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ANTECEDENTS AND CONSEQUENCES OF ROLE STRESS AMONG UITM OFF CAMPUS STUDENTS

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Abstract

A descriptive-correlational research design was employed, involving 272 active off-campus students at UiTM Shah Alam selected through convenience sampling. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire measuring four antecedents of role stress: student life demands, study-work balance challenges, family life demands, and financial constraints. Correlation and multiple regression analyses were conducted to examine the relationships between these factors, role stress, psychological well-being, and academic performance. The findings indicate that all four antecedents were significantly associated with role stress. Student life demands emerged as the strongest predictor, suggesting that academic workload and performance expectations contribute most substantially to students' stress levels. The results further revealed that higher levels of role stress were associated with increased anxiety and depression, as well as poorer academic performance. Although the use of convenience sampling limits the generalizability of the findings, the sample size provided adequate statistical power to support the reliability of the results. The study highlights the need for higher education institutions to implement strategies that reduce role stress among off-campus students. Flexible academic policies, counselling and mentoring services, financial assistance, and time management and stress management programmes are recommended to enhance students' psychological well-being, improve academic performance, and support the persistence and success of adult learners pursuing part-time or distance education.

Keywords: Role Stress; Off-Campus Students; Study-Work Balance; Academic Performance

1. Introduction

Employers increasingly seek candidates with advanced degrees, making it challenging for those with only a high school education to advance in their careers. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, unemployment rates for college graduates were significantly lower than those for individuals with some college or only a high school education (Barroso, 2021). The pandemic, however, increased unemployment across all educational levels.

Adult learners pursue higher education for career advancement, personal growth, and to set a positive example for their families (Comings, 2023). Fe Josefa Nava (2016) noted that adult learners enroll in graduate programs to acquire practical skills and knowledge. In Malaysia, strategic plans like the Graduate Marketability Strategic Plan 2021–2025 and the Job Creation Strategic Plan 2021–2023 aim to address labor market mismatches and create new employment opportunities, supporting national goals and aligning with the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (Sunil, 2021).

The concept of stress, introduced by Hans Selye in the 1920s, has evolved to include psychological stressors such as grief, caregiving, and work problems (Robinson, 2018; Tan & Yip, 2018; Yang et al., 2021). Studies like Dr. John Mason's research on monkeys highlight the subjective nature of stress and its exacerbation by environmental factors (Suomi et al., 1975). Understanding these dynamics is crucial for supporting adult learners in their educational pursuits.

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1.1. Research Questions

- 1.1.1 What are the relationships between antecedent of stress (Student Life demand, Study Work Life demand, Family Life demand, Financial Constraints) towards consequences of stress?
- 1.1.2 What are the factors (Student Life demand, Study Work Life demand, Family Life demand, Financial Constraints) that predict the consequences of stress?
- 1.1.3 What are the levels of consequences of stress among off campus students?

1.2. Research Objectives

- 1.2.1 To identify the relationship between antecedents of stress (Student Life demand, Study Work Life demand, Family Life demand, Financial Constraints) towards consequences of stress (Depression, Anxiety, Academic performance).
- 1.2.2 To examine the prediction antecedents of stress (Student Life demand, Study Work Life demand, Family Life demand, Financial Constraints) on consequences of stress (Depression, Anxiety, Academic performance).
- 1.2.3 To measure the level of consequences of stress among off campus students.

2. Literature Review

Stress arises from a mismatch between a person's capacity and the demands they face, negatively affecting behavior (Assibey Ankrah, 2021). It can be neutral, harmful, or beneficial, influenced by external factors like job environment and internal factors like health and rest (Yaribeygi et al., 2017). Students, particularly those who work, show stress symptoms such as appetite changes, concentration issues, and anxiety (Săvescu et al., 2017). Part-time students experience stress due to assignments, lack of study time, work, financial worries, and family matters (Yasmin, 2020). High stress levels lead some to consider withdrawing from their studies (Cohen, 2011). Women report higher academic stress and anxiety than men, despite better time management skills (Agormedah et al., 2021).

Academic stress impacts study abilities, performance, sleep quality, and overall well-being (Pascoe et al., 2020; Nagarathna et al., 2022). Over 50% of working students face stress-related symptoms like overeating, loss of appetite, and concentration difficulties (Săvescu et al., 2017). Self-imposed stress is common, with women experiencing more psychological stress than men (Hamaideh, 2011; Graves et al., 2021). Part-time students often struggle to handle stress due to multiple responsibilities, impacting their academic success.

2.1 Student Life Demand

Student life demands refer to the rigorous expectations placed on students to complete tasks such as attending classes, completing assignments, studying for exams, and working on research projects to meet graduation standards. Part-time students, in particular, face added challenges as they juggle academic responsibilities with work and family roles (Johns Hopkins University, 2019). Balancing these multiple roles can lead to significant stress, as students must manage various responsibilities while dealing with high academic expectations and pressures, such as meeting deadlines and achieving good grades (Bok, 2021; Nicklin et al., 2019). This stress is further exacerbated by the demands of employment and family obligations, which can interfere with academic responsibilities and contribute to burnout (Bean & Metzner, 1985; Drăghici & Cazan, 2022). The added burden of family responsibilities, including childcare and household tasks, can create a challenging balance for part-time students, impacting their academic performance and overall well-being (Hodge et al., 2020). Studies have shown that academic stress is strongly linked to poor mental health, with part-time students often experiencing increased anxiety and difficulty managing their academic workload due to competing demands (Wittrup & Hurd, 2022; Barbayannis et al., 2022).

2.2 Study-Work Life Demand

Study-work-life demands involve the challenge of balancing academic, work, and personal responsibilities, which significantly impacts part-time students. These individuals often face the tough task of managing school assignments, job obligations, and personal life simultaneously (O'Mahony & Jeske, 2019). This balancing act can lead to substantial stress, as

students attempt to meet academic requirements while fulfilling professional and personal roles. The strain from this multi-role juggling can lead to compromised study time, reduced academic engagement, and potentially lower grades. Additionally, the physical, emotional, and mental exhaustion associated with managing both work and academic responsibilities can result in increased burnout, particularly for those working over 15 hours per week (Drăghici & Cazan, 2022). Research shows that part-time students frequently experience role conflict and overload, which heightens psychological stress and affects both mental health and academic performance (Pološki Vokić et al., 2021). Furthermore, difficulties in time management and decreased leisure time compound this stress, making it crucial for students to find a balance to maintain their well-being and academic success (Kenwright, 2018; Hill et al., 2018). This complex interplay of responsibilities underscores the need for effective strategies to manage work and academic demands to prevent burnout and ensure a healthier academic and personal life (Pookaiyaudom, 2015; Ayadurai, 2018).

2.3 Family Life Demand

Family life demands involve the various responsibilities and expectations placed on part-time students by their family members, such as childcare, household management, and fulfilling roles like spouse or parent. These demands often create significant stress, particularly for students balancing academic and work commitments. Research highlights that family responsibilities, including caregiving and managing a household, can exacerbate academic stress, leading to heightened psychological strain and decreased academic performance (Graham et al., 2021; Ramli et al., 2022). The struggle to manage multiple roles can result in increased anxiety and depression (Yang et al., 2021; Sy, 2006). Additionally, while strong family support is linked to higher academic self-efficacy and life satisfaction, excessive family expectations can contribute to greater stress and lower overall satisfaction (Vautero et al., 2020). This dual nature of family influence underscores the complex impact of family life demands on part-time students' well-being and academic outcomes.

2.4 Financial Constraints

Financial difficulties are a significant challenge for many students, especially those from disadvantaged or low-income backgrounds. While students do not have the same financial obligations as households with monthly debt payments, they still face financial pressures from tuition fees, rent, and other living expenses (Bakar et al., 2019). These financial strains can impact their academic performance, as students often have to work longer hours to manage costs, potentially leading to reduced study time and lower grades (Norazlan, 2020). Research has shown that students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds tend to perform worse academically compared to their higher-income peers (Olufemioladebinu et al., 2018). Financial stress can also lead to poor academic outcomes by causing students to work part-time jobs, which can interfere with their ability to study and attend classes (Widener, 2017). Additionally, student loan debt, as noted in studies like Froidevaux (2020), can further exacerbate financial stress and impact students' job search efforts and overall well-being. Thus, financial difficulties can create a range of issues that affect academic performance and quality of education (Bakar et al., 2019; Norazlan, 2020).

2.5 Depression

Educational institutions worldwide are increasingly concerned about student depression, closely linked to academic stress. High expectations, competitive environments, and heavy workloads contribute to chronic stress, leading to depression if not managed properly (Deb et al., 2015). Depression prevalence varies significantly among students, influenced by cultural and geographic factors, with medical students particularly at risk (Ibrahim et al., 2013; Haldorsen et al., 2014; Bassols et al., 2014). Part-time students face unique challenges balancing academic, work, and family responsibilities, leading to significant stress and heightened vulnerability to depression (Adriano & Callaghan, 2020). Financial pressures exacerbate these stressors, further impacting mental health. Institutions must provide targeted support, such as flexible schedules, financial aid, and mental health resources, to address these stressors and improve student well-being.

2.6 Anxiety

Anxiety is a common mental health issue among students, characterized by excessive worry and fear, and significantly affecting daily activities and academic performance. Nearly 63% of American college students report severe anxiety (Beiter et al., 2015), highlighting the need for effective support and interventions. Academic pressure, social stress, and financial concerns are major contributors to student anxiety (Pascoe et al., 2020). Anxiety impairs cognitive functions, leading to poor academic performance and higher dropout rates (Owens et al., 2012). It also causes physical health problems and social withdrawal, reducing overall quality of life. Many students experience overwhelming anxiety, which leads to avoidance

behaviors like skipping classes and procrastination, further exacerbating academic stress (Beiter et al., 2015). Educational institutions must address these issues through targeted support networks and therapies to help students manage anxiety and improve their well-being.

2.7 Academic Performance

In today's fast-paced world, students face significant stress due to societal expectations and various ill-defined and inconsistent tasks (Hj Ramli et al., 2018; Lal, 2014). University students' ability to cope with stress impacts their academic achievement, with less stressed students who use problem-focused coping strategies achieving more, while those under more stress perform worse (Gustems-Carnicer et al., 2019). Academic stress, exacerbated by cultural pressure to graduate with good grades, is prevalent among Malaysian students, many of whom struggle with self-regulation and mindfulness (Teh et al., 2015; Ahmadi et al., 2014). Individual differences in stress perception and coping abilities also play a crucial role, with higher stress resilience linked to better academic performance (Bowman, 2019). This highlights the need for tailored support systems to address students' unique needs.

3. Conceptual Framework

Figure 1 below displays the conceptual framework for the Antecedents and Consequences towards Stress among off campus students in UiTM Shah Alam.

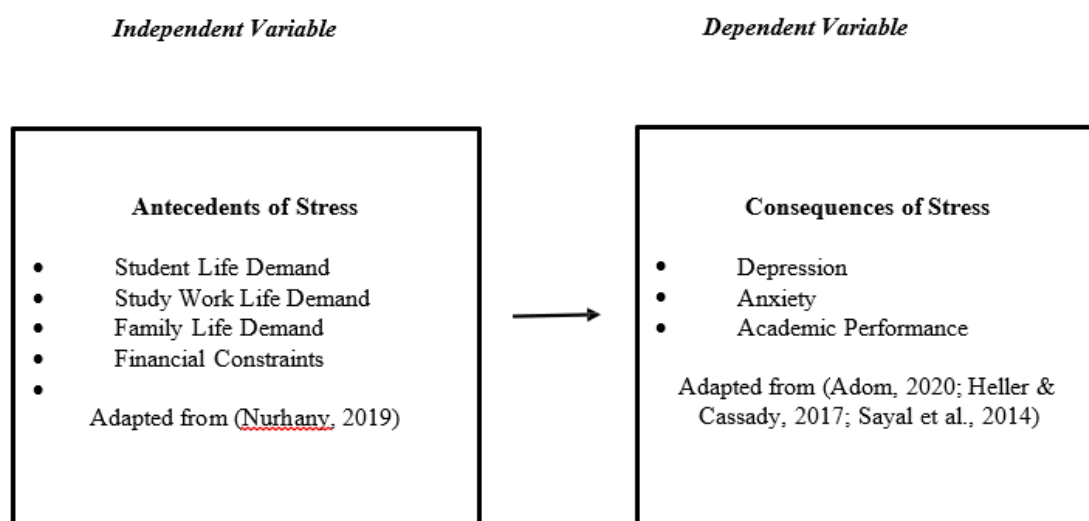


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

4. Methodology

This study employed a cross-sectional research design to examine the antecedents and consequences of role stress among off campus students in UiTM. Specifically, the study focused on UiTM campus Shah Alam, Selangor. Convenience sampling, a non-random sampling approach, was used to effectively gather data from the most readily available individuals within the population. A total of 272 active off campus students in UiTM Shah Alam participated in the study. The primary data collection instrument was a questionnaire structured into three sections. Part A gathered demographic background information with 8 questions, Part B assessed antecedents of stress with 24 questions, and Part C focused on consequences of role stress with another 24 questions.

Responses to questions in Sections B and C were measured using a five-point Likert scale, where 1 indicated "strongly disagree" and 5 indicated "strongly agree". This structured approach allowed for a comprehensive assessment on how antecedents of stress have relationship with consequences of role stress. The use of cross-sectional design and convenience sampling enabled the researchers to efficiently capture a snapshot of the relationships under investigation and providing valuable insights. By

utilizing this approach, the study was able to identify significant patterns and correlations between the antecedents and consequences of role stress in a timely and cost-effective manner. Additionally, the use of a comprehensive questionnaire allowed for a detailed analysis of various stress factors and their impact on the psychological well-being and academic performance of off campus students.

5. Results and Discussions

All figures should be numbered with Arabic numerals (1,2,...n). All photographs, schemas, graphs and diagrams are to be referred to as figures. Line drawings should be good quality scans or true electronic output. Low-quality scans are not acceptable. Figures must be embedded into the text and not supplied separately. Lettering and symbols should be clearly defined either in the caption or in a legend provided as part of the figure. Figures should be placed at the top or bottom of a page wherever possible, as close as possible to the first reference to them in the paper.

Based on the survey of 272 active off campus students at UiTM Shah Alam, the majority of respondents were male (n=147, 54%), aged 21-29 years old (n=156, 57.4%), and single (n=147, 54%). Most respondents were employed (n=253, 93%), with a significant portion pursuing a diploma (n=152, 55.9%). The largest group of respondents worked in the private sector (n=145, 53.3%). In terms of current semester, the highest number of students were in semester 6 (n=59, 21.7%). The primary reason for pursuing their studies was upgrading their present career (n=131, 48.2%). Understanding these demographic and motivational factors is essential for addressing the antecedents and consequences of role stress among off campus students, thereby facilitating more effective interventions and support strategies to mitigate stress and enhance overall well-being.

5.1 Descriptive Statistics

The study employed a 5-point Likert Scale to evaluate antecedents (student life demand, study work life demand, family life demand, and financial constraints) and dependent variables (depression, anxiety, and academic performance). Descriptive statistics were used to calculate means and standard deviations for turnover intention, classified into positive and negative dimensions. Scores were interpreted based on Best's Principles (Thaoprom, 2004), categorizing them into high, average, and low levels.

- Scores between 1.00 – 2.33 = Low Level
- Scores between 2.34 – 3.67 = Average Level
- Scores between 3.68 – 5.00 = High Level

Table 2 Level of Consequences of Stress among off campus students

	Descriptive Statistics			Value
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	
Depression	272	4.1089	.67081	High
Anxiety	272	4.0153	.62301	High
Academic Performance	272	4.0262	.68259	High

Descriptive statistics revealed that both depression (Mean = 4.1089, SD = 0.67081) and anxiety (Mean = 4.0153, SD = 0.62301) scores fall within the high range, indicating substantial mental distress among respondents. Despite these high levels of psychological stress, the Mean Academic Performance score (Mean = 4.0262, SD = 0.68259) also fell within the high range, suggesting that respondents view their academic performance positively. These findings highlight a complex relationship between mental health and academic performance among off campus students. While students face significant levels of depression and anxiety, they maintain a positive outlook on their academic achievements. This dual perspective underscores the need for integrated support strategies that address both mental health and academic performance to enhance overall student well-being and success in remote learning environments.

5.2 Correlation Analysis

The Pearson Correlation Coefficient was used to measure the relationships between Antecedent of stress (Student Life Demand, Study Work Life Demand, Family Life Demand, Financial Constraints) towards Consequences of Role Stress. The findings are presented in Table 4

Table 3 Salkind's (2012) Interpretation Values of Correlation

Degree of Correlations	r Values
Very strong	+.08 to 1.0
Strong	+.06 to .08
Moderate	+.04 to 0.6
Weak	+.02 to 0.4
Very weak	+ 0 to 0.2

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

Table 4 Correlation Analysis between Antecedents of Stress towards Consequences of Stress

	Mean Student Life Demand	Mean Study Work Life Demand	Mean Family Life Demand	Mean Financial Constraints	Total Mean
Student Life Demand	1				
Study Work Life Demand	.811**	1			
Family Life Demand	.824**	.665**	1		
Financial Constraints	.567**	.570**	.443**	1	
Consequences of Role Stress	.898**	.794**	.804**	.657**	1

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

The correlation analysis presented in Table 4 highlights the relationships between various dimensions of antecedents and consequences of stress. The results demonstrate the variables having relationship with each other. The analysis reveals significant relationships between various antecedents of role stress and their consequences among off campus students at UiTM Shah Alam. Student Life Demand shows a very strong positive correlation ($r = .898$, $p < 0.001$) with the consequences of role stress. This indicates that increased student life demands significantly exacerbate stress levels. This finding underscores the importance for educational institutions to develop targeted interventions that address the high stress associated with student life demands, including academic and personal pressures.

Study Work Life Demand is strongly correlated ($r = .794$, $p < 0.001$) with role stress consequences. The robust positive relationship highlights the stress impacts from balancing academic and work responsibilities. Institutions should focus on providing effective support systems and stress management resources to help students manage their study and work life balance better, enhancing overall well-being and academic performance. Family Life Demand exhibits a very strong positive correlation ($r = .804$, $p < 0.001$) with role stress outcomes. This significant link shows that family responsibilities heavily influence students' stress levels. Addressing family-related stress through support programs and counseling can help students manage their familial duties while minimizing negative impacts on their academic and personal lives.

Financial Constraints also demonstrate a strong positive relationship ($r = .657$, $p < 0.001$) with stress consequences. Financial pressures are a notable source of stress for students, affecting their ability to manage educational expenses and personal needs. Institutions and welfare programs need to consider financial support and counseling services to alleviate the financial burdens and

reduce stress among students. In Summary, these findings highlight the critical need for comprehensive support strategies addressing student life, work, family, and financial demands. Implementing targeted interventions and support systems will be crucial in mitigating role stress and promoting overall student well-being and success.

5.3 Multiple Regression Analysis

Table 5 below shows the Multiple Regression Analysis to measure what factors (Student Life Demand, Study Work Life Demand, Family Life Demand, Financial Constraints) that predict the Consequences of Stress?

Table 5 Analysis Multiple Regression

Model	Standardized Coefficients Beta (β)	t	Sig.
(Constant)		-2.336	.020
Student Life Demand	.499	9.431	.000
Study Work Life Demand	.130	3.220	.001
Family Life Demand	.216	5.305	.000
Financial Constraints	.205	7.124	.000

Table 5 shows that Student Life Demand has the most significant influence on role stress among off campus students, with a standardized coefficient (β) of .499 and a highly significant t-value of 9.431 ($p < .001$). This indicates that higher student life demands lead to increased role stress. For off campus students, who might have less structured schedules and fewer direct support networks compared to traditional students, these demands can be particularly overwhelming. The necessity to balance studies with other life responsibilities exacerbates stress levels, highlighting the critical need for targeted interventions to alleviate this pressure. Following by family Life Demand. This variable significantly impacts role stress ($\beta = .216$, $t = 5.305$, $p < .001$), reflecting the influence of familial responsibilities on students' stress levels. In Malaysia's collectivist society, students must balance academic duties with caregiving and household chores, leading to heightened stress and challenges in focusing on academics. Financial Constraints follow closely, with a standardized coefficient (β) of .205 and a t-value of 7.124 ($p < .001$). Financial difficulties are a common source of stress for many off campus students, who often have to manage the costs of education while handling living expenses and, in some cases, providing for their families. The financial burden of tuition fees, study materials, and other educational expenses can be substantial, especially for students without stable income sources or adequate financial aid. This financial stress impacts students' overall well-being and academic performance, as they struggle to balance their financial responsibilities with their educational goals.

Study Work Life Demand also show a significant predictor of role stress among off campus students, with a standardized coefficient (β) of .130 and a highly significant t-value of 3.220 ($p < .001$). This indicates that higher study work life demands lead to increased role stress. The dual pressure of managing academic responsibilities and work commitments can heighten stress levels, emphasizing the need for effective support systems. Institutions can offer flexible scheduling, time management workshops, and career counseling to help students cope with these demands. Addressing Study Work Life Demand is crucial for improving the well-being and academic performance of off campus students.

6.0 Conclusion

The study on the antecedents and consequences of role stress among off campus students at UiTM provides comprehensive insights into how various stressors impact students' experiences and well-being. The analysis reveals that all identified stress factors, Student Life Demand, Study Work Life Demand, Family Life Demand, and Financial Constraints, significantly correlate with increased role stress. Among these, Student Life Demand is the strongest predictor, highlighting the substantial impact of balancing personal, academic, and career responsibilities on stress levels. Study Work Life Demand also significantly contributes to role stress, underscoring the challenges of managing academic responsibilities alongside work commitments. Family Life Demand and Financial Constraints further add to role stress, emphasizing the difficulties of handling familial responsibilities and financial pressures in conjunction with academic demands. The study indicates that off campus students experience high levels of Depression and Anxiety, despite maintaining a positive perception of their academic performance. This duality illustrates the resilience of students but also emphasizes the urgent need for targeted support. Effective interventions should address both mental health and academic support to help students navigate their complex roles and mitigate stress. By addressing these multifaceted stressors including student life demands, study work life demands, family responsibilities, and financial constraints institutions

can enhance student well-being, improve academic outcomes, and foster a supportive environment conducive to success in remote learning contexts.

7.0 Future Research

Future improvements for this study could significantly enhance its findings. Expanding the participant pool to include a larger and more diverse sample of off campus students would increase the robustness and generalizability of the results. Including various demographics such as age, gender, socioeconomic background, and geographic location would provide a more comprehensive view of the stressors faced by different segments of the population. Additionally, exploring a broader range of stressors, including technology-related issues, could offer a more nuanced understanding of the challenges off campus students encounter. Employing a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative data, would enrich the study by providing deeper insights into students' personal experiences. Using probability sampling techniques like random or stratified sampling could enhance the study's methodological rigor and representativeness. Finally, implementing a longitudinal design would allow researchers to track changes in stress levels and coping mechanisms over time, offering a dynamic perspective on stress and resilience among off campus students.

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