

**Stress and other Correlates of Academic Success  
among Nigerian Students in Eastern Mediterranean  
University**

**Moses Bunmi Oluwabusola**

Submitted to the  
Institute of Graduate Studies and Research  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Science  
in  
Developmental Psychology

Eastern Mediterranean University  
February 2019  
Gazimağusa, North Cyprus

Approval of the Institute of Graduate Studies and Research

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Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ali Hakan Ulusoy  
Acting Director

I certify that this thesis satisfies all the requirements as a thesis for the degree of Master of Science in Developmental Psychology.

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Assoc. Prof. Dr. Fatih Bayraktar  
Chair, Department of Psychology

We certify that we have read this thesis and that in our opinion it is fully adequate in scope and quality as a thesis for the degree of Master of Science in Developmental Psychology.

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Assoc. Prof. Dr. Şenel Hüsni Raman  
Supervisor

---

Examining Committee

1. Prof. Dr. Biran Mertan

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2. Assoc. Prof. Dr. Fatih Bayraktar

---

3. Assoc. Prof. Dr. Şenel Hüsni Raman

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study examines the impact of stress and other correlates of academic success among Nigerian students in Eastern Mediterranean University, Famagusta North Cyprus, as they face challenges that correspond with studying abroad in a foreign land. The research explores the relationship between stress, academic motivation, academic environment and social support in relation to academic success. A total of 141 participants completed a questionnaire including a demographic section and subscales of the Students Adaptation to College Questionnaire namely, Academic Environment Scale and Academic Motivation Scale, the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support and the Perceived Stress Scale. Academic success was measured with the use of the students current semester GPA declared by the participant student as graded in the questionnaire. Results revealed that stress, social support, academic motivation and positive academic environment did not significantly predict academic success. Also there were no gender differences among the variables except for stress factor. This research will make it possible for the students' welfare department and the university authority to gain awareness about the travails of the Nigerian students amidst international students in general.

**Keywords:** academic success, motivation, Nigerian students, stress, positive academic environment.

## ÖZ

Bu çalışma, Doğu Akdeniz Üniversitesi'nde okumakta olan Nijeryalı öğrencilerin stres ve farklı değişkenlerin akademik başarı ile ilişkisini incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Araştırma, algılanan stres, akademik motivasyon, olumlu akademik ortam, algılanan sosyal destek ve akademik başarı arasındaki ilişkiyi yordamayı hedeflemektedir. Toplamda 141 katılımcı, öğrencilerin üniversiteye adaptasyon ölçeği, akademik çevre ölçeği, akademik motivasyon ölçeği, çok boyutlu algılanan sosyal destek ölçeği ve algılanan stres ölçeği olmak üzere iki alt ölçeği olan bir anket doldurdu. Akademik başarı, katılımcı öğrenci tarafından beyan edilen not ortalaması olarak ölçülmüştür. Sonuçlar, stresin, sosyal desteğin, akademik motivasyonun ve olumlu akademik ortamın akademik başarıyı anlamlı bir şekilde yordamadığını ortaya koyarken, değişkenlerinin bir çoğu arasında anlamlı bir korelasyon olduğu ve algılan stress değişkeninde cinsiyet farkı olduğu ortaya çıkmıştır. Bu araştırma, uluslararası öğrenciler olarak Nijeryalı öğrencilerin yaşadıkları zorluklar hakkında farkındalık kazanmalarını sağlayacak ve rehberlik merkezlerine ışık tutabilecek bilgiler sağlamaktadır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Akademik başarı, motivasyon, Nijeryalı öğrenciler, stress, olumlu akademik ortam.

# **DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated to my family

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENT**

I would like to express my profound heartfelt gratitude to my supervisor, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Şenel Hüsni Raman for her guidance, unflinching support in various ways and constant encouragement before and while working on this thesis and in the course of my master's program.

Many thanks to Assoc. Prof. Dr. Fatih Bayraktar for his erudite support, counsel and encouragement and I must confess my thanks to Assoc. Prof. Dr Yacoub Khallad who took much interest in this research and helped me to begin in the process.

I extend further thanks to the lecturers in the department of psychology, they are my role model.

Finally, it is my pleasure to appreciate all my fellow classmates for their love, support and assistance.

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

AES	Academic Environment Scale
AMS	Academic Motivation Scale
CGPA	Cumulative Grade Point Average
e.g	for example
et al.	and others
GPA	Grade Point Average
MSPSS	Multi-Dimensional Scale of Perceived Stress
PSS	Perceived Social Support
SACQ	Students Adaptation to College Questionnaire
SAT	Scholastic Assessment Test
UIS	UNESCO Institute for Statistics
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

# Chapter 1

## INTRODUCTION

Earning a university degree is essential to one's career and economic independence in life. Academic success among college students has been the focus of many studies. Although there is no agreed upon definition of academic success, it has most commonly been assessed in terms of academic performance as reflected in grades (Richardson, Bond, & Abraham, 2012). The exclusive purpose of grades is to precisely communicate to others, the extent and level of academic achievement that student has obtained either success or failure (Allen, 2005). The undergraduate grade point average (GPA) is a general and popular measure in university educational research and serves as a reliable measure of performance, retention and degree accomplishment (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Available evidence indicates that success in college is also influenced by variety of social and psychological factors. These include motivation level, availability (or lack of) social support, stress, age and gender, among others (Linnenbrink & Pintrich, 2002). The present study examines some of these variables in relation to academic success of Nigerian students at Eastern Mediterranean University.

Thousands of students leave their home countries to pursue higher education abroad every year. Among these are an estimated 71,000 Nigerian students, who are enrolled at universities around the world (UNESCO, 2017). At Eastern Mediterranean University (EMU) in Northern Cyprus, there are approximately 1,500 registered

Nigerian students, pursuing undergraduate and graduate degrees in various disciplines (EMU International Office, 2018). For many of these students, the experience of studying abroad can be challenging for a number of reasons in an environment that is different from their homeland.

### **1.1 Academic Success**

Academic success has been conceptualized as an outcome relating to university education or education in the classroom (Tinto & Pusser, 2006). This perspective can be explained as the attainment of certain skills and knowledge through studying and finishing of courses. It also means obtaining and making advancement in one's job after having acquired higher degree. Astin (1991) proposed that academic success emanates from the interrelationship between academic inputs with the appropriate environment. Similarly, Pascarella and Terenzini, (2006) supported Astin's view by corroborating the fact that, students' academic success is realised by the interplay of both academic and social experience that they have acquired overtime. These involved the environment, namely school programs, school policies, culture and campus experience, which must reflect in the attitude, values, behavior of the student after graduation.

Furthermore, as academic success is essential in life, and vital for youthful development. The bulk of the literature reviewed focuses on academic endeavors, academic advancement, and academic achievement in measuring academic success (Harackiewicz et al., 2002; Choi, 2005; Zajacova et al., 2005; Dennis et al., 2005) According to Kuh et al. (2011) academic success is an achievement realized from educational attainment of learning outcomes, engagement in academic

purposeful activities, knowledge acquisition, skill acquisition and competencies. Moreover, academic success also depends on the student perception of the learning environment in order to realize a successful outcome which is more important than the university physical environment. From another point of view, Andrade (2006) states that, academic success is an indication of knowledge acquisition, that is measured through completion of course requisite successfully (GPA), and an acceptable academic retention and approval.

Moreover Choic (2005), identified students completion of courses in the university successfully, as academic achievement. In his findings, academic success is the successful completion of university courses, while academic achievement is the course GPA. Both terms have been used interchangeably to measure students' academic success. For example, Ransdell, (2001) found academic success to be an achievement in terms of the GPA and successful completion of courses with the approved GPA outcome to graduate. As a measure of academic performance for this study, the GPA is justified to be a reliable grading system that aids in predicting academic outcomes at an aggregate level at a point in time in the semester academic calendar other than the CGPA which is more broader and covers calculations of all semester GPA as a complete grades in the academic year.

### **1.1.1 The Input-Environment-Outcome Model of Academic Success**

This model was proposed by Astin, (1991), to examine how the university psychological environment affects student's development. The main goal of this model was to examine the influence of environmental factors or variables on outcomes (academic success) having accounted for other contextual characteristics (Astin, 1993). This theory found that the output of an academic program depends on the quality of its input and a positive academic environment. This model consists of

three elements, the input, environment and the outcome. The input refers to the students characteristics at the initial stage of gaining university admission. It can be fixed characteristics like gender, ethnicity and other cognitive factors like values, attributes and prior education. The environment explains all the experiences of the student in the university that can impact the outcome, while the outcome is the objectives of the learning programs. Findings have revealed that assessment outcomes depend on the positive academic environmental inputs (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2006). On the other hand, demographic factors namely, family situation, social and academic experience gained before gaining admission to the university, relationships, university policies and programs together with the students personality attributes contributes to a successful academic outcome. Moreover, Huang and Chang, 2004; Berger and Milem, (1999) identified a positive academic environment as more influential on the social and intellectual development of university students. However, this model suggests that individual students have a role to play in shaping his or her behavior within and outside the confines of the university (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2006). This model identifies students' distinctiveness, environmental interventions, including academic programs and student knowledge, accomplishment, improvement and advancement (Astin, 1991; Pascarella & Terezini, 2006). This model describes student contextual characteristics which also exert influences on the expected outcome, in order to measure their academic influence. Fittingly, it can help to identify those factors that can predict academic success and outcome, thereby initiating grounds for intervention program by the university authority. Due to multiplicity in students' population, and the need for academic excellence, some aspect predicting the academic success of the students becomes imperative for investigation (Simpson, 2006). These predictors include

demographic variables, namely age in emerging adulthood and gender factors among the students.

## **1.2 Social Demographic Factors and Academic Success**

Many researches have been conducted on socio demographic variables as factors predictive of stress and its impact on the academic success of college students (Crede & Niehorster, 2012), which will be described in the following section.

### **1.2.1 Age**

Age in relation to emerging adulthood affects the experience, severity and types of stress affecting international students. The period of emerging adulthood cannot be identified with a specific age but it is a transition from late adolescence to young adulthood, as the emerging adult can reach adulthood at different age stages in life (Arnett, 2000). Students in this period of age normally do not think they've attained to adulthood as they are still striving to complete their education. On the other hand, findings have identified that being an older student usually lessens severity of stress which affects younger students or new emerging adult undergraduates as they arrive abroad to a new academic environment (Stallman, 2010). This period of emerging adulthood is a stressful period which entails transition from high school to university due to the differences in academic workload for new undergraduates which will inevitably be reflected on academic success (Arnett, 2006) and other environmental factors, in which age and maturity determines the level with which students endure pressing situations. Moreover, emerging adulthood was suggested to describe the period of extension in adolescence that happens in developed nations when students take up higher education.

Furthermore, university students are particularly susceptible to high levels of stress (Brown & Ralph, 1999). As emerging adults, in their late 20s (Arnett, 2007), they normally encounter challenges of emerging identity, financial freedom, academics in a competitive circumstances and recognizing their roles among other members of the community, for example, as age tell on the students, they have choices to make on issues about religious opinions, the other sex, and relationships with parents (Lefkowitz, 2005). These challenges are prevalent among university students, as findings have shown that the stressors facing younger and emerging adults differs from the stressors facing older adult in terms of life experience and responsibilities to cater for themselves and their families as they take up higher education abroad (Thawabieh & Qaisy, 2012).

To realize academic success, emerging adult will have to be making their own decisions concerning circumstances which might meaningfully impacts their livelihood (Zarrett & Eccles, 2006). On the other hand, studies done by Mistra and Castillo (2004) found no significant differences in the amount stress reported by students of different ages affecting their academic success as this period of age is characterized by the combination of prior and current understanding by the students in choosing their life carrier. Additionally, Holinka (2015) claims that stress can totally impact a student's universal evaluation of their life course, due to the fact that stress decreases the likelihood of joy on campus and increases the chance of experiencing certain depressive indicators. However, the influence of the parents of these students is vital as they still influence their adult children goals, yearning and aspiration (Arnett, 2014) irrespective of their gender.



### **1.2.2 Gender**

Literatures have also identified gender difference in the study of stress among university students (Day & Livingstone, 2003), however findings reveal some contradictory results. In a research done by Misra and Castillo (2004) males as well as female students however differ in their reaction to and experience of stress but found that being a male or female student is not a predictive factor for stress level experience and that both genders suffer stress of the same level in relation to their condition and academic environment. As Brougham et al. (2009) found college females reported a higher stress level, and are more prone to pressures as regards their academic pursuit than male students. Due to gender and socialization, not because of their biological difference, increased roles strain makes female to be more stressed because of responsibilities (Bang, 2009). Narsrin as cited by Hashim (2003) found that female international students from non-European countries suffer discriminations from host culture, due to the student's ignorance regarding other culture which can be stressful. On the other hand, social expectations in some cultures allow men to engage in more tasks than females (Iwamoto & Liu, 2006), for this reasons, male international students' may undergo an increased activities that can be stressful more than their female counterpart.

Furthermore, a study done in Cape Town South Africa among cohorts of 528 medical students revealed that there was no gender difference in the experience of severity of stress affecting the student's education. Females reported approximately the same level of stress as the male students in their first three years in the university (Mason, 2017), as both genders experience academic, environmental, relationship and personal issues overtime. On the other hand, the severity of stress in both male and female students differs (Amr, El Gilany, & El Hawary, 2008), as Misra and

Castillo (2004) proved that there is a difference in the perception of stress among male and female international students. This findings was corroborated by Calaguas (2011) conclusion, that the significant differences between male and female students on the perception of stress is because of the way they view their lecturers and the academic programs, but found no significant differences between them on stress emanating from social relationships and financial issues.

Considering the various variables impacting on students' academic success, this study defines academic success as an achievement realized from pursuing academic and learning goals with the right motives to acquire a skill with competence in which performances are measured in grades (GPA). Pritchard and Wilson, (2003) indicates motivation as a contributory factor towards a successful academic career that impacts students' psychological wellbeing.

### **1.3 Academic Motivation and Academic Success**

Motivation in this context can be explained as an energetic driving force that helps us to achieve our goals. A student that is motivated will seek all means at his or her disposal to achieve success so all actions would be directed towards achieving such goals (Archer, 1994). A study conducted by Palmer (2007) found student motivation to be an essential component for excellence and high quality learning, and learning does not really occur unless a constant motivation is provided for the student.. This involves proper planning, activities and attempt at striving to reach the pinnacle of excellence.

The theory of self-determination (Ryan & Deci, 2000) better explains the extent whereby, a student perceives if the school environment fulfils psychological necessities for autonomy, competence and relatedness, as students seek for means to

achieve their academic goals and uniqueness. According to this theory, individuals internal condition together with external stimulation serves as an incentive that make the person to engage in a goal oriented pursuit and hence pursue and perform task that they are interested in (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Furthermore, this theory emphasized the perception and realization of three basic physiological needs which is associated with students' academic outcomes of namely, autonomy, competence and relatedness. Autonomy occurs when students willingly dedicate their time and vigor to their studies, and regulate their affairs with the aim of shaping their own conduct (Assor, Kaplan, & Roth, 2002) Also, autonomy will enable the students to realize that academic undertaking is very relevant to his or her goal, yearnings and aspiration. Student will fulfil competency when they know and have the ability to see themselves as effectively performing a task, with action for a desirable successful outcome in the academic and social environment (Black & Deci, 2000). Also, they feel competence when they realize that they can cope with their academic challenges. Both the need for autonomy and competence as fulfilled by the students actualize intrinsic motivation. That is, they take actions devoid of external stimulus, due to their inherent interest in such task. Thirdly, relatedness shows the benefit of other individuals and the need to get connected and associate with fellow students' in the university environment as a motivational factor (Reeve, Deci, & Ryan, 2004). This perspective encourages learning, studying, personal growth, self-organization, longings and take decisiveness into consideration with a positive result, because of the series of both internal and external stimulations that the student's experience (Jones, 2009).

Findings by Larson (2000), identified motivation as the force behind the effort that student put into beginning and the completion of academic task, without allowing

anything to stop them despite the challenges and hindrances they may come across in the process. Motivation will enable students to pay rapt attention to their lecturers and strive to understand what they are being taught so as not to suffer failure (Finn & Rock, 1997; Linnenbrink & Pintrich, 2002). Such knowledge attained is considered by the students as useful for their lives in future for handling adult responsibilities.

Motivation is an essential contributor to students' academic achievement and success. Notably different factors like the environment, internal biological, condition, purpose in life and personal disposition serves as tools for achieving academic success and growth (Mahdipour & Dizgah, 2015). Motivation can also be defined as the power that moves someone to do something, decide on what to learn, how, and the time chosen to take up knowledge. These ultimately prompt students to take their assignment seriously and be prepared to obtain their diplomas in their chosen course. Furthermore, concluded in their findings that students who are motivated to study go for nothing less than distinction, as they perform better in their courses (Harackiewicz, et al., 1997). Such were found to be successful in their future endeavours more than students with little or no interest in their studies while in the university.

#### **1.4 Positive Academic Environment and Academic Success**

A positive academic environment also plays a dynamic part, in determining how students are motivated and responds to the educational activities they pursue. The influence of the environment cannot be overemphasized as it controls to a considerable degree how students acts and interacts, that is to say, the academic environment shapes students (Lizzio, Wilson, & Simons, 2002) and influence their success and behavior. An important aspect of this environment is the lecturers that

instruct students. The lecturers (professors) in their wisdom, knowledge and understanding are responsible for inculcating positive values in students, thus playing a dynamic role in the improvement of the student's personality (Nikose, Chari, & Gupta, 2018). In order to achieve academic success, a positive academic environment to facilitate it must be available (Drexler, 2010).

In relation to student's positive academic environment, the ecological perspective in Bronfenbrenner's work applies. Though, taken from studies on early childhood development, the model transfers across the lifespan and can be applied to college student's development (Renn & Arnold, 2003). The influence of a positive academic environment on students revealed that human development is influenced by different types of environmental systems. Highlighting mainly the micro and the mesosystem in this context, the micro systems in the university are the lecturers, students, course mates in such settings. The interaction between the students and the lecturers as they influence one another will make the students not to be recipient of the environment alone but are also contributing to the construction of that environment (Bronfenbrenner, 1995). Furthermore, this perspective reveals that students must engage in certain task and take action for development to be achieved in the dynamic relationship in the microsystem (course mates and lecturers) can help in the development of good morals and virtues in the life of the students that will impact the student relationship with their supportive and encouraging parents at home.

Mesosystem is realized when more than one micro system interact, and the synergy between them enables students development in the university setting. This initiative can spur the student for a better relationship with their instructors and fellow classmates in a nested relationship which is the mesosystem, having inculcated

positive attitudes from the positive academic environment. Placing emphasis on students' physical environment, it was proven that the instructors in the learning environment play a vital role to help facilitate students' academic success (Kamaruddin, Zainal, & Aminuddin, 2009).

### **1.5 Social Support and Academic Success**

Among students, social support from friends and family have been found to be related to psychological wellbeing and academic success (Clara, Cox, Enns, Murray, & Torgude, 2003), as the support that they are receiving or perceived to have received is beneficial for their psychological stability and wellbeing. Social support is the perception or the real and actual experience of being cared or catered for and valued by familiar, friendly and inseparable others. This is a situation whereby one realises that he or she have someone to rely and call upon in the time of need to solve ones problems (Sarason, Shearin, & Sarason, 1990; Taylor, 2011). Similarly, Phinney and Haas (2003) further found students who have a strong social support as they progress in their education have more feeling of self-confidence, self-determination and were successful in their academic endeavours and able to cope with stressful circumstances. Findings by Clara et al. (2003) identified friends, family and parents as the most often stated social supports among college students that is related with the students psychological wellbeing. However, a research conducted among first year university South African students from rural communities found that, social support from the parents, friends and religious leaders has a strong influence on the challenges that the students are facing (Pillay & Ngcobo, 2010)

In support of these claims and to investigate the impact of social support from family on the psychological wellbeing of students, a study was conducted by Khallad and Jabir (2016) on Jordanian and Turkish college students. It was found that social support from family and friends was significantly related to students' mental health status as those participants who responded to having had a greater level of support from their family and friends were less stressed. This finding, replicates evidence by Dzulkifli & Yasin (2009) on the link between perceived social support and psychological problems on undergraduates samples, thereby identifying the special role, social support played on students' academic success.

Likewise, previous studies have suggested a relationship between perceived social supports in relation to students' psychological wellbeing. In their study, Awang, Kutty and Ahmad (2014) found that social support alleviate stress level among youths and students. Also, parents' educational level and household income can help promote students wellbeing. Social support for students impacts students' academic success, happiness, joy and life enjoyment as well as the ability to adapt to campus environment. These all requires social support from family and friends in order to actualise students' positive wellbeing in the university (Awang, Kutty, & Ahmad, 2014).

Furthermore, a review of a recent survey by Hunt and Eisenberg, (2010) identified the need for social support, as serious psychological problems affecting college student's academic success, and also predisposing them to harmful behaviour and distress can be avoided (Burris et al., 2009). Social support will have its positive impact when duly discharged and expressed on students, most especially support from people around them on campus and outside the university environment. These

have been observed in a study conducted among multicultural samples of university students from different countries (Lyraikos, 2012).

## **1.6 Stress and Academic Success**

Stress can be understood as a state of tension experienced by individuals facing extraordinary demands, constraints or opportunities or pressures emanating from circumstances in the environment (Azila-Gbetor et al., 2015). This calls to mind actions and situations that place special physical and physiological demands upon a person which can affect an individual's psychophysiological equilibrium. Lazarus (1993), defined stress as a particular relationship between an individual and the environment, that is appraised by the person as taxing, or exceeding his or her resources and endangering his or her wellbeing. Notably, the impact of stress on students' academic performance is well documented. For example, Gall, Evans, and Bellerose (2000) showed that entering a university results in a great deal of stress and strain most especially for first year students. This is because university students often face new challenges in terms of academics, lifestyle, and social environment as they need to attain certain levels of academic achievement to graduate, as determined by their performance (Cong, Bessie & Cheong, 2009). Past researches show that some undergraduate students significantly experience stress (Brown et al, 1999). Available evidence shows that stress affects students' academic achievement (Elliot, Arthur & Hill, 2007). For the students, stress may emanate from academic demands, living situation, social relationship, financial difficulties and family concerns.

Findings also indicate that stress can have detrimental effect on various aspects of students everyday academic activities (Robotham & Julian, 2006) including their psychological wellbeing. Similarly, poor academic performance have been found to



be related to psychological symptoms of stress, as poor performing students normally feel frustrated, angry, depressed and anxious (Lumley & Provenzano, 2003) . On the other hand, when stress is intense due to an increase in students' daily hassles, students' psychological wellbeing will significantly be affected, leading to mental disequilibrium and poor academic outcomes (Kanner et al., 1981; Lazarus, 1993). Likewise, Rogers, Creed and Searle (2012) suggested that students will experience a lower level of psychological wellbeing if they feel that schoolwork is time consuming and boring, this will invariably make them to obtain a poor academic outcome.

Moreover, stresses normally have a negative impact on students' academic and social effectiveness and cognition which culminates into chronic health issues. In a study conducted among Nigerian female undergraduate students, Arowolo and Falade, (2014) observed that, if a strain that produces a stimulus is removed, the material will simply return to the original condition but if the strain stretches beyond the elastic limit, a permanent damage will occur. That is, our capacity to endure stress and strain will diminish when our physiology cannot cope with it, leading to lack of concentration to study and comprehend, also thinking ability will suffer.

### **1.7 The Current Study**

When considering literatures on stress and other variables that influence academic success of international students, findings reveal that not much work has been done on Nigerian students studying abroad, especially those studying at Eastern Mediterranean University in North Cyprus. Furthermore, Sawir et al. (2008) argued that much of the available literature focuses on the academic experience of

international students while little research focuses on stress and other psychological variables affecting their wellbeing and academic success.

Although attempts have been made, to study the causes of stress among university students mainly studying at higher institutions in Nigeria, inadequate evidence exists relating to this issue on an international scale. Most of the international studies in this field have examined the impact of stress and other influences on foreign students enrolled in American universities (Sanders and Kurt, 2001; Shapiro et al., 2000). Therefore, the present study aimed at addressing the paucity of studies on the effects of general stress and other factors on Nigerian students' academic success abroad. Furthermore, this study will also examine motivation, positive academic environment and social support as it provides the needed emotional and influential support and also act as a buffer to minimize the effect of stress and avoid the sense of loneliness and perplexity (Pedersen, 1991), thereby enhancing students' academic success.

Bearing in mind the above review, the following hypotheses were tested:

Hypothesis 1 predicted a positive relationship between perceived social support and academic motivation.

Hypothesis 2 predicted a positive relationship between positive academic environment and academic motivation.

Hypothesis 3 predicted a positive relationship between perceived social support and academic success, as reflected in students' GPAs

Hypothesis 4 predicted that there would be a negative relationship between stress and academic success.

Hypothesis 5 predicted a negative relationship between perceived social support and perceived stress among participant

An additional research question was to explore gender differences for all variables although a prediction was not made.

## Chapter 2

### METHOD

#### 2.1 Participants

One hundred and forty one Nigerian students (96 males and 45 females) aged between 18 – 38 years old ( $M = 23.8$ ,  $SD = 4.02$ ) studying at Eastern Mediterranean University (EMU) participated in this study. Their length of stay as students at this university in North Cyprus ranges between a minimum of 1 year to a maximum of 7 years ( $M = 2.98$ ,  $SD = 1.26$ ).

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Nigerian Students

Variable	Category	Total (N)	%
Gender	Male	96	68.1
	Female	45	31.9
Education	Bachelor	111	78.7
	Masters	16	11.3
	PhD	14	9.9
Marital Status	Single	129	92.2
	Married	10	7.1
	Divorced	1	7
Length of Stay	<1 year / 1 year	21	14.9
	<2 years/ 2 years	27	19.1
	<3 years/ 3 years	43	30.5
	<4 years/ 4 years	40	28.4
Source of Financial Support	Parent	107	75.9
	Relatives	2	1.4
	Self	20	14.2
	Sponsored	12	8.5

## Faculties

Faculty of education	1	0.71
Faculty of health science	15	10.64
Faculty of tourism	2	1.42
Faculty of arts and science	11	7.8
Faculty of architecture	3	2.13
Faculty of business and economics	48	34
Faculty of communication & media	17	12.11
Faculty of engineering	34	24
School of computing & technology	10	7.8

## 2.2 Materials

For this study four scales were used in gathering data: Demographic questionnaire, subscales of the Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire (SACQ), namely the Academic Motivation Scale (AMS), and the Academic Environment Scale (AES). The Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS) and the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS).

### 2.2.1 Demographic Questions

The scales developed for the purposes of this study consisted of several items pertaining to demographic information (e.g., age, gender, area of study, marital status, source of financial support, length of stay studying in the university and GPA). (See Appendix A)

### 2.2.2 Student Adaptation to College questionnaire (SACQ) (Baker & Siryk, 1998)

In order to assess students' academic motivation (as a predictor of academic success), the Academic Motivation and Academic Environment subscales of the student adaptation to college questionnaire (Baker and Siryk, 1989) were used. The Academic Motivation subscale measures students' attitudes toward the education

they are pursuing and the extent of their awareness of and commitment to academic goals. The Academic satisfaction subscale measure the degree of students' satisfaction with their academic environment, including the university they are studying at, their courses, and their professors. Each of the two subscales consists of 4 items (See Appendix B). An example item for Academic Motivation Scale is ("I know why I am in the university and what I want out of it"). An example item for the Academic Environment Scale is ("I am satisfied with the professors I have now in my courses"). In this study, the Academic Motivation Scale had a Cronbach's alpha value of .82, while the Academic Environment Scale Cronbach's alpha was .72. Each modified measure adapted for this study was on a 5 point Likert scale ranging from "applies very close to me" to "doesn't apply to me at all". It was expected that students having high scores on this scale would perform better in their courses and develop more interest in their studies in their bid to succeed under stressful circumstances (See Appendix C).

### **2.2.3 Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS)**

This scale was developed by Zimet et al. (1988) and specifically designed to measure the extent of social support that students perceive to have from family, friends, and significant others. This scale consists of 12 items wherein an equal number of items measure the perception of social support from family (e.g., "I can talk about my problems with my family"), from friends (e.g., "My friends really try to help me"), and from significant others (e.g. "There is a special person in my life who cares about my feelings"). Participants indicated the extent of their agreement using a 7 point Likert scale varying from 1 (= very strongly disagree) to 7 (= very strongly agree). Higher scores indicate higher levels of perceived social support

(Zimet, Dahlem & Farley, 1988). This current study has a Cronbach alpha of .80 (See Appendix D).

#### **2.2.4 Perceived Stress Scale-10 item Version (PSS-10)**

The Perceived Stress Scale-10 item version was developed by Cohen et al. (1983) to measure the extent to which one views various life situations as stressful. The responses to the items of the Perceived Stress Scale ranges from 1 = never to 5 = very often on a 5 point Likert scale. A sample statement is (“In the last month, how often have you felt you were unable to control the important thing in your life”). Furthermore, there were four positive items which are reversed; they are (items 4, 5, 7, and 8). The current study had a Cronbach reliability of .78 (See Appendix E).

### **2.3 Procedure**

Prior to the commencement of this study and data collection, ethical approval was obtained from the EMU Ethics and Research Committee. This thesis used a non-probability form of convenient sampling in selecting participants from among Nigerian students within the campus vicinity. Questionnaires were administered after the aims of the study were explained and a consent form was signed. Administration of the questionnaire took place between the months of February and March of 2018. Completion of the questionnaire took approximately 15 minutes. When the questionnaires were collected, the participants were thanked and given a debriefing form that further explained the objectives of the research and provided an opportunity for the participants to ask questions. Finally, statistical analysis of the collected data was done using a computer software program known as Statistical Package for Social Sciences, Version 22.

## Chapter 3

### RESULT

Pearson correlations were used to measure the relationship among the variables, also an independent t-test was done to test gender differences between the variables. Lastly, hierarchical multiple regression analysis was conducted to see the predictive roles of the independent variables on academic success as measured using the GPA.

#### 3.1 Descriptive Statistics

As can be seen in the table below, the range of GPA varied between Nigerian students.

Table 2: GPA range of Nigerian student sample

Range	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 2.0	12	8.5
2.0 – 2.49	51	36.2
2.5 – 2.99	34	24.1
3.0 – 3.49	31	22.0
3.5 – 4.00	13	9.2

#### 3.2 Correlation Analysis

A correlation analysis was done to examine the relationship among the main continuous variables which allowed us to test the hypothesis in this study. Academic success was not significantly correlated with any of the measures. However, social support was negatively related to perceived stress and academic motivation.



Additionally, academic environment and academic motivation were correlated (see Table 3).

Table 3. Correlation among main variable of study

Variables	1	2	3	4	5
1. Academic Success (GPA)	-				
2. Perceived Stress	-.12	-			
3. Academic Motivation	.02	.12	-		
4. Academic Environment	-.02	.14	.46**	-	
5. Social Support	.04	-.17*	-.22**	-.07	-

Note: \*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed);

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

### 3.3 Independent Samples t-test: Perceived stress, Academic success (GPA), Academic Motivation, Academic Environment and Social Support by Gender

An independent samples t test was conducted on both the male and female student to test their level of experience of the severity and impact of stress whereby  $t(139) = -2.12$ ,  $p = .036$ , these results suggested that females ( $M = 2.94$ ,  $SD = .71$ ) reported a high level of stress than the males did ( $M = 2.69$ ,  $SD = .60$ ). There was no significant difference between males and female in the remaining variables namely academic success, academic motivation, academic environment and impact of social support (see Table 4).

Table 4: Mean Score, Standard Deviation and the t values of the main variables according to gender

Variables	Males		Females		t-value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
GPA	2.80	1.08	3.02	1.23	-1.08
Perceived Stress	2.70	.06	2.94	.71	-2.12*
Academic Motivation	1.93	1.06	1.87	1.01	.290
Academic Environment	2.30	.90	2.39	.92	-.563
Social Support	4.87	1.00	4.74	.91	.694

Note: \* $p < .05$

### 3.4 Hierarchical Regression Analysis

A hierarchical multiple regressions were used to assess the ability of social support, academic environment, academic motivation, perceived stress to predict academic success after controlling for age, gender and stay in Cyprus.

Preliminary analysis was conducted to make sure that there is no violation of assumptions of normality, linearity, multicollinearity and homoscedasticity. Examination of the data identify non significance as the highest VIF among all the variables was 1.316, for academic motivation, while the lowest tolerance to academic success (GPA) was .76 for academic motivation.

Considering the fact that the individual Nigerian student participant differ in age, gender, and in their length of stay in North Cyprus, this variable were entered into step 1, explaining 2.8% of the variance in the students' academic success (GPA).

After entering positive academic environment, social support, perceived stress and academic motivation in step 2, the total variance explained by the model as a whole was 6%,  $F(7,133) = 1.205, p > .05$ . The measures explained an additional 3.1% of the variability in academic success (GPA), after controlling for age, gender and stay in Cyprus.  $R$  square change = .03,  $F(4,133) = 1.108, p > .05$ . In the final model, the whole variables recorded a non-significant result (See Table 5).

Table 5: Hierarchical multiple regression analysis findings for variables predicting academic success.

<b>Predictors</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>SEb</b>	<b><math>\beta</math></b>
<b>Step 1</b>			
Age	-.037	.024	-.132
Gender	.163	.209	.067
Stay in Cyprus	.054	.076	.060
Step 1 Statistics:	$R^2=.3$		
<b>Step 2</b>			
Age	-.036	.024	-.129
Gender	.252	.213	.104
Stay in Cyprus	.080	.077	.089
Perceived stress	-.042	.023	-.157
Social support	.005	.008	.049
Positive academic environment	-.029	.028	-.097
Academic motivation	.022	.026	.083
Step 2 statistics	$R^2=.6$		

Note:  $p>.05$

## **Chapter 4**

### **DISCUSSION**

The main objective of this cross sectional study was to explore the effects of the variables namely, stress in general, academic motivation, social support and positive academic environment would have on the academic success of the Nigerian students in Eastern Mediterranean University. In this study, we identified those variables that are related to one another in our quest to know how such factor affects Nigerian students' academic success.

Correlational analysis showed that there was a negative significant relationship between social support and academic motivation of the Nigerian students. This suggested that as the strength of the social support increased, academic motivation decreased. These findings were not what were anticipated for; as it was hypothesized that social support will correlate positively with academic motivation. Most of the literature has identified social support to positively motivate students for academic success (Wentzel, 1998), also social support enable students to cope with stress stemming from their daily hassles (Cassidy, 1999). Contrary to this above mentioned findings as well as the hypothesis of this current study, it was revealed that though there may be social support it does not have an impact on the Nigerian students' academic motivation. In line with self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000) students may have not been intrinsically motivated but rely on extrinsic or external support which may suppress performance and motivation. Similarly, in this study,

our findings confirm the fact that social support could not predict academic success in the regression. It might however be the case that only the tasks that students inherently enjoy can intrinsically and optimally motivate them for academic success according to the self-determination theory.

Testing the hypothesis of a positive relationship between social support and academic success, our result supported the hypothesis but a non-significant relationship existed between them. A previous study done by Cheng, Ickes and Verhofstadst (2012) on the relationship between perceived social support from the family and academic success achieved in the college resulted in no significant correlation, similarly Roman, Cuestas and Fenollar (2008) also reported a non-significance result. On the other hand, a study investigating how social support influenced academic performances, among Mutah University of Jordan students, Alnabhan, Alzegoul and Harwell (2001) has shown a weak but significant relationship between perceived social support from parent and college students' academic performances.

This inconsistent report in relation to our current study may be due to the fact that some students hold family financial assistance as social support. In defining social support, Awang, Kutty, and Ahmad (2014) opined that social support is the perception of how much a student feels that his or her family cares for him or her and give encouragement in their effort to succeed in the university. Financial assistance or economic support for a student depends on individual family financial status that they depend upon in their period of emerging adulthood. When referring to students' academic success in relation to the level of financial support, Cheng et al. (2012) further found that lack of financial support can ruin a student's ability to succeed

academically and cope with major challenges (Klink, Byars-Winston, Bakken, 2008), but a high financial support can act as a caring influence, amidst the students' families' financial problems.

Moreover, there are variety of social support types not investigated by this study which likewise may have led to a non-significance relationship between perceived social support and the student academic success. It is worthy to note that the Nigerian students in general view social support basically from their family as their main source of helping facility (Canavan & Dolan, 2000).

This study's non-significant result may also have been caused by certain variables which might be extraneous but vital and not initially considered, especially, support from friends. According to an aspect of self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000), relatedness, Morrow and Ackermann (2012) noted that the academic or learning environment promotes a sense of belongingness and the need to get connected to peers and friends which can fortify motivation and positively affect academic outcomes as students imitate their fellows thereby developing interest in their education. Studies on the importance of support from loyal friend have been found to promote academic success and satisfaction with university life (Yazedjian, Purswell, Sevin, & Toews, 2007), this suggested that having a friend with similar attitude and a common concern is valuable for academic success (Chickering & Reisser, 1993).

Also, there are differences between the social support provided and the social support needed in different settings or circumstances, such that if social support is not in harmony with the students existing problem, such social support would not act to

motivate the students in realising educational goals and success. For example, Rigby, Deci, Patrick and Ryan (1992) indicates that, rewards from parents as social support given to the wrong student who does not value it will be ineffective in motivating such a student. They found that rewarding students for the activities that they naturally enjoy can decrease motivation, as this study find a negative significant relationship between social support and motivation. For example students given a financial reward as social support for solving problems, normally have a difficult time for solving another problem that requires a different approach as the reward given initially has weakened thinking capability hence decreasing motivation (Ronald, 2011).

The amount of social support received by both male and female students was further investigated, whereby earlier studies reveal that females' students scored higher than males (Vallerand & Bissonnette, 1992). On the contrary, another study suggested that males have a higher mean score than females (Hakan & Munire, 2014). This current study revealed that gender difference was not significant in relation to social support. Findings by Pfeifer and Asberg (2011) in their research, using undergraduate participants revealed non-significant gender variances in the perception of social support which supported our current analysis. Likewise, there was a non-significant gender difference in academic motivation among these participants. In their findings, Gilman and Anderman (2006) opined that motivated students irrespective of their gender will realise the necessity of schooling and trust their capacity for academic success. Such students irrespective of their gender do set genuine goals and work towards achieving the goals (McCoach & Siegel, 2005). On the other hand, in support of a non-significant finding in this study, Darby, Longmire-Avital, Chenault, and Haglund (2013) examined gender differences in



academic motivation over a semester period and discovered that there are fairly motivational changes observed in the course of the semester in both genders. Female students' motivation increased earlier during the semester and it gradually dropped within the passage of the semester, while males' motivation also peaked in the middle of the semester, but weakened near the termination of the semester. This non-significant finding reveal that academic motivation may be viewed as one of many factors that influence academic success, but it is not the singular causal factor.

Current findings also provided a confirmation of a significant negative relationship between social support and perceived stress. This result no doubt was supported by other preceding researches whereby social support relates negatively with psychological problems such as stress, anxiety and other psychosomatic problems (Friedlander, Reid, Shupak & Cribbie, 2007). The possibility and impact of psychological problems can be alleviated if the needed social support is provided for the Nigerian students in dealing with stress in their academic pursuit and to expedite a positive adjustment to university life despite challenges (Rawson, Bloomer, & Kendall, 1999). The correlation was however small possibly due to the fact that other aspect of social support namely the various source of support was not considered in this current study. In another study supporting this current finding, students that have high social support will experience little or no mental and emotional difficulties (Cohen & Lakey, 2000). Notably, the manner with which students perceive social support is essential to the advantages that they gain from the experience as literatures further explained social support to mean the kind of provisions that can be available in times of need (Cohen, Gootlieb & Underwood, 2001). Findings from this current study help us to understand stress has negatively affected the Nigerian students.

Another hypothesis of the study was that, positive academic environment will positively correlate with academic motivation and this was supported. This relationship suggests that some aspect of the positive academic environment such as the course taken and the professors lecturing technique have a beneficial effect on the Nigerian student. The reason for this high positive correlation is due to the fact that, the enabling Eastern Mediterranean University academic environment in terms of the effort of the academic staffs enhances motivation and learning as experienced by the Nigerian students. Supporting the result of this study on the importance of teaching expertise in the university as an important aspect of the academic environment, a study done by Bayraktar (2015), identified instructors' effective use of pragmatic methods, tools and technique in creating a learning condition in the lecture room has a significant influence on student motivation. These environmental factors have spurred the intellectual capability of the students despite the challenges they faced studying in a foreign land. Supporting this findings, Williams and Williams (2011) corroborates the fact that lecturers role are very crucial within the academic environment as studies revealed that lecturers, passion on the job, expertise and their vast knowledge of the taught courses motivates students for excellence. On the other hand, the results of this study help us to understand that adherence to ethical code of conduct by the lecturers tends to motivate these Nigerian student samples. Also, the lecturer's non prejudicial and optimistic attitude and students interaction with them has a great effect to motivate and make students to be confidence in achieving academic success (Komarraju, Musulkin, & Bhattacharya, 2010).

Furthermore, the findings of this study is an evidence of the robust impact of the students positive academic environment on student education in that, it is helpful, supportive, energizes and motivate them to pursue aspirations and goals for academic

excellence. Also the students'- lecturers' cordial and social interaction do foster academic success (Shah, SidNair & Bennett, 2013). The relationship between the positive academic environment and the academic motivation in this study shows that academic environment takes a greater impact on students' achievement than the influence of the students' academic motivation. This revealed that the academic environment influence the students' academic success more than any other factors. These findings show a very noticeable difference to the findings of some researchers, in which they found a greater effect of motivation on learning. A study done in Indonesia among undergraduate student by Pujadi (2007) in Indonesia identified the importance of the micro system in the life of the students, as the positive academic environment of high quality lecturing, and the taught course content proved to have a significant relationship with students' academic motivation. Notably, our findings confirmed motivation as an internal factor, while the academic environment is a cluster of external influences that can impact students' academic success.

This study explores gender differences in relation to the experience and impact of stress. It was found that the Nigerian female students reported a negative significant level of stress slightly higher than the males, meaning that they felt the impact most. Considering most cultures across nations on major depressive problems, Weissman, Bland and Canino (1996) noted that females are more likely to develop symptoms related with stress. A plausible reason for the Nigerian female students is their susceptible to stress or being vulnerable to stressful situations in line with Adeoyo, and Durosaro (2000); and Ipem (2005) studies on the multiplicity of stressors affecting female students more than the males as worries about caring for their junior siblings and starting a romantic relationship that can lead to marriage is common among university single female students.

Prior studies confirmed that females reported surpassing amount of stress than males (Hogan, Carlson & Dua, 2002; Tamres, Janick & Helgeson , 2002). Contrarily, other findings revealed that students who are males reported a high level of stress, in accordance with Chen et al. (2009) studies. Although, there were contradictory studies which require further inquiry on the occurrences suggesting, in general there are significant differences on the stress level between male and female students because of their daily demands and academic challenges as they play their roles as student (Bhosale, 2014).

It was hypothesized that, a negative relationship would exist between academic success (GPA) and stress. This current study indicate that stress has a negative but non-significant relationship with academic success as measured using students (GPA). Prior research on the relationship between stress and academic success in the universities, has suggested that stress has a contrary relationship with academic success (GPA) (Silverstein, Krit-Silverstein, 2010; Zajacova, Lynch & Espenshade, 2005). Studies on stress in relation to academic achievement have found a strong significant correlation between perceived stress and academic success (Ross, Neibling, Heckert, 1999) but contrary to their findings, this current study among Nigerian students found no significant relationship between stress and academic success. Evidently, the students experience moderate stress level which may be due to environmental factors and academic workload as suggested by Hudd, (2000). Such academic load normally piles up towards the end of the semester, as there are pressures to complete the curriculum. Furthermore, Zajacova, Lynch and Espenshade (2005) found other reason that may have caused our insignificance finding, as they identify reasons for college students' dropping out of school, not only due to stress but due to other factors like the lack of full commitment to academic goals and the

difference between students expectation and reality experienced, which may have confound the results of this study.

Additionally, the current study revealed inconsistent findings whereby academic success as measured by GPA does not have a relationship with any of the measures in the regression and correlation analyses. The fact that there was no significant correlation between academic success and any of the variables of study suggests that, GPA might not be the right parameter to measure academic success. However, performance in university education is usually measured using grade point average (GPA) as a quantifiable measure of academic success, defining academic status. It involves the compilation of the average marks of all assignment and test done within the semester up to the semester final exam rather than the CGPA which covers overall GPA.

Moreover, this current study considers response by participants based on their current stated GPA in the current semester. A knowledge based on GPA factor is relevant for the university when selecting the most capable students. On the other hand, investigations have found that undergraduate GPA has a positive influence on earnings from employers after graduation. For example, Jones and Jackson (1990) found that employers consideration of GPA, lead to an increase in annual earnings of over 8% for workers. Due to the strong effect that undergraduate GPA has on graduate employment and the value placed on GPA by university policy makers as recognition for academic success, initially it was considered instead of the CGPA. Surprisingly it proved non-significant as the lack of results might have been due to the fact that the GPA measure may not actually be the most comprehensive measure of academic success. Furthermore, the GPA stated by the Nigerian student

participants may not have been be their real current GPA. They may have inflated their grade, which is equal to response bias on their part so as to gain social desirability, hence making the measure open to violations of validity and reliability of the survey instrument (Johnson, 2003).

Despite the universal acceptability of this measure, GPA based on self-report may not reflect the accurate grade received due to the participants' imperfect retentive memory which may have lowered the power of predictability in the research process (Humphreys & Drasgow, 1989).

Another explanation about the reason why this study could not obtain a significant result in measuring academic success on all measures may be due to the fact that we did not combine cognitive and non- cognitive variables. Factors such as intelligence, personality traits, self-efficacy, self-esteem, emotion and confidence (Richardson, Abraham, & Bond, 2012; Usher & Pajares, 2008) as part of our measuring variables, which may directly or indirectly serve as predictor for academic performance leading to success. A recent study done by Vedel, Thomsen, and Larsen (2015) also found personality traits like conscientiousness and openness as a positive predictor for academic success. Understanding the predictive capability of independent variables is very important, because some variables predictive strength is lost due to high correlation between them, in this wise, predicting a university students academic success would necessitates the use of attitudinal and personality factors as variables to be inputted (Kuh, Hu, & Vesper, 2000; Ting, 2000; Tross, Herper, Osher, & Kneidinger, 2000). Other such factors that can be considered are personal commitment, degree aspiration, goal commitment and academic adjustment (Hamachek, 1995) as non-cognitive variables can make students to control their

thinking capability and established goals, but were not considered in this current study. The predictors as a whole in the current research contribute to only 6% of the variances in the academic success, meaning that the predictors were not influential in predicting the outcome variable having recorded nonsignificant result in the relationship.

Furthermore, some researchers disputed the fact that standards based assessment tests measure abilities or competences might be more informative than GPA scores, which might basically assess students' memory of what is covered in a given course (Nicholson, 2014). Such measure was not considered in this study as could be considered in future research.

#### **4.1 Limitations**

Certain limitations have been mentioned above as to why academic success as measured using university GPA scores could not record a significant prediction from the predictors, as well as the reliability of GPA scores as a measuring instrument for academic success. This study only analyses one semester GPA and are unable to include more than one semester GPA. Also, the sample size was not enough to generalize as a whole, as the samples for this study are only among Nigerian students in Eastern Mediterranean University, whose participant selection was done through convenient form of parametric selection and not randomized. It is also observed that there was gender imbalance among the participants whereby the male participants doubled in number than the female participants. This may have influenced the results. Though the participants are Nigerian students, but they vary in term of cultural differences from their homeland which may have affected their responses. Similarly, here in North Cyprus, certain cultural related factors were not considered

namely, the influence of the foreign language, experience of prejudice, cultural adaptation, homesickness, etc. as impacting on their academic success. Including such characteristics could have improved the descriptive strength of the regression analysis.

Future research should increase the sample size and even extend the survey to other Nigerian students' in other universities in North Cyprus. A longitudinal study can further be carried out in examining not only the GPA but the CGPA of the students also which can as well increase the range of the study in order to observe the effect of generalizability of findings over the whole duration of stay for international students in general, not just Nigerian students. Future research needs to conduct studies on observable changes on targeted population and samples overtime and build upon the current study.

#### **4.2 Implications and Future Directions**

The current study gives us important information and insight into the factors surrounding the academic success of the Nigerian students as they no doubt wade through challenges associated with studying in foreign land. The Nigerian students and all other international students' needs the assistance of the school authority, as they know that the students are assets to them and to the nation as some work temporarily or are employed permanently.

However, this study will help those at the helm of affairs in the university to focus on active and identifiable sources of support for the students, in terms of initiating programs, seminars and conferences targeting not only Nigerian students but other international student in order for them to achieve their academic goals. The student



can be motivated, through increased extracurricular activities in order to make them get used to circumstances in their new environment and adjust accordingly overtime

Moreover, this current study can also be implied to the university authority in identifying lapses in the environment that can militate against students' academic success. Factors namely stress cannot be avoided among student either positively or negatively, but strategies at controlling and eradicating it can be introduce through the Psychological counselling, guidance and research centre (PDRAM) so that the motivation and social support offered the student can have a long lasting benefit on them.

Furthermore, this current study can be investigated using scientific methods on the topic as it needs more empirical evidence in knowing the variable that promote academic success. Also this study should be an opportunity to provide policy makers and counsellors with useful information, that can be used in the development of intervention programs aimed at assisting the Nigerian students' in dealing more effectively with the challenges, that they are experiencing and also to address covert problem.

### **4.3 Conclusion**

The objective of this study was to explore the relationship between stress and other important correlates of Nigerian university students' academic success in Eastern Mediterranean University. Results revealed in this purely correlational study generated a significance relationship among the core variables but not significance in predicting academic success.

However, gender of students show negative significant differences on stress as it impacts the students' academic success whereby we learn that females normally feel the pang of stress more than the males. Overall, it is hoped that this study will draw attention to assisting the Nigerian students' population while the university policy makers introduce constructive measure in their understanding of the scope of this study.

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## **APPENDICES**



## Appendix A: Demographic Questionnaire

Read each question below carefully and tick or fill in the answer that you feel is the most appropriate.

1. Age : ( Please Specify)\_\_\_\_\_

2. Gender : Male\_\_\_\_\_ Female\_\_\_\_\_

3. Marital Status : Single\_\_\_\_\_ Married\_\_\_\_\_ Divorced\_\_\_\_\_

Separated\_\_\_\_\_

4. What is your major : ( Please Specify )\_\_\_\_\_

5. What degree are you pursuing : Bachelors\_\_\_\_\_ Masters\_\_\_\_\_  
PhD\_\_\_\_\_

6. GPA: Less than 2.0\_\_\_\_\_ ( 2.0 – 2.49)\_\_\_\_\_ (2.5 – 2.99)\_\_\_\_\_  
(3.0 – 3.49) \_\_\_\_\_ (3.5 – 4.00)\_\_\_\_\_

7. What is your primary source of financial support? (please specify).

Parents\_\_\_\_\_ Other family\_\_\_\_\_ Self\_\_\_\_\_ Sponsored\_\_\_\_\_

8. How long have you been in Northern Cyprus?. (please specify)

\_\_\_\_\_

9. Have you ever lived in another foreign country? Yes \_\_\_\_\_

No\_\_\_\_\_

10. Father's education (please specify)

Primary School 6<sup>th</sup> or below\_\_\_\_\_ Junior Secondary 7<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup>\_\_\_\_\_

Senior Secondary 10<sup>th</sup>- 13<sup>th</sup>\_\_\_\_\_ Less than a Bachelor's degree\_\_\_\_\_

Bachelor's degree or above\_\_\_\_\_

11. Mother's education (please specify)

Primary School 6<sup>th</sup> or below\_\_\_\_\_ Junior Secondary 7<sup>th</sup>- 9<sup>th</sup>\_\_\_\_\_

Senior Secondary 10<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup>\_\_\_\_\_ Bachelor Degree or less\_\_\_\_\_

Bachelor Degree and above\_\_\_\_\_

**Rank the following items from 1 (least stressful) to 5 (most stressful):**

Academic performance .....

Financial concerns .....

Social relationships .....

Family concerns .....

Living situation .....

## Appendix B: Academic environment scale

Using the scale below, indicate to what extent each of the following items applies to you by assigning a score of 1 to 5.

	Applies very close to me <b>1</b>				Doesn't apply to me at all <b>5</b>
1. I am satisfied with the number and variety of courses available at the university.....	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
2. I am satisfied with my program of courses for this semester.....	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
3. I am satisfied with the quality of courses available at the university.....	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
4. I am satisfied with my professors.....	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>

## Appendix C: Multidimensional scale of perceived social support

Please indicate the extent of your agreement with each of the following statements

by circling the appropriate option.

Very Strongly <u>Disagree</u>	Strongly <u>Disagree</u>	Mildly <u>Disagree</u>	Neutral	Mildly <u>Agree</u>	Strongly <u>Agree</u>	Very Strongly <u>Agree</u>
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. There is a special person who is around when I am in need.....						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. There is a special person with whom I can share joys and sorrows.....						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. My family really tries to help me.....						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. I get the emotional help and support I need from my family.....						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. I have a special person who is a real source of comfort to me.....						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. My friends really try to help me.....						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. I can count on my friends when things go wrong.....						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. I can talk about my problems with my family.....						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. I have friends with whom I can share my joys and sorrows.....						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. There is a special person in my life who cares about my feelings.....						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11. My family is willing to help me make decisions.....						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12. I can talk about my problems with my friends.....						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

## Appendix D: Perceived stress scale

The questions below asks you about your feelings and thoughts during the last month. Using the scale below, please specify how often you felt or thought a certain way by circling the option that applies to you.

Never	Almost never	Sometimes	Fairly often	Very often	
1	2	3	4	5	
1. In the last month, how often have you been upset because something had happened unexpectedly?.....	1	2	3	4	5
2. In the last month, how often have you felt that you were unable to control the important things in your life?.....	1	2	3	4	5
3. In the last month, how often have you felt nervous and stressed?.....	1	2	3	4	5
4. In the month, how often have you felt confident about your ability to handle your personal problems.....	1	2	3	4	5
5. In the last month, how often have you felt that things were going your way.....	1	2	3	4	5
6. In the last month, how often have you found that you could not cope with all the things that you had to do.....	1	2	3	4	5
7. In the last month, how often have you been able to control irritations in your life.....	1	2	3	4	5
8. In the last month, how often have you felt that you were on top of things.....	1	2	3	4	5
9. In the last month, how often have been angered because things were outside your control.....	1	2	3	4	5
10. In the last month, how often have you felt that difficulties were piling up so high that you could not overcome them.....	1	2	3	4	5

## Appendix E: Department Ethics Committee Approval Letter



**Eastern  
Mediterranean  
University**  
"For Your International Career"

P.K.: 99628 Gazimağusa, KUZEY KIBRIS /  
Famagusta, North Cyprus,  
via Mersin-10 TURKEY  
Tel: (+90) 392 630 1995  
Faks/Fax: (+90) 392 630 2919  
bayek@emu.edu.tr

Etik Kurulu / Ethics Committee

**Reference No:** ETK00-2018-0106  
**Subject:** Application for Ethics.

16.03.2018

RE: Moses B. Oluwabusola  
Department of Psychology

To Whom It May Concern,

As part of the 2017-2018 Spring Semester, pertaining to Master Thesis questionnaires EMU's Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee has granted Mr. Moses B. Oluwabusola, from the Psychology Department, to pursue with his survey ***Stress and Other Correlates of Mental Wellbeing and Academic Success of Nigerian Students at Eastern Mediterranean University***. This decision has been taken by the majority of votes. (Meeting number 2018/55-09)

Regards,



**Assoc. Prof. Dr. Sükrü Tüzmen**  
Director of Ethics Committee

ŞT/sky.

www.emu.edu.tr

## Appendix F: Informed Consent Form

Doğu Akdeniz Üniversitesi  
Eastern Mediterranean University

"Uluslararası Karar İçin"  
"For Your International Career"



Psikoloji Bölümü / Department of Psychology  
**Department of Psychology**  
**Eastern Mediterranean University**  
Famagusta, Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus  
Tel: +(90) 392 630 1389 Fax: +(90) 392 630 2475  
Web: <http://brahms.emu.edu.tr/psychology>

Stress and other correlates of academic success among Nigerian students in Eastern Mediterranean University.

Dear participant,

Please take a few minutes to read the following information on this research carefully before you agree to participate. **If at any time you have a question regarding the study, please feel free to ask the researcher who will provide more information.**

This study is being conducted by Moses B. Oluwabusola under the supervision of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Yacoub Khallad. It aims to investigate and identify the various factors that impact the academic success among Nigerian students as they face challenges associated with their academics in this university. The study should take no more than 15 minutes to complete.

Of course, you are not obliged to participate in this research and are free to refuse to participate. You may also withdraw from the study at any point without giving any reason. In this case, all of your responses will be destroyed and omitted from the research. If you agree to participate in and complete the study, all responses and questionnaires will be treated **confidentially**. Your name and identifying information will be kept securely and separately from the rest of your questionnaire. Data will be stored for a maximum of six years after the study. Once the data is analyzed, a report of the findings may be submitted for publication.

**To signify your voluntary participation, please complete the consent form below.**

### CONSENT FORM

Stress and other correlates of academic success among Nigerian Students in EMU  
Moses B Oluwabusola  
mo2loy27@gmail.com

**Please tick the boxes to confirm that you agree to each statement.**

1. I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet for this study and have had the opportunity to ask any questions.
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I may withdraw from the study at any time without explanation.
3. I agree to take part in this study.

\_\_\_\_\_

Date

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature

*If you have any concerns about the ethical conduct of this study, please inform Dr. Şenel Husnu Raman, Chair of the Psychology Research & Ethics Committee at Eastern Mediterranean University, in writing, providing a detailed account of your concern ([shenelhusnu.raman@emu.edu.tr](mailto:shenelhusnu.raman@emu.edu.tr)).*

# Appendix G: Debriefing Form



**Department of Psychology  
Eastern Mediterranean University  
Famagusta, Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus  
Tel: +(90) 392 630 1389 Fax: +(90) 392 630 2475  
Web: <http://brahms.emu.edu.tr/psychology>**

## Participant Debrief Form

Thank you very much for participating in this study with the title the stress and other correlates of academic success among Nigerian students at Eastern Mediterranean university. Please take a few more minutes to read the following information, which will explain the aims and purpose of the research further. If you have any questions, please feel free to ask the researcher whose contact details are stated below.

This research is investigating the factors that impact or influence the academic success of Nigerian students in EMU. Findings have shown that stress and other psychological variables impacts students' academic success. For students, stress has been shown to result in feelings of fatigue, anger, depression, and other health related problems (Associate Press Survey,2008). Empirical studies have suggested that young people undertaking university education may be experiencing high levels of psychological and environmental issues than their age peers in the general community (Stallman,2010). There is no doubt coming to a western country to study will have its own peculiar challenges in attaining cherished educational goals. Previous research has shown the paucity of literatures on the factors that influence, the academic success of Nigerian students among their fellow international students, which therefore necessitates this study. We are extending this work to enable policy makers and counsellors to have useful information that can be used in the development of intervention programs aimed at assisting the Nigerian students in dealing more effectively with the challenges they experience

If during the completion of this questionnaire you felt any distress or discomfort and you would like to speak to a professional, please contact the emu psychological counselling and guidance center (PDRAM) located below the emu health center. You may also contact the researcher Moses B Oluwabusola, tel no +905338324473, email : [mo2loy27@gmail.com](mailto:mo2loy27@gmail.com) or the research supervisor Assoc. Prof. Dr. Yacoub Khallad, email : [yacoubkhalad@emu.edu.tr](mailto:yacoubkhalad@emu.edu.tr) with any questions.

Once again thank you for your valuable contribution to this research. Your participation is greatly appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

Moses B

Oluwabusola.