31	13.865	.217	.058
Q36	28.31	16.507	-.059	.219
Q37	28.24	14.761	.175	.095
Q38	28.00	14.571	.066	.150

Figure 1.3: Pilot Study Reliability Analysis

There was a pilot study conducted among 29 Year 3 students of Faculty of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development (FCSHD) of UNIMAS to assess the clarity and reliability of the selected items of the questionnaire derived from the Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (K10). This pilot was designed to detect any measurement problems and to ensure the suitability of the instrument for the target group of participants on a larger scale data collection.

The Case Processing Summary showed that all 29 responses were valid (i.e., none were missing). This result indicated that the questionnaire was understandable and that all

participants answered it completely, and therefore confirmed the applicability of the questionnaire to a wider population.

Aletheia Strengths The Reliability Statistics, however, showed a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.171 for the 10 item-scale, a value that stands well below the widely accepted standard for internal consistency in social science research of 0.70 (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011; Sheposh, 2024). This low alpha may indicate that the items are not capturing a single, unidimensional concept of psychological distress, or that some items fit poorly with the rest of the scale.

Additional inspection of the Item-Total Statistics revealed that a few items in the NFA, especially Q31, Q33 and Q36, with negative or negligible (very low) corrected item-total correlations. These items have little (or no) substantive contribution to the construct as a whole and might be conceptually misaligned or misinterpreted by participants. Arguably, deletion of Q33 would raise alpha to 0.327, suggesting that this item could be particularly problematic.

The Item Statistics also showed a significant amount of spread in the responses, mean varying from 2.93 to 3.52 and SDs over 1.0 over all the items. Although this variation is informative for identifying interindividual differences, it may also be more indicative of varying interpretation of individual items across participants.

Identification of these responses illustrates the necessity to improve the questionnaire prior to full implementation. Potential enhancements are the clarification of those items which are unclear, cultural and contextually tuning and eventually the performance of a factor analysis to evaluate dimensionality. The pilot study yielded essential information in terms of test-retest reliability of the measure, and informed necessary changes to further strengthen the psychometric properties of the instrument.

3.9 Data Analysis

SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) version 26, a popular and trustworthy program for statistical analysis in social science research, was used to examine the gathered data (Pallant, 2020). A comprehensive set of tools provide by SPSS makes it easier to do descriptive and inferential statistical analyses, enabling precise and insightful data interpretation.

3.9.1 Descriptive Analysis

The demographic details of the participants, including age, gender, CGPA program, year of study and how many times meeting academic advisor as well as the primary variables being study, were compiled using descriptive statistics. A concise summary of the data is given by descriptive statistics, which also assist in presenting important findings in an approachable manner. To characterize the data distribution, metrics including the mean, standard deviation, frequency distributions, and percentages was computed. These measurements help in identifying trends and patterns in data in addition to providing central tendencies and variability (Schaap, 2013). The features of the sample and the main research variables will be fundamentally understood according to this preliminary analysis.

3.9.2 Pearson Correlation

The study was used Pearson Correlation analysis to investigate the pattern and extent of the associations between stress management techniques and psychological distress. Two variable's linear relationship is measure by the Pearson Correlation coefficient (r), which has values between -1 and +1. Perfect positive correlations were represented by values of +1, perfect negative correlations by values -1, and no correlation is represented by a value of 0 (Cohen, 2013). This research was investigated that certain stress-reduction methods, like emotion-focused or problem-focused coping strategies, are link to increase psychological suffering. The strength (strong, moderate, or weak) and direction (positive or negative) of the associations between these variables was also evaluate, offering more information on the type of correlations.

3.9.3 Regression Analysis

The predictors of psychological distress will be investigated using multiple regression analysis, taking into account stress management techniques and demographic factors as gender, age, CGPA, program, year of study and how many times meeting academic advisor. By adjusting for other variables, this approach enables a thorough understanding of the role that each predictor variable plays in psychological distress. Multiple regression analysis can show the unique effects of each predictor as well as any possible interactions between the predictors that might affect distress levels by using many independent variables. This method offers a more comprehensive view of the elements causing psychological suffering (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2018).

3.9.4 One-Way ANOVA

A one-way ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) was performed to examine the variations in psychological distress and stress management techniques among several categorical groups (e.g., gender, age, CGPA or year of study). To determine whether there is a statistically significant difference between three or more independent groups, one-way ANOVA compares their means (Field, 2013). For instance, the study could determine whether psychological distress levels in various programs differ significantly or whether gender differences in stress management techniques are relevant. Afterwards testing was used to identify the differences if significant ones are discovered.

3.10 Summary

Research Design The research design is the methodological framework of the study to examine on the topic of the relationship between psychological distress and stress coping techniques in Year 3 FCSHD students of UNIMAS. Utilizing quantitative correlational research design, the study used stratified random sampling to ensure an equitable representation with the sample determined through Krejcie & Morgan, Yamane and Thompson's formulae. Measures consisted of the Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (K10), Brief COPE Inventory, Social Support Questionnaire (SSQ6), and a demographic form, which were administered through WhatsApp using a peer-referral approach for recruitment. Twenty-nine participants were included in a pilot study, which demonstrated data completeness but low internal consistency (June/July 2015; Cronbach's $\alpha = .171$), precipitating item-level examination of the questionnaire and identification of possible implications for revision. To enhance the validity and reliability, the study included standardised measures, pre-testing of items and vigorous sampling techniques, and used analyses (performed using SPSS) such as; warehousing, correlations, regressions and ANOVA to interpret the relationship, if any, between stress management strategies and psychological stress.

Chapter 4

Findings

4.0 Introduction

This study investigates the relationship between psychological distress and stress management techniques among Year 3 FCSHD in UNIMAS. University students, particularly those in their third year, experience increased academic pressure that can result in psychological distress, such as stress, anxiety and depression as discussed at Chapter 1 and Chapter 2 (Misra et al., 2000; Pelizza et al., 2021). These student's distress levels are increased by stressors including final year projects and getting ready for future professions (Brown et al., 2020). The results of a quantitative examination of data obtained with proven tools, such as the Brief COPE Inventory and the Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (K10), are presented in this chapter. These resources are necessary for determining student's psychological distress and stress management techniques (Carver, 1997; Kessler et al., 2002).

This study using quantitative correlational approach allowed for an investigation of the connections between psychological distress and stress management techniques (Tabachnick et al., 2018). To investigate the direction and strength of the relationships between the descriptive analysis, Pearson Correlation analysis, Regression analysis and One-Way ANOVA used. Furthermore, demographic information such as age, gender, CGPA, and academic year were gathered in order to find out whether these variables had an impact on the student's psychological distress and stress management techniques (Bryman, 2012; Cohen, 1992).

The results are explained in a methodical manner in this chapter. In the beginning, the sample's demographic details will be provided. The relationship between problem-focused and emotion-focused stress management techniques and psychological distress will then be examined. Finally, the importance of social support in stress mitigation will be examined. The effectiveness of stress management techniques approaches in reducing being uncomfortable will also be covered. The Transactional Model of Stress and Coping, which

holds that stress is a dynamic process including the evaluation of stressors and available coping resources, will be used to interpret these findings (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

It is expected that the results of this research will offer insightful information about how particular stress management techniques are used by students to deal with the psychological distress they encounter during their academic journey (Folkman & Lazarus, 1984)

4.1 Inferential Analysis

Inferential analysis is improving the well-being of students, especially those in Year 3 FCSDH in UNIMAS. It requires an understanding of the relationship between psychological distress and stress management techniques. Time management, academic demands and future career path cause students to feel more stressed. A theoretical basis for examining how people perceive and react to stressors is provided by (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984) Transactional Model of Stress and Coping. The inferential statistical procedures of Pearson Correlation, Regression Analysis, and One-Way ANOVA are used in this study to determine whether psychological distress is predicted by demographic characteristics and whether stress management strategies are correlated with distress levels.

The Pearson Correlation analysis is used to assess the strength and direction of the relationship between stress management techniques and psychological distress. Previous studies indicate that effective stress management techniques, such as problem-focused strategies, are associated with lower distress levels, while maladaptive coping strategies, such as avoidance, exacerbate psychological distress (Cheng et al., 2023). By findings from similar research suggest that emotion-focused coping, including seeking social support, may have a positive correlation with distress levels, meaning students experiencing higher distress tend to rely more on emotional support (Xu et al., 2023). However, problem-focused coping, such as planning and active coping, may show a negative correlation, indicating that students who engage in structured stress management techniques experience lower distress levels.

Therefore, regression analysis helps identify key predictors of psychological distress among students. Studies have shown that academic workload, future career path, and social support significantly influence distress levels (Chen et al., 2022). In this study, multiple regression analysis examines whether stress management techniques and demographic factors contribute to psychological distress. Research suggests that self-efficacy and resilience play a crucial role in mitigating stress (Shaban et al., 2025). Students with higher psychological capital comprising optimism, hope, and self-efficacy tend to experience lower distress levels. Additionally, gender differences may emerge, with female students often reporting higher distress levels due to societal expectations and emotional sensitivity (Atkinson, 2020).

Next, One-Way ANOVA is used to compare psychological distress levels across different demographic groups, such as gender, academic program, and CGPA. Previous studies indicate that students in high-pressure academic programs report significantly higher distress levels (Asturias, 2017). Findings from similar studies suggest that first-generation university students may experience higher distress due to financial burdens and lack of familial academic guidance.

4.2 Descriptive Statistic

Table 4.1: Descriptive Statistics for Age, Gender, Program, and CGPA (N = 325)

	Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean		Std. Deviation
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic
Age (Umur)	325	1	3	2.03	.037	.673
Gender (Jantina)	325	1	2	1.55	.028	.498
Course program in FCSHD (Program kursus dalam FCSHD)	325	1	4	2.65	.061	1.106
Current CGPA (PNGK semasa)	325	1	5	3.07	.068	1.225
Valid N (listwise)	325					

Figure 4.1: Descriptive Statistic

The descriptive statistics for the study sample (N = 325) show the following results. The participants' ages ranged from a minimum of 1 to a maximum of 3, with a mean age of 2.03 and a standard deviation of 0.673. Regarding gender, the gender distribution ranged

from 1 (male) to 2 (female), with a mean of 1.55 and a standard deviation of 0.498, indicating a relatively balanced gender distribution. In terms of academic programs within the Faculty of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development (FCSHD), the course programs varied from 1 to 4, with a mean value of

2.65 and a standard deviation of 1.106, suggesting a diverse spread of course selections among the students. Finally, the current CGPA (Cumulative Grade Point Average) scores ranged from 1 to 5, with a mean of 3.07 and a standard deviation of 1.225, indicating a fairly wide range of academic performance levels within the sample.

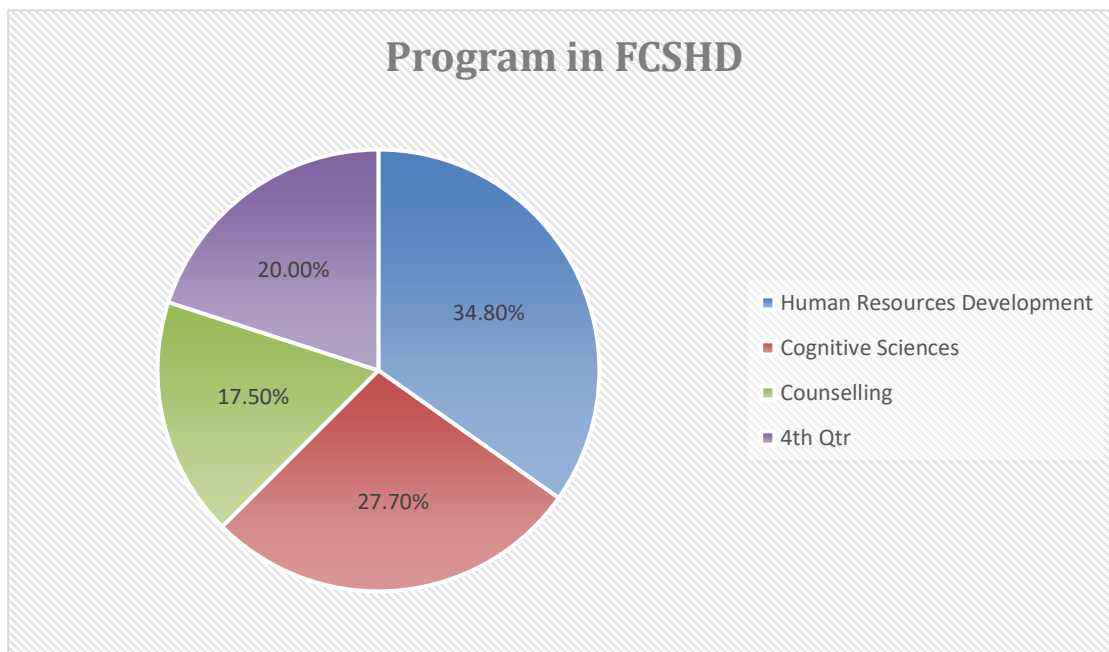


Figure 4.2: Program in FCSHD

A pie chart shows the proportion of Year 3 students ($n = 325$) according to area of study completed in the questionnaire. Most of the sample is HRD, which is the largest proportion of the sample as part of the population as HRD accounted for 34.8% of the sample 7.2. Cognitive Science has 27.7%, unquestionably reflecting great interest in interdisciplinary studies on cognition and behaviour. Psychology represents 20.0% of respondents, demonstrating a significant commitment of students in mental health and behaviour-related disciplines. Finally, Counselling makes 17.5%, highlighting the appreciable role played by students who are in something similar to emotional support and guidance programs.

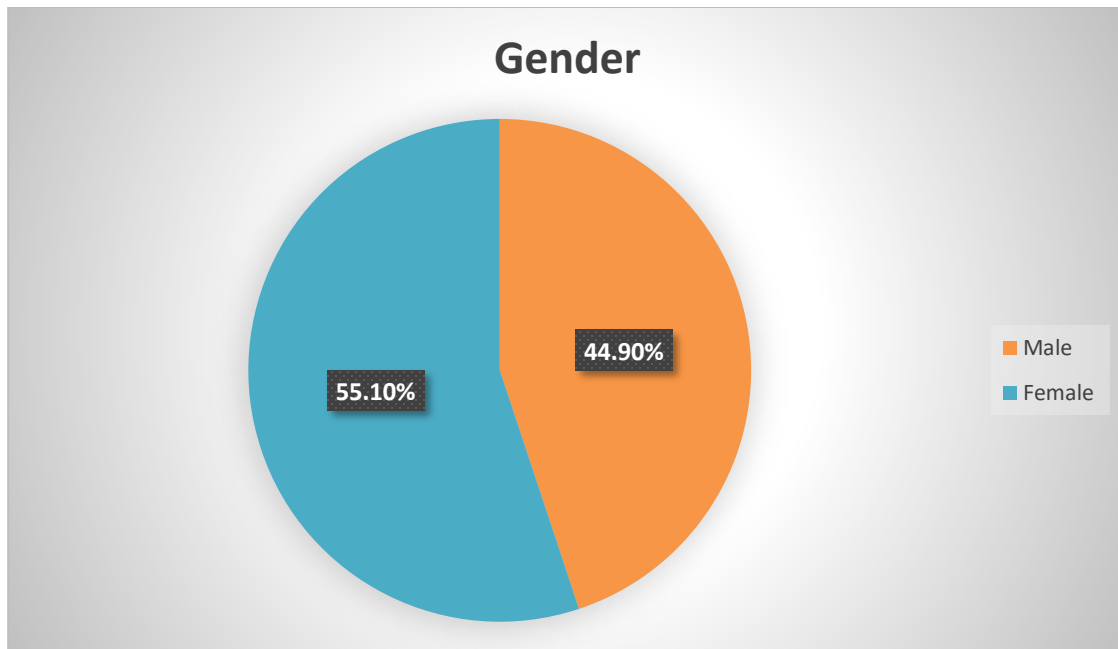


Figure 4.3: Gender

The sample of 325 Year 3 students who responded to the questionnaire seems to be balanced judging by the pie chart labelled "Gender" (Figure 1: Gender). Moreover, a total of 44.90% of the respondents are males and 55.10% females. This small majority of female participant is consistent with the gender mean of 1.55 in the descriptive statistic male was coded as 1 and female was coded as 2. The relatively equal representation of male and female respondents gives credibility to this study; however, the experiences related to gender could still impact on how students perceive and respond to psychological distress.

4.2.1 Descriptive Psychological Distress

Table 4.2: Descriptive Statistics for Psychological Distress (K10) Scores Among Respondents

(N = 325)

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
KPS_TOTAL_NEW	325	18.00	41.00	30.3662	3.90055
Valid N (listwise)	325				

Figure 4.4: Descriptive Psychological Distress

There are no statistically significant variations between the groups Psychological Distress levels, according to the ANOVA results ($F = 0.875$, $p = .545$). The grouping variable may not have had an important effect on psychological distress levels, according to this non-significant conclusion. Such results could suggest a genuine lack of group differences or methodological issues such as insufficient power or an invalidation of ANOVA assumptions as explained by Tabachnick & Fidell (2019). Furukawa et al. (2003) noted that Kessler scales reflect temporary distress states that may vary irrespective of group membership, which is consistent with the substantial within-group variability (Mean Square = 15.369).

Research on effect sizes serves as a reminder that it may take larger numbers of samples to identify small but practically significant differences (Cohen, 1988). (Lovibond et al., 1995) results that core distress symptoms frequently traverse categorization boundaries without moderating factors are similar to the consistency of distress across groups. In order to better understand whether psychological distress presents differently in different circumstances, (Andrew et al., 2001) suggest that future studies look at specific populations or other factors.

4.3 Pearson Correlation Analysis

This study, the relationship between psychological distress and stress management techniques among Year 3 FCSHD students at UNIMAS, Pearson correlation analysis serves as a foundational statistical tool to examine the strength and direction of associations between these two constructs. Pearson correlation is particularly well-suited for identifying linear relationships between continuous variables, such as scores on psychological distress scales and the frequency or intensity of coping strategies employed by students (Field, 2018). By applying this method, researchers can determine whether increases in the use of specific stress management techniques such as active coping, emotional support, instrumental support, planning, acceptance and positive reframing are associated with corresponding increases or decreases in psychological distress.

This approach is especially relevant in higher education settings, where students often face multifaceted stressors related to academic performance, social expectations, and future career uncertainty. Understanding how these students manage stress and how their coping behaviors relate to their mental health outcomes is critical for developing effective support systems (Alzayyat & Al-Gamal, 2014). Pearson correlation analysis not only quantifies these relationships but also provides empirical evidence to inform targeted interventions. For instance, a significant negative correlation between active coping and psychological distress would suggest that students who engage more in proactive stress management experience lower levels of emotional strain, thereby validating the promotion of such strategies in university wellness programs (Reeve et al., 2021).

Moreover, this statistical method aligns with the theoretical underpinnings of Lazarus and Folkman's Transactional Model of Stress and Coping, which posits that individuals' cognitive appraisals and coping responses mediate the impact of stressors on psychological outcomes (Biggs et al., 2017). By using Pearson correlation, the study operationalizes this model, allowing for a nuanced understanding of how specific coping mechanisms correlate with students' mental health. This insight is essential for tailoring counseling services and academic policies to better support students navigating the pressures of university life.

Table 4.3: Pearson Correlation

Correlations			
		KPS_TOTAL_ NEW	ACTIVE_COPI NG
KPS_TOTAL_NEW	Pearson Correlation	1	-.150**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.007
	N	325	325
ACTIVE_COPING	Pearson Correlation	-.150**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.007	
	N	325	325

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Figure 4.5: Pearson Correlation

The Pearson correlation analysis between psychological distress (KPS_TOTAL_NEW means Kessler Psychological Distress K10 assessment) and active coping revealed a statistically significant negative relationship ($r = -0.150$, $p = .007$), suggesting that students who engage more frequently in active coping strategies tend to report slightly lower levels of psychological distress. Although the strength of the correlation is modest, its significance indicates a meaningful association between these two variables. This finding aligns with the broader literature, which consistently supports the protective role of active coping in managing psychological strain, particularly in high-stress academic environments (Tada, 2017).

Active coping, characterized by deliberate efforts to confront stressors through planning, problem-solving, and seeking instrumental support, has been associated with improved emotional regulation and reduced anxiety symptoms in student populations (Perez-Tejada et al., 2019). The inverse relationship observed in this study reinforces the notion that students who adopt proactive coping mechanisms are better equipped to buffer the psychological toll of academic demands. This is particularly relevant in the context of final-year university students, who often face compounded stress from research projects, career uncertainty, and social expectations.

Moreover, the significance of this correlation supports the theoretical framework proposed by Lazarus and Folkman, which posits that individuals who perceive stressors as manageable are more likely to engage in problem-focused coping, thereby reducing

emotional distress (Shukri & Badayai, 2020). The findings also echo recent research in healthcare education, where active coping was found to be inversely related to psychological distress among nursing students, with exercise and sleep habits mediating this relationship (Tuncay & Musabak, 2015). These results suggest that active coping not only mitigates distress directly but may also promote healthier behavioral routines that further enhance psychological resilience.

In conclusion, the negative correlation between active coping and psychological distress, though modest, is consistent with a growing body of evidence emphasizing the value of adaptive coping strategies in academic settings. It highlights the importance of equipping students with practical tools for stress management and underscores the need for universities to foster environments that encourage proactive engagement with challenges.

4.4 Regression Analysis

This study, which investigates the relationship between psychological distress and stress management techniques among Year 3 FCSHD students at UNIMAS, regression analysis plays a pivotal role in identifying which specific coping strategies significantly predict levels of psychological distress. Unlike correlation, which merely indicates the presence and direction of a relationship, regression analysis allows for a more nuanced understanding by quantifying the extent to which one or more independent variables such as active coping, emotional support, instrumental support, planning, acceptance and positive reframing can explain variations in the dependent variable, psychological distress (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019).

This method is particularly valuable in psychological and educational research, where multiple factors often interact to influence mental health outcomes. For instance, regression analysis can reveal whether students who frequently use active coping strategies are statistically less likely to report high levels of distress, even after accounting for other variables like gender, academic performance, or social support. Such insights are essential for designing targeted interventions that prioritize the most effective stress management techniques (Aldridge & Roesch, 2008). Moreover, regression models help to control for confounding variables, offering a clearer picture of the unique contribution each coping

strategy makes to students' psychological well-being (Hair et al., 2020).

By applying regression analysis, this study aligns with the theoretical framework of Lazarus and Folkman's Transactional Model of Stress and Coping, which emphasizes the dynamic interaction between individual coping responses and perceived stressors. The model suggests that the effectiveness of a coping strategy depends not only on the nature of the stressor but also on the individual's appraisal and available resources (Biggs et al., 2017). Regression analysis operationalizes this framework by statistically testing which coping strategies serve as protective factors against psychological distress in a high-stakes academic environment.

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.210 ^a	.044	.026	3.84969

a. Predictors: (Constant), POSTIVE_REFRAMING, ACTIVE_COPING, USE_OF_INSTRUMENTAL_SUPPORT, PLANNING, ACCEPTANCE, USE_OF_EMOTIONAL_SUPPORT

Figure 4.6: Model Summary Regression Analysis

ANOVA^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	216.621	6	36.104	2.436	.026 ^b
	Residual	4712.806	318	14.820		
	Total	4929.428	324			

a. Dependent Variable: KPS_TOTAL_NEW

b. Predictors: (Constant), POSTIVE_REFRAMING, ACTIVE_COPING, USE_OF_INSTRUMENTAL_SUPPORT, PLANNING, ACCEPTANCE, USE_OF_EMOTIONAL_SUPPORT

Figure 4.7: Anova Regression Analysis

Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	34.778	2.051		16.958	.000
	ACTIVE_COPING	-.453	.158	-.159	-2.871	.004
	USE_OF_EMOTIONAL_SUPPORT	-.272	.157	-.097	-1.737	.083
	USE_OF_INSTRUMENTAL_SUPPORT	-.095	.162	-.033	-.590	.555
	PLANNING	-.138	.161	-.047	-.854	.394
	ACCEPTANCE	.230	.161	.079	1.426	.155
	POSTIVE_REFRAMING	-.154	.165	-.051	-.934	.351

a. Dependent Variable: KPS_TOTAL_NEW

Figure 4.8: Coefficients Regression Analysis

The regression analysis conducted in this study offers critical insights into how different psychological distress and stress management techniques among Year 3 FCSHD students at UNIMAS. The Model Summary reports an R value of 0.210 and an R² (coefficient of determination) of 0.044. This means that the six stress management techniques entered into the model active coping, emotional support, instrumental support, planning, acceptance, and positive reframing together explain approximately 4.4% of the variance in students' psychological distress scores (KPS_TOTAL_NEW means Kessler Psychological Distress K10 assessment). While the explained variance is modest, it is not unusual in psychological and social science research where numerous factors influence mental health outcomes (Fletcher & Sarkar, 2013). The adjusted R² of 0.026 accounts for the number of predictors and provides a more conservative estimate, suggesting the model still has predictive value but is limited in scope.

Then the ANOVA table, the F-statistic is 2.436, with a significance level of $p = .026$, indicating that the overall regression model is statistically significant. This means the set of coping strategies, when taken together, reliably predicts variations in psychological distress and that this finding is unlikely to be due to chance (Hayes, 2022). The Coefficients table provides deeper insight into which individual predictors significantly contribute to the model. Among all six coping strategies, active coping is the only one with a significant effect ($B = -0.453$, $p = .004$). The negative unstandardized coefficient indicates that for every unit increase in active coping, students' psychological distress scores decrease by

approximately 0.453 units, holding all other variables constant. This reinforces the protective role of proactive stress management behaviours, aligning with existing research that highlights active coping as a buffer against academic burnout and emotional strain (Park & Adler, 2020).

Moreover, remaining predictors emotional support ($p = .083$), instrumental support ($p = .555$), planning ($p = .394$), acceptance ($p = .155$), and positive reframing ($p = .351$) were not statistically significant. Although some, such as emotional support, came close to significance, their effect sizes were not strong enough to meet the conventional threshold ($p < .05$). This suggests that while these techniques may still be used by students, they do not independently predict psychological distress in this sample. It's possible that the effectiveness of these strategies is context-dependent or intertwined with other unmeasured factors, such as personality traits, academic workload intensity, or available social infrastructure (Panahi et al., 2022).

In conclusion, the regression analysis confirms that active coping is a statistically significant and meaningful predictor of lower psychological distress in university students, while other strategies show limited independent impact. These findings support targeted interventions that enhance student's use of active coping techniques, such as problem-solving workshops and resilience training, to help manage academic stress more effectively.

4.5 One-Way ANOVA

In this study, which explores the relationship between psychological distress and stress management techniques among Year 3 FCSHD students at UNIMAS, one-way ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) serves as a critical statistical tool to examine whether levels of psychological distress differ significantly across distinct groups based on categorical variables such as gender, academic program, or CGPA. Unlike correlation or regression, which assess relationships between continuous variables, one-way ANOVA is designed to compare the means of three or more independent groups to determine if at least one group differs significantly from the others in terms of the dependent variable, in this case, psychological distress (Field, 2018).

This method is particularly relevant in educational and psychological research, where

researchers often seek to understand how demographic or academic factors influence mental health outcomes. For example, one-way ANOVA can reveal whether students from different academic programs experience varying levels of distress, thereby informing targeted support strategies (Saira et al., 2020). It also allows for the identification of group-based disparities that may otherwise be overlooked in bivariate analyses. By applying this technique, the study aligns with the broader goal of identifying systemic or contextual contributors to student well-being, offering a foundation for more equitable and responsive mental health interventions (Fein et al., 2024).

ANOVA					
KPS_TOTAL_NEW					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	185.072	3	61.691	4.174	.006
Within Groups	4744.356	321	14.780		
Total	4929.428	324			

Figure 4.9: Anova Regression Analysis

Multiple Comparisons						
Dependent Variable: KPS_TOTAL_NEW						
Tukey HSD						
(I) Course program in FCSHD (Program kursus dalam FCSHD)	(J) Course program in FCSHD (Program kursus dalam FCSHD)	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	2	2.07142*	.63394	.007	.4342	3.7086
	3	1.28576	.73999	.306	-.6253	3.1968
	4	1.97444*	.63887	.012	.3245	3.6244
2	1	-2.07142*	.63394	.007	-3.7086	-.4342
	3	-.78565	.64189	.612	-2.4434	.8720
	4	-.09697	.52210	.998	-1.4453	1.2514
3	1	-1.28576	.73999	.306	-3.1968	.6253
	2	.78565	.64189	.612	-.8720	2.4434
	4	.68868	.64676	.711	-.9816	2.3590
4	1	-1.97444*	.63887	.012	-3.6244	-.3245
	2	.09697	.52210	.998	-1.2514	1.4453
	3	-.68868	.64676	.711	-2.3590	.9816

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Figure 4.10: Multiple Comparisons One Way ANOVA

KPS_TOTAL_NEW			
Tukey HSD ^{a,b}			
Course program in FCSHD (Program kursus dalam FCSDH)	N	Subset for alpha = 0.05	
		1	2
2	111	29.8559	
4	106	29.9528	
3	53	30.6415	30.6415
1	55		31.9273
Sig.		.610	.187

Means for groups in homogeneous subsets are displayed.

a. Uses Harmonic Mean Sample Size = 72.082.

b. The group sizes are unequal. The harmonic mean of the group sizes is used. Type I error levels are not guaranteed.

Figure 4.11: Homogeneous Subsets One Way ANOVA

The one-way ANOVA conducted on psychological distress scores (KPS_TOTAL_NEW) across different FCSDH academic programs reveals a statistically significant result, indicating that distress levels vary depending on the student's course of study. Specifically, the ANOVA table shows a between-groups sum of squares of 185.072 with 3 degrees of freedom, and a corresponding F-value of 4.174 with a p-value of .006. Since the p-value is less than 0.05, we can conclude that there are significant differences in psychological distress levels among at least some of the academic program groups (Field, 2018).

Therefore, the Tukey HSD post hoc test provides pairwise comparisons. The results show that students in Program 1 (Human Resources Development) (mean = 31.93) reported significantly higher distress than students in Program 2 (mean = 29.86) and Program 4 (mean = 29.95). The mean difference between Program 1 (Human Resources Development) and Program 2 (Cognitive Science) is 2.07 ($p = .007$), and between Program 1 (Human Resources Development) and Program 4 (Psychology) is 1.97 ($p = .012$) both statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

However, the comparisons involving Program 3 did not yield significant differences, indicating that distress levels among students in Program 3 (Counselling) were not statistically distinguishable from the other groups. Additionally, the homogeneous subsets

table confirms that Programs 2 (Cognitive Science) and 4 (Psychology) cluster together with the lowest mean levels of psychological distress, while Program 1 (Human Resources Development) stands apart with the highest levels (Fein et al., 2024).

These findings suggest that the academic demands or environmental stressors associated with different course programs may influence the emotional well-being of students. It is plausible that the curriculum design, assessment load, or availability of academic support varies by program, thereby affecting students' stress levels (Saira et al., 2020). Understanding these group differences is vital for university policymakers and student support services, as it underscores the necessity of tailoring interventions by academic context, rather than relying solely on general wellness initiatives (White & Jackson, 2023).

In conclusion, the one-way ANOVA results demonstrate that psychological distress is not evenly distributed across academic programs, with students in Program 1 appearing particularly vulnerable. This supports the need for further qualitative exploration to uncover the specific academic or institutional factors that might be contributing to these disparities.

4.6 Study Limitations

Although this postulation provides valuable information about the relationship between stress coping strategies and psychological distress among Year 3 FCSHD students in UNIMAS, there are several limitations that need to be borne in mind. The cross-sectional nature does not allow to infer cause and effect (Sharp & Theiler, 2018). The reliance on self-reported instruments such as the Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (K10) and Brief COPE Inventory may have led to biases such as socially desirable response and recall bias (Carver, 1997; Yazdanpanah & Marashian, 2023). The sample respondents represented students of only one faculty and one year level, therefore limiting the extent to which findings are applicable to other faculties and levels (Hemamalini, Ashok, & Sasikala, 2018). Personal and contextual factors that are known to influence coping strategies and psychological outcomes (Nieuwoudt, 2021; Sharp & Theiler, 2018) including socioeconomic background, mental health history and family support were not considered. The regression analyses were significant but the depression scores estimated only 4.4% of the variance, indicating that distress depends on an array of other variables (Cohen, 1988). It would be useful in future research to employ a more longitudinal and mixed-methods design to investigate more influences and develop a more comprehensive picture of how students coped with stress (Leverage Edu, 2024; Andrew et al., 2001).

4.7 Summary

This chapter presented the major findings on the association between psychological distress and stress coping strategies among the Year 3 FCSHD students in UNIMAS. The researchers found that participants who frequently used active coping strategies (e.g., planning/ problem solving) were more likely to experience less distress than those who did not, which is consistent with Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) focus on how an individual will respond to stressors is not only based on the severity of the stressor, but also depends upon the perceived potency of the problem or challenge, and the individual's coping resources (Folkman & Lazarus, 1985).

A regression analysis was used to test the ace of active coping as a predictor of low distress, and the model was able to account for only 4.4% of the variance, indicating other variables including academic stress, economic tension, and laboratory support also may be serving a role (Yazdanpanah & Marashian, 2023). The ANOVA results indicated that the students of HRD Programme had more distress symptoms than students studying in Psychology or Cognitive Science maybe due to larger quantities of studies or different in methods of studying (Hemamalini, Ashok, & Sasikala, 2018).

Notably, participants with greater distress were the most likely to rely on emotional support, which suggests that they seek help in a reactive, rather than proactive manner. Nevertheless, emotional and instrumental support were not independent predictors of perceived social support in the regression model, which indicates that social support may be insufficient on its own to decrease distress (Sharp & Theiler, 2018).

Overall, the results indicate that student mental health is a function of both individual coping styles and academic environments. At the level of individuals, intervening to address psychological distress must include measures like coping workshops, but institutional interventions like improved advising and mental health services are also required. In order to understand what happens when stressed, future research might adopt a longitudinal and mixed-methods approach to examine the development of stress and coping over time (Leverage Edu, 2024; Andrew et al 2001).

Chapter 5

Summary

5.0 Introduction

The final reflection of the study, which was conducted to explore the psychological distress and the stress management practices among the Year 3 FCSHD UNIMAS students is being discussed in this chapter. Grounded in the Transactional Model of Stress and Coping (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) and CBT principles, this study employed a quantitative correlational design with Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (K10), Brief COPE Inventory, and Social Support Questionnaire (SSQ6) tools. Trends in distress levels and coping strategies were identified using statistical analyses: Pearson's correlation, multiple regression and one-way ANOVA. This chapter presents a discussion and integration of the main results, implications of the theoretical perspectives into practical guiding principles, a few conclusions, suggestions for future research, and ends with the close of the study.

5.1 Discussion

The findings indicated a moderate negative association between active coping and psychological morbidity ($r = -0.007$) (i.e., students who employ proactive stress management strategies report less emotional strain). This upholds the Transactional Model of Stress and Coping, which highlights the ways that people evaluate stressors and enact coping problem-focused strategies (Folkman & Lazarus, 1985). In the regression analysis active coping was a significant predictor of decreased distress ($B = -0.453$, $p = .004$), but the model explained 4.4% of the variance ($R^2 = 0.044$), which suggests that other factors such as resilience, support network and educational environment may also contribute in (Yazdanpanah & Marashian, 2023).

Emotional support, though most pervasive, was positively related to distress. This raises the possibility that students may use emotional support reactively in the face of increased stress rather than as a preventive strategy, a result that is consistent with those

obtained by Xu, Zhang, & Chen (2023). Emotional and instrumental support were not predictors of distress though in the regression model, and that goes against the belief that simple social support as received San the psychological strain would reduce.

A one-way ANOVA demonstrated differences of graduates from the programs, with Human Resource Development students reported significantly higher distress than Psychology and Cognitive Science ($p < .05$). These discrepancies may mirror differences in the structure of the curriculum delivery, the load of work and the availability of academic support, thus underscoring the need to adjust every mental health intervention to the peculiarities of each program (Hemamalini, Ashok, & Sasikala, 2018; Fein, White, & Jackson, 2024).

5.2 Recommendations

The results of the current research highlight the importance of counselling services in promoting the mental well-being for university students, especially for students who are adjusting to the challenging academic culture of Year 3 students in Faculty of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development (FCSHD) of UNIMAS. Note the negative correlation between active coping and distress ($r = -0.007$) is consistent with the concepts of CBT theory, which focuses on improving dysfunctional thought patterns and promoting goal-focused behavior strategies to cope with stress (Beck, 1975; Hofmann et al., 2012). He offers a no-fee CBT-based stress management training programme in University Counselling Services that can help equip students with practical tools (i.e., problem-solving, time management, cognitive reframing) that are likely to make them more resilient and less emotionally taxed.

This research also found that students used emotional support/but were more, not less, distressed, which may indicate that students were accessing support when already under stress rather than before problems arose. Counselling centres need to advocate for early psychoeducation intended to promote help-seeking behaviour before levels of distress become severe. A successful approach is the use of peer counselling programmes that provide an informal, safe space in which to express concerns, receive support, and discuss

coping strategies (Pointon-Haas et al., 2023). These peer-driven interventions promote a sense of belonging and decrease stigma related to mental health in universities.

Further, the wide diversity in distress among the different academic studies such as the high distress of HRD to which the highest attention should be directed for some specific counselling intervention. Counsellors must work with faculty to create specific workshops to meet the needs of each discipline. For example, HRD students who are balancing fieldwork and administrative tasks could use counselling modules on team dynamics, role stress, and reflective self-care, while Psychology and Cognitive Science students might be concentrating on identity development, career clarity, or emotional resilience (Fein et al., 2024).

Mindfulness-based therapy is another evidence-based practice that might be helpful for students in high-stress academic setting. Methods Using techniques such as meditation, grounding exercises, and mindful breathing have demonstrated efficacy to decrease perceived stress and enhance emotion regulation among students (Galante et al., 2018; Zuo et al., 2023). The intervention approaches can be incorporated into individual counselling sessions, group programs, or as part of broader psychoeducation provided through campus wellness services.

Digital counselling systems also are seen as an important extension of support services. It is not practical because of stigma and time constraints so many students do not seek face-to-face counselling.” CBT-based mobile applications and chat-based support initiatives offer the advantages of flexibility, privacy, and direct access to psychological support (Weiss et al., 2025). When supervised by trained facilitators or e-counsellors these platforms can complement face-to-face therapy and enhance mental health provision within the university.

Lastly, it is vital that lecturers are trained in basic counselling micro-skills. Faculty and staff training in empathic listening, paraphrasing, and understanding of mental health learning progress contribute to a more supportive academic climate and to earlier identification and referral of distressed students (Sharp & Theiler, 2018). This comprehensive-campus-strategic approach is congruent with the best frameworks of integrated mental health in higher education and underscores institutions' duty to the well-

being of all students.

Finally, counselling services need to shift away from strictly clinical one-to-one support and integrate themselves in the academic culture with proactive, responsive, and contextually relevant programming. With a variety of therapeutic methods, peer support, mindfulness practices, online technology, and educator contribution being synthesized in universities such as UNIMAS; students can be prepared to become a resilient group of individuals that are able to manage academic pressure and psychological health.

5.3 Future Research Direction

The existing study has to some extent provided a valuable knowledge on relationship of psychological distress and different strategies to manage stress among FCSHD Year 3 Students in UNIMAS. Despite this, a number of limitations that also point to productive directions for future research are present and may enrich the findings, increase generalisability and inform more focused mental health interventions.

One important future direction is to investigate how psychological distress and coping behaviour change across time with longitudinal study designs. The current cross-sectional design thus offers snapshots of students' experiences, and such experiences need not be constant across academic semesters, internship placements, or graduation transitions. By following students over time and if possible, through interventions such as active coping workshops and counselling-based support systems, research can better identify cause and effect relationships and long-term impacts on mental health outcomes (Sharp & Theiler, 2018).

Furthermore, mixed-methods work could provide a more nuanced and richer portrayal of student well-being. While quantitative surveys are useful for identifying broad patterns, such qualitative methods as interviews and focus groups can reveal the lived reality behind that data. Such approaches enable the researcher to access the emotional stories, personal values, and nuanced relationships that many standardized instruments leave to the side. This information is of particular relevance when we look at areas such as psychological distress, which is influenced not only by school-related stressors, but also by identity, social context and cultural norms (Meijer, 2024).

Results of the present research also did not control for contextual and demographic variables that were not assessed in the current work and that have been shown to be related to relationship duration. This may be due to a range of variables such as socioeconomic status, previous mental health history, religious/cultural background and family dynamics that could impact on how students perceive and manage stress. For example, students from families with low income might perceive a stronger financial strain that negatively influences both academic achievement and coping. Likewise, cultural values related to emotional expression and help-seeking may influence students' readiness to utilize counselling or social support systems. Its inclusion would present a complete and more transportable picture of student mental health, especially in the cross-cultural nature of Malaysian universities (Nieuwoudt, 2021).

Lastly, given the advent of technology and digital learning environments, future study is required to determine the efficacy of digital mental health interventions specifically designed for Malaysian students. Apps based on CBT, virtual mindfulness programs, and AI-powered counselling support systems are scalable options for universities with limited resources or growing student bodies. They are especially popular with students less likely to access traditional counselling, even among those dealing with challenges such as stigma or scheduling difficulties. Research of the usability, cultural appropriateness, and psychological impact of such digital tools could potentially lead to novel and inclusive supportive techniques in academic environments (Weiss et al., 2025).

In conclusion, future studies should move towards longitudinal, mixed-method or context-sensitive designs that allow a more in-depth understanding of the experience of psychological distress, as well as its determinants. Through researchers and practitioners embracing these orientations, more inclusive and efficacious mental health frameworks can be constructed to help students on their academic and personal journeys.

5.4 Conclusion

The study investigates the association between psychological distress and stress coping techniques among Year Three students in the Faculty of Cognitive Science and Human Development (FCSHD), UNIMAS. Theoretical framework with a transactional model of stress and coping by Lazarus and Folkman (1984) and the concept of CBT were the key perspectives underlying that results, which highlighted the importance of active coping in stress reduction. While active coping was significantly predictive, the small amount of variance explained ($R^2 = 0.044$) implies that broader contextual constraints, including academic demands, financial stress, and available resources, have potential effects on students' mental health (Yazdanpanah & Marashian, 2023; Sharp & Theiler, 2018).

Emotional support as a coping method was largely reactive and deployment only occurred during increased levels of stress, highlighting the importance of earlier intervention and proactive support schemes (Pointon-Haas et al., 2023). Further, variations in stress levels related to the program are evident and warrant specialized counselling actions, especially in the HRD area, which has been identified as the program with the most psychological distress (Fein, White, & Jackson, 2024).

On the whole, this analysis emphasizes the complexity of psychological distress within university students and underscores the need to incorporate counselling-based interventions, including CBT, peer support and program-specific mental health initiatives. Lamentably however, the findings from this study are not conclusive, leaving avenues for future research to utilize longitudinal and mixed-method approaches to divulge students' developing experiences of stress and expand the potential utility of mental health frameworks within rollercoaster higher education environments.

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APPENDIXES

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC RESPONDENTS

Section 1: Demographic (Bahagian 1: Demografi)

A. Personal Information (Maklumat peribadi)

Age (Umur) *

☐ 21 - 22 years old

☐ 23 - 24 years old

☐ 25 - 26 years old

☐ Other:

Gender (Jantina) *

☐ Male (Lelaki)

☐ Female (Perempuan)

Back

Next

Clear form

Course program in FCSHD (Program kursus dalam FCSHD) *

☐ Human Resources Development

☐ Cognitive Sciences

☐ Counselling

☐ Psychology

Current CGPA (PNGK semasa) *

☐ Below 2.00

☐ 2.00 - 2.49

☐ 2.50 - 2.99

☐ 3.00 - 3.49

☐ 3.50 - 4.00

C. Academic Support & Interaction (Sokongan & Interaksi Akademik)

Description (optional)

How often do you meet your academic advisor? (Berapa kerap anda berjumpa dengan penasihat akademik anda?) *

☐ Never (Tidak pernah)

☐ Once per semester (Sekali setiap semester)

☐ 2 - 3 times per semester (2 - 3 kali setiap semester)

☐ Monthly (Sebulan sekali)

☐ More than once a month (Lebih daripada sekali sebulan)

How often do you interact with your academic advisor (outside class, for academic discussion, consultation, or guidance) (Berapa kerap anda berinteraksi dengan penasihat akademik anda (di luar kelas, untuk perbincangan akademik, perundingan atau bimbingan) *

☐

☐

☐

☐

☐

How often do you interact with your academic advisor (outside class, for academic discussion, consultation, or guidance) *(Berapa kerap anda berinteraksi dengan penasihat akademik anda (di luar kelas, untuk perbincangan akademik, perundingan atau bimbingan))* *

☐ Never (Tidak pernah)
☐ Rarely (Jarang)
☐ Occasionally (Sesekali)
☐ Frequently (Kekerap-kerapan)

How would you describe the quality of your relationship with your academic advisor? *(Bagaimanakah anda menerangkan kualiti hubungan anda dengan penasihat akademik anda?)* *

☐ Very good (Sangat baik)
☐ Good (Baik)
☐ Neutral
☐ Poor (Teruk)

Who do you seek support from when dealing with academic stress? *Select all that apply *(Siapakah anda mendapatkan sokongan apabila berhadapan dengan tekanan akademik?) *Pilih semua yang berkenaan* *

☐ Family members (Ahli keluarga)
☐ Friends (Kawan)
☐ Academic Advisor (Penasihat akademik)
☐ Other...

Do you feel that your interactions with authority figures (e.g., academic advisors, family member and friends) help you manage academic stress? *(Adakah anda merasakan bahawa interaksi anda dengan tokoh pihak berkuasa (cth., penasihat akademik, ahli keluarga dan rakan) membantu anda menguruskan tekanan akademik?)* *

☐ Strongly agree (Sangat setuju)
☐ Agree (Setuju)
☐ Neutral

☐ Strongly agree (Sangat setuju)
☐ Agree (Setuju)
☐ Neutral
☐ Disagree (Tidak setuju)
☐ Strongly disagree (Sangat tidak setuju)

Do you believe a lack of academic support increases your stress levels? *(Adakah anda percaya kekurangan sokongan akademik meningkatkan tahap tekanan anda?)* *

☐ Strongly agree (Sangat setuju)
☐ Agree (Setuju)
☐ Neutral
☐ Disagree (Tidak setuju)
☐ Strongly disagree (Sangat tidak setuju)

SECTION 2: THE BRIEF COPE INVENTORY (CARVER, 1997)

Section 2: The BRIEF COPE Inventory (Carver, 1997) (*Bahagian 2: Inventori COPE Ringkas* (Carver, 1997))

We are interested in how people respond when they confront difficult or stressful events in their lives. There are lots of ways to try to deal with stress. This questionnaire asks you to indicate what you generally do and feel when you experience stressful events. Obviously, different events bring out somewhat different responses, but think about what you usually do when you are under a lot of stress. Then respond to each of the following items by blackening one number on your answer sheet for each, using the response choices listed just below. Please try to respond to each item separately in your mind from each other item. Choose your answers thoughtfully, and make your answers as true for you as you can. Please answer every item. There are no "right" or "wrong" answers, so choose the most accurate answer for you—not what you think "most people" would say or do. Indicate what you usually do when you experience a stressful event.

Kami berminat dengan cara orang bertindak balas apabila mereka menghadapi peristiwa sukar atau tekanan dalam hidup mereka. Ada banyak cara untuk cuba menanganai tekanan. Soal selidik ini meminta anda untuk menunjukkan perkara yang anda lakukan dan rasa pada umumnya apabila anda mengalami peristiwa yang menekan. Jelas sekali, peristiwa yang berbeza membawa tindak balas yang agak berbeza, tetapi fikirkan tentang apa yang biasanya anda lakukan apabila anda berada di bawah banyak tekanan. Kemudian balas setiap item berikut dengan menghitamkan satu nombor pada kertas jawapan anda untuk setiap item, menggunakan pilihan jawapan yang disenaraikan di bawah. Sila cuba balas setiap item secara berasingan dalam fikiran anda antara satu sama lain item. Pilih jawapan anda dengan teliti, dan jadikan jawapan anda sebagai benar untuk anda seboleh mungkin. Tolong jawab setiap item. Tiada jawapan "betul" atau "salah", jadi pilih jawapan yang paling tepat untuk anda bukan jawapan anda fikir "kebanyakan orang" akan cakap atau buat. Nyatakan perkara yang biasa anda lakukan apabila anda mengalami peristiwa yang menekan.

- 1 = I haven't been doing this at all
2 = I've been doing this a little bit
3 = I've been doing this a medium amount
4 = I've been doing this a lot

- 1 = Saya tidak pernah melakukan ini sama sekali
2 = Saya telah melakukan ini sedikit
3 = Saya telah melakukan ini dalam jumlah sederhana
4 = Saya telah banyak melakukan ini

I've been turning to work or other activities to take my mind off things. (*Saya telah beralih kepada kerja atau aktiviti lain untuk mengalihkan fikiran saya daripada perkara-perkara.*) *

- ☐ I haven't been doing this at all (Saya tidak pernah melakukan ini sama sekali)
☐ I've been doing this a little bit (Saya telah melakukan ini sedikit)
☐ I've been doing this a medium amount (Saya telah melakukan ini dalam jumlah sederhana)
☐ I've been doing this a lot (Saya telah banyak melakukan ini)

I've been concentrating my efforts on doing something about the situation I'm in. (*Saya telah memumpukan usaha saya untuk melakukan sesuatu tentang situasi yang saya hadapi.*) *

- ☐ I haven't been doing this at all (Saya tidak pernah melakukan ini sama sekali)
☐ I've been doing this a little bit (Saya telah melakukan ini sedikit)
☐ I've been doing this a medium amount (Saya telah melakukan ini dalam jumlah sederhana)
☐ I've been doing this a lot (Saya telah banyak melakukan ini)

I've been saying to myself "this isn't real." (*Saya telah berkata kepada diri saya sendiri "ini tidak benar."*) *

- ☐ I haven't been doing this at all (Saya tidak pernah melakukan ini sama sekali)
☐ I've been doing this a little bit (Saya telah melakukan ini sedikit)
☐ I've been doing this a medium amount (Saya telah melakukan ini dalam jumlah sederhana)
☐ I've been doing this a lot (Saya telah banyak melakukan ini)

I've been using alcohol or other drugs to make myself feel better. *(Saya telah menggunakan alkohol * atau obat lain untuk membuat diri saya merasa lebih baik.)*

- ☐ I haven't been doing this at all (Saya tidak pernah melakukan ini sama sekali)
- ☐ I've been doing this a little bit (Saya telah melakukan ini sedikit)
- ☐ I've been doing this a medium amount (Saya telah melakukan ini dalam jumlah sederhana)
- ☐ I've been doing this a lot (Saya telah banyak melakukan ini)

I've been getting emotional support from others. *(Saya telah mendapat sokongan emosi daripada * orang lain.)*

- ☐ I haven't been doing this at all (Saya tidak pernah melakukan ini sama sekali)
- ☐ I've been doing this a little bit (Saya telah melakukan ini sedikit)
- ☐ I've been doing this a medium amount (Saya telah melakukan ini dalam jumlah sederhana)
- ☐ I've been doing this a lot (Saya telah banyak melakukan ini)

I've been giving up trying to deal with it. *(Saya sudah berputus asa untuk menghadapinya.) **

- ☐ I haven't been doing this at all (Saya tidak pernah melakukan ini sama sekali)
- ☐ I've been doing this a little bit (Saya telah melakukan ini sedikit)
- ☐ I've been doing this a medium amount (Saya telah melakukan ini dalam jumlah sederhana)
- ☐ I've been doing this a lot (Saya telah banyak melakukan ini)

I've been taking action to try to make the situation better. *(Saya telah mengambil tindakan untuk * cuba memperbaiki keadaan.)*

- ☐ I haven't been doing this at all (Saya tidak pernah melakukan ini sama sekali)
- ☐ I've been doing this a little bit (Saya telah melakukan ini sedikit)
- ☐ I've been doing this a medium amount (Saya telah melakukan ini dalam jumlah sederhana)
- ☐ I've been doing this a lot (Saya telah banyak melakukan ini)

I've been refusing to believe that it has happened. *(Saya enggan percaya bahawa ia telah berlaku.) **

- ☐ I haven't been doing this at all (Saya tidak pernah melakukan ini sama sekali)
- ☐ I've been doing this a little bit (Saya telah melakukan ini sedikit)
- ☐ I've been doing this a medium amount (Saya telah melakukan ini dalam jumlah sederhana)
- ☐ I've been doing this a lot (Saya telah banyak melakukan ini)

I've been saying things to let my unpleasant feelings escape. *(Saya telah mengatakan sesuatu untuk * melepaskan perasaan yang tidak menyenangkan saya.)*

- ☐ I haven't been doing this at all (Saya tidak pernah melakukan ini sama sekali)
- ☐ I've been doing this a little bit (Saya telah melakukan ini sedikit)
- ☐ I've been doing this a medium amount (Saya telah melakukan ini dalam jumlah sederhana)
- ☐ I've been doing this a lot (Saya telah banyak melakukan ini)

I've been refusing to believe that it has happened. *(Saya enggan percaya bahawa ia telah berlaku.)* *

- ☐ I haven't been doing this at all *(Saya tidak pernah melakukan ini sama sekali)*
- ☐ I've been doing this a little bit *(Saya telah melakukan ini sedikit)*
- ☐ I've been doing this a medium amount *(Saya telah melakukan ini dalam jumlah sederhana)*
- ☐ I've been doing this a lot *(Saya telah banyak melakukan ini)*

I've been saying things to let my unpleasant feelings escape. *(Saya telah mengatakan sesuatu untuk melepaskan perasaan yang tidak menyenangkan saya.)* *

- ☐ I haven't been doing this at all *(Saya tidak pernah melakukan ini sama sekali)*
- ☐ I've been doing this a little bit *(Saya telah melakukan ini sedikit)*
- ☐ I've been doing this a medium amount *(Saya telah melakukan ini dalam jumlah sederhana)*
- ☐ I've been doing this a lot *(Saya telah banyak melakukan ini)*

I've been getting help and advice from other people. *(Saya telah mendapat bantuan dan nasihat daripada orang lain.)*

- ☐ I haven't been doing this at all *(Saya tidak pernah melakukan ini sama sekali)*
- ☐ I've been doing this a little bit *(Saya telah melakukan ini sedikit)*
- ☐ I've been doing this a medium amount *(Saya telah melakukan ini dalam jumlah sederhana)*
- ☐ I've been doing this a lot *(Saya telah banyak melakukan ini)*

I've been using alcohol or other drugs to help me get through it. *(Saya telah menggunakan alkohol atau ubat lain untuk membantu saya mengatasinya.)* *

- ☐ I haven't been doing this at all *(Saya tidak pernah melakukan ini sama sekali)*
- ☐ I've been doing this a little bit *(Saya telah melakukan ini sedikit)*
- ☐ I've been doing this a medium amount *(Saya telah melakukan ini dalam jumlah sederhana)*
- ☐ I've been doing this a lot *(Saya telah banyak melakukan ini)*

I've been trying to see it in a different light, to make it seem more positive. *(Saya telah cuba melihatnya dari sudut yang berbeza, untuk menjadikannya kelihatan lebih positif.)* *

- ☐ I haven't been doing this at all *(Saya tidak pernah melakukan ini sama sekali)*
- ☐ I've been doing this a little bit *(Saya telah melakukan ini sedikit)*
- ☐ I've been doing this a medium amount *(Saya telah melakukan ini dalam jumlah sederhana)*
- ☐ I've been doing this a lot *(Saya telah banyak melakukan ini)*

I've been criticizing myself. *(Saya telah mengkritik diri saya sendiri.)* *

- ☐ I haven't been doing this at all *(Saya tidak pernah melakukan ini sama sekali)*
- ☐ I've been doing this a little bit *(Saya telah melakukan ini sedikit)*
- ☐ I've been doing this a medium amount *(Saya telah melakukan ini dalam jumlah sederhana)*
- ☐ I've been doing this a lot *(Saya telah banyak melakukan ini)*

I've been trying to come up with a strategy about what to do. *(Saya telah cuba membuat strategi tentang apa yang perlu dilakukan.)* *

- ☐ I haven't been doing this at all *(Saya tidak pernah melakukan ini sama sekali)*
- ☐ I've been doing this a little bit *(Saya telah melakukan ini sedikit)*
- ☐ I've been doing this a medium amount *(Saya telah melakukan ini dalam jumlah sederhana)*
- ☐ I've been doing this a lot *(Saya telah banyak melakukan ini)*

I've been getting comfort and understanding from someone. *(Saya telah mendapat keselesaan dan pemahaman daripada seseorang.)* *

- ☐ I haven't been doing this at all *(Saya tidak pernah melakukan ini sama sekali)*
- ☐ I've been doing this a little bit *(Saya telah melakukan ini sedikit)*
- ☐ I've been doing this a medium amount *(Saya telah melakukan ini dalam jumlah sederhana)*
- ☐ I've been doing this a lot *(Saya telah banyak melakukan ini)*

I've been giving up the attempt to cope. *(Saya telah melepaskan percobaan untuk mengatasinya.)* *

- ☐ I haven't been doing this at all (Saya tidak pernah melakukan ini sama sekali)
- ☐ I've been doing this a little bit (Saya telah melakukan ini sedikit)
- ☐ I've been doing this a medium amount (Saya telah melakukan ini dalam jumlah sederhana)
- ☐ I've been doing this a lot (Saya telah banyak melakukan ini)

I've been looking for something good in what is happening. *(Saya telah mencari sesuatu yang baik dalam apa yang berlaku.)* *

- ☐ I haven't been doing this at all (Saya tidak pernah melakukan ini sama sekali)
- ☐ I've been doing this a little bit (Saya telah melakukan ini sedikit)
- ☐ I've been doing this a medium amount (Saya telah melakukan ini dalam jumlah sederhana)
- ☐ I've been doing this a lot (Saya telah banyak melakukan ini)

I've been making jokes about it. *(Saya telah membuat jenaka mengenainya.)* *

- ☐ I haven't been doing this at all (Saya tidak pernah melakukan ini sama sekali)
- ☐ I've been doing this a little bit (Saya telah melakukan ini sedikit)
- ☐ I've been doing this a medium amount (Saya telah melakukan ini dalam jumlah sederhana)
- ☐ I've been doing this a lot (Saya telah banyak melakukan ini)

I've been doing something to think about it less, such as going to movies, watching TV, reading, daydreaming, sleeping, or shopping. *(Saya telah melakukan sesuatu untuk kurang memikirkannya, seperti menonton wayang, menonton TV, membaca, berkhayal, tidur, atau membeli belah.)* *

- ☐ I haven't been doing this at all (Saya tidak pernah melakukan ini sama sekali)
- ☐ I've been doing this a little bit (Saya telah melakukan ini sedikit)
- ☐ I've been doing this a medium amount (Saya telah melakukan ini dalam jumlah sederhana)
- ☐ I've been doing this a lot (Saya telah banyak melakukan ini)

I've been accepting the reality of the fact that it has happened. *(Saya telah menerima realiti hakikat bahawa ia telah berlaku.)* *

- ☐ I haven't been doing this at all (Saya tidak pernah melakukan ini sama sekali)
- ☐ I've been doing this a little bit (Saya telah melakukan ini sedikit)
- ☐ I've been doing this a medium amount (Saya telah melakukan ini dalam jumlah sederhana)
- ☐ I've been doing this a lot (Saya telah banyak melakukan ini)

I've been expressing my negative feelings. *(Saya telah meluahkan perasaan negatif saya.)* *

- ☐ I haven't been doing this at all (Saya tidak pernah melakukan ini sama sekali)
- ☐ I've been doing this a little bit (Saya telah melakukan ini sedikit)
- ☐ I've been doing this a medium amount (Saya telah melakukan ini dalam jumlah sederhana)
- ☐ I've been doing this a lot (Saya telah banyak melakukan ini)

I've been trying to find comfort in my religion or spiritual beliefs. *(Saya telah cuba mencari keselesaan dalam agama atau kepercayaan rohani saya.)* *

- ☐ I haven't been doing this at all (Saya tidak pernah melakukan ini sama sekali)
- ☐ I've been doing this a little bit (Saya telah melakukan ini sedikit)
- ☐ I've been doing this a medium amount (Saya telah melakukan ini dalam jumlah sederhana)
- ☐ I've been doing this a lot (Saya telah banyak melakukan ini)

I've been trying to get advice or help from other people about what to do. *(Saya telah cuba mendapatkan nasihat atau bantuan daripada orang lain tentang perkara yang perlu dilakukan.)* *

- ☐ I haven't been doing this at all (Saya tidak pernah melakukan ini sama sekali)
- ☐ I've been doing this a little bit (Saya telah melakukan ini sedikit)
- ☐ I've been doing this a medium amount (Saya telah melakukan ini dalam jumlah sederhana)

I've been learning to live with it. *(Saya telah belajar untuk hidup dengannya.)* *

- ☐ I haven't been doing this at all (Saya tidak pernah melakukan ini sama sekali)
- ☐ I've been doing this a little bit (Saya telah melakukan ini sedikit)
- ☐ I've been doing this a medium amount (Saya telah melakukan ini dalam jumlah sederhana)
- ☐ I've been doing this a lot (Saya telah banyak melakukan ini)

I've been thinking hard about what steps to take. *(Saya telah memikirkan langkah langkah yang perlu diambil.)* *

- ☐ I haven't been doing this at all (Saya tidak pernah melakukan ini sama sekali)
- ☐ I've been doing this a little bit (Saya telah melakukan ini sedikit)
- ☐ I've been doing this a medium amount (Saya telah melakukan ini dalam jumlah sederhana)
- ☐ I've been doing this a lot (Saya telah banyak melakukan ini)

I've been blaming myself for things that happened. *(Saya telah menyalahkan diri sendiri atas perkara yang berlaku.)* *

- ☐ I haven't been doing this at all (Saya tidak pernah melakukan ini sama sekali)
- ☐ I've been doing this a little bit (Saya telah melakukan ini sedikit)
- ☐ I've been doing this a medium amount (Saya telah melakukan ini dalam jumlah sederhana)
- ☐ I've been doing this a lot (Saya telah banyak melakukan ini)

I've been praying or meditating. *(Saya telah berdoa atau bermeditasi.)* *

- ☐ I haven't been doing this at all (Saya tidak pernah melakukan ini sama sekali)
- ☐ I've been doing this a little bit (Saya telah melakukan ini sedikit)
- ☐ I've been doing this a medium amount (Saya telah melakukan ini dalam jumlah sederhana)
- ☐ I've been doing this a lot (Saya telah banyak melakukan ini)

I've been making fun of the situation. *(Saya telah mempersendakan keadaan.)* *

- ☐ I haven't been doing this at all (Saya tidak pernah melakukan ini sama sekali)
- ☐ I've been doing this a little bit (Saya telah melakukan ini sedikit)
- ☐ I've been doing this a medium amount (Saya telah melakukan ini dalam jumlah sederhana)
- ☐ I've been doing this a lot (Saya telah banyak melakukan ini)

SECTION 3: THE KESSLER PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTRESS SCALE (K10) (KESSLER ET AL., 2003)

Section 3: The Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (K10) (Kessler et al., 2003) (*Bahagian 3: Skala Kesusahan Psikologi Kessler (K10) (Kessler et al., 2003)*)

The Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (K10) [1] is a simple measure of psychological distress. The K10 scale involves 10 questions about emotional states each with a five-level response scale. The measure can be used as a brief screen to identify levels of distress. The tool can be given to patients to complete, or alternatively the questions can be read to the patient by the practitioner. In the context of injury management, the measure can be provided to the patient where recovery is not proceeding as anticipated (for instance, between weeks four and six), and may highlight the need for more regular review, or referral to a specialist health provider such as a psychologist. Questions three and six do not need to be asked if the response to the preceding question was 'none of the time'. In such cases questions three and six should receive an automatic score of one.

Skala Kesusahan Psikologi Kessler (K10) [1] ialah ukuran mudah tekanan psikologi. K10 itu skala melibatkan 10 soalan tentang keadaan emosi setiap satu dengan skala tindak balas lima peringkat. Zkatannya boleh digunakan sebagai skrin ringkas untuk mengenal pasti tahap kesusahan. Alat itu boleh diberikan kepada pesakit untuk melengkapkan, atau sebagai alternatif soalan boleh dibacakan kepada pesakit oleh pengamal. Dalam konteks pengurusan kecederaan, langkah itu boleh diberikan kepada pesakit di mana pemulihan tidak meneruskan seperti yang dijangkakan (contohnya, antara minggu empat dan enam), dan mungkin menyerlahkan keperluan untuk lebih semakan biasa, atau rujukan kepada pembekal kesihatan pakar seperti ahli psikologi. Soalan tiga dan enam tidak perlu ditanya jika jawapan kepada soalan sebelumnya adalah 'tiada satu masa'. Dalam kes sedemikian soalan tiga dan enam harus menerima skor automatik satu.

Please tick the answer that is correct for you:
Sila tandakan jawapan yang betul untuk anda:

Please tick the answer that is correct for you:
Sila tandakan jawapan yang betul untuk anda:

- 1 = All of the time
- 2 = Most of the time
- 3 = Some of the time
- 4 = A little of the time
- 5 = None of the time

- 1 = Sepanjang masa
- 2 = Selalunya
- 3 = Kadang - kadang
- 4 = Sedikit masa
- 5 = Tiada masa

In the past 4 weeks, about how often did you feel tired out for no good reason? (Dalam 4 minggu yang lalu, kira kira berapa kerap anda berasa letih tanpa sebab yang kukuh?) *

- ☐ All of the time (Sepanjang masa)
- ☐ Most of the time (Selalunya)
- ☐ Some of the time (Kadang - kadang)

In the past 4 weeks, about how often did you feel nervous? (Dalam 4 minggu yang lalu, kira kira berapa kerap anda berasa gementar?) *

- ☐ All of the time (Sepanjang masa)
- ☐ Most of the time (Selalunya)
- ☐ Some of the time (Kadang - kadang)
- ☐ A little of the time (Sedikit masa)
- ☐ None of the time (Tiada masa)

In the past 4 weeks, about how often did you feel so nervous that nothing could calm you down? (Dalam 4 minggu yang lalu, kira kira berapa kerap anda berasa sangat gementar sehingga tiada apa yang dapat menenangkan anda?) *

- ☐ All of the time (Sepanjang masa)
- ☐ Most of the time (Selalunya)
- ☐ Some of the time (Kadang - kadang)

In the past 4 weeks, about how often did you feel hopeless? *(Dalam 4 minggu yang lalu, kira kira berapa kerap anda berasa putus asa?)* *

- ☐ All of the time (Sepanjang masa)
- ☐ Most of the time (Selalunya)
- ☐ Some of the time (Kadang - kadang)
- ☐ A little of the time (Sedikit masa)
- ☐ None of the time (Tiada masa)

In the past 4 weeks, about how often did you feel restless or fidgety? *(Dalam 4 minggu yang lalu, kira kira berapa kerap anda berasa gelisah atau gelisah?)* *

- ☐ All of the time (Sepanjang masa)
- ☐ Most of the time (Selalunya)
- ☐ Some of the time (Kadang - kadang)

In the past 4 weeks, about how often did you feel so restless you could not sit still? *(Dalam 4 minggu yang lalu, kira kira berapa kerap anda berasa sangat resah sehingga tidak boleh duduk diam?)* *

- ☐ All of the time (Sepanjang masa)
- ☐ Most of the time (Selalunya)
- ☐ Some of the time (Kadang - kadang)
- ☐ A little of the time (Sedikit masa)
- ☐ None of the time (Tiada masa)

In the past 4 weeks, about how often did you feel depressed? *(Dalam 4 minggu yang lalu, kira - kira berapa kerap anda berasa tertekan?)* *

- ☐ All of the time (Sepanjang masa)
- ☐ Most of the time (Selalunya)
- ☐ Some of the time (Kadang - kadang)

In the past 4 weeks, about how often did you feel that everything was an effort? *(Dalam 4 minggu yang lalu, kira kira berapa kerap anda merasakan bahawa segala galanya adalah usaha?)* *

- ☐ All of the time (Sepanjang masa)
- ☐ Most of the time (Selalunya)
- ☐ Some of the time (Kadang - kadang)
- ☐ A little of the time (Sedikit masa)
- ☐ None of the time (Tiada masa)

In the past 4 weeks, about how often did you feel so sad that nothing could cheer you up? *(Dalam 4 minggu yang lalu, kira kira berapa kerap anda berasa sangat sedih sehingga tiada apa yang dapat mengembirakan anda?)* *

- ☐ All of the time (Sepanjang masa)
- ☐ Most of the time (Selalunya)
- ☐ Some of the time (Kadang - kadang)

In the past 4 weeks, about how often did you feel worthless? *(Dalam 4 minggu yang lalu, kira kira berapa kerap anda berasa tidak berharga?)* *

- ☐ All of the time (Sepanjang masa)
- ☐ Most of the time (Selalunya)
- ☐ Some of the time (Kadang - kadang)
- ☐ A little of the time (Sedikit masa)
- ☐ None of the time (Tiada masa)

SECTION 4: SOCIAL SUPPORT QUESTIONNAIRE (SSQ6) (SARASON ET AL., 1987)

Section 4: Social Support Questionnaire (SSQ6) (Sarason et al., 1987) (Bahagian 4: Soal Selidik Sokongan Sosial (SSQ6) (Sarason et al., 1987))

Instructions: The following questions ask about people in your life who provide you with help or support. Each question has two parts. For the first part, list all the people you know, excluding yourself, whom you can count on for help or support in the manner described. Give the person's initials and their relationship to you (see example). Do not list more than one person next to each of the numbers beneath the question. For the second part, circle how satisfied you are with the overall support you have. If you have no support for a question, check the words "No one," but still rate your level of satisfaction. Do not list more than nine persons per question. Please answer all questions as best you can. All your answers will be kept confidential.

Arahan: Soalan berikut bertanya tentang orang dalam hidup anda yang memberikan bantuan kepada anda atau sokongan. Setiap soalan mempunyai dua bahagian. Untuk bahagian pertama, senaraikan semua orang yang anda kenali, tidak termasuk diri anda, yang boleh anda harapkan bantuan atau sokongan mengikut cara yang diterangkan. Berikan inisial orang itu dan hubungannya dengan anda (lihat contoh). Jangan senaraikan lebih daripada seorang di sebelah setiap nombor di bawah soalan. Untuk bahagian kedua, bulatkan betapa berpuas hati anda dengan sokongan keseluruhan yang anda miliki. Jika anda mempunyai tiada sokongan untuk soalan, semak perkataan "Tiada sesiapa", tetapi tetap menilai tahap kepuasan anda. Jangan senaraikan lebih daripada sembilan orang bagi setiap soalan. Sila jawab semua soalan sebaik mungkin. Semua jawapan anda akan dirahsiakan.

Example: Who do you know whom you can trust with information that could get you in trouble?

Contoh: Siapa yang anda kenali yang boleh anda percayai dengan maklumat yang boleh menyebabkan anda menghadapi masalah?

Who can you really count on to be dependable when you need help? (Siapa yang boleh anda harapkan untuk dipercayai apabila anda memerlukan bantuan?) *

Short answer text

How satisfied are you with the social support given to you by these people overall? (Sejauh manakah * anda berpuas hati dengan sokongan sosial yang diberikan oleh mereka secara keseluruhan?)

- ☐ Very dissatisfied (Sangat tak puas hati)
- ☐ Fairly dissatisfied (Agak tidak berpuas hati)
- ☐ A little dissatisfied (Sedikit tidak puas hati)
- ☐ A little satisfied (Puas hati sedikit)
- ☐ Fairly satisfied (Agak berpuas hati)
- ☐ Very satisfied (Sangat berpuas hati)

Who can you really count on to help you feel more relaxed when you are under pressure or tense? * (Siapa yang boleh anda harapkan untuk membantu anda berasa lebih santai apabila anda berada di bawah tekanan atau tegang?)

Short answer text

How satisfied are you with the social support given to you by these people overall? (Sejauh manakah * anda berpuas hati dengan sokongan sosial yang diberikan oleh mereka secara keseluruhan?)

- ☐ Very dissatisfied (Sangat tak puas hati)
- ☐ Fairly dissatisfied (Agak tidak berpuas hati)
- ☐ A little dissatisfied (Sedikit tidak puas hati)
- ☐ A little satisfied (Puas hati sedikit)
- ☐ Fairly satisfied (Agak berpuas hati)
- ☐ Very satisfied (Sangat berpuas hati)

Who accepts you totally, including both your worst and your best points? *(Siapa yang menerima anda sepenuhnya, termasuk mata terburuk dan terbaik anda?)* *

Short answer text

How satisfied are you with the social support given to you by these people overall? *(Sejauh manakah anda berpuas hati dengan sokongan sosial yang diberikan oleh mereka secara keseluruhan?)* *

- ☐ Very dissatisfied (Sangat tak puas hati)
- ☐ Fairly dissatisfied (Agak tidak berpuas hati)
- ☐ A little dissatisfied (Sedikit tidak puas hati)
- ☐ A little satisfied (Puas hati sedikit)
- ☐ Fairly satisfied (Agak berpuas hati)
- ☐ Very satisfied (Sangat berpuas hati)

Who can you really count on to care about you, regardless of what is happening to you? *(Siapa yang boleh anda harapkan untuk mengambil berat tentang anda, tanpa mengira apa yang berlaku awak?)* *

Short answer text

How satisfied are you with the social support given to you by these people overall? *(Sejauh manakah anda berpuas hati dengan sokongan sosial yang diberikan oleh mereka secara keseluruhan?)* *

- ☐ Very dissatisfied (Sangat tak puas hati)
- ☐ Fairly dissatisfied (Agak tidak berpuas hati)
- ☐ A little dissatisfied (Sedikit tidak puas hati)
- ☐ A little satisfied (Puas hati sedikit)
- ☐ Fairly satisfied (Agak berpuas hati)
- ☐ Very satisfied (Sangat berpuas hati)

Who can you really count on to help you feel better when you are feeling generally down in the dumps? *(Siapa yang boleh anda harapkan untuk membantu anda berasa lebih baik apabila anda berasa secara umum di tempat pembuangan sampah?)* *

Short answer text

How satisfied are you with the social support given to you by these people overall? *(Sejauh manakah anda berpuas hati dengan sokongan sosial yang diberikan oleh mereka secara keseluruhan?)* *

- ☐ Very dissatisfied (Sangat tak puas hati)
- ☐ Fairly dissatisfied (Agak tidak berpuas hati)
- ☐ A little dissatisfied (Sedikit tidak puas hati)
- ☐ A little satisfied (Puas hati sedikit)
- ☐ Fairly satisfied (Agak berpuas hati)
- ☐ Very satisfied (Sangat berpuas hati)

Who can you count on to console you when you are very upset? *(Siapa yang boleh anda harapkan untuk menghiburkan anda apabila anda sangat kecewa?)* *

Short answer text

How satisfied are you with the social support given to you by these people overall? *(Sejauh manakah anda berpuas hati dengan sokongan sosial yang diberikan oleh mereka secara keseluruhan?)* *

- ☐ Very dissatisfied (Sangat tak puas hati)
- ☐ Fairly dissatisfied (Agak tidak berpuas hati)
- ☐ A little dissatisfied (Sedikit tidak puas hati)
- ☐ A little satisfied (Puas hati sedikit)
- ☐ Fairly satisfied (Agak berpuas hati)
- ☐ Very satisfied (Sangat berpuas hati)