

**NURSING STUDENTS' PERCEIVED STRESS LEVEL,
COPING STRATEGIES, AND ACADEMIC
PERFORMANCE**

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**NURSING STUDENTS' PERCEIVED STRESS LEVEL, COPING STRATEGIES,
AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE**

An Undergraduate Thesis
Presented to the Faculty of the College of Nursing, Midwifery, and Radiologic
Technology
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In Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirement for the Degree
Bachelor of Science in Nursing

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2024

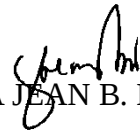
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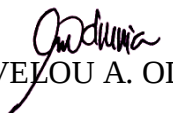
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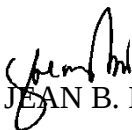

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Declaration Page

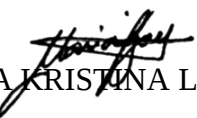
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Approval Sheet

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Bachelor of Science in Nursing, this research output entitled, “**Nursing Students’ Perceived Stress Level, Coping Strategies, and Academic Performance**” is hereby recommended for acceptance and approval.

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Abstract

Stress is a phenomenon that is widely acknowledged, and there is compelling evidence showing that nursing programs are inherently stressful. Increased stress levels experienced by nursing students can detrimentally affect their memory, concentration, and problem-solving capabilities, potentially resulting in diminished learning outcomes, coping mechanisms, academic performance, and retention rates. The study aimed to determine the perceived stress level, coping strategies, and academic performance among first-year nursing students. The study employed a descriptive-correlational design. The respondents of the study were 180 first-year nursing students from one of the universities in Ozamiz City, Philippines, selected using stratified sampling. A combination of a standardized research survey and a modified questionnaire were utilized to gather data. The data were analyzed using the frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation, and Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient. The findings revealed that first-year nursing students perceived a high level of stress, whereas the coping strategies used were quite effective. The overall academic performance of the first-year nursing students was very satisfactory. Further, their perceived stress level was significantly correlated with their academic performance. However, academic performance was not influenced by the coping strategies. To conclude, many freshmen nursing students felt nervous, stressed, and had difficulties reaching to such a great extent that they felt they were unable to surmount them. In this regard, accepting the reality that something has happened was the most effective coping strategy used. With respect to academic performance, most of the first-year nursing students were very satisfactory, despite their highly stressful environment and demanding program. Additionally, the amount of stress that the first-year nursing students experienced is associated with how well they performed in school.

Whereas the coping strategies employed by the students do not have a direct impact on their academic performance.

Keywords: academic performance, coping strategies, descriptive-correlation, freshmen nursing students, perceived stress level

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The Researchers

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Rationale of the Study

Nursing education involves both theoretical and practical learning, and it requires the development of hand skills, observational skills, and interpretative abilities. The fundamental goal of theoretical and practical nursing education is to get students ready to deliver high-quality care. Due to unpleasant and stressful experiences, students may feel frustrated, stressed, and disappointed while attempting to live up to these expectations (Aslan & Akturk, 2018).

The World Health Organization (2021) describes stress as any change that creates physical, emotional, or psychological distress. It is the body's reaction to any situation that requires particular attention or behavior. Every single person gets stressed to some degree, and an individual's response to stress has a big impact on their general well-being.

Freshman students may experience varying degrees of stress. The move to an unfamiliar location and situation, along with the adaptation to freshly established academic responsibilities, collegiate commitments, task-management demands, and adjusting to fresh assessment and expectations, appear to be extremely difficult circumstances for incoming college students. (Bublitz et al., 2017).

Given that first-year nursing students cannot escape these stressors, it is critical that they acquire strategies for coping to address these issues. Students' perceptions of stress and capacity to deal with stress are heavily influenced by their coping strategies. Folkman and Maskowitz (1984) established the concept of "coping" as the utilization of

behavioral and cognitive approaches to control both internal and external stressors within perceived challenging situations. Since the nursing students' responses to stress affect their physical and mental health as well as their academic achievement, identifying their coping strategies is critical for initiating early interventions. (Rafati et al., 2017).

Stress, or the potential for stress, is everywhere. Indeed, nursing students experience stress that could hinder their educational achievement. (Shudifat & Al-Husban, 2018). A high degree of stress among nursing students could potentially impair concentration, recall, and the ability to solve problems, ultimately resulting in diminished studying, dealing abilities, educational achievement, and retention of knowledge (Goff, 2017). Previous research indicates that when students feel extreme stress at university, it not only inhibits their motivation towards finishing a task but also affects their general educational achievement and may increase their likelihood of dropping out.

Aun et al. (2017) suggested that unfolding coping strategies aids students in attending classes regularly, engaging more proactively, even in the face of challenges or encountering disappointments in their entirety when it comes to academics, and equipping them with a tougher, more capable self that can lead to a much more fruitful learning experience for themselves. Likewise, approaches for dealing with challenges, such as adopting a proactive stance, avoiding certain situations, and seeking support from peers, assisted college students in their academic endeavors (Sullivan, 2017). Typically, during the initial year of undergraduate studies, individuals tend to rely on emotional coping strategies, while as they progress, there's a trend towards utilizing less pleasant cognitive problem-solving approaches (Mahajan, 2018).

The academic achievement of students is greatly affected by an environment of complexity, shaped by factors like study intensity, motivation, and interpersonal

dynamics. Additionally, psychological, and emotional elements such as anxiety, well-being, and adaptive behavior strategies play crucial roles in how students manage the demands of their environment and the accompanying emotional stress (Trucchia et al., 2017).

Numerous studies have centered on the perceived level of stress and its impact on academic performance, as well as coping strategies and their effect on academic performance; however, there is still a research gap in the investigation of the relationship between perceived stress level, coping strategies, and academic performance among freshmen nursing students. Thus, this study assessed the perceived stress level, coping strategies, academic performance, and their significant relationships among first-year nursing students.

The possibility of successfully addressing stress in freshmen nursing students by utilizing measures that may minimize or abolish this issue makes early discovery of this matter a priority goal. The findings of this study will therefore establish the foundation for the efficient education and learning of stress management approaches, in addition to filling a scientific and theoretical gap regarding stress. Consequently, it is possible to effectively deal with unhealthy stress management behaviors and improve students' academic performance.

Theoretical Framework

This study was grounded in the Adaptation Model of Sister Callista Roy (1976) and the Goal Attainment Theory of Imogene King (1960).

Sister Callista Roy's theory (1976) posits that adaptation is a dynamic process wherein individuals and communities use mindful thought, reflection, and decision-

making to seek harmony with their surroundings. Individuals adapt when they respond positively to environmental changes, managing stressors with both intrinsic and learned coping strategies to manage stressors. The term "stimuli" denotes elements of the environment, which form complicated chains of communication, responses, improvement, and a state of decline (Jennings, 2017).

Moreover, Roy (1976) delineation of two subsystems: the cognator and regulator subsystems. The cognator subsystem is pivotal in coping processes, integrating four cognitive-emotional channels, including perceptual and information processing, learning, judgment, and emotion. In contrast, the regulator subsystem acts as a foundational adaptive mechanism, operating reflexively via neuronal, substance, and endocrine mechanisms of coping. (Petiprin, 2023).

Nursing students experience stress as a result of a variety of stimuli and must respond appropriately to their rigorous coursework and challenging emotional experiences. These circumstances call for nursing students to have a high threshold for frustration and a high degree of composure by utilizing coping strategies in order to overcome challenges given by the process of adjusting to life at the university. Thus, the adaptation model is appropriate for the study.

In addition to Sister Callista Roy's Model, our research incorporated Imogene King's (1960) Theory of Goal Attainment. This theory delves into the dynamic interpersonal interactions through which individuals' progress to achieve specific life objectives. It underscores the influence of roles, stress, space, and time on academic performance, emphasizing the intricate interplay among personal, interpersonal, and social systems. The theory highlights the importance of goal setting in shaping nursing students' academic success, aiding in prioritization, sustaining motivation, and fostering

commitment to completing college (Stewart & Maisonville, n.d.).

First-year students create goals when they begin a new level of school, such as being at a university and maintaining strong academic performance to meet university standards. Given that this study involves achieving an outstanding academic performance among nursing students, the Goal Attainment Theory of Imogene King is applicable.

Conceptual Framework

One of the world's most demanding and stressful degrees is nursing (Ching et al., 2020). In academia, it is a well-established fact that nursing students encounter heightened stress levels compared to peers in other health-related disciplines. This increased stress arises from the rigorous demands of nursing programs, which require students to fulfill extensive theoretical and clinical requirements. As students progress through their academic journey, they engage in experiential learning, applying theoretical concepts acquired in the classroom to real-world clinical scenarios (Ozan et al., 2020).

In this study, the independent variables are the perceived stress level and coping strategies, while academic performance is the dependent variable. These variables are defined operationally.

Stress

Sapolsky (1994) conceptualized stress as a physiological condition resulting from an individual's cognitive interpretation of a stressor. This interpretation involves assessing the perceived threat to one's well-being and determining the capacity to cope with the stressor. Subsequently, a coping strategy is chosen based on this evaluation. Iqbal et al. (2021) asserted that stress adversely affects students' academic attainment,

with mental health significantly influencing academic performance. The present study assesses first-year nursing students' perceived stress levels by investigating the degree of unpredictability, lack of control, and overload experienced in their lives.

Stress manifests in two distinct forms: absolute stress, triggered by actual threats, and relative stress, influenced by individual interpretation (Lupien et al., 2018). As a result, each person's response to the environment during times of stress is unique and extremely individualized (Fink, 2017). The imbalance results in stress when a person is unable to meet these obligations (Cox, 2017).

The presence of stress among those studying nursing is widely acknowledged, with evident indications that nursing programs inherently create stressful environments. Health-related programs have a reputation for being extremely demanding and stressful, necessitating the capacity to resist extremely difficult situations. Globally, studies show that the overall incidence of stress among learners in health professions range from approximately 14.3% to 56% (Nebhinani et al., 2020). (Nebhinani et al., 2020).

Due to the shifting phase of higher education, freshmen are more prone to stress. For instance, numerous college students experience their first time living away from home, which may require them to part with all their accustomed support systems, including parents, siblings, and friends from high school. Students are expected to be responsible for their own needs and may need to make new social connections. They might struggle to adjust to the necessity of learning how to interact with others who have various cultures and beliefs, as well as the more demanding academic standards. Thus, being away from home for the first time and the varying nature of the academic experience at the college level can both cause stress (Haischer, 2017).

Coping Strategies

Folkman and Maskowitz (1984) provided a definition of "coping" as the cognitive and behavioral strategies employed to address both internal and external stressors perceived within a given situation. In this study, the coping strategies are the mental and behavioral techniques made by first-year nursing students to effectively manage any situation that they perceive as stressful.

Stress is an inescapable reality and usually tough to manage, but using effective coping strategies can assist students in attaining improved academic performance. Coping with stress encompasses cognitive and behavioral actions aimed at mitigating pressures that people feel on the inside and outside. As stated by Folkman and Lazarus's proposition (Biggs et al., 2017), individuals actively identify stressors within their environment, triggering emotional responses that prompt the implementation of coping techniques. Effective coping strategies yield favorable outcomes, while ineffective ones lead to distress.

Because freshmen nursing students face unavoidable stressors, highlighting the necessity for them to employ coping strategies to effectively manage these pressures. Identifying the coping strategies used by aspiring nurses is crucial, given their substantial influence on physical and mental health outcomes, as well as academic performance (Rafati et al., 2017). This underscores the imperative for early intervention strategies tailored to these coping mechanisms.

Aun et al. (2017) posited that the cultivation of coping strategies facilitates enhanced class attendance, increased participation, resilience in the face of challenges or setbacks, and fosters the development of a robust, resilient self-concept, thus contributing to a more favorable learning environment. Likewise, coping mechanisms, including

strategy, evasion, and social assistance, were found to bolster academic performance between students pursuing an undergraduate degree (Sullivan, 2017).

Coping strategies and academic success have been linked in several studies. Khan (2017) found that there was a weak relationship between the general weighted average (GWA) and stress coping strategies. In contrast to these assertions, Kadhiravan and Kumar (2018) reported findings indicating that coping strategies possess the capacity to improve the academic achievement of undergraduate students. The findings suggested a positive and significant correlation between each dimension of coping mechanisms and students' overall weighted average. Therefore, it is plausible to infer that students who exhibit greater adaptability and resilience towards academic and personal stress tend to achieve better academic performance.

Academic Performance

The assessment of students' academic performance serves as a primary gauge for evaluating educational standards within universities. Academic achievement is a multifaceted process influenced by various factors such as study habits, learning capabilities, familial background, peer influences, teaching quality, and the educational infrastructure (Briones et al., 2021). In the study, the academic performance was calculated using the semestral general weighted average (GWA) of first-year nursing students who took classes in the first semester of the academic year 2022-2023.

In relation to stress, stress can have a negatively effect on nursing students' academic performance (Shudifat & Al-Husban, 2018). Previous studies indicate that encountering too much stress at school not only decreases motivation to finish the task but also affects overall academic performance and may increase the dropout rate. Furthermore, Goff (2017) postulated that elevated stress levels among nursing students

could impair memory, focus, and problem-solving capacity, potentially resulting in diminished learning capacity, coping mechanisms, and academic achievement.

In the study of Wintre and Yaffe (2018), it was shown that heightened stress levels experienced by first-year college students are linked to poorer overall adjustment and heightened vulnerabilities to social and psychological issues, ultimately resulting in decrease grade point averages (GPAs) by the final year. Numerous investigations on this matter have shown that a range of psychological factors, such as stress, play a significant role in shaping students' academic performance. The academic stress experienced by tertiary students emerges as a pivotal determinant of their academic achievement. Increased stress levels often correspond to poorer academic performance. However, students frequently lack awareness of their stress levels, underscoring the importance of comprehending the nature and magnitude of stress they encounter, along with investigating the factors contributing to this stress, to facilitate an effective learning environment (Nolan, 2017).

Conversely, Sullivan (2017) observed that coping strategies such as approach, avoidance, and social support were beneficial for undergraduate students in enhancing their academic performance. In the first year of undergraduate education, emotional coping strategies are typically used, whereas the direction is turning toward negative cognitive problem solving in later years (Mahajan, 2018).

Khan (2017) conducted a study among undergraduate students from a university in the northwestern United States. The respondents' college general weighted average (GWA) was used as an indicator of academic performance. However, the study found that there was a weak relationship between the students' stress-coping strategies and their GWA.

Another study by Giancola et al. (2017) no significant correlations were identified between coping strategies and academic performance. While effective coping strategies may benefit psychological well-being, they may not have a direct impact on academic performance. Moreover, Schiller et al. (2018) conducted a study on coping skills such as problem solving and seeking social assistance, avoidance, and positive reappraisal among paramedical students. The study found that these coping strategies were not significantly related to academic performance. Hence, the coping strategies employed by the students may not have a direct impact on their academic performance.

Figure 1, on the next page, presents the schematic diagram of the study.

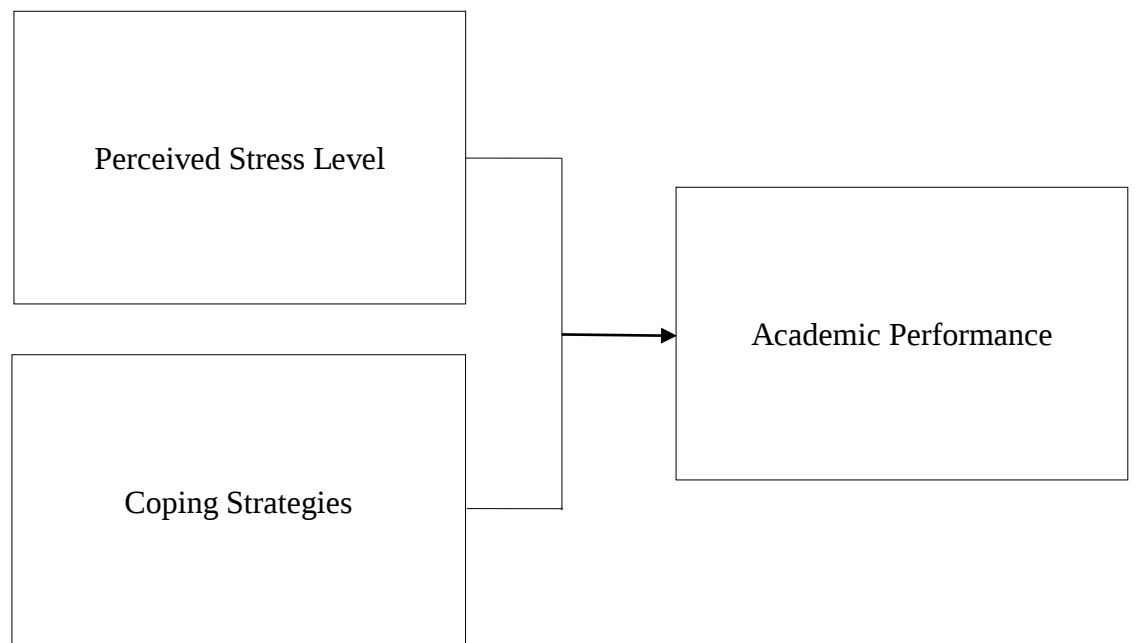


Figure 1. Schematic Diagram of the Study

Statement of the Problem

The study aimed to determine the perceived stress level, coping strategies, and academic performance among first-year nursing students. Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the respondents' perceived stress level?
2. What are the respondents' coping strategies?
3. What is the respondents' academic performance?
4. Is there a significant relationship between the respondents' perceived stress level and their academic performance?
5. Is there a significant relationship between the respondents' coping strategies and their academic performance?

Hypotheses

To guide the course of the study, the following hypotheses were tested:

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between the respondents' perceived stress level and their academic performance.

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between the respondents' coping strategies and their academic performance.

Chapter 2

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents a description of the research design, setting, respondents, sampling method, instruments used, data gathering procedure, ethical considerations, and data analysis techniques.

Design

A descriptive-correlational design was utilized in this study. Descriptive research is a type of study where characteristics are objectively and systematically described through behavior observation. A descriptive research effort aims to gain a thorough understanding of phenomena or groupings. In contrast, correlational research is a method that helps us understand and predict how variables are naturally related in real-life situations.

The descriptive-correlational design, in particular, provides flexibility for examining and describing the connections between independent and dependent variables. This study delves into the variables (perceived stress level, coping strategies, and academic performance) and naturally occurring relationships among them.

Setting

The study was carried out at a higher education institution located in Ozamiz City, Philippines. Over recent years, the college has undertaken its immensely influential academic correcting in its quest for outstanding performance. The college has undergone rigorous international and national accreditation. One of the academic programs rendered by the university is a 4-year Bachelor of Science in Nursing.

Respondents

The entire population of first-year nursing students amounts to 336. This research involved a sample of 180 first-year nursing students who were enrolled in the first semester of the academic year 2022-2023. They were selected using a method called stratified sampling, which divides the population into smaller subgroups known as strata. The sample size was computed using the Raosoft formula online calculator. The researchers approached a statistician who suggested using the Raosoft formula and also provided the result. In selecting the respondents, the following are considered: first-year, officially enrolled in the Bachelor of Science in Nursing program during the first semester of the academic year 2022-2023, regular, and willing to participate in the study.

Instruments

A combination of a standardized research survey and a modified questionnaire were employed in the study, which consisted of three distinct parts: the Respondents' Perceived Stress Scale, Respondents' Coping Strategies, and Respondents' Academic Performance.

A. Respondents' Perceived Stress Scale. The survey's first segment featured the standardized Perceived Stress Scale (PSS), devised by Cohen in 1994. This instrument comprised 10 questions aimed at assessing stress levels. Respondents used a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (Never) to 5 (Very Often), to indicate their emotions and feelings over the past month. Studies conducted by Roberti et al. (2006) have confirmed the reliability and validity of the PSS in measuring perceived stress among college students.

Below is the continuum that was used in interpreting and analyzing the data gathered.

Weight	Responses	Continuum	Interpretation
5	Very Often	4.20-5.00	Very High
4	Fairly Often	3.40-4.19	High
3	Sometimes	2.60-3.39	Moderate
2	Almost Never	1.80-2.59	Low
1	Never	1.00-1.79	Very Low

B. Respondents' Coping Strategies. The only alteration made to the questionnaire was changing the original 4-point Likert scale to a 5-point Likert scale. This involved adjusting "4 (I've been doing this a lot)" to "I've been doing this rarely" and adding "5 (I've been doing this always)." The instrument comprised 28 questions aimed at assessing the utilization of coping strategies. Respondents were provided with response options ranging from 1 (I haven't been doing this at all) to 5 (I've been doing this always) to indicate their use of the stated coping strategies. The Brief-COPE has demonstrated satisfactory internal reliability Carver (1997).

Below is the continuum that was used in interpreting and analyzing the data gathered.

Weight	Responses	Continuum	Interpretation
5	I've been doing this always	4.20-5.00	Very Effective
4	I've been doing this rarely	3.40-4.19	Quite Effective
3	A medium amount	2.60-3.39	Effective
2	A little bit	1.80-2.59	Least Effective
1	I haven't been doing this at all	1.00-1.79	Not Effective

C. Respondents' Academic Performance. The respondents' semestral general weighted average during the first semester of the academic year 2022-2023 was utilized as their academic performance. A 5-point Likert scale format ranging from 1 (3.01–5.0) to 5 (1.0–1.50) was utilized to determine the nursing students' academic performance.

Weight	Grades	Interpretation
5	1.0-1.50	Outstanding
4	1.51-2.0	Very Satisfactory
3	2.01-2.50	Satisfactory
2	2.51-3.0	Fair
1	3.01-5.0	Poor

Data Gathering Procedure

Prior to distributing the research instrument, the researchers acquired approval from the Dean of the College of Nursing to carry out the study. Subsequently, they sought consent from the participants to participate in the study, guaranteeing the confidentiality of their data and its sole utilization for research purposes. Upon receiving consent, the survey questionnaire was distributed. Adherence to the minimum health protocol was observed. Then, after collecting all the necessary information, the researchers tabulated the data for analysis and interpretation.

Ethical Considerations

The researchers engaged in all ethical considerations before implementing the study. Prior to conducting the study, the researchers obtained consent from the Dean of the College of Nursing. Consequently, the respondents were briefed on the study's purpose, objectives, procedures, and the privacy of their data. The participation

from respondents was entirely voluntary, and prior to their involvement, informed consent was sought and obtained. The respondents were clearly explained that they could cancel from the study at any moment with the assurance of the confidentiality of the information they would give. Furthermore, the respondents were encouraged to ask the researchers questions in case of queries or concerns, and their anonymity and confidentiality were preserved throughout the duration of the study. All information, including the academic performance of the respondents, was stored on a password secured device, and destroyed upon completion of the study. For those students with deficient performance, the following were recommended by their respective advisers to the guidance counselor.

Data Analysis Techniques

The data collected from the survey were analyzed using the following statistical tools:

Frequency and Percentage. Frequency was employed to analyze how responses were distributed in each category, while percentage was used for figuring out the precise position of the answers provided by the respondents relative to the overall number of responses used in the study.

Mean and Standard Deviation. These methods were utilized to inspect the perceived stress level, coping strategies, and academic performance of first-year nursing students.

Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient. This was employed to tour relationships between respondents' perceived stress level, coping strategies, and academic performance.

Chapter 3

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This chapter presents the findings and discussions related to the five specific research questions stated in Chapter 1. The respondents' perceived stress level, coping strategies, and academic performance were determined. Then, the relationship between the respondents' perceived stress level and their academic performance and the relationship between the respondents' coping strategies and their academic performance were evaluated. The presentation of findings is arranged into the following topics:

Respondents' Perceived Stress Level

Respondents' Coping Strategies

Respondents' Academic Performance

Significant Relationship between the Respondents' Perceived Stress Level and their Academic Performance

Significant Relationship between the Respondents' Coping Strategies and their Academic Performance

Respondents' Perceived Stress Level

Table 1 displays the perceived stress level of the first-year nursing students. Based on the average weighted mean of 3.5761 and standard deviation of 0.4635, the first-year nursing students have a high perceived stress level. This finding shows that a significant portion of freshman nursing students in the first semester of the academic year 2022-2023 faced nervousness, stress, and substantial difficulties that seemed insurmountable.

A study by D'Zurilla & Sheedy (2017) suggested that due to the transitional nature of college life, freshmen in particular are a group of students who are more prone

to stress. Correspondingly, when confronted with challenging situations like the change from high school to university, where they must adjust to new learning strategies or forge strong university identities, university students commonly report significant levels of perceived stress (Denovan & Macaskill, 2017). Another study by Luchesi (2018) on perceived stress in nursing undergraduate students reported that students often feel nervous or tired. Compared to students pursuing other degree programs, undergraduate nursing students report feeling more stressed (Bartlett et al., 2018).

First-year nursing students face a variety of stressors. In order to bring out their full potential as nursing students, they must learn the individual factors contributing to their stress level and learn ways to address them accordingly.

Table 1
Respondents' Perceived Stress Level (n=180)

Variable	M	SD	Interpretation
Perceived Stress Level	3.5761	0.4635	High

Note: Perceived Stress Scale: 4.20-5.00 (Very High); 3.40-4.19 (High); 2.60-3.39 (Moderate); 1.80-2.59 (Low); 1.00-1.79 (Very Low)

Respondents' Coping Strategies

Table 2 illustrates the coping strategies employed by first-year nursing students. With an average weighted mean of 3.4379 and a standard deviation of 0.4720, it appears that the coping strategies utilized by these students were generally effective. Among the most effective strategies were accepting the reality of a situation and engaging in activities to distract themselves, such as watching movies or reading. Conversely, relying on alcohol or drugs to cope was both the least effective and least utilized strategy among freshmen nursing students.

Many authors support this finding. In a qualitative study by Rafati et al. (2017) on the time when meeting stressful situations, some nursing students sought to disrupt the cycle of avoiding stress by actively confronting and accepting it as part of their coping strategies. In another qualitative study by Lopez et al. (2017), nursing students studying at a university in Singapore revealed that the most often used coping strategies for dealing with perceived stress included discussing negative emotions with peers and seeking positive aspects within demanding situations. Comparably, seeking social support, planning issue solving, and taking responsibility were found to be the most often employed coping strategies, according to a second study that supported the findings of a comparable study conducted among nursing students.

Moreover, Singh et al. (2018) discovered that transference, which was used by the students to unwind through TV, movies, a shower, shopping, sleeping, and physical activity, was the most widely employed coping strategy. Additionally, a study by Seyedfatemi et al. (2017) in Iran it was discovered that some students managed stress by using herbal and chemical medicines. However, in this study, only two students mentioned using marijuana and cigarettes, while none reported using alcohol. Furthermore, over 90% of the participants stated that they avoided strategies like smoking or drinking beer or wine to alleviate stress.

Stressors are unavoidable for first-year nursing students; thus, they must know how to cope. Students need to identify and learn the most effective coping strategy for them. This may help them deal with their stress, always be ready for whatever tasks are given without being drained and exhausted, and, at the same time, appreciate their college life, thereby increasing their satisfaction level with their academic performance.

Table 2
Respondents' Coping Strategies (n=180)

Variable	M	SD	Interpretation
Coping Strategies	3.4379	0.4720	Quite Effective

Note: Coping Strategies Scale: 4.20-5.00 (Very Effective); 3.40-4.19 (Quite Effective); 2.60-3.39 (Effective); 1.80-2.59 (Least Effective); 1.00-1.79 (Not Effective)

Respondents' Academic Performance

Table 3 shows the academic performance of the first-year nursing students. The academic performance was measured by their semestral general weighted average during the first semester of the academic year 2022-2023. Based on the average weighted mean of 1.71, the overall result of the first-year nursing students' academic performance is very satisfactory. The data indicates that most of the first-year nursing students have very satisfactory academic performance (f = 115; % = 63.89). Some of them have demonstrated outstanding academic performance (f = 44; % = 24.44), and only a few students have satisfactory academic performance (f = 21; % = 11.67). Despite their highly stressful environment and demanding program, first-year nursing students were still achieving because their strategies were effective.

The academic workload in nursing can put a student under a lot of stress and have an impact on their academic performance (Alden, 2018). Nursing students enrolled in the nursing program need to demonstrate not just satisfactory but outstanding academic performance in order to be retained in the college. It is important for freshmen to look for factors contributing to their academic performance and use them to successfully reach outstanding achievement.

Table 3
Respondents' Academic Performance (n=180)

Academic Performance	Frequency	Percentage
Outstanding	44	24.44
Very Satisfactory	115	63.89
Satisfactory	21	11.67
Overall Performance	1.71– Very Satisfactory	

Note: Academic Performance Scale: 1.0-1.50 (Outstanding); 1.51-2.0 (Very Satisfactory); 2.01-2.50 (Satisfactory); 2.51-3.0 (Fair); 3.01-5.0 (Poor)

Significant Relationship between the Respondents' Perceived Stress Level and their Academic Performance

In determining the significant relationship between the respondents' perceived stress level and their academic performance, the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient was used. Table 4 reveals the significant relationship between the respondents' perceived stress level and their academic performance. Based on the computed values ($r = -0.622$; $p = 0.037$), the p-value is less than 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. The first-year nursing students' perceived stress level is significantly correlated with their academic performance. However, the r value signifies an inverse correlation, also known as a negative correlation. An inverse correlation is denoted when r is less than 0.

The data indicates that the amount of stress that the first-year nursing students experienced is associated with how well they performed in school, which is reflected in their grades (semestral general weighted average). With an overall result of very satisfactory academic performance, first-year nursing students were still achieving because their strategies were effective. That is despite their highly stressful environment. Although the rate of decrease in academic performance is not linear to how high the

students' perceived stress level is, freshmen nursing students perceived high levels of stress that affected their performance in the nursing program during the first semester of the academic year 2022-2023.

This finding is supported by numerous studies, showing a significant correlation between stress and academic performance. Ponce Gómez et al. (2017) asserted the undeniable relationship between stress and the academic achievement of nursing students. Additionally, Wintre and Yaffe (2018) proved that elevated stress levels during the first year of college are predictive of poorer overall adjustment and may increase susceptibility to social and psychological challenges, ultimately leading to lower grade point averages (GPAs) in next years. Numerous inquiries have highlighted the impact of various psychological factors, including stress, on students' academic performance. Academic stress among tertiary students appears as a crucial factor influencing their educational attainment, with heightened stress often correlating with poorer academic outcomes. Furthermore, students are often unaware of the extent of their stress, underscoring the importance of understanding the nature and magnitude of stress experienced by students, as well as finding factors contributing to their stress, to ease an effective learning environment (Nolan, 2017).

The first year of nursing is considered a crucial transitional year as students jump between the extreme demands of college and the rigorous curriculum of the nursing program from the comforts of their homes and the less demanding curriculum of Senior High School. It is important to underscore that sensations of nervousness and stress, as perceived by students, can disrupt the execution of both physical and mental activities, thereby influencing their academic performance.

Table 4

Significant Relationship between the Respondents' Perceived Stress Level and their Academic Performance (n=180)

Variable	r-value	p-value	Decision	Remarks
Respondents' Perceived Stress Level and their Academic Performance	-0.622	0.037	Reject H_0	Significant

*Note: Probability Scale: ** $p < 0.01$ (Highly Significant); * $p < 0.05$ (Significant); $p > 0.05$ (Not Significant)*

Significant Relationship between the Respondents' Coping Strategies and their Academic Performance

Table 5 reveals that there is no significant relationship between the respondents' coping strategies and their academic performance. Based on the computed values ($r = 0.054$; $p = 0.472$), the p-value is greater than 0.05, so the null hypothesis is not rejected. This finding implies that the coping strategies used by the first-year nursing students do not have a direct influence on their academic performance. The strategies used were quite effective, but these are not the factors that contributed to their academic performance.

The result aligns with previous studies, which also found no significant relationship between coping strategies and academic performance. Khan (2017) found that there was a weak relationship between the students' stress-coping strategies and their general weighted average (GWA). The undergraduate college students' semestral GWA was used as an indicator of academic performance. Giancola et al. (2017) observed that there is no correlation between coping and academic performance. While effective coping strategies may benefit psychological well-being, they may not have a direct impact on academic performance. Moreover, Schiller et al. (2018) found that coping strategies, such as problem-solving, seeking social support, avoidance, and positive reappraisal, were not

significantly related to academic performance during the preclinical years of paramedical education. Hence, the coping strategies employed by paramedical students during this phase may not have a direct impact on their academic performance.

First-year nursing students should be aware that while coping strategies are important for their well-being, there may be other factors contributing to their academic performance. Engaging in activities that promote self-care, time management, and effective study techniques can supplement coping strategies and contribute to their academic success.

Table 5
Significant Relationship between the Respondents' Coping Strategies and their Academic Performance (n=180)

Variable	r- value	p-value	Decision	Remarks
Respondents' Coping Strategies and their Academic Performance	0.054	0.472	Do not reject H_0	Not Significant

*Note: Probability Scale: $**p < 0.01$ (Highly Significant); $*p < 0.05$ (Significant); $p > 0.05$ (Not Significant)*

Chapter 4

SUMMARY, FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This final chapter of the study provides a summary of the problem, the methodology used, and the study results, followed by conclusions and recommendations for students, educators, the university administration, parents, and suggestions for future researchers.

Summary

The study determined the nursing students' perceived stress level, coping strategies, and academic performance. The following were the specific objectives of the study: 1.) Assess the respondents' perceived stress level; 2.) Identify the respondents' coping strategies; 3.) Determine the respondents' academic performance; 4.) Explore the significant relationship between the respondents' perceived stress level and their academic performance; 5.) Explore the significant relationship between the respondents' coping strategies and their academic performance.

Moreover, the study utilized a quantitative, descriptive-correlational design and was conducted at one of the universities in Ozamiz City, Philippines. The study respondents were one hundred eighty (180) first-year nursing students enrolled during the first semester of the academic year 2022-2023, selected through simple random sampling. A combination of a standardized research survey and a modified questionnaire were used in data collection. The data were analyzed using frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation, and the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient.

Findings

The following are the findings of the study:

1. The respondents' perceived stress level is high.
2. The respondents' coping strategies are quite effective in managing their stress.
3. The respondents' academic performance is very satisfactory.
4. There is a significant relationship between the respondents' perceived stress level and their academic performance.
5. There is no significant relationship between the respondents' coping strategies and their academic performance.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions are made:

1. First-year nursing students experience a high level of perceived stress. Many freshmen nursing students felt nervous, stressed, and had difficulties facing obstacles that seemed insurmountable.
2. However, first-year nursing students demonstrate effectiveness in their coping strategies. Two of the most effective coping strategies employed by freshman nursing students involve acknowledging the reality of a situation and engaging in activities to distract themselves, such as watching movies, television, reading, dreaming of something, staying asleep, or buying stuff, along with taking proactive steps to improve the situation. Conversely, relying on alcohol or drugs as a coping strategy is the least effective and least utilized strategy among these students.
3. In terms of academic performance, most of the first-year nursing students have

very satisfactory academic performance despite their highly stressful environment and demanding program.

4. Furthermore, the study establishes a significant relationship between the first-year nursing students' perceived stress level and their academic performance, indicating that the amount of stress that the first-year nursing students experienced is associated with how well they performed in school, which is reflected in their grades (semestral general weighted average).
5. Conversely, no significant relationship is found between the first-year nursing students' coping strategies and their academic performance, suggesting that the coping strategies employed by the students are not the factors that contributed to their grades.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are made:

1. Given that the research indicates that freshmen nursing students have a high perceived level of stress, it is vital for students to be mindful of their degree of stress and take appropriate strategies to control them effectively. Students may engage in other stress-reducing activities such as exercising, cleaning, painting, singing, and dancing. Although the study found that respondents were quite effective in their coping strategies, it is still beneficial for nursing students to explore and develop a diverse range of coping strategies.
2. Considering the effectiveness of coping strategies reported by the respondents, educators may incorporate stress management and coping skill development into the curriculum or provide additional resources and guidance in this area. By

teaching effective coping strategies, educators can support students in managing stress and enhancing their overall well-being. Additionally, it may be helpful for educators to provide feedback and guidance on individual students' coping strategies, assisting them in identifying and utilizing the most suitable strategies for their specific stressors.

3. Most of the freshmen nursing students in the study demonstrated satisfactory to outstanding academic performance. The university administration may continue to provide a supportive academic environment by maintaining high-quality teaching methods, ensuring the availability of necessary resources, and offering academic support services. Additionally, considering the significant relationship between perceived stress level and academic performance, it would be beneficial for the university administration to collaborate with educators and implement programs and resources aimed at addressing stress and enhancing students' well-being.
4. Parents and outside support networks may also be informed about the high perceived stress levels and effective coping strategies of first-year nursing students. These individuals play a vital role in the students' lives. Therefore, being informed may aid in understanding the students and support them in integrating effective coping strategies that purposefully target their individual issues.
5. Future researchers may explore additional factors that might impact academic performance among first-year nursing students and investigate alternative coping strategies that may have a more direct effect on their academic achievements.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Letter of Request



MISAMIS UNIVERSITY
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College of Nursing, Midwifery and Radiologic Technology
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CERTIFIED: ISO 9001:2015 Quality Management System – DNV
ACCREDITED: Philippine Association of Colleges and Universities Commission on Accreditation (PACUCOA)
GRANTED: AUTONOMOUS STATUS by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED)

April 28, 2023

DR. SAMMY B. TAGHOY

Dean, College of Nursing, Midwifery and Radiologic Technology
Misamis University

Dear Dr. Taghoy:

Good day!

We, 3rd year students of Misamis University, Ozamiz City, taking up Bachelor of Science in Nursing and are currently working on a research study titled "NURSING STUDENTS' PERCEIVED STRESS LEVEL, COPING STRATEGIES, AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE." This study aims to determine the relationship between the perceived stress level, coping strategies, and academic performance among first-year nursing students. With this, we would like to ask for an approval from your good office to allow us to conduct the study. It will be conducted at one of the universities in Ozamiz City, from April to June 2023.

Rest assured that all information derived herein will be treated with utmost confidentiality.

Thank you very much and God bless.

Sincerely yours,


KAYE A. BA-ACLO

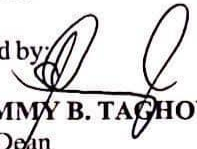

XYRA JEAN B. BERNARDO


JANNALOU B. MAWILI


MARVELOU A. ODRUNIA


MARIA KRISTINA L. REJOY
Researchers

Approved by:


DR. SAMMY B. TAGHOY
College Dean

Appendix B: Research Survey Questionnaire

Nursing Students' Perceived Stress, Coping Strategies and Academic Performance Questionnaire

Part 1. Respondents' Perceived Stress Scale

Instructions: The questions on this scale ask about your feelings and thoughts. In each case, you will be asked to indicate how often you felt or thought a certain way. Although some of the questions are similar, there are differences between them, and you should treat each one as a separate question. The best approach is to answer fairly quickly. That is, don't try to count up the number of times you felt a particular way; rather, indicate the alternative that seems like a reasonable estimate. Please put a $\surd$ in the box that best describes your answer to the statements provided using the following code:

5 – Very Often

2 – Almost Never

4 – Fairly Often

1 – Never

3 – Sometimes

Statements	5	4	3	2	1
1. In the last month, how often have you been upset because of something that happened unexpectedly?					
2. In the last month, how often have you felt that you were unable to control the important things in your life?					
3. In the last month, how often have you felt nervous and stressed?					
4. In the last month, how often have you felt confident about your ability to handle your personal problem?					

5. In the last month, how often have you felt that things were going your way?					
6. In the last month, how often have you found that you could not cope with all the things that you had to do?					
7. In the last month, how often have you been able to control irritation in your life?					
8. In the last month, how often have you felt that you were on top of things?					
9. In the last month, how often have you been angered because of things that happened that were outside of your control?					
10. In the last month, how often have you felt difficulties were piling up so high that you could not overcome them?					

Part 2. Respondents' Coping Strategies

Instructions: The following questions ask how you have sought to cope with hardships in your life. Read the statements and indicate how much you have been using each coping style. Please put a $\sqrt{}$ in the box that best describes your answer using the following code:

5 - I've been doing this always

2 – A little bit

4 – I've been doing this rarely

1 – I haven't been doing this at all

3 – A medium amount

Statements	5	4	3	2	1
1. I've been turning to work or other activities to take my mind off things.					
2. I've been concentrating my efforts on doing something about the situation I'm in.					
3. I've been saying to myself "this isn't real".					
4. I've been using alcohol or other drugs to make myself feel better.					

5. I've been getting emotional support from others.					
6. I've been giving up trying to deal with it.					
7. I've been taking action to try to make the situation better.					
8. I've been refusing to believe that it has happened.					
9. I've been saying things to let my unpleasant feelings escape.					
10. I've been getting help and advice from other people.					
11. I've been using alcohol or other drugs to help me through it.					
12. I've been trying to see it in a different light, to make it seem more positive.					
13. I've been criticizing myself.					
14. I've been trying to come up with a strategy about what to do.					
15. I've been getting comfort and understanding from someone.					
16. I've been giving up the attempt to cope.					
17. I've been looking for something good in what is happening.					
18. I've been making jokes about it.					
19. I've been doing something to think about it less, such as going to movies, watching TV, reading, daydreaming, sleeping, or shopping.					
20. I've been accepting the reality of the fact that it has happened.					
21. I've been expressing my negative feelings.					
22. I've been trying to find comfort in my					

religion or spiritual beliefs.					
23. I've been trying to get advice or help from other people about what.					
24. I've been learning to live with it.					
25. I've been thinking hard about what steps to take.					
26. I've been blaming myself for things that happened.					
27. I've been praying or meditating.					
28. I've been making fun of the situation.					

Part 3. Respondents' Academic Performance

Instructions: Please indicate your semestral general weighed average on the space provided.

Semestral General Weighed Average: _____

(1st Semester, AY 2022-2023)

Thank you for participating!

Appendix C: Informed Consent Form

RESEARCH INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Title

This study is titled “Nursing Students’ Perceived Stress Level, Coping Strategies, and Academic Performance” in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Bachelor of Science in Nursing.

Researcher

This study is to be conducted by Kaye A. Ba-aclo, Xyra Jean B. Bernardo, Jannalou B. Mawili, Marvelou A. Odrunia, and Maria Kristina L. Rejoy, who is pursuing the degree in Bachelor of Science in Nursing at Misamis University College of Nursing, with Sammy B. Taghoy as the adviser. The researchers can be contacted through these email addresses: kayebaaclo18@gmail.com, xyrabernardo0626@gmail.com, jannaloumawili82@gmail.com, marvelouodrunia15@gmail.com, and mkrejoy01@gmail.com.

Purpose of the Research

This study aims to determine the relationship between the perceived stress level, coping strategies, and academic performance among first-year nursing students.

Description of the Research

This study is a descriptive–correlational type of research, and the data will be gathered through a combination of standardized research survey and modified questionnaires within two (2) months.

Potential Benefits

This study will benefit nursing students as it will contribute to a better understanding of their stress, coping strategies, and academic performance. Moreover, this study will provide a foundation for future studies on this topic, enabling researchers to build upon existing knowledge and identify new areas of inquiry. Besides, assessing nursing students' perceived stress level, coping strategies, and academic performance will allow for the responsibility of implementing new interventions, evaluating their effectiveness, and refining existing programs based on the latest research.

Confidentiality

In the conduct of the study, full confidentiality will be assured. No information that discloses your identity will be released or published without your specific consent to the disclosure and only imperatively necessary. The materials that contained the raw information derived from you will be destroyed after data processing within a given period.

Publication

The results of this study may be published in any form for public and scholarly consumption or used in classroom instruction to enrich learning and generate more knowledge for future research.

Participation

Your participation in this study must be voluntary and you have the right to withdraw if you feel uncomfortable in the process of gathering information from you.

Informed Consent

Given the information above, I confirm that the potential harms, benefits, and alternatives have been explained to me. I have read and understood this consent form, and I understand that I am free to withdraw from my involvement in the study any time I deem it to be necessary or to seek clarification for any unclear steps in the research process. My signature indicates my willingness to participate in the study.

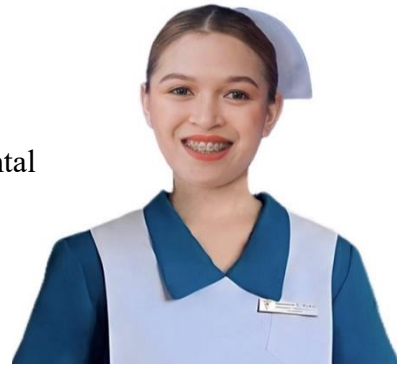
Printed Name and Signature of the Research Respondent

Date

CURRICULUM VITAE

PERSONAL DATA

Name: Kaye A. Ba-aclo
Address: D'BAN, Calamba, Misamis Occidental
Date of Birth: October 18, 2001
Father's Name: Mark E. Ba-aclo
Mother's Name: Cherryl A. Ba-aclo
Sex: Female
Civil Status: Single
Age: 22 years old



EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

College: Misamis University
H.T. Feliciano St., Aguada, Ozamiz City, Philippines
Senior High: Misamis University
H.T. Feliciano St., Aguada, Ozamiz City, Philippines
2019-2020
Junior High: Calamba National Comprehensive Highschool
D'BAN, Calamba, Misamis Occidental
2017 – 2018
Intermediate: Calamba Central School
Northern Poblacion, Calamba, Misamis Occidental
2013 – 2014

CURRICULUM VITAE

PERSONAL DATA

Name: Xyra Jean B. Bernardo
Address: Poblacion, Talusan, Zamboanga Sibugay
Date of Birth: June 26, 2000
Father's Name: Henry H. Bernardo
Mother's Name: Myrna B. Bernardo
Sex: Female
Civil Status: Single
Age: 23 years old



EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

College: Misamis University
H.T. Feliciano St., Aguada, Ozamiz City, Philippines
Senior High: Saint Columban College
Humanities and Social Sciences
San Francisco Dist., Pagadian City
2017 – 2019
Junior High: Talusan National Highschool
Poblacion, Talusan, Zamboanga Sibugay
2013 – 2017
Intermediate: Talusan Central Elementary School
Poblacion, Talusan, Zamboanga Sibugay
2007 – 2013

CURRICULUM VITAE

PERSONAL DATA

Name: Jannalou B. Mawili
Address: Mobod, Oroquieta City, Misamis Occidental
Date of Birth: January 28, 2002
Father's Name: Angelo B. Mawili
Mother's Name: Ivy B. Mawili
Sex: Female
Civil Status: Single
Age: 22 years old



EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

College: Misamis University
H.T. Feliciano St., Aguada, Ozamiz City, Philippines
Senior High: National Institute for Technical Excellence Inc.
General Academic Strand
Barrientos St., Oroquieta City, Misamis Occidental
2018 – 2020
Junior High: Mobod Integrated School
Purok 2 Mobod Oroquieta City, Misamis Occidental
2014 – 2018
Intermediate: Mobod Integrated School
Purok 2 Mobod Oroquieta City, Misamis Occidental
2007 – 2014

CURRICULUM VITAE

PERSONAL DATA

Name: Marvelou A. Odrunia
Address: Candis, Tubod, Lanao Del Norte
Date of Birth: August 18, 2002
Father's Name: Marianito O. Odrunia
Mother's Name: Victorina A. Odrunia
Sex: Female
Civil Status: Single
Age: 21 years old



EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

College: Misamis University
H.T. Feliciano St., Aguada, Ozamiz City, Philippines

Senior High: Lanao Del Norte National Comprehensive high school
Humanities and Social Sciences
Sto. Niño Village, Baroy, Lanao del norte
2019 – 2020

Junior High: Lanao Del Norte National Comprehensive high school
Sto. Niño Village, Baroy, Lanao del norte
2013 – 2017

Intermediate: Candis Elementary School
Candis, Tubod Lanao del norte
2012 – 2013

CURRICULUM VITAE

PERSONAL DATA

Name: Maria Kristina L. Rejoy
Address: Mobod, Oroquieta City, Misamis Occidental
Date of Birth: November 01, 2000
Father's Name: Arnold C. Rejoy
Mother's Name: Marife L. Rejoy
Sex: Female
Civil Status: Single
Age: 23 years old



EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

College: Misamis University
H.T. Feliciano St., Aguada, Ozamiz City, Philippines
Senior High: Stella Maris College
Humanities and Social Sciences
Independence St., Oroquieta City, Misamis Occidental
2017 – 2019
Junior High: Mobod Integrated School
Purok 2 Mobod Oroquieta City, Misamis Occidental
2013 – 2017
Intermediate: Oroquieta City Central Elementary School
Upper Loboc, Oroquieta City, Misamis Occidental
2007 – 2013