



Social Support And Stress Management Strategies Among Business Students

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Abstract

Social support represents an important psychosocial resource in helping university students manage academic demands and respond to stressful experiences. This study examined the relationship between social support and stress management strategies among business students in a university in Batangas Province. Specifically, social support was examined in terms of emotional, instrumental, informational, and appraisal support, while stress management strategies were assessed through problem-focused coping, emotion-focused coping, avoidance coping, and cognitive reframing. The study employed a descriptive-correlational research design using a researcher-developed questionnaire anchored on Social Support Theory and the Transactional Model of Stress and Coping. The instrument underwent content validation and reliability testing, with all subscales demonstrating excellent internal consistency. Descriptive and correlational analyses were used to examine the respondents' perceptions and the relationships among the study variables. Findings indicated that business students generally perceived the availability of social support from family members, peers, teachers, mentors, and other significant individuals. Respondents likewise reported using multiple strategies to manage academic stress. Significant positive relationships were observed between the dimensions of social support and the different stress management strategies, indicating that stronger perceived support was associated with greater use of coping responses. The findings underscore the value of supportive academic environments and suggest the importance of strengthening counseling services, faculty guidance, peer support, academic assistance, and recognition initiatives to promote student resilience and well-being.

Keywords: *social support; stress management; coping strategies; business students; academic stress; student well-being*

1. Introduction

University students encounter multiple academic, personal, and social demands that can affect their psychological well-being and ability to perform effectively in their studies. Business students may experience particular pressures arising from demanding coursework, competitive academic environments, internship requirements, financial concerns, deadlines, and uncertainty regarding future careers. Managing these pressures requires not only academic competence but also effective coping strategies and access to supportive interpersonal and institutional resources.

Social support is widely regarded as an important psychosocial resource in the management of stress. House (1981) conceptualized social support in terms of emotional, instrumental, informational, and appraisal support. Emotional support provides care, empathy, reassurance, and a sense of belonging; instrumental support involves tangible or practical assistance; informational support provides advice, guidance, and relevant information; and appraisal support offers constructive feedback, recognition, and assistance in evaluating personal performance and circumstances. Within higher education, these forms of support may come from family members, peers, teachers, mentors, advisers, and institutional support systems.

The relevance of social support is particularly evident in academic settings where students must continuously respond to demands that require adjustment, self-regulation, and coping. Research has shown that stronger perceived social support is associated with lower academic stress, improved psychological adjustment, and better academic well-being. Zhang et al. (2022), for example, found that perceived social support was associated with lower academic stress and reduced self-regulatory fatigue among university students. Ullah et al. (2023) similarly reported that social support played an important role in the relationship between emotional intelligence and academic stress. Support received from teachers and classmates has also been associated with improved coping capacity, academic achievement, and reduced feelings of helplessness among students (Hoferichter et al., 2022).

The relationship between social support and coping may be understood through the Transactional Model of Stress and Coping developed by Lazarus and Folkman (1984). The model proposes that stress results from the interaction between individuals and their environment and depends substantially on how people appraise particular demands and the resources available to manage them. Individuals initially evaluate whether a situation is threatening, challenging, or potentially harmful and subsequently assess the personal and environmental resources available to respond to that situation. Social support therefore becomes relevant because the availability of

emotional reassurance, practical assistance, information, and feedback may affect how individuals assess stressors and select coping responses.

Students may use several strategies in responding to academic stress. Problem-focused coping involves actively addressing the source of stress through planning, problem-solving, time management, information seeking, and other solution-oriented actions. Emotion-focused coping attempts to regulate emotional responses through strategies such as relaxation, positive thinking, emotional expression, and social support. Cognitive reframing involves changing the interpretation of a stressful experience so that it is perceived as more manageable, constructive, or meaningful. These strategies are generally considered adaptive when they help individuals maintain functioning and psychological stability. Research has associated problem-focused coping, emotional regulation, positive reappraisal, and similar adaptive approaches with better psychological outcomes and reduced academic stress (Meijer, 2024; Riepenhausen et al., 2022).

Not all coping responses, however, are equally constructive. Avoidance coping involves postponing, withdrawing from, distracting oneself from, or attempting not to think about stressful situations. Although avoidance may provide temporary emotional relief, prolonged reliance on such strategies may intensify stress and interfere with academic functioning. Academic procrastination, digital distraction, and task avoidance have been associated with poorer academic outcomes, increased anxiety, and greater academic stress (Flanigan et al., 2023; Ragusa et al., 2023; Rozental et al., 2022). The manner in which students combine adaptive and avoidant responses therefore provides important insight into how they manage academic demands.

Social resources may influence the availability and use of these coping strategies. Family members may provide emotional and financial assistance, peers may offer companionship and academic collaboration, while teachers and mentors can provide informational and appraisal support through advice, constructive feedback, and academic guidance. Hassan et al. (2023) reported that perceived social support was associated with improved academic adjustment and academic success among university students. Yang et al. (2022) likewise found that family and social support were associated with adaptive coping and improved mental-health outcomes. These findings suggest that stress management should not be treated exclusively as an individual responsibility because students' coping behaviors operate within interpersonal and institutional environments.

Despite the broader literature on social support, academic stress, and coping, the relationship between specific dimensions of social support and particular stress-management strategies remains context-dependent. The original study identifies limited attention to this relationship among business students in the Philippine higher-education setting. Business students represent a relevant group because they face academic requirements while simultaneously preparing for future professional and organizational roles. Understanding how emotional, instrumental, informational, and appraisal support correspond with problem-focused coping, emotion-focused coping, avoidance coping, and cognitive reframing may therefore provide useful evidence for strengthening student-support systems and promoting more effective responses to academic stress.

The practical relevance of the study extends to universities, faculty members, guidance and counseling offices, academic advisers, student organizations, and families. Identifying which forms of support students perceive to be available and how these relate to their coping responses can inform interventions involving counseling, mentoring, academic advising, faculty consultation, recognition programs, and stress-management initiatives. Such efforts may contribute to stronger student resilience, psychological well-being, and academic adjustment.

Objectives of the Study

This study aimed to examine social support and stress management strategies among business students in a university in Batangas Province. Specifically, it sought to:

1. determine the level of social support in terms of emotional support, instrumental support, informational support, and appraisal support;
2. describe the stress management strategies reported by business students;
3. examine the significant relationship between the dimensions of social support and stress management strategies;
4. assess the predictive relationship between social support and stress management strategies; and
5. develop an action plan intended to strengthen social support and stress management among business students.

2. Review of Related Literature

2.1 Social Support as a Psychosocial Resource

Social support is widely recognized as an important psychosocial resource in helping students manage academic and personal demands. House (1981) conceptualized social support as comprising emotional, instrumental, informational, and appraisal forms of assistance. These dimensions represent different but interrelated ways through which individuals receive reassurance, practical help, guidance, and evaluative feedback from

significant others. In educational settings, such support may come from family members, peers, teachers, mentors, and institutional structures.

Empirical studies have consistently linked perceived social support with lower academic stress and better psychological adjustment. Zhang et al. (2022) found that undergraduate students who reported greater support from family, friends, and significant others experienced lower academic stress and reduced self-regulatory fatigue. Their findings further indicated that social support played a mediating role in the relationship between academic stress and psychological outcomes. Ullah et al. (2023) similarly reported that social support mediated the relationship between emotional intelligence and academic stress, suggesting that students with stronger support systems were better able to manage the demands of tertiary education.

Support within the academic environment is also important. Hoferichter et al. (2022) found that teacher and classmate support were associated with improved coping, reduced feelings of helplessness, and better academic achievement. Hassan et al. (2023) likewise reported that perceived social support contributed positively to academic adjustment and success among university students. These findings collectively suggest that social support functions not merely as interpersonal reassurance but also as a resource that may strengthen students' capacity to respond to academic stress and adapt to higher-education demands. Philippine evidence also indicates that student mental-health risks are distributed across individual, interpersonal, and systemic domains; Malabanan (2026), for example, included social support, family difficulties, academic distress, financial stress, and access to mental-health support within an interconnected university-student risk framework.

2.2 Dimensions of Social Support in Academic Settings

The multidimensional nature of social support is particularly relevant in academic contexts because different student needs may require different forms of assistance. Emotional support includes care, empathy, reassurance, and encouragement. Studies indicate that students who perceive stronger emotional support from family, peers, and significant others tend to report lower levels of psychological distress and greater resilience. Yang et al. (2022) found that family support contributed to better mental-health outcomes partly through adaptive coping, while Ullah et al. (2023) emphasized the importance of accessible emotional support in reducing academic stress. In an adjacent college-student context, Rui (2026) found that parental emotional warmth was positively associated with self-control and self-efficacy, suggesting that supportive family relationships may operate alongside internal coping resources.

Instrumental support refers to tangible forms of assistance such as financial help, educational materials, academic resources, and direct practical assistance. Hassan et al. (2023) reported that social support from family, friends, and significant others was associated with better academic adjustment and performance, partly because such support provides resources that reduce practical barriers to academic participation. For university students, instrumental support may therefore help reduce pressures related to financial limitations, educational requirements, and workload demands.

Informational and appraisal support are also important in higher education. Informational support involves advice, academic guidance, and access to useful information, while appraisal support involves constructive feedback, encouragement, recognition, and assistance in evaluating personal performance. Hoferichter et al. (2022) showed that instructional guidance and teacher support were associated with stronger coping abilities, while Ulmanen et al. (2022) found that teacher support was linked to higher study engagement and lower study burnout. Sadoughi and Hejazi (2022) similarly emphasized the role of constructive feedback and recognition in strengthening student motivation and engagement. Together, these forms of support suggest that academic well-being depends not only on emotional reassurance but also on access to useful information, meaningful feedback, and practical resources. Among Filipino late adolescents, Balut et al. (2026) similarly found peer dynamics to be associated with prosocial behavior, self-regulation, emotional control, and social awareness, reinforcing the relevance of interpersonal context to students' social functioning.

2.3 Adaptive and Maladaptive Stress-Management Strategies

Students use a range of coping strategies when responding to academic stress. Problem-focused coping seeks to address the source of stress through planning, problem-solving, time management, task organization, and help-seeking. Meijer (2024) reported that problem-focused coping was positively associated with students' mental well-being, while Putranto et al. (2025) found that greater use of problem-focused coping was associated with lower levels of academic stress. Sari (2023) likewise emphasized that planning and active problem-solving are important strategies among students managing multiple academic and personal responsibilities.

Emotion-focused coping, in contrast, concentrates on regulating emotional responses to stress. Strategies may include relaxation, positive thinking, emotional expression, and engagement in recreational or restorative activities. Kritikou and Giovazolias (2022) highlighted the importance of emotional regulation in academic adjustment, while Alvarado-García et al. (2025) reported that mindfulness-based interventions reduced stress, anxiety, and depression among college students. Bentley et al. (2023) similarly identified structured breathing practices as useful in stress

and anxiety reduction. Complementary Philippine studies illustrate additional stress-regulation pathways: San Juan et al. (2026) examined sleep-diary self-monitoring under persistent academic stress, while Mañibo (2026), in a more clinically distressed young-adult context, identified support-seeking, cognitive reframing, exercise, faith, and journaling among reported coping responses.

Cognitive reframing represents another adaptive strategy in which individuals reinterpret stressful situations in more constructive or manageable ways. Riepenhausen et al. (2022), in a systematic review, identified positive cognitive reappraisal as an important resilience mechanism associated with lower stress and stronger psychological well-being.

Not all coping strategies are adaptive. Avoidance coping includes procrastination, distraction, withdrawal, and deliberate disengagement from stressful tasks. Ragusa et al. (2023) associated avoidance and procrastination with greater academic stress and poorer academic outcomes. Flanigan et al. (2023) likewise identified digital distraction as a behavioral pattern capable of interfering with learning and engagement, while Rozental et al. (2022) linked procrastination with poorer well-being and academic functioning. These findings demonstrate that students may simultaneously use both constructive and maladaptive coping responses when dealing with academic pressures. Digital and lifestyle evidence further shows that stress-related behavior can extend beyond formal coping techniques: Dancel et al. (2026) reported social-media use for emotional regulation and avoidance of uncomfortable interaction among Generation Z college students, while Quinto et al. (2025) documented associations between distress/burnout and behaviors such as sleep, physical activity, and screen time among dormitory medical students.

2.4 Social Support, Coping, and Student Well-Being

Social support and coping are closely interconnected because the availability of external resources may shape how students evaluate and respond to stressful situations. Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) Transactional Model of Stress and Coping provides an important theoretical basis for this relationship. The model proposes that individuals assess both the demands posed by stressful events and the resources available for managing those demands. These resources include not only personal capabilities but also social and environmental support.

Empirical studies support this connection. Yang et al. (2022) found that family and social support were associated with more adaptive coping and better mental-health outcomes among university students. Hoferichter et al. (2022) similarly showed that teacher and peer support contributed to improved coping and academic performance. Hassan et al. (2023) further demonstrated that perceived social support was positively related to students' academic adjustment and success, suggesting that supportive interpersonal relationships can help students respond more effectively to educational demands.

Social support may be particularly relevant to help-seeking and emotional regulation. Li et al. (2023) identified academic help-seeking as an important strategy for addressing academic difficulties, although students may avoid asking for assistance because of personal or social barriers. Somuah et al. (2024) likewise reported that help-seeking behavior is influenced by attitudes, available support, and access to institutional resources. These findings imply that the effectiveness of social support depends not merely on whether assistance exists, but also on whether students perceive it as accessible and are willing to use it.

The literature therefore suggests that coping is shaped by both individual behavioral responses and the quality of the social environment. Students who receive emotional reassurance, practical assistance, information, and constructive feedback may have greater resources for managing stress, whereas insufficient or inaccessible support may limit adaptive responses.

2.5 Synthesis and Research Gaps

The reviewed literature consistently identifies social support as an important resource associated with academic adjustment, psychological well-being, and coping among students. Emotional, instrumental, informational, and appraisal support provide different forms of assistance that may reduce perceived stress and strengthen students' capacity to respond to academic demands (Hassan et al., 2023; Hoferichter et al., 2022; Ullah et al., 2023; Yang et al., 2022; Zhang et al., 2022). At the same time, the coping literature distinguishes between adaptive strategies, including problem-focused coping, emotion regulation, and cognitive reframing, and potentially maladaptive strategies such as avoidance, procrastination, and digital distraction (Flanigan et al., 2023; Ragusa et al., 2023; Riepenhausen et al., 2022; Rozental et al., 2022).

Despite this substantial body of research, much of the literature examines social support, academic stress, mental health, or coping as broad constructs rather than simultaneously examining the relationships between specific dimensions of social support and distinct coping strategies. The source manuscript also identifies limited attention to these relationships among business students in the Philippine higher-education context. This leaves a contextual and analytical gap concerning how emotional, instrumental, informational, and appraisal support relate to problem-focused coping, emotion-focused coping, avoidance coping, and cognitive reframing within this student population. The present study addresses this gap by examining these dimensions together and by generating

evidence that may inform student-support initiatives, academic advising, counseling, mentoring, and stress-management interventions in higher education.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The study employed a descriptive-correlational research design to examine social support and stress management strategies among business students. The descriptive component was used to determine the respondents' perceptions of social support in terms of emotional, instrumental, informational, and appraisal support and to describe their stress management strategies. The correlational component examined the statistical relationships between the dimensions of social support and the stress management strategies. Consistent with the nonexperimental design, the study focused on associations among the variables rather than establishing causal relationships.

3.2 Participants and Study Setting

The respondents were business students enrolled during Academic Year 2025-2026 in a university in Batangas Province. The study focused on this population because business students experience academic and personal demands associated with coursework, deadlines, competitive academic environments, and preparation for future careers.

The total population consisted of 391 business students. A required sample of 195 respondents was calculated using the Raosoft sample-size calculator based on a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error.

3.3 Research Instrument

Data were collected using a researcher-developed structured questionnaire based on House's (1981) Social Support Theory and the Transactional Model of Stress and Coping of Lazarus and Folkman (1984). The instrument consisted of two major parts.

The first part measured social support across four dimensions: emotional support, instrumental or tangible support, informational support, and appraisal support. The second part measured stress management strategies through problem-focused coping, emotion-focused coping, avoidance coping, and cognitive reframing.

The questionnaire underwent content validation by individuals with expertise in psychology, education, and research methodology. A pilot test was subsequently conducted among students who were not included in the actual study respondents. Internal consistency was examined using Cronbach's alpha.

All subscales demonstrated high internal consistency. Cronbach's alpha coefficients were .946 for emotional support, .930 for instrumental support, .946 for informational support, and .959 for appraisal support. For the stress management measures, the coefficients were .948 for problem-focused coping, .974 for emotion-focused coping, .940 for avoidance coping, and .955 for cognitive reframing. These values indicated excellent internal consistency across the measured constructs.

3.4 Data Gathering Procedure

The study began with the development of the research framework, identification of the variables, and preparation of the questionnaire based on the relevant theoretical and empirical literature. Following expert review and pilot testing, items considered unclear or inadequate were revised before administration.

Permission to conduct the study was obtained from the university administration and the appropriate academic unit. Coordination with faculty members and program personnel was undertaken to facilitate access to eligible respondents. The validated questionnaire was distributed through printed copies and secure online platforms. Respondents were informed about the purpose of the study and were provided with instructions for completing the instrument.

Completed questionnaires were reviewed for completeness prior to data encoding and analysis. The collected responses were then organized and analyzed according to the objectives of the study.

3.5 Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the respondents' assessments of social support and stress management strategies. Weighted means and rankings were used to describe the dimensions of social support and the available descriptive results for the stress management strategies.

Bivariate correlation analysis was used to examine the relationships between social support and stress management strategies. A multiple regression model was also reported with problem-focused coping, emotion-

focused coping, avoidance coping, and cognitive reframing entered as predictors of perceived social support. Statistical significance was evaluated at the .05 level.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

The study observed ethical procedures intended to protect the rights, privacy, and welfare of the respondents. Institutional approval and ethics review clearance were reportedly obtained before data collection. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was secured from the respondents.

Participants were informed of the study's purpose, procedures, and their right to discontinue participation without penalty. No identifying information, such as names or student numbers, was collected. Responses were treated as confidential and were used solely for academic research purposes. Data were stored securely, with access limited to the researcher.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Perceived Social Support Among Business Students

The respondents generally reported receiving social support across the four dimensions examined in the study. As summarized in Table 1, emotional support obtained the highest composite mean of 3.38, followed by instrumental support at 3.33. Informational support and appraisal support both obtained composite means of 3.31. All dimensions were interpreted as "Agree," indicating that respondents generally perceived emotional reassurance, practical assistance, guidance, feedback, and encouragement as available within their social environment.

Table 1. *Summary of Perceived Social Support*

Dimension	Weighted Mean	Interpretation	Rank
Emotional support	3.38	Agree	1
Instrumental support	3.33	Agree	2
Informational support	3.31	Agree	3.5
Appraisal support	3.31	Agree	3.5
Composite Mean	3.33	Agree	

Emotional support emerged as the most strongly perceived dimension. At the item level, family-based emotional support received the highest rating, particularly the perception that family members provide love and care when students experience academic stress. This finding indicates that family relationships remain an important source of reassurance and emotional stability for respondents. Such a pattern is consistent with research emphasizing the contribution of family and social support to student mental health and adaptive coping (Yang et al., 2022; Zhang et al., 2022).

Instrumental support was also positively assessed, with family-provided financial or material assistance receiving the strongest rating within that dimension. Respondents likewise reported access to peer-shared materials, assistance with group tasks, and other tangible resources. The comparatively lower rating for direct practical help when schoolwork becomes difficult suggests, however, that tangible assistance may not always be immediately accessible during demanding academic situations.

Informational and appraisal support received slightly lower, although still positive, assessments. Teacher or mentor advice concerning academic stress was among the strongest informational-support indicators, whereas information regarding available student services such as counseling received the lowest rating within that dimension. Similarly, respondents generally perceived guidance and constructive feedback as available, although recognition for achievement received a comparatively lower rating. These patterns indicate that students may benefit from strengthening the visibility of institutional support services and providing more consistent opportunities for feedback, mentoring, and recognition.

Overall, the findings suggest that students experience social support as a multidimensional resource. Emotional and tangible forms of assistance appear somewhat more salient than informational and appraisal support, although all four dimensions were positively perceived.

4.2 Stress Management Strategies

The study examined problem-focused coping, emotion-focused coping, avoidance coping, and cognitive reframing as stress management strategies. The available descriptive results for problem-focused coping, emotion-focused coping, and avoidance coping are summarized in Table 2. Cognitive reframing was also included in the instrument and in the subsequent inferential analyses.

Table 2. Descriptive Results for Stress Management Strategies

Strategy	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
Problem-focused coping	3.27	Agree
Emotion-focused coping	3.30	Agree
Avoidance coping	3.11	Agree

Respondents generally reported using problem-focused coping when handling academic stress. The strongest item within this dimension concerned focusing on concrete solutions when experiencing academic stress, while seeking assistance from professors or peers received the lowest rating. The findings suggest that students tend to rely on direct problem-solving, task organization, and time-management strategies but may be comparatively less inclined to seek external assistance. This pattern is broadly consistent with literature identifying planning, problem-solving, and academic help-seeking as important components of adaptive coping (Li et al., 2023; Putranto et al., 2025; Sari, 2023).

Emotion-focused coping obtained a composite mean of 3.30. Maintaining a positive outlook when academic stress becomes overwhelming received the highest rating in this dimension. Respondents also reported using relaxation, emotional expression, recreational activities, and reflection on past successes. These findings indicate that students regulate not only the causes of academic stress but also their emotional reactions to those stressors. Previous research similarly associates emotional regulation, relaxation, mindfulness, and adaptive emotional coping with psychological adjustment and well-being (Alvarado-García et al., 2025; Bentley et al., 2023; Kritikou & Giovazolias, 2022).

Avoidance coping obtained the lowest composite mean at 3.11, although it was still interpreted as "Agree." Digital and recreational distraction through social media, gaming, or other activities was the most strongly endorsed avoidance strategy. Ignoring academic tasks because they felt overwhelming received the lowest rating. This suggests that respondents sometimes use temporary disengagement or distraction when under pressure, but complete withdrawal from academic responsibilities may be less common. The pattern is consistent with literature associating digital distraction, procrastination, and avoidance with increased academic stress and poorer academic functioning (Flanigan et al., 2023; Ragusa et al., 2023; Rozental et al., 2022).

4.3 Relationship Between Social Support and Stress Management Strategies

The study reports statistically significant positive relationships between all four dimensions of social support and the stress management strategies. Table 3 consolidates the reported correlation coefficients.

Table 3. Correlations Between Social Support and Stress Management Strategies

Social Support Dimension	Problem-Focused Coping	Emotion-Focused Coping	Avoidance Coping	Cognitive Reframing
Emotional support	.640	.710	.321	.583
Instrumental support	.706	.683	.352	.585
Informational support	.669	.689	.374	.566
Appraisal support	.657	.660	.358	.555

Note. All reported relationships were significant at $p < .001$.

The strongest reported association was between emotional support and emotion-focused coping (coefficient = .710), closely followed by instrumental support and problem-focused coping (coefficient = .706). These results suggest that students who perceive stronger emotional reassurance tend also to report greater use of emotion-regulation strategies, while students receiving greater tangible or practical assistance tend to report greater use of problem-oriented coping.

Informational support was positively associated with all four stress management strategies, with coefficients ranging from .374 to .689. This suggests that advice, academic guidance, and access to useful information correspond with greater reported use of coping responses. Appraisal support likewise showed positive relationships across the coping dimensions, indicating that constructive feedback, encouragement, recognition, and guidance may operate alongside students' stress-management responses.

Avoidance coping produced the weakest associations across all four social-support dimensions, although the reported relationships remained statistically significant. Coefficients ranged from .321 to .374. This pattern suggests that stronger social support corresponds more strongly with problem-focused, emotion-focused, and cognitively oriented coping than with avoidance-based responses.

4.4 Regression Model

A multiple regression model was reported with the four stress management strategies entered as predictors of perceived social support. The model accounted for 60.2% of the variance in social support. Table 4 presents the coefficients retained from the source analysis.

Table 4. *Regression Model Predicting Perceived Social Support*

Predictor	B	t	p	Interpretation
Problem-focused coping	0.130	1.93	.055	Not significant
Emotion-focused coping	0.200	3.03	.003	Significant
Avoidance coping	0.195	3.18	.002	Significant
Cognitive reframing	0.158	2.54	.012	Significant

Note. $R^2 = .602$; significance evaluated at $\alpha = .05$.

Emotion-focused coping, avoidance coping, and cognitive reframing were statistically significant predictors of perceived social support, whereas problem-focused coping did not reach the .05 level of significance ($p = .055$). As reported, emotion-focused coping had the largest unstandardized coefficient among the four predictors. This suggests that students who report greater use of emotional coping responses also tend to report stronger perceived social support.

The positive coefficient for cognitive reframing similarly indicates an association between constructive reinterpretation of stressful situations and higher perceived support. Avoidance coping was also statistically significant, although this finding warrants cautious interpretation because avoidance is generally considered a less adaptive strategy.

Problem-focused coping was not statistically significant in the regression model. One possible explanation is that students who rely primarily on planning, problem-solving, and independent task management may not necessarily perceive greater availability of social support. The regression findings should be interpreted as predictive associations within a nonexperimental design rather than as evidence of causal effects.

4.5 Discussion

The findings indicate that business students generally perceive social support as available across emotional, instrumental, informational, and appraisal dimensions. Emotional support emerged as the most strongly perceived form of assistance, emphasizing the continuing importance of close interpersonal relationships in helping students manage academic pressures. This finding is consistent with research showing that family, peer, and significant-other support contributes to psychological adjustment and lower academic stress (Ullah et al., 2023; Yang et al., 2022; Zhang et al., 2022).

The findings also show that students employ a combination of adaptive and avoidant coping strategies. Problem-focused and emotion-focused coping were both positively endorsed, indicating that respondents attempt both to address academic problems directly and to regulate their emotional reactions. These results correspond with research associating active problem-solving, emotional regulation, and adaptive coping with reduced academic stress and better psychological functioning (Kritikou & Giovazolias, 2022; Putranto et al., 2025; Sari, 2023).

At the same time, avoidance coping remained evident among the respondents. Digital distraction received particular prominence, suggesting that social media, gaming, and similar activities may serve as readily accessible mechanisms for temporary relief from academic pressure. Although such behaviors may reduce distress in the short term, prolonged dependence on avoidance and procrastination can contribute to greater academic stress and reduced performance (Flanigan et al., 2023; Ragusa et al., 2023; Rozentel et al., 2022).

The relational findings provide the strongest empirical contribution of the study. All reported relationships between social support dimensions and coping strategies were statistically significant. Emotional support was particularly strongly associated with emotion-focused coping, while instrumental support was strongly associated with problem-focused coping. These relationships are theoretically consistent with Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) Transactional Model of Stress and Coping, in which individuals assess both personal capacities and external resources when responding to stressful demands.

The weaker relationships involving avoidance coping are also meaningful. Although social support was positively associated with avoidance, the magnitude of these relationships was consistently smaller than those involving problem-focused and emotion-focused coping. This suggests that supportive social environments may correspond more strongly with constructive coping responses than with withdrawal or disengagement.

Taken together, the findings indicate that academic stress management should not be understood solely as an individual behavioral process. Students' coping responses exist within social environments composed of family, peers, faculty members, mentors, and institutional support systems. Strengthening the accessibility of informational support, academic guidance, counseling, peer assistance, and constructive feedback may therefore complement individual stress-management interventions.

5. Conclusions, Recommendations, and Implications

5.1 Conclusions

The study found that business students generally perceived the availability of social support across emotional, instrumental, informational, and appraisal dimensions. Emotional support obtained the highest mean among the four dimensions, indicating that respondents particularly valued reassurance, care, and encouragement from family members, peers, and other significant individuals. Instrumental, informational, and appraisal support were likewise positively perceived, although the comparatively lower ratings for access to student-service information and recognition suggest areas where institutional support could be strengthened.

The respondents also reported using different strategies to manage academic stress. Available descriptive findings showed the use of problem-focused coping, emotion-focused coping, and avoidance coping. Problem-focused and emotion-focused strategies were more strongly endorsed than avoidance coping, suggesting that students generally combine direct problem-solving with efforts to regulate emotional responses. Avoidance behaviors nevertheless remained evident, particularly through distraction and temporary disengagement from stressful academic demands.

The correlational findings demonstrated statistically significant positive relationships between all dimensions of social support and the stress management strategies reported in the study. Emotional support showed its strongest association with emotion-focused coping, while instrumental support showed a particularly strong relationship with problem-focused coping. The comparatively weaker associations involving avoidance coping indicate that social support was more strongly related to constructive coping responses than to avoidant behavior.

The regression model further showed that emotion-focused coping, avoidance coping, and cognitive reframing were statistically significant predictors of perceived social support, while problem-focused coping was not significant at the .05 level. These findings describe predictive associations within the reported model and should not be interpreted as evidence of causality.

Overall, the findings support the view that stress management among business students is associated with the quality and availability of interpersonal and institutional support. Students appear to cope with academic demands not only through individual strategies but also within broader networks of family, peers, faculty members, mentors, and university support systems.

5.2 Recommendations

Universities may strengthen student-support systems by improving the visibility, accessibility, and coordination of counseling, academic advising, mentoring, and wellness services. Orientation activities, student portals, institutional social-media channels, and classroom communication may be used more systematically to ensure that students are aware of available support resources.

Faculty members, academic advisers, and mentors may provide more consistent informational and appraisal support through timely academic guidance, constructive feedback, consultation opportunities, and realistic assistance in goal setting. Particular attention may be given to students who appear reluctant to seek assistance despite experiencing academic difficulties.

Peer-support initiatives may also be strengthened through mentoring, tutoring, collaborative study groups, and peer-assisted learning programs. These interventions may provide practical assistance while reducing barriers to academic help-seeking.

Student-development and guidance offices may conduct programs focused on adaptive stress management, including time management, problem-solving, emotional regulation, relaxation techniques, and constructive cognitive responses to academic pressure. Such programs should also address the potential risks of excessive avoidance, procrastination, and digital distraction.

Recognition mechanisms may be expanded beyond high academic achievement to include improvement, leadership, participation, perseverance, and personal development. More inclusive forms of recognition may strengthen appraisal support and encourage greater student engagement.

The proposed action plan may be adapted by the institution as a guide for strengthening social support and stress-management initiatives. Its implementation should be accompanied by periodic evaluation to determine

whether student awareness, participation, help-seeking behavior, and perceptions of available support improve over time.

Future studies may replicate the research across different academic programs, institutions, and geographic settings to determine whether similar patterns are observed. Subsequent research may also clarify the directional relationship between social support and coping through longitudinal or more explicitly predictive designs.

5.3 Implications of the Study

The findings have behavioral, educational, and institutional implications. Behaviorally, the study reinforces the view that coping responses are related to the social environment in which stress is experienced. Students do not manage academic pressure solely through personal skills; their responses are also associated with the availability of emotional reassurance, tangible assistance, guidance, and constructive feedback.

From an educational perspective, the findings suggest that student well-being should be treated as a shared institutional concern rather than as an exclusively individual responsibility. Faculty members, advisers, counseling personnel, student organizations, and families may all contribute to creating conditions that support more constructive responses to academic stress.

Institutionally, the comparatively lower ratings for some informational and appraisal-support indicators point to the importance of improving communication about available student services and strengthening consistent mechanisms for feedback, recognition, mentoring, and academic assistance. Support systems become more useful when students are aware of them, perceive them as accessible, and feel comfortable using them.

Theoretically, the pattern of relationships is broadly consistent with the Transactional Model of Stress and Coping, which emphasizes that coping depends partly on the resources individuals perceive as available when evaluating stressful situations. The findings similarly support the conceptualization of social support as a multidimensional psychosocial resource involving emotional, instrumental, informational, and appraisal functions.

The study therefore contributes to the understanding of student stress management by showing that coping patterns and perceived social support are significantly interconnected within the context of business education. This relationship provides a practical basis for integrating academic-support structures with behavioral and psychosocial interventions intended to improve student resilience and well-being.

6. References

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