

**EVALUATION OF STRESS FACTORS AND COPING STRATEGIES DURING
CLINICAL POSTINGS AMONG NURSING STUDENTS OF THOMAS ADEWUMI
UNIVERSITY, OKO-IRESE, KWARA STATE**

BY

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AT

FACULTY OF NURSING SCIENCE

THOMAS ADEWUMI UNIVERSITY OKO-IRESE, KWARA STATE

AUGUST, 2025

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**IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE AWARD OF
BACHELOR OF NURSING SCIENCE DEGREE**

AUGUST 2025.

Declaration

This is to declare that the research project titled **Evaluation of Stress Factors and Coping Strategies During Clinical Postings Among Nursing Students of Thomas Adewumi University, Oko-Irese, Kwara State**, was carried out by **DADA MERCY INIOLUWA** is solely result of my work except where acknowledged as being derived from other person(s) or resources.

Matriculation Number: **20/05NSS011**

In The Faculty of Nursing Sciences, Thomas Adewumi University Oko-Irese Kwara State.



Signature _____ Date: 7th August, 2025

Certification

This is to certify that this research project carried out by **DADA MERCY INIOLUWA** with matriculation number **20/05NSS011** has been examined and approved for the award of “Bachelor of Nursing Science Certificate”.

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Abstract

Nursing students face intense academic and clinical demands, often leading to elevated stress levels that can affect their well-being and academic performance. This study examined stress and coping strategies during clinical postings among nursing students of Thomas Adewumi University. The objective of this study was to identify specific stress factors experienced by nursing students during clinical posting; to examine the coping strategies adopted by nursing students during clinical posting and to assess the effectiveness of the coping strategies employed by nursing students during clinical postings. Descriptive survey research design was adopted for this study. A total of one hundred and nine nursing students were selected to participate in the study using convenience sampling technique. A researcher's designed questionnaire was used to collect data. The research questions were answered using mean analysis and the research hypotheses was using Pearson Product Moment Correlation and tested at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that: nursing students experienced several stressors during clinical posting amongst which were extended hours which are often beyond comfort level 70(64.2%) and managing academic coursework alongside clinical responsibilities 68(62.4%); the major coping strategies adopted by nursing students during clinical posting was calling a colleague/friend to discuss other activities that takes mind off the stressful event 66(60.5%); the various coping strategies employed by nursing students in dealing with stress during clinical postings was very effective and there was significant relationship between the types of coping strategies adopted by nursing students during clinical postings and their specific stressors. The study concluded by highlighting the importance of tailored support for managing stress in clinical training environments. Based on the findings, it was recommended that nursing program administrators should implement a structured support program, including regular stress management workshops, to address the unique stressors that nursing students face during clinical postings.

Keywords: Stress, Coping, Strategies, Clinical Posting

Word Count: 296

Dedication

This research study is dedicated to the Almighty God.

Acknowledgement

I am grateful to Almighty God for His grace and divine mercies over my life throughout the course of this study, also for helping me through the period of this program and for been a prayer answering God who always shows up for me.

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Table of content

Cover Page	i
Title Page	ii
Declaration	iii
Certification	iv
Abstract	v
Dedication	vi
Acknowledgement	vii
Table of Content	viii
List of Tables	xi
List of Figures	xii
CHAPTER ONE	
Introduction	1
Background of Study	1
Statement of Problem	4
Objectives of the Study	5
Research Questions	6
Research Hypotheses	6
Significance of the Study	6

Scope of the Study	7
Operational Definition of Terms	8
CHAPTER TWO	
Introduction	9
Conceptual review	9
Theoretical framework	16
Empirical review	22
CHAPTER THREE	
Research Methodology	26
Research Design	26
Setting of the Study	26
Target Population	27
Sample Size Determination	27
Sample Technique	28
Instrument of Data Collection	28
Validity of the Instrument	29
Reliability of the instrument	29
Method of Data Collection	30
Method of Data Analysis	30

Ethical Consideration	30
CHAPTER FOUR	
Introduction	31
Presentation of Data and Analysis	31
CHAPTER FIVE	
Introduction	40
Discussion of Findings	40
Implications of Findings to Nursing	42
Limitations of the Study	42
Summary of the Findings	43
Conclusion	43
Recommendations	44
Suggestion for Further Study	44
References	46
Appendix	

List of Tables

Table 4.1: Distribution of Respondents by Demographic Characteristics	31
Table 4.2: Distribution of Respondents by Specific Stressors Experienced During Clinical Posting	33
Table 4.3: Distribution of Respondents by Coping Strategies	35
Table 4.4: Distribution of Respondents by the Effectiveness of the Coping Strategies	37
Table 4.5: There is no significant relationship between the types of coping strategies adopted by nursing students during clinical postings and their specific stressors	39

List of Figures

Figure 4.1: A Bar Chart Showing the Distribution of Respondents by Gender, Age and Year of Study 32

CHAPTER ONE

1.0 Introduction

This chapter aims to provide detailed information on the background of study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions, research hypothesis, significance of the study, scope of the study and operational definition of terms.

1.1 Background of the Study

Stress describes a dynamic relationship between a person and their surroundings. It is a widespread phenomenon of contemporary life styles; it has been discovered to have negative health effects and to adversely impair students' learning, and it is recognized as one of the most significant problems in the contemporary world (Madian et al., 2019). The definition of stress as a response was discovered by Selye (1976), who defines stress as the non-specific response of the body to any kind of demand (Hamadi et al., 2021). Nursing students experience stress frequently during their education (Hamadi et al., 2021). Nursing is one of the most stressful and challenging professions worldwide (Ching et al., 2020; Rayan, 2019). More so than other health-related disciplines, it has been well-established that nursing students experience higher levels of stress than other non-nursing university students (Ching et al., 2020; Tharani et al., 2017).

Stress, universally is defined as a physiological and psychological response to a perceived threat or challenge. It involves the body's adaptive reactions aimed at mobilizing resources to cope with the demands of a situation. Stress can manifest as a complex interplay of physical, emotional, and behavioral changes, and its intensity varies based on individual perceptions and coping mechanisms (Thomas, 2022, Lavoie-Tremblay et al., 2022). Although stress in general is often considered harmful but when maintained at manageable levels, it can potentially offer benefits by

serving as a motivational force for students, fostering resilience and encouraging the development of effective coping strategies (Hasson 2020). Although clinical education provides rich opportunities to gain hands-on experience, the clinical component of nursing education has been identified as providing the highest source of stress for nursing students (Ching et al., 2020; Yksel & Bahadir-Yilmaz, 2019). Stress and coping during nurse education and training are widely recognized as important areas of research, as nursing students often experience high levels of stress due to academic demands, clinical placements, and personal life stressors (Liu et al., 2022, Ayaz-Alkaya, & Simones, 2022). Numerous studies have identified common stressors in nursing students, including heavy academic workloads, time pressures, clinical placements, and personal life challenges such as financial problems and family issues (Lavoie-Tremblay et al 2022).

Nursing students worldwide face high stress due to their immersion in clinical environments, where they are expected to care for real patients while learning (Labrague et al., 2020). In many African countries, challenges such as insufficient staffing, emotional burden, and weak mentorship increase student stress (Mtengezo et al., 2021). A recent Nigerian study by Akintola et al. (2023) found that over 80% of nursing students experienced moderate to high stress during their postings. Locally, a study in Kwara State by Aliu and Olanrewaju (2023) revealed that students struggle with lack of orientation, overwhelming tasks, and limited supervisor feedback.

Nursing education programs aim to provide students with high-quality clinical learning experiences to ensure that nurses can provide safe and direct care to patients. (Almarwani, 2022). However, a gap exists between theory and practice as the curriculum in the classroom differs from nursing students' experiences in the clinical nursing practicum (Saifan et al., 2021). The clinical practicum takes place in an environment that combines numerous structural, psychological, emotional and organizational elements that influence student learning (Kalyani et al., 2019) and

may affect the development of professional nursing competencies, such as compassion, communication and professional identity (Mahasneh et al., 2021). Nursing education constitutes a critical phase in the preparation of future healthcare professionals, combining theoretical learning with practical experience in clinical settings. Clinical postings, in particular, play a pivotal role in nursing education by providing students with opportunities to apply classroom knowledge in real-world healthcare environments (Smith, 2018; Jones et al., 2020). These experiences are crucial for developing clinical competence, fostering professional identity formation, and preparing students for the complexities of nursing practice (Jones et al., 2020). Clinical postings inherently expose nursing students to a variety of stressors stemming from the demanding nature of patient care responsibilities, the fast-paced healthcare environment, and interactions with patients, families, and healthcare teams (Johnson & Brown, 2019; Thomas & Peters, 2021). Stressors can include the pressure to perform clinical skills, time constraints, emotional challenges related to patient care, and the fear of making clinical errors (Thomas & Peters, 2021).

The impact of stress on nursing students extends beyond immediate emotional responses, affecting various aspects of their academic and personal lives. High levels of stress have been associated with decreased academic performance, increased levels of anxiety and depression, and compromised mental well-being among nursing students (Adams & Clark, 2022; Roberts & Williams, 2020). Moreover, chronic stress during nursing education has been linked to burnout, attrition from the nursing profession, and reduced quality of patient care (Roberts & Williams, 2020).

In response to stress during clinical postings, nursing students employ a range of coping strategies to manage their emotional and psychological well-being. These strategies include seeking social support from peers and clinical instructors, engaging in self-care practices such as mindfulness

and relaxation techniques, and adopting problem-solving approaches to address challenges encountered in clinical settings (Brown et al., 2021; Smith & White, 2019).

Research indicates that effective coping strategies among nursing students involve both individual and organizational factors. Individual strategies include maintaining a positive outlook, setting realistic goals, and engaging in regular self-care activities (Smith & White, 2019). Organizational factors, such as supportive clinical environments, mentorship programs, and access to resources for stress management, also play a crucial role in enhancing coping and resilience among nursing students (Green & Johnson, 2021). Despite the availability of coping strategies, nursing students may encounter challenges and barriers that affect their ability to effectively manage stress during clinical postings. These challenges can include workload pressures, inadequate support systems, interpersonal conflicts, and limited access to mental health resources (Taylor et al., 2023). Addressing these barriers is essential for promoting a supportive learning environment that fosters student well-being and professional growth.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Clinical postings are a crucial component of nursing education, offering students an opportunity to apply theoretical knowledge in real-life healthcare settings. However, these experiences are often accompanied by various stressors that can significantly affect students' physical, emotional, and mental well-being. Nursing students frequently face high expectations as they are exposed to complex patient cases, work within multidisciplinary teams and navigate the high-pressure environment of healthcare facilities. The responsibility of providing safe and effective patient care, often under time constraints and with limited experience, can be overwhelming.

In addition to the practical challenges, students are expected to balance academic requirements with the demands of their clinical placements, which further exacerbates their stress levels. The pressure to perform well, fear of making mistakes, and the emotional toll of witnessing suffering or death in clinical settings can lead to feelings of anxiety, burnout, and decreased self-confidence. These stressors may not only impact their academic performance and clinical competencies but also their overall psychological well-being and satisfaction with their nursing education.

While it is well established that nursing students experience significant stress during clinical postings, there is limited research on the specific stressors they encounter and how these stressors affect their learning experiences. Moreover, the coping strategies that nursing students adopt to manage these challenges are varied, ranging from seeking support from peers and mentors to employing individual coping mechanisms such as relaxation techniques or problem-solving strategies. However, the effectiveness of these coping strategies in alleviating stress remains largely unexplored. Given the potential implications of stress on nursing students' professional development and overall health, it is important to investigate the specific stressors they face during clinical postings, the coping strategies they adopt and the effectiveness of these strategies.

Understanding these elements is essential for developing targeted interventions and support systems that can enhance students' resilience, improve their coping abilities, and ensure a more positive and successful clinical learning experience.

Hence this study will look through some specific stress factors and the coping strategies employed by nursing students in managing stress during clinical posting.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

Broad Objective: The broad objective of this study is to evaluate the stress factors and coping strategies during clinical posting among nursing students of Thomas Adewumi University.

Specific Objectives

1. To identify specific stressors experienced by nursing students during clinical posting.
2. To examine the coping strategies adopted by nursing students during clinical posting.
3. To assess the effectiveness of the various coping strategies employed by nursing students in dealing with stress during clinical postings.

1.4 Research Questions

1. What are the specific stressors experienced by nursing students during clinical posting?
2. What are the coping strategies adopted by nursing students during clinical posting?
3. What is the effectiveness of the various coping strategies employed by nursing students in dealing with stress during clinical postings?

1.5 Research Hypothesis

H₀: There is no significant relationship between the types of coping strategies adopted by nursing students during clinical postings and their specific stressor.

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study aims to contribute to the understanding of the unique stressors faced by nursing students during their clinical postings and the coping strategies they use to manage these challenges. By identifying the specific stressors that nursing students experience during clinical placements, this study can provide valuable insights for educators, clinical instructors, and academic institutions.

This study will help in developing targeted support systems, such as stress management programs, counseling services, and mentoring initiatives tailored to the needs of nursing students, improving their overall well-being and academic performance.

This study will evaluate the effectiveness of various coping strategies employed by nursing students. Understanding which strategies are most beneficial can guide the development of interventions that promote healthier coping mechanisms, potentially reducing the incidence of stress-related issues such as anxiety, burnout or mental health challenges.

The research findings could inform curriculum development and the design of clinical training programs. Insights from the study could lead to better-prepared nursing students, equipped with both the clinical skills and the emotional resilience needed to thrive in high-pressure environments. This would ultimately enhance the quality of nursing education and improve students' learning experiences.

By helping students manage stress effectively during clinical postings, this study can contribute to their professional growth. Nursing students who develop strong coping skills are more likely to transition smoothly into the workforce and perform effectively in stressful healthcare environments. This could improve patient care outcomes and contribute to a more resilient and prepared nursing workforce.

This study will address a gap in the existing literature by focusing specifically on the experiences of nursing students during clinical postings, a critical but often overlooked aspect of nursing education. The research findings will add to the body of knowledge on stress management, and coping strategies, providing a foundation for future research in this area.

1.7 Scope of the Study

The study is carried out in Thomas Adewumi university to evaluate the stress factors and coping strategies during clinical postings among nursing students of Thomas Adewumi University, Oko-Irese, Kwara State.

1.8 Operational Definition of Terms

1. **Stress:** refers to anything that causes feelings of tiredness, being overwhelmed or pressured experienced by nursing students during clinical posting.
2. **Clinical posting:** refers to the practical training session that nursing students go to the hospital to undergo in order to gain more knowledge.
3. **Coping Strategies:** refers to the way nursing students manage stress.
4. **Nursing Students:** these are students that are enrolled in the nursing program of the university.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter provides a detailed review of literature related to ‘evaluation of stress factors and coping strategies during clinical postings among nursing students of Thomas Adewumi University’. It is organized into three main sections: a conceptual review defining key terms, a theoretical review of relevant frameworks, and an empirical review of recent studies. This structure aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how stress affects nursing students and the coping strategies they employ to manage it.

2.1 Conceptual Review

2.1.1 Stress

Stress is defined as a psychological and physiological response to perceived challenges or threats. The American Psychological Association (APA) defines stress as "any uncomfortable emotional experience accompanied by predictable biochemical, physiological, cognitive, and behavioral changes" (APA, 2020). Stress responses can vary widely depending on individual perceptions and the nature of the stressor.

Nursing students experience significant academic stress due to the demanding nature of their coursework and clinical responsibilities. This includes pressure from exams, maintaining grades, and completing assignments. According to Dyrbye et al. (2021), academic stress is a major concern among nursing students, contributing to anxiety and burnout.

Clinical stress involves the pressures associated with hands-on patient care, high-stakes situations, and interactions with clinical staff. Labrague et al. (2020) highlighted that clinical stress can lead to feelings of inadequacies and fears of making mistakes, impacting students' confidence and performances.

Balancing academic demands with personal life and social relationships adds another layer of stress. McCarthy et al. (2022) discovered that managing personal responsibilities, work, and social interactions can lead to increased stress and affect students' overall well-being.

2.1.2 Symptoms of Stress

- **Psychological Symptoms:** Anxiety, depression, and burnout are common psychological effects of stress. Kim et al. (2021) emphasize that chronic stress negatively impacts mental health, leading to decreased emotional well-being and academic performance.
- **Physical Symptoms:** Stress can cause physical issues such as headaches, fatigue, and gastrointestinal problems. Husain et al. (2022) note that chronic stress can weaken the immune system and lead to various health complications.
- **Behavioral Symptoms:** Changes in behavior, such as procrastination, substance use, and social withdrawal, are indicative of stress. Bowers et al. (2023) highlight that these behaviors can further exacerbate stress and hinder academic progress.

2.1.3 Classification of Stress

Stress can be classified into different categories based on its duration, source, and impact on individuals. They include:

- **Acute Stress:** Acute stress is a brief and immediate response to a perceived threat or challenge. It is the body's rapid reaction to a new and demanding situation. Symptoms include increased heart rate, sweating, heightened senses, and a surge of adrenaline. It prepares the body for a 'fight-or-flight' response. (McEwen, 2019)

Example: Handling a sudden medical emergency, such as a patient experiencing a cardiac arrest or severe allergic reaction, which requires immediate and critical intervention. (Mullen & MacDonald, 2021)

- **Episodic Acute Stress:** this type of stress is characterized by frequent episodes of acute stress. Individuals experiencing this type of stress often feel like they are in a constant state of crisis. Symptoms include persistent tension, anxiety, irritability, and headaches. It can lead to a pattern of short-term stress reactions due to repeated exposure to stressful situations. (Kessler & Bromet, 2020)

Example: Experiencing stress each time a major examination is scheduled, such as for clinical skills assessments or theoretical knowledge tests. (O'Connor & Jones, 2020)

- **Chronic Stress:** this is a long-term form of stress resulting from ongoing situations that don't seem to have a clear endpoint. It can have severe health implications. Symptoms include prolonged feelings of anxiety, depression, and helplessness. Chronic stress can lead to serious health issues like heart disease, hypertension, and diabetes. (Cohen et al .; 2016)

Example: long-term shift and sleep disruption, continuous exposure to high work-load (Townsend & McInnes, 2020)

- **Eustress:** refers to stress that leads to a positive response. It is the opposite of distress and can refer to any type of beneficial stress, whether physical or psychological. (Lu et al; 2021). It tends to be short-term and often feels exciting. People perceive this type of stress as manageable and even motivating. Symptoms include excitement, increased energy, and focused attention. Eustress is associated with positive outcomes and personal growth. Example: skill development, engaging in patient care.

2.1.4 Coping Strategies

Coping strategies are methods employed to manage or alleviate stress. Coping strategies are specific efforts, encompassing both psychological and behavioral responses, aimed at managing the impact of stressors on well-being. (Thompson et al. 2023).

Coping strategies are the diverse ways individuals adjust their thoughts and behaviors to manage the challenges posed by stressful situations. (Aldwin & Yancura 2021)

Connor-Smith & Flachsbart (2021) also define coping strategies as the cognitive and behavioral techniques that individuals utilize to handle stressors and their emotional consequences.

According to Algorani and Gupta (2021), coping is described as thoughts and behaviors mobilized to manage internal and external stressful situations.

Coping is a cognitive and behavioral adaptation that reduces unpleasant emotions such as sadness, fear, and anger regardless of emotional intensity (Stallman, 2020).

2.1.5 Types of Coping Strategies

- **Problem-Focused Coping:** Aimed at changing the stressor or situation itself. Carver et al. (2018) describes problem-focused coping as involving active problem-solving and seeking information or support to address the source of stress. Examples include: implementing time management techniques, seeking academic or clinical advice, and setting achievable goals are effective problem-focused strategies (Fletcher et al., 2023).
- **Emotion-Focused Coping:** this type of coping strategy involves managing emotional responses to stress rather than changing the stressor. Emotion-focused coping includes techniques such as relaxation and emotional expression (Tennen et al., 2019). Examples include: engaging in mindfulness practices, talking to friends or counselors, and using relaxation techniques are common emotion-focused coping strategies (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).
- **Avoidance Coping:** this involves avoiding the stressor or its emotional impact, often through denial or distraction. Zeidner et al. (2022) note that avoidance coping can provide temporary relief but does not address the underlying issues.
- **Adaptive Coping:** Adaptive coping refers to positive, proactive strategies that help manage stress effectively and promote long-term resilience and well-being. Examples include: mindfulness, positive reframing, maintaining a healthy lifestyle, and developing resilience through personal growth activities. (Park & Alder, 2020).
- **Maladaptive coping:** Maladaptive coping strategies are those that might provide short-term relief but lead to negative consequences in the long run. Examples: Substance abuse, overeating, social withdrawal, and self-harm. (Aldwin & Yancura, 2021)

2.1.6 Sources of Stress for Nursing Students

- **Academic Stress:** The academic workload, including lectures, assignments, and examinations, contributes significantly to stress among nursing students. Cohen et al. (2021) describe academic stress as a major factor influencing student well-being and performance. High levels of academic stress are linked to anxiety, burnout, and reduced academic performance (Aliakbari & Dehghan-Nayeri, 2021).
- **Clinical Stress:** Clinical stress arises from direct patient care, including dealing with complex medical cases and high-pressure environments. Labrague et al. (2020) report that clinical settings can create significant stress due to the demanding nature of patient interactions and the need for rapid decision-making.
- **Personal and Social Stress:** The challenge of balancing academic responsibilities with personal life and maintaining social relationships adds to stress. McCarthy et al. (2022) found that personal and social stressors significantly affect students' mental health and academic performance. Personal and social stress can lead to social withdrawal, conflicts, and decreased engagement in academic activities (Dyrbye et al., 2021).

2.1.7 Impact of Stress on Nursing Students

- **Psychological Effects:** Chronic stress can lead to serious mental health issues such as anxiety, depression, and burnout. Kim et al. (2021) discuss how prolonged stress negatively impacts mental health, affecting students' overall well-being and academic performance.
- **Physical Health Consequences:** Stress-related physical symptoms include headaches, sleep disturbances, and gastrointestinal issues. Husain et al. (2022) emphasize that long-term stress can impair physical health and overall functioning.

- **Academic Performance:** High levels of stress can impair cognitive functions and lead to lower academic achievement. Fletcher et al. (2023) highlights that stress negatively impacts students' ability to concentrate and perform well in their studies.
- **Professional Development:** Persistent stress may affect students' professional attitudes and career choices. Bowers et al. (2023) note that ongoing stress can lead to doubts about one's chosen career path and reduce readiness for professional practice.

2.1.8 Effects of Stress on the Clinical Performance of Nursing Students

- **Impaired Cognitive Functioning:** Stress adversely affects cognitive functions such as concentration, memory, and decision-making, which are crucial for clinical performance. Cognitive impairments can lead to difficulties in: attention and focus, memory retention and decision making. (Pasha et al 2021)
- **Increased Error Rates:** Stress increases the likelihood of making errors in clinical practice, which can be detrimental to patient safety. Common errors include: medication errors, procedural mistakes and documentation errors. (Ramanujam & Kiran 2021)
- **Decreased Patient Interaction Quality:** Stress can negatively impact the quality of interactions with patients, affecting: empathy and compassion, communication and rapport building (Choi & Park, 2022)
- **Increased Emotional Exhaustion:** Chronic stress can lead to emotional exhaustion, characterized by: burnout, reduced motivation and coping difficulties. (Lin & Chang, 2019)
- **Negative Impact on Learning and Professional Development:** Stress can hinder the learning process and professional development of nursing students by: reduced participation, lower self-efficacy and reduced ability to engage in reflective practices. (Liu & Shi, 2020)

- **Higher Levels of Anxiety and Depression:** Chronic stress can contribute to mental health issues such as anxiety and depression, which further impact clinical performance. Symptoms may include: persistent worry, mood swings and emotional instability. (Alzghoul & Khalil, 2021)

2.2 Theoretical Review

2.2.1 Transactional Model of Stress and Coping (Lazarus and Folkman)

The Transactional Model of Stress and Coping, developed by Richard Lazarus and Susan Folkman in 1984, is a cognitive-phenomenological model that examines how individuals interpret and respond to stressors. It emphasizes the dynamic and reciprocal interaction between an individual and their environment, highlighting the processes of cognitive appraisal and coping as central to understanding stress. (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

Core Concepts of the Transactional Model

Cognitive Appraisal: Cognitive appraisal is the process through which individuals evaluate the significance of what is happening for their well-being. It includes two main stages: primary appraisal and secondary appraisal.

- **Primary Appraisal:** This stage involves evaluating whether an event or situation is irrelevant, benign-positive, or stressful. If the situation is deemed stressful, it is further classified as harm/loss, threat, or challenge.

- i. **Harm/Loss:** Refers to damage or loss that has already occurred.
- ii. **Threat:** Concerns potential future damage or loss.
- iii. **Challenge:** Involves events perceived as opportunities for growth or gain.

Example: Nursing students may appraise a clinical examination as a threat to their academic success, a harm/loss if they have previously failed, or a challenge to prove their competencies.

- **Secondary Appraisal:** This stage involves evaluating one's ability to cope with the situation, considering available resources and options.

Example: A nursing student assessing their preparedness for a critical clinical skill assessment might evaluate their study efforts, support from peers, and access to faculty guidance.

Coping Strategies: Coping strategies are cognitive and behavioral efforts to manage specific external and/or internal demands that are appraised as taxing or exceeding the resources of the person.

- **Problem-Focused Coping:** Involves efforts to change the stressful situation or expand one's resources to deal with it. Example: Nursing students may use problem-focused coping by increasing their study time or seeking help from mentors to improve clinical skills.
- **Emotion-Focused Coping:** Involves efforts to manage the emotional distress associated with the situation. Example: Nursing students may engage in relaxation techniques, seek social support, or practice mindfulness to manage their anxiety during clinical postings.

The Process of the Transactional Model

When an individual encounters a potential stressor, it triggers the cognitive appraisal process, initiating their response to the situation. In the primary appraisal stage, the individual evaluates whether the stressor is a threat, challenge, or irrelevant. This initial assessment influences the individual's emotional and cognitive reactions. Following this, in the secondary appraisal stage, the individual assesses their resources and options for managing the stressor. Based on these appraisals, the individual employs coping efforts, which can be categorized as either problem-focused, aiming to address or change the stressor, or emotion-focused, aimed at managing the emotional impact. Finally, through reappraisal, the individual reassesses both the situation and their coping strategies. This ongoing evaluation can lead to adjustments in coping methods to better handle the stressor.

Application of the Lazarus and Folkman Transactional Model of Stress and Coping in Evaluation of Stress Factors and Coping Strategies During Clinical Postings Among Nursing Students

This model provides a framework for understanding how nursing students perceive and manage stressors related to their academic and clinical experiences. It emphasizes the role of cognitive appraisal and coping strategies in managing stress (Folkman & Moskowitz, 2004).

Encounter with a Stressor: During clinical postings, nursing students frequently encounter various stressors such as high patient loads, complex clinical tasks, and the pressure of performing in real-world healthcare settings. According to the model, these encounters trigger the cognitive appraisal process. For instance, a sudden change in a patient's condition might be perceived as a significant stressor.

Primary Appraisal: In the primary appraisal stage, nursing students evaluate whether the encountered stressor is a threat, challenge, or irrelevant. For example, a nursing student might view a critical patient situation as a threat to their competence or as a challenge that offers an opportunity to apply their knowledge and skills. This appraisal influences their initial emotional and cognitive responses. If the situation is perceived as a threat, it could induce anxiety and stress, while viewing it as a challenge might foster motivation and engagement.

Secondary Appraisal: In the secondary appraisal stage, nursing students assess their available resources and options for coping with the identified stressor. They consider internal resources such as their clinical knowledge, skills, and emotional resilience, as well as external resources like support from clinical instructors, peer support, and access to additional learning resources. For instance, if a student feels overwhelmed by a complex procedure, they might evaluate whether they can rely on their training, seek guidance from a mentor, or utilize additional resources to manage the stressor effectively.

Coping Efforts: Based on their appraisals, nursing students engage in coping efforts to manage stress. These coping strategies can be problem-focused or emotion-focused. Problem-focused coping might involve taking proactive steps such as seeking further training or clarification on clinical procedures. Emotion-focused coping could include practices like mindfulness, talking to a supportive friend or counselor, or engaging in stress-relief activities. For example, if a student finds the pace of clinical work overwhelming, they might use problem-focused coping by organizing their tasks more efficiently and emotion-focused coping by practicing relaxation techniques.

Reappraisal: Reappraisal involves the ongoing process of reassessing the stressor and the effectiveness of coping strategies. Nursing students may adjust their coping methods based on their experiences and feedback. For instance, if a student receives constructive feedback from a supervisor indicating that their initial stress was unwarranted or manageable, they might reassess their approach to similar situations in the future and modify their coping strategies accordingly. This process allows students to adapt and refine their coping mechanisms over time, enhancing their resilience and effectiveness in managing stress.

2.2.2 General Adaptation Syndrome (Hans Selye)

General Adaptation Syndrome (GAS) is a model developed by Hans Selye in 1936 to describe the physiological response to stress. The GAS framework explains how the body responds to stress over time through three stages: Alarm, Resistance, and Exhaustion. (Selye, 1976)

Alarm stage: this is the body's immediate response to a stressor, characterized by the "fight-or-flight" reaction as the body prepares to confront the perceived threat. During this stage, several key physiological changes occur: the activation of the sympathetic nervous system leads to the release of adrenaline (epinephrine) and norepinephrine from the adrenal glands, resulting in increased heart rate, blood pressure, and energy levels. Additionally, the adrenal cortex releases cortisol, which mobilizes energy reserves and enhances the body's ability to cope with stress. This

heightened physiological state also increases alertness, making the individual highly focused on the stressor. For example, a nursing student facing an urgent clinical situation, such as a patient experiencing a sudden medical emergency, will undergo the alarm stage, marked by a rapid surge in physiological arousal and heightened awareness as they prepare to address the crisis.

Resistance stage: in this stage, the body strives to adapt to the ongoing stressor and restore a sense of balance. During this phase, cortisol levels remain elevated to support the body in managing the stressor. The individual employs various coping strategies to handle the stress, and while physiological responses such as increased energy and sustained alertness persist, they occur at a reduced intensity compared to the alarm stage. The body continues to work towards maintaining homeostasis and normal functioning despite the persistent stress. For example, after the initial shock of a clinical emergency, a nursing student may utilize problem-solving skills and seek assistance from colleagues to navigate the situation, all while still experiencing elevated cortisol levels.

Exhaustion stage: if the stressor persists for an extended period or if the body's adaptive resources are depleted, the individual experiences significant physiological and psychological consequences. The body's ability to maintain normal functioning diminishes as energy reserves are depleted, leading to increased vulnerability. This prolonged exposure to stress can make the individual more susceptible to various health problems, such as cardiovascular disease, depression, and immune system suppression. Chronic stress also raises the risk of burnout, which is characterized by emotional exhaustion, reduced performance, and detachment from responsibilities. For example, if a nursing student faces overwhelming stress continuously without sufficient recovery time, they may experience burnout, resulting in physical exhaustion, emotional fatigue, and a noticeable decline in their clinical performance.

Application of the General Adaptation Syndrome Model in Evaluation of Stress Factors and Coping Strategies During Clinical Posting Among Nursing Students

Alarm Stage: during the alarm stage, nursing students encounter acute stressors such as high patient loads, critical medical emergencies, or demanding tasks. This initial phase triggers the body's "fight-or-flight" response, characterized by physiological changes such as increased heart rate, elevated blood pressure, and heightened alertness due to the release of adrenaline and cortisol (Selye, 1956). For instance, when a nursing student faces a sudden patient crisis, their body rapidly responds with increased arousal and a sense of urgency, preparing them to address the immediate threat.

Resistance Stage: in the resistance stage, nursing students attempt to adapt to the ongoing stressor and return to a state of balance. During this phase, the body continues to produce cortisol, albeit at a slightly reduced level compared to the alarm stage, to support coping efforts. Students employ various coping strategies to manage the stressor, such as problem-focused techniques (e.g., seeking guidance from mentors or organizing tasks) and emotion-focused techniques (e.g., using relaxation exercises or seeking peer support). This stage is marked by sustained energy and alertness, although at a lower intensity than the initial shock. The goal is to maintain homeostasis and effective functioning despite the persistent stress.

Exhaustion Stage: If the stressor endures over a long period or if the body's adaptive resources become depleted, nursing students may enter the exhaustion stage. In this stage, the body's ability to function normally diminishes as energy reserves are exhausted. Prolonged stress can lead to increased vulnerability to health problems such as fatigue, burnout, and various illnesses. For nursing students, this might manifest as chronic exhaustion, emotional fatigue, and a decline in

clinical performance and overall well-being. Without adequate recovery and effective coping strategies, students may experience burnout, characterized by emotional detachment, reduced performance, and a sense of inefficacy.

2.3 Empirical Review

- Rusnani et al.; conducted a study on Stressors and Coping Strategies during Clinical Practice among Diploma Nursing Students in the year 2019 at the Kubang Kerian Nursing College, Kelantan which involved 346 respondents using simple random sampling method. The inclusion criteria were year one, two and three of nursing students who have clinical posting and voluntarily joining the study. Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) and Brief COPE inventory were utilized in the data collection. Higher mean score indicates higher degree of stress. Their findings indicated that Clinical assignments and workload were the main stressor (mean = 3.19, SD = 1.09). Religion approach was the most coping strategy applied (mean = 3.30, SD = 0.71). Pearson's correlation coefficient test found that six domains of stressors during clinical practices (taking care of patients; clinical educators/instructors and ward staff; clinical assignments and workload; peers and nursing students from other college; lack of professional knowledge and skills and clinical environment) were statistically significant correlation with coping strategies, where $P\text{-value} < 0.05$. Clinical assignment was the main stressor among nursing students; therefore, successful activities should be promoted to help them in managing clinical assignment and enhancing knowledge in religion.
- Hala Mohamed Sanad conducted a Descriptive Study at College of Health Sciences, University of Bahrain in the year 2019 on Stress and Anxiety among Junior Nursing Students during the Initial Clinical Training. A self-administered questionnaire was employed to gather data on perceived stress (5 points Likert scale), perceived anxiety (4 points Likert scale) and

socio-demographic characteristics from 93 second year nursing students at CHS (a response rate of 77.5%). The total scores for each item were summed and average scores were calculated accordingly. Both univariate and multivariate analyses were undertaken in order to identify significant factors that influence anxiety and /or stress levels among students. The p-value of less than 0.05 was considered statistically significant. The findings of this study indicated that about four-fifth of the respondents were female students. Most students had normal levels of anxiety while two-third reported moderate stress levels. Female gender was the only significant factor that is related to stress in univariate as well as multivariate analyses.

- Melanie Lavoie-Tremblay et al.; conducted a transversal descriptive qualitative study in the year 2021 on Sources of Stress and Coping Strategies Among Undergraduate Nursing Students Across All Year. A sample of 26 undergraduate students attending a university in Montreal, Canada were recruited and participated in a semi-structured interview. Data were analyzed using inductive thematic analysis. The findings of the study indicated that the sources of stress differed according to year of study and related significantly to the specific novelty of that year. For first-year students, their stress was related to their academic courses. High clinical performance expectations and a lack of time for their personal lives was a main source of stress for second-year students. The prospect of graduating and transitioning into the work environment caused stress for students in their final year. Students across all years of study utilized similar coping strategies
- Kholoud Alharbi conducted a study on Stress and Coping Strategies Among Nursing Students. a qualitative descriptive methodology. 20 semi-structured interviews were conducted individually in the English language by the principal researcher at a female nursing college. The initial section of the interview consisted of a document listing the participants' age and level. Questions derived from the theoretical model were used in the interview's second

section to identify the sources of stress among undergraduate nursing students and to explore their coping methods. The qualitative data was analyzed using thematic analysis based on the Braun and Clarke framework. The result of the study indicated four global themes emerged as the following: stressors, stress symptoms, coping strategies, and educational environment. The first 3 themes were derived deductively from the study theoretical model; whereas, the last theme was derived inductively from the data itself.

- Labrague conducted a study in the year 2024 on Stress Levels, Sources of Stress, and Coping Mechanisms among Student Nurses. Five databases (PsycINFO, PubMed, CINAHL, Scopus and Web of Science) were searched for review articles published from 2010 onwards. This review includes twelve articles, encompassing 189 studies. The review findings demonstrate that student nurses experience moderate-to-high levels of stress during their nurse training. Major sources of stress include academic demands, patient care responsibilities, and interactions with nursing staff and faculty. Commonly utilized coping skills involved problem-solving behaviors, transference, and maintaining an optimistic outlook. Given the adverse consequences of stress, nurse educators play a critical role in the development of strategies with which to reduce stress and enhance coping skills among student nurses.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodological approach employed to evaluate the stress factors and coping strategies during clinical postings among nursing students of Thomas Adewumi University. It provides a detailed description of the research design, setting, target population, sampling techniques, and instruments used for data collection. Additionally, this chapter discusses the procedures for ensuring the validity and reliability of the instruments, the methods of data collection and analysis, and the ethical considerations observed throughout the study.

3.1 Research Design

This study employs a descriptive design to evaluate the stress factors and coping strategies during clinical postings among nursing students of Thomas Adewumi University.

3.2 Setting

The study was conducted at Thomas Adewumi University. Located in Oko-Irese, Kwara State, Nigeria. Thomas Adewumi University was founded by Dr. Eng JBO Adewumi. The university was founded on May 16th, 2021. The university has 7 different faculties, with over 25 academic programs.

The mission of the university is to be a center of attraction for staff and students of the highest quality who are dedicated and attuned to the ideas of excellence, truth, progress and development.

The vision of the university is to provide an excellent and suitable academic environment for the development of ideas and knowledge for the benefit of mankind.

3.3 Target Population

The target population for this study includes all 300 Level to 500 Level nursing students at Thomas Adewumi University. The students in 300L comprises 78 students, 400L comprises 48 students and the students in 500L comprises 23 students, making it a total of 154 nursing students.

3.4 Sampling

The sample size for the research was obtained from the target population using the Slovin's formula:

$$n = N / (1 + N e^2)$$

Where:

n is the sample size.

N is the population size.

e is the margin of error.

Calculation:

Population size (N = 154)

Margin of error (e = 0.05) (for $\pm 5\%$)

$$n = 154 / (1 + 154(0.05)^2)$$

$$n = 154 / (1 + 154(0.0025))$$

$$n = 154 / 1.385$$

$$n \approx 111$$

Number of dropouts = 2

Therefore, the sample size for the research is 109 nursing students.

Attrition Rate = number of dropouts / original sample size x 100

Attrition Rate = $2/154 \times 100$

Attrition Rate = 1.3%

3.5 Sampling Technique

A convenience sampling technique is employed for the purpose of this study. Participants are selected based on availability and accessibility. Participants are selected from the convenience of the university environment through an online platform.

3.6 Instruments for Data Collection

Data is collected using a modified structured questionnaire consisting of four sections:

1. Section A: Demographic information
2. Section B: Questions that examine the specific stressors experienced by nursing students during clinical posting.
3. Section C: Questions that examine the coping strategies adopted by nursing students during clinical postings.
4. Section D: Questions that examines the effectiveness of the various coping strategies adopted by nursing students during clinical postings.

3.7 Validity of Instrument

The validity of the research instrument was ensured through expert review to establish both content and face validity. The questionnaire was developed based on relevant literature and theoretical frameworks related to stress and coping among nursing students. To assess its validity, the instrument was submitted to two lecturers in the department of nursing for thorough

evaluation. These experts examined each item for clarity, relevance, and alignment with the study's objectives. Their feedback led to appropriate modifications such as rewording ambiguous items, eliminating irrelevant ones and ensuring comprehensive coverage of the research variables. This validation process confirmed that the instrument accurately measures the constructs of stress factors and coping strategies in the clinical context.

3.8 Reliability of Instrument

To determine the reliability of the instrument, a pilot study was conducted among 10 nursing students who were not part of the main study population. The internal consistency of the questionnaire was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient, analyzed via SPSS software. The result showed a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.82, which indicates a high level of reliability. This means the items within the questionnaire consistently measured the intended variables (stress factors, coping strategies, and their effectiveness). Therefore, the instrument is considered reliable and suitable for use in the main study.

3.9 Method of Data Collection

The questionnaire was printed and distributed among nursing students of 300 level to 500 level fill it at their convenience.

3.10 Method of Data Analysis

Data analysis is performed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25. Descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, frequencies, and percentages) are used to summarize the demographic characteristics and the type of stressors, coping strategies and the

effectiveness of the coping strategies. Inferential statistics, including Pearson Product-Moment correlation (PPMC), are used to examine the relationships between demographic variables, stress levels, and coping strategies.

3.11 Ethical Consideration

Ethical approval is obtained from the ethical committee of Thomas Adewumi University, Oko-Irese, Kwara State. Informed consent is obtained from all participants, ensuring that they are fully aware of the study's purpose, procedures, and their right to withdraw at any time without any negative consequences. Confidentiality and anonymity of the participants are strictly maintained throughout the study, with data being used solely for the research purposes.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF DATA AND ANALYSIS

Introduction

This chapter entails the analysis of the data which was obtained from the administered questionnaire administered on the study titled "Evaluation of Stress Factors and Coping Strategies During Clinical Postings Among Nursing Students of Thomas Adewumi University, Oko-Irese, Kwara State". 109 nursing students that participated in clinical posting were the study participants.

The 109 responses were validated by checking for irregularities, incompleteness and inappropriate responses. The analysis is divided into three sections; the demographic variables, analysis of research questions and test of hypothesis. The analysis is carried out with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25.

Section A: Demographic Data Presentation

Table 4.1: Distribution of respondents by demographic characteristics

Gender	N	Percent (%)
Male	19	17.4
Female	90	82.6
Total	109	100
Age		
Below 20	44	40.4
20 – 24 years	65	59.6
25 years and above	0	0
Total	109	100
Year of study		
300 level	46	42.2
400 level	40	36.7
500 level	23	21.1
Total	109	100

Fig. 4.1: Distribution of respondents by demographic characteristics

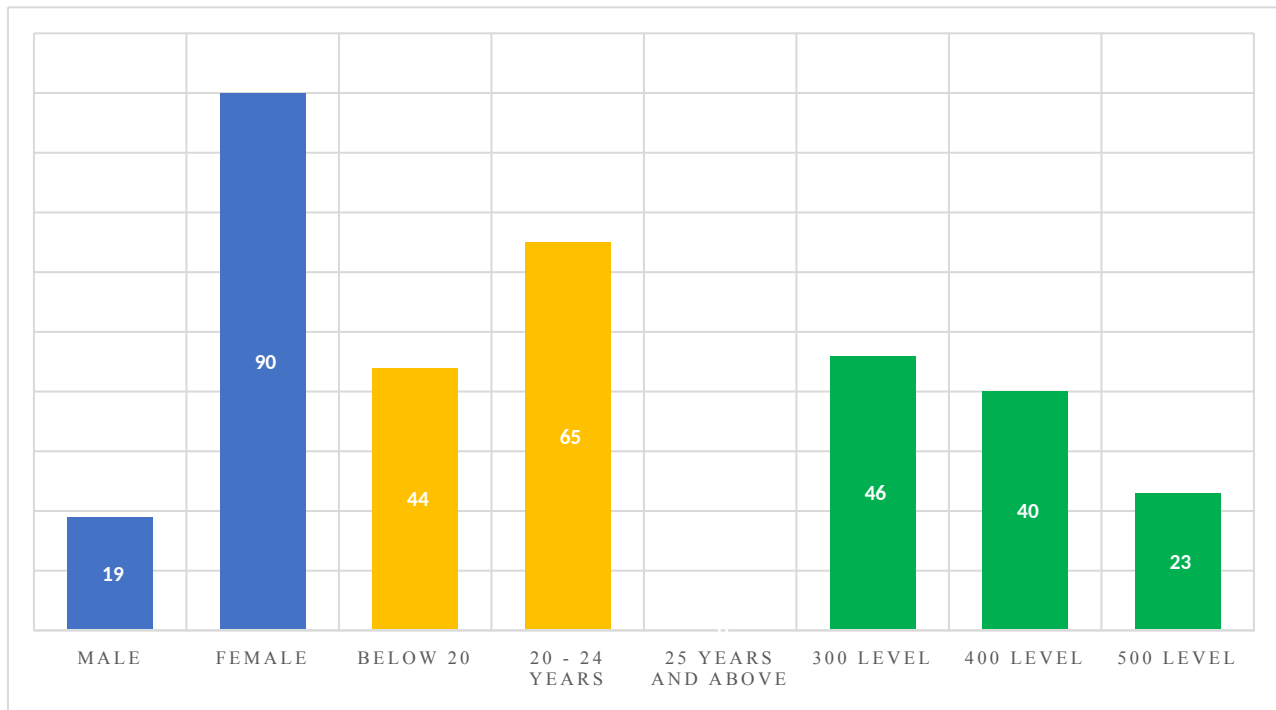


Table 4.1 presents the distribution of respondents by gender, age range and year of study. It was revealed that 19 (17.4%) of the respondents were males and 90 (82.6%) were females. This indicates that majority of the participants of the study were females. The table also presents the distribution of respondents by age. It indicates that 44(40.4%) were below 20 and 65 (59.6%) were between 20 – 24 years. This implies that the majority of the participants of this study were between 20 – 24 years. According to the year of study, 46 (42.2%) were in 300 level, 40 (36.7%) were in 400 level and 23 (21.1%) were in 500 level respectively.

Section B: Answering Research Questions

Descriptive statistics of frequency counts and percentages; and measure of central tendency was used to answer all research questions generated for the study.

Research Question 1: What are the specific stressors experienced by nursing students during clinical postings

Table 4.2: Distribution of Respondents by Specific Stressors Experienced During Clinical Posting

	Items	Level of Agreement				Mean	Std	Rank
		SA	A	D	SD			
1	Clinical postings require extended hours, often beyond my comfort level	70 (64.2%)	38 (34.9%)	1 (0.9%)	0 (0%)	3.63	.503	1 st
2	Supervisors have high expectations that feel difficult to meet	66 (60.6%)	41 (37.6%)	2 (1.8%)	0 (0%)	3.59	.531	4 th
3	There is a constant pressure to avoid mistakes in patient care	58 (53.2%)	51 (46.8%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3.53	.501	7 th
4	I am assigned to patients with complex or critical health conditions	56 (51.4%)	49 (45.0%)	4 (3.7%)	0 (0%)	3.48	.571	10 th
5	The risk of exposure to infections or diseases during clinical postings	60 (55.0%)	49 (45.0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3.55	.500	6 th
6	The workload during clinical postings is high	64 (58.7%)	43 (39.4%)	2 (1.8%)	0 (0%)	3.57	.533	5 th
7	Adapting to new departments or units frequently is required	65 (59.6%)	44 (40.4%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3.60	.493	3 rd
8	Some patients are uncooperative or difficult to work with	57 (52.3%)	52 (47.7%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3.52	.502	8 th
9	I have to manage academic coursework alongside clinical responsibilities	68 (62.4%)	41 (37.6%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3.62	.487	2 nd
10	I am expected to handle a large volume of tasks during clinical postings	54 (49.5%)	55 (50.5%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3.50	.502	9 th
11	There is strong competition among peers during clinical postings	26 (23.9%)	56 (51.4%)	27 (24.8%)	0 (0%)	2.99	.700	12 th
12	The clinical environment often feels fast-paced and demanding	50 (45.9%)	59 (54.1%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3.46	.501	11 th
	TOTAL					3.50	0.52	

Table 4.2 shows the specific stressors experienced by nursing students during clinical posting. According to the Mean ranking, all items have a mean score above 2.5 which is above the benchmark. “Clinical postings require extended hours, often beyond my comfort level” with mean value of $M=3.63$ was ranked first while “There is strong competition among peers during clinical postings” with mean value of $M=2.99$ was ranked 12th.

Research Question 2: What are the coping strategies adopted by nursing students during clinical posting?

Table 4.3: Distribution of Respondents by Coping Strategies Adopted by Nursing Students during Clinical Posting

	Items	Level of Agreement				Mean	Std	Rank
		SA	A	D	SD			
1	Take short breaks to stretch and rest mentally	62 (56.9%)	46 (42.2%)	1 (0.9%)	0 (0%)	3.57	.497	2 nd
2	Connect with experienced nurses for guidance and advice	55 (50.5%)	54 (49.5%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3.50	.502	5 th
3	Learn to say no when necessary and establish boundaries to avoid burnout	50 (45.9%)	57 (52.3%)	2 (1.8%)	0 (0%)	3.44	.535	9 th
4	Dedicate time to hobbies or interests such as checking social media platforms outside the facility	50 (45.9%)	59 (54.1%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3.45	.500	8 th
5	Engaging in physical activities to improve mood and reduce stress	56 (50.5%)	53 (48.6%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3.51	.502	4 th
6	Paying less focus on activities that does not involve me	51 (46.8%)	58 (53.2%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3.47	.501	6 th
7	Sitting at a quiet corner of the facility to maintain serenity	58 (53.2%)	51 (46.8%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3.53	.501	3 rd
8	I do the urgent task and take my time to do other task	51 (46.8%)	57 (52.3%)	1 (0.9%)	0 (0%)	3.46	.519	7 th
9	I eat snacks and take soft drinks to ease myself of stress	40 (36.7%)	68 (62.4%)	1 (0.9%)	0 (0%)	3.36	.500	10 th
10	I call a colleague/friend to discuss other activities that takes my mind off the stressful event	66 (60.5%)	43 (39.4%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3.60	.492	1 st
	TOTAL					3.48	0.50	

Table 4.3 shows the coping strategies adopted by nursing students during clinical posting. According to the Mean ranking, all items have a mean score of 2.5 which is above the benchmark. “I call a colleague/friend to discuss other activities that takes my mind off the stressful event” with mean value of M=3.60 was ranked first while “I eat snacks and take soft drinks to ease myself of stress” with mean value of M=3.36 was ranked 10th.

Research Question 3: What is the effectiveness of the various coping strategies employed by nursing students in dealing with stress during clinical postings?

Table 4.4: Distribution of Respondents by Effectiveness of the Various Coping Strategies Adopted During Clinical Postings

	Items	Level of Agreement				Mean	Std
		SA	A	D	SD		
1	Take short breaks throughout the day to stretch and reset mentally	58 (53.2%)	51 (46.8%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3.53	.501
2	Connect with experienced nurses for guidance and advice	40 (36.7%)	68 (62.4%)	1 (0.9%)	0 (0%)	3.36	.500
3	Learn to say no when necessary and establish boundaries to avoid burnout	45 (41.3%)	62 (56.9%)	2 (1.8%)	0 (0%)	3.39	.527
4	Dedicate time to hobbies or interests such as checking social media platforms outside the facility	41 (37.6%)	67 (61.5%)	1 (0.9%)	0 (0%)	3.37	.503
5	Engaging in physical activities to improve mood and reduce stress	40 (36.7%)	69 (63.3%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3.37	.484
6	Paying less focus on activities that does not involve me	44 (40.4%)	65 (59.6%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3.40	.493
7	Sitting at a quiet corner of the facility to maintain serenity	42 (38.5%)	67 (61.5%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3.39	.489
8	I do the urgent task and take my time to do other task	47 (43.1%)	62 (56.9%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3.43	.498
9	I eat snacks and take soft drinks to ease myself of stress	34 (31.2%)	75 (68.8%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3.31	.465
10	I call a colleague/friend to discuss other activities that takes my mind off the stressful event	55 (50.5%)	54 (49.5%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3.50	.502
	TOTAL					3.40	0.49

Decision Value: *Not Effective* = 0.00 – 1.99, *Effective* = 2.00 – 3.49, *Very Effective* = 3.00 – 4.00

Table 4.4 shows the effectiveness of the various coping strategies employed by nursing students in dealing with stress during clinical postings. It was revealed from the table 4.4 that all the items received a means score above the benchmark of 2.50 with “Take short breaks throughout the day to stretch and reset mentally” having the highest mean score of $\bar{x} = 3.53$ and “I eat snacks and take soft drinks to ease myself of stress” with lowest mean score of $\bar{x} = 3.31$. Based on the value of the Grand Mean (3.40 out of 5.00 maximum value obtainable) which falls within the decision value for *Very Effective*, it can be inferred that the effectiveness of the various coping strategies employed by nursing students in dealing with stress during clinical postings is **Very effective**.

Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis One: *There is no significant relationship between the coping strategies adopted by nursing students during clinical postings and their specific stressors*

Table 4.5: There is no significant relationship between the types of coping strategies adopted by nursing students during clinical postings and their specific stressors

Variable	N	Mean	SD	Pearson Correlation	p-value	decision
Coping strategies		3.03	.30			
	109			.410	.000	Rejected
Specific Stressors		3.02	.44			

Sig. $p < 0.05$

Table 4.5 shows the association between the coping strategies adopted by nursing students during clinical postings and their specific stressors. The correlation coefficient (r) is 0.41; p -value is 0.00. The correlation coefficient of $r = 0.41$ indicates that there exists a moderate but positive relationship between the coping strategies adopted by nursing students during clinical postings and their specific stressors. Also, the significant value of 0.00 is lesser than the critical alpha value of 0.05. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is significant relationship between the coping strategies adopted by nursing students during clinical postings and their specific stressors.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the summary, conclusion and recommendations on Evaluation of Stress Factors and Coping Strategies During Clinical Postings Among Nursing Students of Thomas Adewumi University, Oko-Irese, Kwara State.

5.1 Discussion of Findings

Question one identified specific stressors experienced by nursing students during clinical posting.

The findings from Question one revealed that nursing students experienced stressors during clinical posting amongst which were extended hours which are often beyond comfort level, managing academic coursework alongside clinical responsibilities, adapting to new departments/units frequently, high expectations from supervisors often difficult to meet, workload, risk of exposure to infections/diseases, constant pressure to avoid mistakes in patient care, uncooperative patients, handling a large volume of tasks and being assigned to patients with complex or critical health conditions. Rusnani et al. (2021) study revealed that clinical assignment was the main stressor among nursing students. McCarthy et al. (2022) also discovered that managing personal responsibilities, work, and social interactions can lead to increased stress.

Question two examined the coping strategies adopted by nursing students during clinical posting.

The findings from Question two revealed that the coping strategies include calling a colleague/friend to discuss other activities that takes mind off the stressful event, taking short breaks to stretch and rest mentally, sitting at a quiet corner of the facility to maintain serenity, engaging in physical activities to improve mood and reduce stress, connect with experienced nurses for guidance and advice, paying less focus on activities that does not involve them, doing

the urgent task and take my time to do other task, dedicate time to hobbies or interests, and eating snacks and taking soft drinks to ease themselves of stress. The finding from this study supports a study conducted by Labrague (2024) which revealed a coping skill that involved problem-solving behaviors, transference, and maintaining an optimistic outlook.

Question 3 assessed the effectiveness of the various coping strategies employed by nursing students in dealing with stress during clinical postings.

The findings from Question 3 revealed that the various coping strategies employed by nursing students in dealing with stress during clinical postings was very effective. This suggests significant implications for understanding how nursing students navigate stress within their demanding educational environments. The effectiveness of the coping strategies adopted highlights the importance of accessible and adaptable stress management techniques within clinical and academic settings. This effectiveness also implies that nursing students benefit from a combination of social interaction, physical activity, and self-care practices that allow them to mitigate stress without compromising their educational performance. The findings of this study supports a study carried out by Majrashi et al. (2021) which noted that social support was one of the most effective coping strategies during the pandemic, as it provided emotional relief and a sense of community among nursing students.

The findings from Hypothesis 1 revealed that there was significant relationship between the types of coping strategies adopted by nursing students during clinical postings and their specific stressors. This suggests that how students manage stress can directly impact their stress experience, potentially affecting both their academic performance and clinical effectiveness. By recognizing this link, educators and clinical supervisors may gain insights into the importance of integrating targeted stress-coping interventions within nursing curricula, promoting resilience and adaptive coping skills that are crucial for maintaining well-being in high-stress healthcare environments.

Chaabane et al. (2021) found a statistically significant correlation between stressors and coping strategies, suggesting that the nature of stressors directly impacts how students choose to cope with stress. Similarly, Ahmed et al. (2022) emphasized that nursing students utilize various coping strategies to manage their stress levels effectively, particularly during challenging periods like the COVID-19 pandemic.

5.2 Implication of Findings to Nursing

1. The presence of various stressors during clinical postings implies a need for structured support systems within nursing programs to address the unique challenges faced by nursing students.
2. The use of diverse coping mechanisms by nursing students suggests that coping skills training should be incorporated into the nursing curriculum.
3. Since nursing students found these coping strategies effective, it highlights the importance of fostering a supportive environment where students are encouraged to develop and utilize personalized coping techniques.
4. The significant relationship between specific stressors and corresponding coping strategies suggests that tailored support interventions could be developed to match individual stressors, helping students manage their unique challenges more effectively.

5.3 Limitations of the Study

1. The study was conducted with nursing students from only one university, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to nursing students in other institutions or regions.
2. The study relied on self-reported data, which may be influenced by participants' desire to present themselves positively or to minimize the perception of stress.
3. Since the study took place during a specific period of clinical postings, it might not capture fluctuations in stress levels or coping strategies over different stages of clinical education.

5.4 Summary of the Findings

Nursing students face intense academic and clinical demands, often leading to elevated stress levels that can affect their well-being and academic performance. This study examined the stress levels experienced by nursing students and the coping strategies they employ to manage this stress. Understanding the sources and intensity of stress, along with the effectiveness of different coping mechanisms, is crucial to supporting students' mental health and academic success. The first chapter of this study has discussed research problems, objectives of the study, research questions, research hypothesis, significance of the study, scope of the study and operational definition of terms. Chapter two dealt encompasses three sections include conceptual review, theoretical framework and empirical review.

Chapter three dealt with research methodology. It was divided to research design, setting of the study, population, sample size, sampling techniques, instrument for data collection, reliability of the instrument, method of data analysis and ethical consideration. The study made use of descriptive to achieve the objective of the study. The instrument used to elicit information from the respondents was a structured questionnaire. The result obtained from data analysis was present in tables in Chapter four. The results revealed the stress and coping strategies during clinical postings among nursing students of Thomas Adewumi University.

5.5 Conclusion

Conclusively, nursing students at Thomas Adewumi University encountered various stressors during clinical postings, such as long hours, academic and clinical workload, frequent departmental rotations, high supervisory expectations, and challenging patient care situations. To manage these stressors, students utilized a range of coping strategies, including seeking social support, taking mental and physical breaks, engaging in hobbies, and connecting with experienced

nurses. These coping strategies were found to be largely effective, and a significant relationship was observed between specific stressors and the coping methods employed by students. This highlights the importance of tailored support for managing stress in clinical training environments.

5.6 Recommendations

The following recommendations were made from the results obtained in this study and they include:

1. Nursing program administrators should implement a structured support program, including regular stress management workshops, to address the unique stressors that nursing students face during clinical postings.
2. Clinical supervisors should consider establishing a balanced workload and reasonable expectations for students.
3. Hospital management should create student-friendly environments by providing designated quiet areas where nursing students can take breaks, recharge, and reduce stress during their clinical shifts.
4. Mental health counselors should establish mental health counseling services accessible to nursing students, ensuring they have a safe space to discuss stressors and receive professional support if needed.

5.7 Suggestion for Further Studies

1. Future studies should conduct similar studies across multiple universities to better generalize findings on stress and coping strategies among nursing students in various clinical environments.
2. Longitudinal study could be conducted to investigate how stress levels and coping mechanisms evolve across different years of nursing education to determine whether experience reduces stress or affects coping effectiveness.

3. Further studies could explore the direct impact of specific coping strategies on academic outcomes.

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APPENDIX

QUESTIONNAIRE

STRESS AND COPING STRATEGIES DURING CLINICAL POSTINGS AMONG NURSING STUDENTS OF THOMAS ADEWUMI UNIVERSITY

Dear Respondents,

I am a student of Thomas Adewumi University, Oko-Irese, Kwara State. I am conducting research on Evaluation of Stress Factors and Coping Strategies During Clinical Postings Among Nursing Students of Thomas Adewumi University, Oko-Irese, Kwara State. Your responses will be used exclusively for this study and academic purposes and will remain confidential. I greatly appreciate your honest and thoughtful participation. Thank you,

Dada Mercy Inioluwa

Section A: Demographic Information

1. Gender

i. Male []

ii. Female []

2. Age:

i. Below 20 []

ii. 20 – 24 []

iii. 25 years and above []

3. Year of study:

i. 300 level []

ii. 400 level []

iii. 500 level []

Section B: Stressors Experienced during Clinical Posting

Kindly tick (✓) the option in front of each item that is most applicable to you

from section 2, using the keys below. They are: SA --Strongly Agree, A --Agree,

D ---Disagree and SD ---- Strongly Disagree

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD
4	Clinical postings require extended hours, often beyond my comfort level				
5	Supervisors have high expectations that feel difficult to meet				
6	There is a constant pressure to avoid mistakes in patient care				
7	I am assigned to patients with complex or critical health conditions				
8	The risk of exposure to infections or diseases during clinical postings				
9	The workload during clinical postings is high				

10	Adapting to new departments or units frequently is required				
11	Some patients are uncooperative or difficult to work with				
12	I have to manage academic coursework alongside clinical responsibilities				
13	I am expected to handle a large volume of tasks during clinical postings				
14	There is strong competition among peers during clinical postings				
15	The clinical environment often feels fast-paced and demanding				

Section C: Coping Strategies Adopted During Clinical Posting

Kindly tick (✓) the option in front of each item that is most applicable to you from section 3, using the keys below. They are: SA --Strongly Agree, A --Agree, D ---Disagree and SD ---- Strongly Disagree

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD
16	Take short breaks throughout the day to stretch and reset mentally				
17	Connect with experienced nurses for guidance and advice				
18	Learn to say no when necessary and establish boundaries to avoid burnout				

19	Dedicate time to hobbies or interests such as checking social media platforms outside the facility				
20	Engaging in physical activities to improve mood and reduce stress				
21	Paying less focus on activities that does not involve me				
22	Sitting at a quiet corner of the facility to maintain serenity				
23	I do the urgent task and take my time to do other tasks				
24	I eat snacks and take soft drinks to ease myself of stress				
25	I call a colleague/friend to discuss other activities that takes my mind off the stressful event				

Section 4: Effectiveness of the Various Coping Strategies

Kindly tick (✓) the option in front of each item that is most applicable to you from section 5, using the keys below. They are: VE -Very Effective, E -- Effective, SE ---Slightly Effective and NE ---- Not Effective

S/N	How effective is:	VE	E	SE	NE
26	taking short breaks throughout the day to stretch and reset mentally				
27	connecting with experienced nurses for guidance and advice				

28	learning to say no when necessary and establish boundaries to avoid burnout				
29	dedicating time to hobbies or interests such as checking social media platforms outside the facility				
30	engaging in physical activities to improve mood and reduce stress				
31	paying less focus on activities that does not involve me				
32	sitting at a quiet corner of the facility to maintain serenity				
33	doing the urgent task and take my time to do other task				
34	eating snacks and take soft drinks to ease myself of stress				
35	calling a colleague/friend to discuss other activities that takes my mind off the stressful event				

