

**STRESS, COPING AND GIRLS' LEADERSHIP IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN
MUKONO MUNICIPALITY**

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**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES IN PARTIAL
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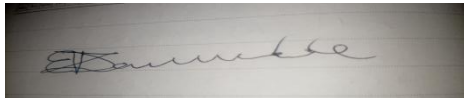
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DECLARATION

I, **ZAWEDDE DOROTHY** declare to the best of my knowledge that, this dissertation is my original work which has never been published and/or submitted for any award in any other University.

Signed

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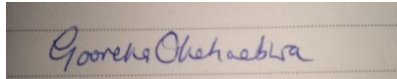
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APPROVAL

I acknowledge that this dissertation entitled “Stress, coping, and girls’ leadership in secondary schools in Mukono municipality” has been under my supervision and is ready for submission.

Signed

A rectangular box containing a handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Gooreka Okahaabwa".

Date...31 July, 2023

GOOREKA OKAHAABWA, PsyD.

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ABSTRACT

Stress is among one of the major occurrences that are directly and indirectly related to lives of human being around the world. Both student leaders and non-student leaders in secondary schools have equally reported some signs of stress. Throughout the lives of students in school, there are always cases when they experience stress which is known to negatively affect their academic performance. About 40% of the students in secondary schools have signs and symptoms of depression and from these students; 82.5% of them have symptoms of frustration and anger and 67.5% have symptoms of anxiety and fear. This research thus majorly focused on assessing the perceived influence of stress, coping on the academic performance of both girls in leadership together with none leaders in secondary schools.

The researcher further employed a descriptive survey design with a quantitative approach. The study population was categorized of girl student leaders and none girl leaders in the selected schools of Mukono Municipality and a sample size of 83 girl student leaders and 348 none leaders who were selected. The researcher used closed ended questionnaires to gather data from all the study respondents and SPSS 21.0 was used to carry out the data collection process.

Findings from this study revealed that all students at one point have ever expressed stress in the course of their study. Major sources of stress among girls in secondary schools are institutional demands, academic work together with a few external stressors. Therefore, among the girl student leaders, dominant among the stressors were institutional stressors ($M = 3.36$). On the other hand, among the girl student none leaders, dominant among the stressors were academic stressors ($M = 3.90$).

Multiple linear regression results for student leaders in the selected secondary schools revealed that there was a significant relationship between the academic stressors, institutional stressors together with academic performance of girl students in leadership at 5 percent level of significance ($P < 0.05$). On the other hand, among none student leaders, only academic stressors significantly influence the academic performance of students ($P > 0.05$). Regarding coping strategies, majority of the girl leaders either agreed or completely agreed that they made an attempt to carry out activities which could make them feel better for the times they felt stressed. The researcher therefore recommends that secondary schools should put a lot of emphasis on establishing counseling programmes with an objective of empowering the girl child so that girls develop the capacity to deal with stress while at school.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Now days, almost everyone around the world is experiencing stress and therefore it has become necessary to diverse coping strategies is to help mitigate this problem. There are a lot of factors that cause stress among leaders and non-student leaders in secondary schools and these can have significant effects on their lives and on affairs. Among the adolescents, stress can be tasking on them and the other people around them and thus becomes a main health problem in many secondary schools especially in low developing countries such as Uganda.

Girl leaders in secondary schools around the world are faced by complex issues as they go about their day-to-day tasks as student leaders. One of the major characteristics of an efficient leader are his or her ability to cope with stress and develop adoption techniques. This study therefore intended to investigate the perceived influence of stress, coping on the academic performance of both girls in leadership and none leaders in secondary schools in Mukono municipality. This study was designed to capture components of perceived influence, leadership related stress, influence on academic performance, perceived academic performance and coping.

1.2 Background to the Study

Stress is among one of the major occurrences that are directly and indirectly related to lives of human being around the world. Stress can be defined as a clear understanding of a mismatch between an individual's capabilities to accomplish the load from the surroundings (Malach-Pines & Keinan, 2007). This therefore means that based on one's capabilities, there is always demand in society and around the surrounding to be satisfied thus one's capacity to fulfill these

societal and environmental needs makes them uncomfortable and this can in turn become stress.

Globally, both student leaders and non-student leaders in secondary schools have equally reported some signs of stress (Edjah, Domey & Ankomah, 2019). Preliminary research has further indicated that stress indeed is a significant effect on the academic life of both student leaders and none student leaders. Scholars have indicated that student leaders and none student leaders that experience high levels of stress tend to perform poorly as compared to those students that do not experience stress. Unfortunately, majority of the students that experience stress are likely to persistently experience stress in the struggle to enhance academic performance. The desire for students to improve their academic performance further increases stress (Veena & Shailaja, 2016). Records from the National Crime Records Bureau show that a minimum of one student leader commits suicide each hour due to stress (Saha, 2017) with a record of 1.8% students who committed suicide because of failure of examinations together with an 80% increase in the rates of suicide in a period of one single year.

Various researchers do agree that are high instances of stress among student leaders especially in high institutions of learning which is evidenced from the high prevalence of mental health issues. According to Zhu (2021), during most of the activities at the university, more than half of the students indicated to be having mental issues. Furthermore, about 73% of the students are admitted to university experience some form of mental health crisis at a given point in time (Reis et al., 2022).

In Africa, a study carried out in Ghana revealed that undergraduate university students are constantly faced with a number of challenges which make them feel uncomfortable and just in case they don't receive any form of organizational and societal assistance, they most likely to have lot of difficulty with coping with stress while at the universities (Edjah et al., 2019). Findings from another study carried out the Africa showed that student leaders at all levels of

education are highly affected by stress which originates from the pressure which comes from being a leader. Furthermore, in their study, Stirling & Emery (2016) revealed that stress negatively affects the emotional and physical well-being of student leaders since they face high pressures such as that expectation from school administration and students among others.

Additionally, the manner in which student leaders and none student leaders communicate with several people such as their family members, teachers and their peers regarding their mental health inside and outside class is said to worsen during the times when they have events at school (Knox et al., 2020). Moreover, a different study on leadership that was carried by Bingham & Bubb (2021) revealed that holding any leadership position in secondary school has a positive influence on the mental health and social well-being of these student leaders. Results from the study also showed that holding a leadership position while at school can enhance the student's ability to improve their social skills specifically those that are likely to cause of removing restrictions and refining relationships together with networks. However, school administrations need to offer student leaders with adequate self-help resources together with counseling support to enable them cope with the negative effects of stress especially those that occur during the periods when they have events (van der Meer et al., 2019).

Findings from research that was carried out recently revealed that there is an increasing level of concern among different stakeholders such as parents, lecturers and administrators about the high cases of mental health among college student leaders as it was revealed that there was a positive association between mental distress and organizational success (Aladdin, 2020). It was further indicated that for students that showed signs of anxiety, also clearly showed symptoms of depression (Maykrantz & Houghton, 2020).

In Uganda, earliest investigations showed that stress negatively affects one's mind and ability to execute any given assignment at a given time. Therefore, when human beings are put under extreme levels of stress, they are not able to concentrate on any given assignment. For that

reason, students who are undergoing stress are more anxious and thus less fruitful (Fawzy & Hamed, 2017). The most stressed, anxiety and depression are always new and day students who are in upper classes (Beiter et al., 2015). These findings further showed that adolescents who easily get stressed are 2.4 times more likely to express again as compared to their counterparts who are less stressed. However, although are a number of scholars for example such as Rana et al. (2019) and Nikitha et al. (2014) that have examined the effects of stress on human life, very few have explored the impact of stress on the academic performance of girl student leaders especially in Sub-Saharan Africa. This study therefore intended to close this gap by investigating the perceived influence of stress, coping on the academic performance of both girls in leadership and none leaders in Ugandan secondary schools with focus to those found in Mukono District.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Throughout the lives of students in school, there are always cases when they experience stress which is known to negatively affect their academic performance (Edjah et al., 2020). At least 6 out of the 10 patients that visit a doctor on a daily basis are stressed (Ballesteros et al., 2022). Moreover, about 40% of the students in secondary schools have signs and symptoms of depression and from these students; 82.5% of them have symptoms of frustration and anger and 67.5% have symptoms of anxiety and fear (Dimitrov, 2017). Additionally, among the secondary students either leaders or none leaders that experience stress about 76% of them have sleeping disorders, 58% have headaches, and about 70% are short tempered (Kumar & Bhukar, 2013).

Student leadership is indeed challenging because these student leaders have to deal with a lot of expectations from their mates and the school administration as they perform their responsibilities as leaders in school. It is thus vital that these student leaders always be in proper mental state in order to execute their responsibilities (Ballesteros et al., 2022). However,

although are a number of researchers such as Rana et al. (2019) and Nikitha et al. (2014) that have examined the effects of stress on human life, very few have explored the influence of stress on the performance on student leaders and none student leaders with focus on their academic performance especially in Sub-Saharan African countries such as Uganda. This research thus intended to close this gap by investigating the perceived influence of stress, coping on the academic performance of both girls in leadership and none leaders in secondary schools.

1.4 Purpose of the Study

This research mainly aimed at exploring the influence of stress on the academic performance of both girls in leadership and none leaders in secondary schools. This study was designed to capture components of perceived influence, leadership related stress, influence on academic performance, perceived academic performance and coping as indicated in the study objectives below.

1.5 Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the forms of stress being experienced by girls in leadership and none leaders in Mukono Municipality secondary schools.
2. To assess the influence of stress on the academic performance of girls in leadership and none leaders in Mukono Municipality secondary schools.
3. To investigate the strategies used by girls in leadership and none leaders in Mukono Municipality secondary schools to cope with stress.

1.6 Research Questions

1. What are the forms of stress being experienced by girls in leadership and none leaders in Mukono Municipality secondary schools?

2. What is the influence of stress on the academic performance of girls in leadership and none leaders in Mukono Municipality secondary schools?
3. What are the strategies used by girls in leadership and none leaders in Mukono Municipality secondary schools to cope with stress?

1.7 Scope of the Study

1.7.1 Content Scope

This research majorly focused on investigating the perceived influence of stress, coping on the academic performance of both girls in leadership and none leaders in secondary schools. This study was designed to capture components of perceived influence, leadership related stress, influence on academic performance, perceived academic performance and coping.

1.7.2 Geographical Scope

The researcher carried out this vital study in Mukono Municipality in Mukono District and it is situated about 21 kilo meters by road from Kampala Capital City Centre. Mukono District together with other districts such as Wakiso and Kampala have the best performing secondary schools in the republic of Uganda. Moreover, the number of students and student leaders in Mukono Municipality is equally sufficient to act as our study population. To be particular, the study will be carried in schools such as Mukono High School, St. Charles Lwanga Secondary School and Bishop's Senior School.

1.7.3 Time Scope

The girls who took part in this study were selected from three secondary schools in Mukono District. The researcher focused on data that covered a period of 10 years from now (2023). Furthermore, the researcher took a period of six (6 months) to produce a full draft thesis. This period was sufficient for the researcher to write a complete proposal, construct the data collection tools, carry out primary data collection and finalizing to be able to produce a full thesis within the time offered by the university.

1.8 Justification

All over the world, a number of stakeholders such as governments, civil society community and the private sector have made deliberate efforts to see that girls in secondary schools engage in leadership as a strategy to groom them to be our future leaders. Unfortunately, these leadership positions come along with some forms of stress which the girl leaders have to cope with. The desire for numerous girls to become student leaders in secondary schools has thus encouraged the school administrators to start up activities that help student leaders to cope with stress while executing their roles as leaders in schools.

Students that have high levels of commitment in the execution of their duties as leaders are likely to cope with stress better than their counterparts that have low levels of commitment (Shek & Leung, 2015). This thus makes them to be in a better social well-being regarding their health most especially when they get integrated into their communities. Regrettably, there is no clear examination on how the girls in leadership are affected by stress especially those in secondary schools found in developing countries such as Uganda. This research therefore majorly focused on investigating the perceived influence of stress, coping on the academic performance of both girls in leadership and non-leaders in secondary schools. This study was designed to capture

components of perceived influence, leadership related stress, influence on academic performance, perceived academic performance and coping.

1.9 Significance of the Study

Precisely, this study without doubt will have significant value to the leaders in secondary schools especially in Uganda specially in understanding how girls in leadership positions are from time to time being affected by stress while executing their duties thus enabling them to suggest means that can enable students to cope with stress. The findings of this study will act as a source of information to the Ministry of Education and Sports with strategies on how to cope with stress in schools.

1.10 Theoretical Framework

1.10.1 Lazarus Theory

According to Lazarus (1993), there are two (2) ideas that are important in any form of mental health and stress theory and these include; “appraisal” which covers an individual’s assessment of the significance of what is happening for their well-being together with “coping” which looks at the energy that is utilized to manage particular needs. However, ever since its inception as a complete theory, the Lazarus stress theory has undertaken numerous essential revisions (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984, Lazarus 1991). Most recently, stress has been considered to as a social notion such as not being defined as a particular form of outside motivation or even a particular arrangement of physical, interactive or biased responses (Lazarus 1991). Therefore, as an alternative, stress is looked at as an association in the middle of characters together with their surround dings.

According to Lazarus & Folkman (1986), mental stress is defined as a connection between the surroundings that individuals consider important for their well-being which thus demands the

need to cope with stress. These scholars further put emphasis on the fact that there are two main fundamental mediators within a person's transactions made in his surrounding and that is cognitive consideration and coping.

In 1960, Arnold introduced the idea of appraisal which was later explained by Lazarus (Lazarus & Launier, 1978) who connected it to stress as a process and also as an important indicator in understanding relations that happen because of stress. This idea is based on the notion that stress depends on the real expectations that individuals around the world show regarding the importance and result of a particular encounter. Therefore, this idea is vital in having a clear understanding of the differences in intensity, quality and time period of stimulated feelings in surroundings that are accurately equivalent for various persons. It is thus presumed that the subsequent situation is obtained, maintained and is generated, maintained, and ultimately changed by a particular sequence of appraisals. In turn, these various individual and situational elements influence these appraisals.

Additionally, Lazarus (1991) in his book on adoption and emotions constructed a complete emotion theory which also consisted of a stress theory (Lazarus, 1993). This theory further separates the two (2) types of appraisals which are primary and secondary and these types depend on various sources of information. In this case, the primary appraisal focuses on anything of great importance to the welfare of individuals while secondary appraisal focusses on the stress coping strategies. According to Lazarus, coping with stress implies one's ability to examine the possibilities of creating certain social actions that will constructively impact an individually appropriate encounter (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

1.11 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework below is based on Lazarus Theory of Stress, and highlights the relationship between the study variables as seen in figure 1.1 below.

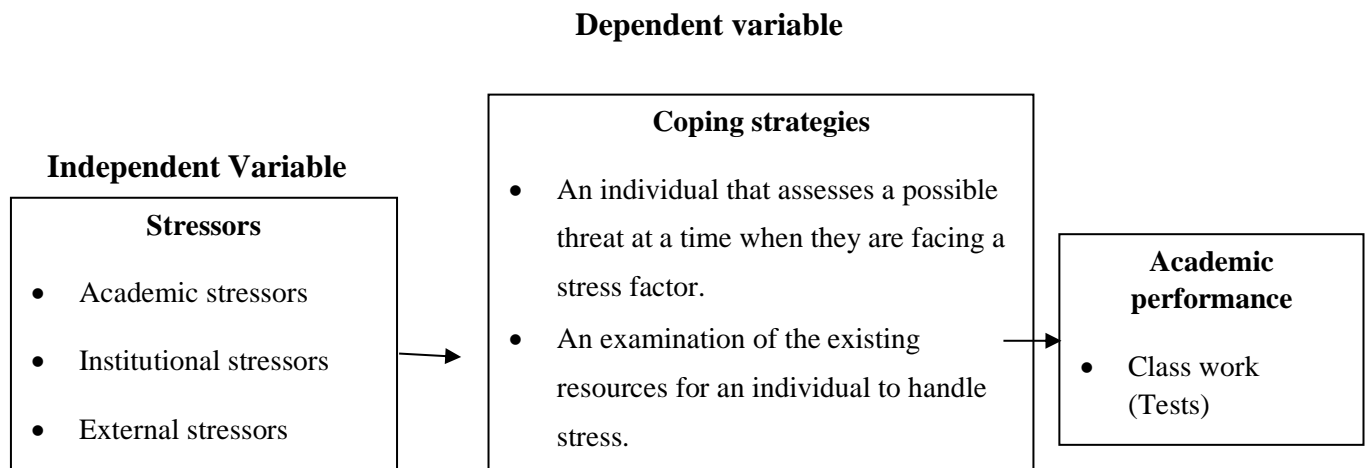


Figure 1.1 Showing the Conceptual framework (Adopted from the Lazarus Theory of Stress (1996))

The conceptual framework above is based on Lazarus Theory of Stress. According to this theory, when the demand from the environment where individuals are operating in are high then it is assumed that both student leaders and none student leader are likely to experience stress. Since most of these students are adolescents who clearly experience physical and mental growth. At this age, the student's thoughts and ideas are directly affected by other people's views, opinions and judgments. Moreover, academic performance pressure, confusion, relationship challenges and career explorations are one of the key determinants of stress. Environmental factors such as external, institutional and academic stressors are significant determinants of stress among students (Lazarus, 1984). These occur as a result of factors such as; student-teacher connection, tests, or class work, parental pressure, bad health room environments, and teacher expectations among others. As a result to this, both student leaders and none student leaders will perform poorly in their academics.

1.11 Definition of Key Terms

- **Stress**

Stress can be defined as a clear understanding of a mismatch between an individual's capabilities to accomplish the load from the surroundings (Malach-Pines & Keinan, 2007). Stress is also the psychological, physiological and behavioural response by an individual when they perceive a lack of equilibrium between the demands placed upon them and their ability to meet those demands, which, over a period of time, leads to ill-health (Palmer, 1989).

- **Leadership**

Leadership is the process of influencing the activities of an individual or a group in effort towards goal achievement in a given situation (Hersey & Blanchard, 2016).

- **Academic performance**

Academic performance is the term that indicates a student's achievement after completing a course or subject from an institution. It measures students' learning across various academic subjects, which is assessed by formative and summative assessments (Ibarra & Michalus, 2010).

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATUREREVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter which is commonly known as the literature review presents studies that other researchers have looked at the variables under study. The documents reviewed included journal articles, text book and reports.

2.2 Forms of Stress Being Experienced by Students in Leadership and None Leaders in Schools

Disorganization of secondary school students may lead to stress among both student leaders and none student leaders (Rana et al., 2019). Moreover, secondary school students in developing countries are most of the time busy doing exams or relating with their friends. Deb et al. (2014) do believe disorganization may be necessary in some cases, it may tend to affect student most especially in increasing the levels of stress among students. Many students have challenges at school to the extent that they do not do not even have the capability to eat a balanced meal. In developed countries, student's diets comprise of noodles, take-away and candy bars (Grajek et al., 2022).

Too much class work is also a main cause of stress among student leaders and none student leaders in secondary schools (Deb et al., 2014). The work load from home cause also causes stress among students. It is worse for those that have family responsibilities such as children. Brains of student leaders and none-student leaders are directly connected with their emotional well-being together with facial expressions. Therefore, once they are stressed, one can easily notice as it will be easily noticed by someone else as it can be seen in the eyes (Turner & McCarthy, 2017). Researchers further emphasis that since stress is a physical process, when

secondary school students laugh or smile, this helps them get relieve tension and thus make the situation better.

Among the young people, several stress may not impose a huge health challenge, however, among the elderly or individuals with other health complications, the long-term effects of stress could further have a negative impact on their health conditions. The causes of stress among secondary school students can be due to key life occasions and slight shifts can be sometimes be traced to specific surroundings that are stressful by nature and the more severe the cause of stress (Akinyi, Odera & Yambo, 2017).

While carrying out research among 275 university students in the Republic of Ghana and revealed that the majority causes of stress include; relationship interactive and social stressors, teaching quality, interpersonal and self-stressors, teachers, surrounding, administration, and transition stressors (Azila-Gbettor et al., 2015). The scholars further revealed that the student's surrounding, administration together with the transition stressors have the most significant causes of stress among secondary school students.

Stressors can be described as burdens caused by a person's inner or external environment that trouble them, hence directly and negatively affecting their physical and emotional well-being thus requiring a given action to regain balance. Nevertheless, they can be different depending on the extent of harshness and length of stress thus implying that what might be stressful to one student leader may not necessarily be stressful to another student (Rana et al., 2019). One example of this nature is; a year one university student can be stressed because missing a single lecture, however, the situation may not be the same with a second- or third-year student that has a different academic ambition and target. Secondly, to a student, missing a final semester examination may not have the same impact to them like being attacked by a dangerous wild animal like a lion. Individuals must be able to develop coping strategies so as to be able to manage stress that results from calamitous happenings, major life changes, and day-to-day

hustles among others. Huge life changing situations can seem to significantly affect adults, however, most of the human being on planet earth are more stressed by day-to-day hustles. These stressors may include day-to-day living conditions, individual connections and job-related circumstances (Akinyi, Odera & Yambo, 2017).

2.3 Influence of Stress on the Academic Performance of Students in Leadership and None Leaders in Schools

The world of today is too competitive that at one point in life, any individual including students can get stressed. However, among the secondary school students, there are those that get more stressed than others while some students have the ability to cope with stress, others struggle a lot to efficiently handle the unfortunate process of stress thus negatively affecting their lives. This clearly shows that in several aspects of human life, stress is unescapable occurrence (Rana et al., 2019). Just like any other individuals on earth, secondary school students are going through high levels of stress in all aspects of their lives. The busy education schedule at school negatively affects the emotional well-being of students. However, low levels of stress can be helpful to students and thus consequently improve their academic performance. On the other hand, when the levels of stress among students is not controlled, it can lead to despair, fatigue and many other health complications. Therefore, the relationship that stress has with academic performance of students can be looked at in different perspectives bearing in mind that the levels of stress that students experience can influence their capacity to cope with stress and also their ability to adopt (Rana et al., 2019).

Pascoe et al. (2020) revealed that stress can negatively affect the academic performance of secondary school students, it can reduce levels of inspiration and also advance the chances of a student dropping out of school. The costs that come in the long run as a result of stress among students is reduced chances of longevity at work places and this can affect the country's GDP which in turn makes the country to lose a lot of money each single year.

Additionally, Saqib and Rehman (2018) revealed that stress has a substantial influence on the academic performance of secondary school students. The students further revealed that parents together with their teachers were the major cause of stress among stress. For that matter, they concluded after agreeing that stress has a significant negative impact on the performance of senior secondary students. Furthermore, Kapur (2021) revealed in his study mad sure all factors affecting the academic performance of including the major causes of poor academic performance were considered to be primary variables.

Aafreen et al. (2021) in their study stated that stress is a result of the failure by an individual to cope with the internal and external forces in our environment. Secondary school students that have difficulties coping with any levels of stress perform poorly academically and their conduct is equally poor.

Finding from research that was carried out in India among 656 university students indicated that best performing students have different measurable stress levels as compared to the less performing students (Veena & Shastri, 2016). Indicators of stress such as financial and social stress were found to also have a negative influence on the performance of students (Pariat, Rynjah & Kharjana, 2014). Nonetheless, there are some few researchers that challenge the negative relationship that stress has with the academic performance of students. Scholars such as Siraj et al. (2014) also revealed that stress was associated with high cumulative grade point average.

2.4 Stress Coping Strategies Used by Students in Leadership and None Leaders in Schools

A deep reflection and meaning prayer can be helpful in seeing that someone's body and mind relaxes and equally focuses (Cunningham, 2014). Being an attentive and open-minded person who is willing to look at different perspectives is helpful in creating self-compassion together with forgiveness. Furthermore, when they the constantly practice this form of mindfulness,

they are able to release certain emotions which could potentially be causing body physical stress. Therefore, for students to be able to cope with stress while at school, the administration to put focus on developing strategies that can help address the issues of mental health among secondary school students. This can be done by constantly educating leaders on how to help other students by reaching out for them. Schools can also integrate mental health studies among the subjects they teach at school, this will thus give an opportunity to different student leaders and none student leaders to cope with stress while at school (Ballesteros et al., 2022).

Additionally, the use of problem-solving approaches is one of the ways in which students can be able to handle or cope with stressful situations while in school environment (Baqutayan, 2015). These problem-solving approaches mainly focus on the causes of stress among the students. The students are therefore able to use particular activities to complete a given assignment. Furthermore, approaches that are concentrated on emotions involve the application of energies to regulate cost associated with emotions of hypothetically stressful situations. Here, the students use activities to develop a better feeling in their bodies (Baqutayan, 2015).

Having a balanced diet, carrying out exercises, seeking for help from friends and family together with putting focus on how one looks are one of the ways of coping with stress (Olope et al., 2017). These scholars also agreed and revealed women easily cope with stress as compared to their counter-parts the men since they are assumed to be more emotionally and physically resilient. Unfortunately, most of the students that experience stress have difficulties sleeping and have decent meals, therefore they need support from other students in developing a positive attitude towards everything they do.

The most appropriate means of managing stress among secondary school students is constructing a very strong support system which can be regarded as an individual's protection strategy against stress (Baqutayan, 2015). The scholar further suggested that stress among students can also be handled by creating individual coping strategies or organizational

strategies. Having a strong religious background can also be a significant element in supporting students cope with stress.

A number of researchers all over the world have a number of times advised and suggested the need to recognize the existence of stress among different individuals including secondary school students and also the need to apply suitable methods to lighten the challenges related to it. It is therefore important that secondary school students prepare for stress even before it comes. Moreover, by using proactive means of managing stress, students can be able to prepare for the time before stress occurs thus enabling them to cope with stress and also reduce on its impacts. Additionally, student leaders also need to develop a strong and healthy personal image with a positive winning mentality (Galanakis et al., 2016).

2.5 Conclusion

Too much class work is also a main cause of stress among student leaders and none student leaders in secondary schools (Deb et al., 2014). The work load from home cause also causes stress among students. It is worse for those that have family responsibilities such as children. Brains of student leaders and none-student leaders are directly connected with their emotional well-being together with facial expressions. Therefore, once they are stressed, one can easily notice as it will be easily noticed by someone else as it can be seen in the eyes (Turner & McCarthy, 2017). Researchers further emphasize that since stress is a physical process, when secondary school students laugh or smile, this helps them get relieve tension and thus make the situation better.

The world of today is too competitive that at one point in life, any individual including students can get stressed. However, among the secondary school students, there are those that get more stressed than others while some students have the ability to cope with stress, others struggle a lot to efficiently handle the unfortunate process of stress thus negatively affecting their lives.

This clearly shows that in several aspects of human life, stress is unescapable occurrence (Rana et al., 2019). Just like any other individuals on earth, secondary school students are going through high levels of stress in all aspects of their lives. The busy education schedule at school negatively affects the emotional well-being of students. However, low levels of stress can be helpful to students and thus consequently improve their academic performance.

A deep reflection and meaning prayer can be helpful in seeing that someone's body and mind relaxes and equally focuses (Cunningham, 2014). Being an attentive and open-minded person who is willing to look at different perspectives is helpful in creating self-compassion together with forgiveness. Furthermore, when they the constantly practice this form of mindfulness, they are able to release certain emotions which could potentially be causing body physical stress. Therefore, for students to be able to cope with stress while at school, the administration to put focus on developing strategies that can help address the issues of mental health among secondary school students. This can be done by constantly educating leaders on how to help other students by reaching out for them. Schools can also integrate mental health studies among the subjects they teach at school, this will thus give an opportunity to different student leaders and none student leaders to cope with stress while at school (Ballesteros et al., 2022).

However, although are a number of scholars like Rana et al. (2019) and Nikitha et al. (2014) that have examined the effects of stress on human life, very few have explored the its impact on academic performance of girl student leaders especially in Sub-Saharan Africa. This study therefore intended to close this gap by investigating the perceived influence of stress, coping on the academic performance of both girls in leadership and none leaders in Ugandan secondary schools with focus to those found in Mukono District.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter that is commonly known as the research methodology covers the various methods that the researcher used to carry out the study and the section further consists of the various sub-sections.

3.2 Study Design

The researcher further employed a descriptive survey design with a quantitative approach. The justification for adopting a descriptive survey design was because it not expensive to performance, requires a short period of time, and it is easy to gather data and also make further assessments. The ease to collect data and make scientific tests such as descriptive statistics, bivariate analysis (correlation) and multivariate analysis (linear regression), thus making the study purely quantitative in nature.

3.3 Study Area

This research was carried in Mukono Municipality in Mukono District and it is situated about 21 kilo meters by road from Kampala Capital City Centre. Mukono District together with other districts such as Wakiso and Kampala have the best performing secondary schools in the republic of Uganda. Moreover, the number of students and student leaders in Mukono Municipality is equally sufficient to act as our study population. To be particular, the study will be carried in schools such as Mukono High School, St. Charles Lwanga Secondary School and Bishop's Senior School. The researcher focused data that covered a period of 10 years from now (2023). Furthermore, the researcher took a period of six (6months) to produce a full draft thesis. This period was sufficient for the researcher to write a complete proposal, construct the

data collection tools, carry out primary data collection and finalizing be able to produce a full thesis within the time offered by the university.

3.4 Study Population

The study population was categorized of girl student leaders and none girl leaders in the selected schools of Mukono Municipality. Basin on the records obtained from test the total populations are tabulated in table 3.1 below.

Table 3.1 Showing the Study Population

School	Girl Student Leaders	None Student Leaders
Bishop’s Senior School	40	190
Mukono High School	30	160
St. Charles Lwanga S.S	20	150
TOTAL	90	500

Source: School Records

3.5 Sample Size

From the study populations indicated in table 3.1 above, respective sample sizes were generated basin on the Krejcie & Morgan (1970) table of sample determination as seen in table 3.2 below.

Table 3.2 Showing the Sample Size of the Study

School	Girl Student Leaders		None Student Leader	
	N	n	N	n
Bishop’s Senior School	40	36	190	127
Mukono High School	30	28	160	113
St. Charles Lwanga S.S	20	19	150	108
TOTAL	90	83	500	348

3.6 Sampling Techniques

The girls that took part of this study include student leaders and none-student leaders. The researcher therefore used a none-probability method of sampling which is commonly known

as purposive sampling. For the none-student leaders, the researchers applied a suitable probability mode of sampling which is globally known as simple random sampling. The justification for applying simple random sampling is the fact that this method at all times gives an equal opportunity of selection to all members that eventually become the sample size.

3.7 Measurement of Variables

The researcher used Likert Scale to make measurements of all study variables. This scale specifically measured variables by comprehend the degree to which everyone agreed or disagreed about particular view and opinions. A Likert Scale was indicated as follows; 1 for Completely Disagree, 2 for Disagree, 3 for Neutral or Not sure, 4 for Agree and last but not least 5 for Completely Agree.

3.8 Data Quality Control

3.8.1 Validity Testing

According to Cook & Campbell (1979), among all the available means of estimate, validity is the finest in regard to estimating the degree of truth or falsity of an interpretation, suggestion or deduction.

Table 3.3 Showing Validity Testing

Content Validity Index (CVI)	Decision
>0.6	Allowed
<0.6	Disallowed

This particular research, data collection tools with a CVI that is equal or more than 0.6 was deliberately allowed for use while those that are less than 0.6 were deemed to be not suitable and thus were disallowed.

3.8.2 Reliability Testing

To examine the degree to which data collection instruments created by the researcher are measured for uniformity when a homogenous group of respondents is selected under the similar conditions is known as testing for reliability (Amin, 2005). The findings from this form of assessment enabled some elements in data collection tools to be modified for the better.

Table 3.4 Showing the Reliability Testing

Cronbach's Alpha Correlation Coefficient	Decision
>0.5	Allowed
<0.5	Disallowed

As seen in table 3.4 above, for this particular research, data collection tools with a Cronbach's alpha correlation coefficient that is equal or more than 0.5 was deliberately allowed for use while those that are less than 0.5 was deemed to be not suitable and thus was disallowed.

3.9 Data Collection Methods

The researcher used closed ended questionnaires to gather data from all the study respondents that took part of the study from identified and selected schools in Mukono District. The questionnaire was further sub-divided into different sections which included the demographic characteristics of respondents which were covered in section A and the remaining sections of the questionnaires the other research objectives.

3.10 Data Analysis

After gathering all the required data, the researcher then prepared to carry out the data analysis and management process. To carry out this process efficiently, the researcher began by editing the data so as to make sure it is uniform, consistent and precise. After doing so, the data was

thus organized for coding and then the data analysis process was begun. Version 21.0 of the Statistical Package of Scientists (SPSS) was used to carry out the data collection process after which interpretation of results was done. The analysis as indicated in chapter four was done in reference to the research specific objectives in chapter one.

3.11 Ethical Considerations

Before the researcher embarked on the data collection process, she obtained an introduction letter from her institution and made sure was delivered to the three schools which were selected from Mukono District. After receiving acceptance letters from the schools, the researcher then visited the selected schools to interact with the respondents. She clearly explained to all study respondents the objective of this research before they took part in the study.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

This forth section of this study document entails a clear presentation of study results which is done based on the study objectives.

4.2 Response Rate

Out of the four hundred thirty-one (431) questionnaires, only eighty-three (83) were distributed to girl student leaders while majority which were three hundred forty-eight (348) were distributed to none leaders. From the eighty-three (83) that were distributed to girl student leaders, seventy (70) questionnaires were returned thus making a response rate of 84.3% while from the three hundred forty-eight (348) that were distributed to none leaders, two hundred eighty (280) were returned thus making a response rate of 80.5%. This hence makes the overall response rate to be 82.4% as seen in table 4.1 below.

Table 4.1 Showing the Response rate of the Respondents

Category	Questionnaires Distributed	Questionnaires Returned	Response Rate (%)
Girl student leaders	83	70	84.3
None leaders	348	280	80.5
Total	431	350	82.4

Source: Primary data

4.3 Characteristics of Respondents

The study mainly covered two characteristics of respondents which included age and class as indicated in Table 4.2 below.

Table 4.2 Showing the Characteristics of Respondents

Variable	Category	Leaders (n=70)	None Leaders (n=280)
		Frequency (Percent (%))	Frequency (Percent (%))
Age	13-14	20 (28.6)	80 (28.6)
	15-16	30 (42.8)	150 (53.5)
	17 and above	20 (28.6)	50 (17.9)
Class	S2	15 (21.4)	60(21.4)
	S3	20 (28.6)	140(50.0)
	S4	25 (35.7)	40(14.3)
	S6	10 (14.3)	40(14.3)

Source: Primary data

As seen in table 4.2 above, majority of the girl student leaders that took part of this were between 15-16 years (42.85%) and in senior S4 (35.7%) while most of the none leaders that took part of this were between 15-16 years (53.5%) and in senior S3 (50.0%).

4.4 Forms of Stress Being Experienced by Girls in Leadership and None Leaders in Secondary Schools

The forms of stress that are being expressed by girls in leadership and none leaders in secondary schools were indicated in 13 items which were majorly classified into three forms of stress which include; institutional, academic and external forms of stress. The researcher used Likert Scale to measure and comprehends the degree to which everyone agreed or disagreed about

particular view and opinions. The scale included; 1 for Completely Disagree, 2 for Disagree, 3 for Neutral or Not sure, 4 for Agree and last but not least 5 for Completely Agree.

Table 4.4 Showing the Forms of Stress Being Experienced by Girls in Leadership and None Leaders in Secondary Schools

Stressors	Girl	Leaders	None	leaders
	M	SD	M	SD
Academic Stressors				
High academic competition among classmates	3.51	1.23	3.65	1.11
Pressure from studies	3.08	1.54	4.5	1.54
Class overload	3.63	1.19	4.03	1.89
Reading for purposes of passing exams	2.55	1.51	3.76	1.12
Unworkable academic dreams	4.00	1.34	3.57	1.07
Mean of means	3.35	1.36	3.90	1.35
External stressors				
Conflicts with friends	2.55	1.15	3.09	1.05
Decisions about an intimate relationship	3.07	1.77	4.05	1.23
Heavy demands from extracurricular activities	4.05	1.43	3.06	1.33
Mean of Means	3.22	1.45	3.4	1.20
Institutional Stressors				
Overcrowded class rooms	4.09	1.5	4.01	1.0
Inadequate resources for academic work	3.0	1.5	4.05	1.0
Difficult class work	3.0	1.5	3.5	1.0
Mean of means	3.36	1.50	3.85	1.00

Source: Primary data

The study fundamentally examined three (3) forms of stress being experienced by girls in leadership and none leaders in secondary schools. For girl student leaders, the leading forms of stress being experienced by them while in school were institutional stressors with a mean of 3.36 together with a standard deviation of 1.50. Other forms of stress being experienced by

girls in leadership included academic stressors with a mean of 3.35 and a standard deviation of 1.36) and lastly, the least forms of stress being experienced by girls in leadership were external stressors with a mean of 3.2s together with a standard deviation of 1.45. On the other hand, for none student leaders, the leading forms of stress being experienced by them while in school were academic stressors with a mean of 3.90 and standard deviation of 1.35. Additionally, other forms of stress being experienced by them while in school were institutional stressors with a mean of 3.85 and standard deviation of 1.00 and the external stressors which obtained a mean of 3.40 and standard deviation of 1.2.

4.5 Stress Coping Strategies Used by Girls in Leadership and None Leaders in Secondary

As indicated in table in 4.5, girl student leaders and none leaders were asked about the stress coping strategies that they have adopted and the responses are seen below.

Table 4.5 Showing the Coping Strategies Adopted by Respondents

Coping Strategies Adopted by Respondents	Girl	Leaders	None	leaders
	M	SD	M	SD
I always do my levels best to focus my mind and body on carrying out activities which make me to feel relaxed and also happy	4.05	1.22	4.50	1.11
I do make sure I stay cool and calm even when I have been proved just to make sure I reconcile with the undesirable feelings	4.08	1.43	3.5	1.24
I regard it as a mode of challenging my mind and body	2.63	1.98	3.03	1.89
I have deliberately decided to comfortable even when I am provoked by friends.	3.55	1.12	5.00	1.52
I always take responsibilities for my actions even at times when I feel stressed	3.90	1.15	3.07	1.07
Whenever I face stress, I accept that sometimes its bad luck	3.77	1.18	3.09	1.65
I do not accept anyone to control my emotional wellbeing	4.07	1.33	3.75	1.23
I have a strong support system in terms of family class-teachers, friends with whom I seek guidance from once I need help	3.95	1.44	3.09	1.13
I always stay calm and hopeful once I get stressed	3.59	1.7	3.65	1.0
I have high levels of confidence in my potential to handle stress	3.06	1.5	4.05	1.0
I believe I have the ability to cope with any form of stress	3.55	1.7	3.58	1.0

I don't express my frustrations to my friends and other people	3.55	1.89	3.76	1.12
I always make sure I plan and reorganize whenever I express any academic obstacle	4.00	1.34	3.54	1.07
I at all times trust in God even when I feel stressed	3.45	1.47	3.49	1.05

Source: Primary data

As seen from the study results in table 4.5 above, majority of the girl leaders either agreed or completely agreed that they always do their level best to focus their mind and body on carrying out activities which make them feel relaxed and also happy (M = 4.05, SD = 1.35). This was the same for the none-student leaders for the girl student leaders (M = 4.50, SD = 1.11).

Study results in table 4.5 above revealed that most of the girl leaders agreed that they do make sure they stay cool and calm even when they have been provoked just to make sure they reconcile with the undesirable feelings (M = 4.08, SD = 1.43).

Additionally, study findings in table 4.5 above revealed that most of the girl leaders agreed that they do not accept anyone to control their emotional wellbeing (M = 4.07, SD = 1.33).

Moreover, study findings in table 4.5 above also revealed that majority of the girl leaders agreed that they always make sure they plan and reorganize whenever they express any academic obstacle (M = 4.00, SD = 1.34).

On the other hand, study results in table 4.5 above, majority of the none leaders completely agreed that they have deliberately decided to be comfortable even when they are provoked by friends (M = 5.00, SD = 1.52).

Furthermore, study results in table 4.5 above also showed that majority of none-leaders agreed that they have high levels of confidence in their potential to handle stress (M = 4.05, SD = 1.00).

4.6 Stress and the Academic Performance of Girls in Leadership and for None Leaders in Secondary Schools

Multiple linear regression was used to establish the influence of stress on the academic performance of girl students in leadership and none leaders.

Table 4.6 Showing Regression Results for Girl Leaders

Variables	Coef.	Std. Err.	t	P> t
Academic Stressors	-.2095	.2514	-0.83	0.035**
External Stressors	.3438	.1548	2.22	0.412
Institutional Stressors	-.1510	.0534	-2.81	0.010**
Constant	.7094	.8459	0.84	0.409

Dependent Variable: Academic Performance

*Where; * 1%=99, ** 5%=95 and * ** 10%=90 levels of significance*

For student leaders, the multiple linear regression results revealed a scientifically significant association between academic performance together with academic stressors at 95% confidence level ($p < 0.05$). The findings also indicated that, when other independent variables of the study are held in a constant position, a single increase in level of academic stressors can result into a .2095 reduction in the academic performance of students for a particular period of time.

Additionally, the multiple linear regression results for student leaders revealed a scientifically significant association between academic performance together with institutional stressors at 95% confidence level ($p < 0.05$). The findings also indicated that, when other independent variables of the study are held in a constant position, a single increase in level of institutional stressors can result into a .1510 reduction in the academic performance of students for a particular period of time.

Table 4.7 Showing the Regression Results for None Student Leaders

Variables	Coef.	Std. Err.	T	P> t
Academic Stressors	4.237	.186	-1.27	0.021**
External Stressors	.2413	.135	1.78	0.088

Institutional Stressors	-.381	.192	-1.98	0.059
Constant	1.734	.878	1.97	0.059

Dependent Variable: Academic Performance

Where; * 1%=99, ** 5%=95 and * ** 10%=90 levels of significance

For none student leaders, the multiple linear regression results revealed a scientifically significant association between academic performance together with academic stressors at 95% confidence level ($p < 0.05$). The findings also indicated that, when other independent variables of the study are held in a constant position, a single increase in level of academic stressors can result into a 4.237 reduction in the academic performance of students for a particular period of time.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses all findings reported in chapter four according to the research questions of the study as shown below.

5.2 Forms of Stress Being Experienced by Girls in Leadership and None Leaders in Secondary Schools

The study fundamentally examined three (3) forms of stress being experienced by girls in leadership and none leaders in secondary schools. For girl student leaders, the leading forms of stress being experienced by them while in school were institutional stressors with a mean of 3.36 together with a standard deviation of 1.50. Other forms of stress being experienced by girls in leadership included academic stressors with a mean of 3.35 and a standard deviation of 1.36) and lastly, the least forms of stress being experienced by girls in leadership were external stressors with a mean of 3.2 together with a standard deviation of 1.45. On the other hand, for none student leaders, the leading forms of stress being experienced by them while in school were academic stressors with a mean of 3.90 and standard deviation of 1.35. Additionally, other forms of stress being experienced by them while in school were institutional stressors with a mean of 3.85 and standard deviation of 1.00 and the external stressors which obtained a mean of 3.40 and standard deviation of 1.2. These results are in agreement with Rana et al. (2019), that revealed that disorganization of secondary school students is one of the major causes of stress among both student leaders and none student leaders. Moreover, secondary school students in developing countries are most of the time busy doing exams or relating with their friends. Deb et al. (2014) also do believe disorganization may be necessary in some cases, it may tend to affect student most especially in increasing the levels of stress among students. In

developed countries, student's diets comprise of noodles, take-away and candy bars (Grajek et al., 2022).

These study results further agree with Deb et al. (2014) who showed that too much class work is also a main cause of stress among student leaders and none student leaders in secondary schools. The work load from home cause also causes stress among students. It is worse for those that have family responsibilities such as children. Brains of student leaders and none-student leaders are directly connected with their emotional well-being together with facial expressions. Therefore, once they are stressed, one can easily notice as it will be easily noticed by someone else as it can be seen in the eyes (Turner & McCarthy, 2017). Researchers further emphasis that since stress is a physical process, when secondary school students laugh or smile, this helps them get relieve tension and thus make the situation better.

Additionally, researchers further revealed that among the young people, several stress may not impose a huge health challenge, however, among the elderly or individuals with other health complications, the long-term effects of stress could further have a negative impact on their health conditions. The causes of stress among secondary school students can be due to key life occasions and slight shifts can be sometimes be traced to specific surroundings that are stressful by nature and the more severe the cause of stress (Akinyi, Odera, & Yambo, 2017).

Furthermore, while carrying out a cross sectional research among 275 university business students in the Republic of Ghana and revealed that the majority causes of stress among university students include; relationship interactive and social stressors, teaching quality, interpersonal and self-stressors, teachers, surrounding, administration, and transition stressors (Azila-Gbetor et a., 2015). The scholars further revealed that the student's surrounding, administration together with the transition stressors have the most significant causes of stress among secondary school students.

It should also be stressors can be described as burdens caused by a person's inner or external environment that trouble them, hence directly and negatively affecting their physical and emotional well-being thus requiring a given action to regain balance. Nevertheless, they can be different depending on the extent of harshness and length of stress thus implying that what might be stressful to one student leader may not necessarily be stressful to another student (Rana et al., 2019). One example of this nature is; a year one university student can be stressed because missing a single lecture, however, the situation may not be the same with a second- or third-year student that has a different academic ambition and target. Secondly, to a student, missing a final semester examination may not have the same impact to them like being attacked by a dangerous wild animal like a lion. Individuals must be able to develop coping strategies so as to be able to manage stress that results from calamitous happenings, major life changes, and day-to-day hustles among others. Huge life changing situations can seem to significantly affect adults, however, most of the human being on planet earth are more stressed by day-to-day hustles. These stressors may include day-to-day living conditions, individual connections and job-related circumstances (Akinyi, Odera & Yambo, 2017).

5.3 Influence of Stress on the Academic Performance of Girls in Leadership and None Leaders in Secondary Schools

For student leaders, the multiple linear regression results revealed a scientifically significant association between academic performance together with academic stressors at 95% confidence level ($p < 0.05$). The findings also indicated that, when other independent variables of the study are held in a constant position, a single increase in level of academic stressors can result into a .2095 reduction in the academic performance of students for a particular period of time. Additionally, the multiple linear regression results for student leaders revealed a scientifically significant association between academic performance together with institutional stressors at 95% confidence level ($p < 0.05$). The findings also indicated that, when other

independent variables of the study are held in a constant position, a single increase in level of institutional stressors can result into a .1510 reduction in the academic performance of students for a particular period of time.

For none student leaders, the multiple linear regression results revealed a scientifically significant association between academic performance together with academic stressors at 95% confidence level ($p < 0.05$). The findings also indicated that, when other independent variables of the study are held in a constant position, a single increase in level of academic stressors can result into a 4.237 reduction in the academic performance of students for a particular period of time. These study results agree with Rana et al. (2019) who revealed that the world of today is too competitive that at one point in life, any individual including students can get stressed. However, among the secondary school students, there are those that get more stressed than others while some students have the ability to cope with stress, others struggle a lot to efficiently handle the unfortunate process of stress thus negatively affecting their lives. This clearly shows that in several aspects of human life, stress is unescapable occurrence (Rana et al., 2019).

Just like any other individuals on earth, secondary school students are going through high levels of stress in all aspects of their lives. The busy education schedule at school negatively affects the emotional well-being of students. However, low levels of stress can be helpful to students and thus consequently improve their academic performance. Therefore, the impact of stress on the academic performance of secondary school students can be looked at in different perspectives bearing in mind that the levels of stress that students experience can influence their capacity to cope with stress and also their ability to adopt (Rana et al., 2019).

Both student leaders and non-student leaders in secondary schools have equally reported some signs of stress (Edjah, Domey & Ankomah, 2019). Preliminary research has further indicated that stress indeed a significant effect on the academic life of both student leaders and none

student leaders. Scholars have indicated that student leaders and non-student leaders that experience high levels of stress tend to perform poorly as compared to those students that do not experience stress. Unfortunately, majority of the students that experience stress are likely to persistently experience stress in the struggle to enhance academic performance. The desire for students to improve their academic performance further increases stress (Veena & Shailaja, 2016). Various researchers do agree that there are high instances of stress among student leaders especially in high institutions of learning which is evidenced from the high prevalence of mental health issues. According to Zhu (2021), during most of the activities at the university, more than half of the students indicated to be having mental issues.

A study carried out in Ghana revealed that university students are constantly faced with a number of challenges which make them feel uncomfortable and they are most likely to have a lot of difficulty with coping with stress while at the universities (Edjah et al., 2019). Findings from another study carried out in Africa showed that student leaders at all levels of education are highly affected by stress which originates from the pressure which comes from being a leader. Furthermore, in their study, Stirling & Emery (2016) revealed that stress negatively affects the emotional and physical well-being of student leaders since they face high pressures such as that expectation from school administration and students among others.

Saqib & Rehman, (2018) revealed that parents together with their teachers were the major cause of stress among students. For that matter, they concluded after agreeing that stress has a significant negative impact on the performance of senior secondary students. Kapur, (2021) also made sure that all factors affecting the academic performance of students including the major causes of poor academic performance were considered to be primary variables. Aafreen et al. (2021) also stated that stress is a result of the failure by an individual to cope with the internal and external forces in our environment. Secondary school students

that have difficulties coping with any levels of stress perform poorly academically and their conduct is equally poor.

Scholars such as Siraj et al. (2014) also examined the relationship between stress and the academic performance of secondary school students and they revealed that stress was associated with high cumulative grade point average. Additionally, Pascoe et al. (2020) in the article revealed that stress can negatively affect the academic performance of secondary school students, it can reduce levels of inspiration and also advance the chances of a student dropping out of school. The costs that come in the long run as a result of stress among students is reduced chances of longevity at work places and this can affect the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) which in turn makes the country to lose a lot of money each single year.

Finding from research that was carried out in India among 656 university students indicated that high performing students were found to have different scores as compared to their counterparts the low performing students regarding the causes of stress (Veena & Shastri, 2016). Indicators of stress such as financial and social stress were found to also have a negative significant effect on the performance of senior secondary school students (Pariat, Rynjah & Kharjana, 2014). Preliminary research thus shows that many scholars do agree that stress has a significant negative effect on the academic performance of students. Nonetheless, there are some few researchers that challenge the negative relationship that stress has with the academic performance of students.

Both student leaders and non-student leaders in secondary schools have equally reported some signs of stress (Edjah, Domey & Ankomah, 2019). Preliminary research has further indicated that stress indeed a significant effect on the academic life of both student leaders and none student leaders. Scholars have indicated that student leaders and none student leaders that experience high levels of stress tend to perform poorly as compared to those students that do not experience stress. Unfortunately, majority of the students that experience stress are likely

to persistently experience stress in the struggle to enhance academic performance. The desire for students to improve their academic performance further increases stress (Veena & Shailaja, 2016). Various researchers do agree that there are high instances of stress among student leaders especially in high institutions of learning which is evidenced from the high prevalence of mental health issues. According to Zhu (2021), during most of the activities at the university, more than half of the students indicated to be having mental issues. Furthermore, about 73% of the students are admitted to university experience some form of mental health crisis at a given point in time (Reis et al., 2022).

A study carried out in Ghana revealed that undergraduate university students are constantly faced with a number of challenges which make them feel uncomfortable and just in case they don't receive any form of organizational and societal assistance, they most likely to have a lot of difficulty with coping with stress while at the universities (Edjah et al., 2019). Findings from another study carried out in Africa showed that student leaders at all levels of education are highly affected by stress which originates from the pressure which comes from being a leader. Furthermore, in their study, Stirling & Emery (2016) revealed that stress negatively affects the emotional and physical well-being of student leaders since they face high pressures such as that expectation from school administration and students among others.

Additionally, the manner in which student leaders and non-student leaders communicate with several people such as their family members, teachers and their peers regarding their mental health inside and outside class is said to worsen during the times when they have events at school (Knox et al., 2020). Moreover, a different study on leadership that was carried out by Bingham & Bubb (2021) revealed that holding any leadership position in secondary school has a positive influence on the mental health and social well-being of these student leaders. Results from the study also showed that holding a leadership position while at school can enhance the student's ability to improve their social skills specifically those that are likely to cause of

removing restrictions and refining relationships together with networks. However, school administrations need to offer student leaders with adequate self-help resources together with counseling support to enable them cope with the negative effects of stress especially those that occur during the periods when they have events (Van der Meer et al., 2019).

5.4 Stress Coping Strategies Used by Girls in Leadership and None Leaders in Secondary

As seen from the study results in table 4.5, majority of the girl leaders either agreed or completely agreed that they always do their level best to focus their mind and body on carrying out activities which make them feel relaxed and also happy ($M = 4.05$, $SD = 1.35$). This was the same for the none-student leaders for the girl student leaders ($M = 4.50$, $SD = 1.11$). Furthermore, study results showed that majority of the girl leaders agreed that they do make sure they stay cool and calm even when they have been provoked just to make sure they reconcile with the undesirable feelings ($M = 4.08$, $SD = 1.43$). Additionally, study results showed that most of the girl leaders agreed that they do not accept anyone to control their emotional wellbeing ($M = 4.07$, $SD = 1.33$). Moreover, study results showed that majority of the girl leaders agreed that they always make sure they plan and reorganize whenever they express any academic obstacle ($M = 4.00$, $SD = 1.34$).

On the other hand, study results in table 4.5 above, majority of the none leaders completely agreed that they have deliberately decided to be comfortable even when they are provoked by friends ($M = 5.00$, $SD = 1.52$). Furthermore, study results showed that majority of the none leaders agreed that they have high levels of confidence in their potential to handle stress ($M = 4.05$, $SD = 1.00$). A deep reflection and meaningful prayer can be helpful in seeing that someone's body and mind relaxes and equally focuses (Cunningham, 2014). Being an attentive and open-minded person who is willing to look at different perspectives is helpful in creating self-compassion together with forgiveness.

Furthermore, when they the constantly practice this form of mindfulness, they are able to release certain emotions which could potentially be causing body physical stress. Therefore, for students to be able to cope with stress while at school, the administration to put focus on developing strategies that can help address the issues of mental health among secondary school students. This can be done by constantly educating leaders on how to help other students by reaching out for them. Schools can also integrate mental health studies among the subjects they teach at school, this will thus give an opportunity to different student leaders and none student leaders to cope with stress while at school (Ballesteros et al., 2022).

Furthermore, study results showed that majority of the girl leaders agreed that allow themselves to calm down first and think of how to reconcile the negative emotions ($M = 4.08$, $SD = 1.43$). Having a balanced diet, carrying out exercises, seeking for help from friends and family together with putting focus on how one looks are one of the ways of coping with stress (Olope et al., 2017). These scholars also agreed and revealed women easily cope with stress as compared to their counter-parts the men since they are assumed to be more emotionally and physically resilient. Unfortunately, most of the students that experience stress have difficulties sleeping and have decent meals, therefore they need support from other students in developing a positive attitude towards everything they do.

A number of researchers all over the world have a number of times advised and suggested the need to recognize the existence of stress among different individuals including secondary school students and also the need to apply suitable methods to lighten the challenges related to it. It is therefore important that secondary school students prepare for stress even before it comes. Moreover, by using proactive means of managing stress, students can be able to prepare for the time before stress occurs thus enabling them to cope with stress and also reduce on its impacts. Additionally, student leaders also need to develop a strong and healthy personal image with a positive winning mentality (Galanakis et al., 2016).

Additionally, the use of problem-solving approaches is one of the ways in which students can be able to handle or cope with stressful situations while in school environment (Baqutayan, 2015). These problem-solving approaches mainly focus on the causes of stress among the students. The students are therefore able to use particular activities to complete a given assignment. Furthermore, approaches that are concentrated on emotions involve the application of energies to regulate cost associated with emotions of hypothetically stressful situations. Here, the students use activities to develop a better feeling in their bodies (Baqutayan, 2015).

The most appropriate means of managing stress among secondary school students is constructing a very strong support system which can be regarded as an individual's protection strategy against stress (Baqutayan, 2015). The scholar further suggested that stress among students can also be handled by creating individual coping strategies or organizational strategies. Having a strong religious background can also be a significant element in supporting students cope with stress.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Summary of findings

6.1.1 Forms of Stress Being Experienced by Girls in Leadership and None Leaders in Secondary Schools

The study fundamentally examined three (3) forms of stress being experienced by girls in leadership and none leaders in secondary schools. For girl student leaders, the leading forms of stress being experienced by them while in school were institutional stressors with a mean of 3.36 together with a standard deviation of 1.50. On the other hand, for none student leaders, the leading forms of stress being experienced by them while in school were academic stressors with a mean of 3.90 and standard deviation of 1.35.

6.1.2 Influence of Stress on the Academic Performance of Girls in Leadership and None Leaders in Secondary Schools

For student leaders, the multiple linear regression results revealed a scientifically significant association between the dependent variable (academic performance) and the independent variable (academic stressors) at 95% confidence level since the p value is less than 0.05. The findings further indicated that, a unit increase in the institutional stressor leads to .2095 decrease in the academic performance of girl students when the rest of the independent variables are not changing in a given period of time.

For none leaders, the multiple linear regression results revealed a scientifically significant association between the dependent variable (academic performance) and the independent variable (academic stressors) at 95% confidence level since the p value is less than 0.05. Study results further show that on average, a unit increase in the academic stress leads to 4.237

decrease in the academic performance of none leaders when the rest of the independent variables are not changing in a given period of time.

6.1.3 Stress Coping Strategies Used by Girls in Leadership and None Leaders in Secondary

Majority of the girl leaders either agreed or completely agreed that they always do their level best to focus their mind and body on carrying out activities which make them feel relaxed and also happy ($M = 4.05$, $SD = 1.35$). This was the same for the none-student leaders for the girl student leaders ($M = 4.50$, $SD = 1.11$). Furthermore, study results showed that majority of the girl leaders agreed that they do make sure they stay cool and calm even when they have been provoked just to make sure they reconcile with the undesirable feelings ($M = 4.08$, $SD = 1.43$).

Additionally, study results showed that most of the girl leaders agreed that they do not accept anyone to control their emotional wellbeing ($M = 4.07$, $SD = 1.33$). Moreover, study results showed that majority of the girl leaders agreed that they always make sure they plan and reorganize whenever they express any academic obstacle ($M = 4.00$, $SD = 1.34$). On the other hand, study results in table 4.5 above, majority of the none leaders completely agreed that they have deliberately decided to comfortable even when they are provoked by friends ($M = 5.00$, $SD = 1.52$). Furthermore, study results showed that majority of none leaders agreed that they have high levels of confidence in their potential to handle stress ($M = 4.05$, $SD = 1.00$).

6.2 Conclusion

This research mainly aimed at exploring the influence of stress on the academic performance of both girls in leadership and none leaders in secondary schools. For girl student leaders, the leading forms of stress being experienced by them while in school were institutional stressors with a mean of 3.36. On the other hand, for none student leaders, the leading forms of stress being experienced by them while in school were academic stressors with a mean of 3.90.

Additionally, for student leaders, the multiple linear regression results revealed a scientifically significant association between academic performance together with academic stressors at 95% confidence level ($p < 0.05$). For none student leaders, the multiple linear regression results revealed a scientifically significant association between academic performance together with academic stressors at 95% confidence level ($p < 0.05$).

Regarding coping strategies, majority of the girl leaders either agreed or completely agreed that they always do their level best to focus their mind and body on carrying out activities which make them feel relaxed and also happy ($M = 4.05$). This was the same for the none-student leaders for the girl student leaders ($M = 4.50$).

6.3 Recommendations

1. The researcher thus recommends that secondary schools should put a lot of emphasis on establishing counseling programmes with an objective of empowering the girl child so that girls develop the capacity to deal with stress while at school.
2. There is also a need to establish training for all girls in leadership positions in schools with a main objective of managing stress levels among colleagues and further develop their leadership skills. Such programmes should be carried out by experts from different parts of the country.
3. This research further recommends that girl leaders in different secondary schools in Uganda should embrace both active and passive strategies to cope with stress and its effects.

6.4 Suggestion for Further Research

More research needs to be done on the perceived influence of stress, coping on girls' leadership in higher institutions of learning especially universities where students have a lot of freedom

and are faced by various challenges that can cause them emotional, behavioral, sleep and physical stress.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: QUESTIONNAIRE

My name is Zawedde Dorothy; a graduate student pursuing a Master of Arts in Counseling Psychology degree of Uganda Christian University (UCU). I am conducting a study on *“Stress, coping and girls’ leadership in secondary schools in Mukono municipality”*. You are requested to take part in this study.

Section A: Demographic Characteristics

Variable	Response
AGE	
CLASS	
Status	a) Student leader b) None student leader

SECTION B: STRESSORS

A Likert Scale was indicated as follows; 1 for Completely Disagree (CD), 2 for Disagree (D), 3 for Neutral or Not sure (N), 4 for Agree (A) and last but not least 5 for Completely Agree (CA).

B1: As one of the students, have you experienced any stress?

- a) Yes
- b) No

Stressors					
Academic Stressors	CD	D	N	A	CA

High academic competition among classmates					
Pressure from studies					
Class overload					
Studying for examination					
Unrealistic academic goals					
External Stressors					
Conflicts with friends					
Decisions about an intimate relationship					
Heavy demands from extracurricular activities					
Institutional Stressors					
Overcrowded class rooms					
Inadequate resources for academic work					
Difficult class work					

SECTION C: COPING TECHNIQUES

Coping strategies adopted by respondents were measured using the academic stress coping style inventory developed by Lin and Chen (2010). A Likert Scale was indicated as follows; 1 for Completely Disagree (CD), 2 for Disagree (D), 3 for Neutral or Not sure (N), 4 for Agree (A) and last but not least 5 for Completely Agree (CA).

Coping strategies adopted by respondents					
Item/s	CD	D	N	A	CA

I always do my levels best to focus my mind and body on carrying out activities which make me to feel relaxed and also happy					
I do make sure I stay cool and calm even when I have been proved just to make sure I reconcile with the undesirable feelings					
I regard it as a mode of challenging my mind and body					
I have deliberately decided to comfortable even when I am provoked by friends.					
I always take responsibilities for my actions even at times when I feel stressed					
Whenever I face stress, I accept that sometimes it's bad luck					
I do not accept anyone to control my emotional wellbeing					
I have a strong support system in terms of family class-teachers, friends with whom I seek guidance from once I need help					
I always stay calm and hopeful once I get stressed					
I have high levels of confidence in my potential to handle stress					
I believe I have the ability to cope with any form of stress					
I don't express my frustrations to my friends and other people					
I always make sure I plan and reorganize whenever I express any academic obstacle					
I at all times trust in God even when I feel stressed					

SECTION C: ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

The respondents were asked to give feedback on their academic performance. A Likert Scale was indicated as follows; 1 for Completely Disagree (CD), 2 for Disagree (D), 3 for Neutral or Not sure (N), 4 for Agree (A) and last but not least 5 for Completely Agree (CA).

Academic Performance					
Item/s	CD	D	N	A	CA
Stress negatively affects my academic performance especially in my final exams					
The busy education schedule at school negatively affects the emotional well-being of students					
Secondary school students have difficulties coping with any levels of stress perform poorly academically and their conduct is equally poor					
Stress is associated with high cumulative grade point average					
High performing students have different scores as compared to their counterparts the low performing students regarding the causes of stress					

Thank you for your cooperation