



Academic Stress and Study Habits in Peruvian University Students

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Abstract

The current research aims to analyze the relationship between academic stress and study habits in Peruvian university students. A quantitative method was employed, with a non-experimental design, basic research type, and relational level. The study was conducted with a population of 133 students from various specialties at the Faculty of Education of the Catholic University of Santa María in Arequipa, selecting a sample of 99 students for the study. For data collection, two instruments were applied: the Likert scale questionnaire called SISCO Inventory, consisting of 29 questions to assess the level of stress, and another Likert scale questionnaire, called Study Habits Inventory, comprising 53 questions to evaluate the knowledge about study habits. After conducting the correlation between the variables under study, it was determined that there is a very strong inverse correlation between academic stress and study habits, approaching a perfect correlation. The correlation coefficient obtained was $r^2 = (-0.840)^2 = 0.706$. This indicates that 70.6% of academic stress affects the study habits of students at the School of Education of the aforementioned university. The significance level of this correlation is very strong, implying that the higher the level of academic stress, the worse the study habits of the students, and vice versa.

Keywords: academic stress, behavioral reactions, coping strategies, physical reactions, psychological reactions, study habits

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Introduction

The academic competitiveness in universities worldwide has increased, driving institutions to enhance their educational quality. This scenario has exposed students to high levels of stress, as they need to engage in both curricular and extracurricular activities to meet the new professional

standards of a globalized world (Huang et al., 2020). Scientific literature has shown that academic stress in teenagers and university students is related to concerns about physical appearance, school, work, and interpersonal relationships, with anxiety about academic and professional achievement being one of the main stress factors (Chen et al., 2020; Trigueros et al., 2020b). Academic stress originates in the learning environment, arising from both individual and group tasks. According to Barbayannis et al. (2022), this stress comes from the academic demands placed on students and teachers. Chandra (2021) expands on this concept, describing academic stress as a psychological adaptive response that occurs when the student faces academic demands. This adaptive response involves a physiological imbalance that motivates the student to resolve the problematic situation in order to restore their personal balance.

Academic stress can manifest in two forms: distress and eustress. Trigueros et al. (2020a) identify distress as the negative response to stress, characterized by somatic disorders derived from various stressors such as work and personal relationships. In contrast, eustress represents the positive side of stress, demonstrating an individual's ability to face challenges with assertiveness and confidence. Durán et al. (2021) add that stress begins with preparatory physiological reactions in response to external stimuli, but an excess of stress can lead to collapse if not managed properly. Theories of academic stress focus on understanding how students evaluate and manage academic demands, proposing a model that integrates systemic and cognitive elements (Araoz et al., 2021). Symptoms associated with academic stress include physical and mental alterations, such as depression and decreased concentration. Causes range from task overload to anxiety about evaluations and performance pressure (Green et al., 2022; Zhang et al., 2022). The consequences of academic stress are diverse, affecting both the physical and psychological health of students, especially those who do not possess effective strategies to confront it (de la Fuente et al., 2021).

Meanwhile, study habits refer to the methods and practices that students regularly apply in their academic tasks. Clarke et al. (2021) and Gilavand, & Emad (2021) agree that these habits, which include time management, study space, organization, and learning strategies, are fundamental to improving academic performance. These habits become customs over time and are influenced by the student's will and motivation. The importance of study habits lies in their central role in academic success. Good study habits are not only essential to face the growing academic load in university, but they are also vital for effective planning and study methods. Kohansal et al. (2023) emphasize that intelligence alone does not guarantee academic success; good study habits are necessary. The collaborative effort of educators, psychologists, parents, and students is crucial to establishing study practices that ensure proper learning development and prepare students to face future challenges (Remaycuna-Vasquez et al., 2023).

In the university context, as pointed out by Solano Dávila et al. (2022), the relationship between academic stress and study habits presents a complex dynamic where academic demands act as catalysts for stress, which can manifest in both negative forms that disturb the health and performance of the student (distress), and in positive forms that enhance coping capacity (eustress). Effective study habits are revealed as a fundamental tool to mitigate stress, by providing a structure and method for managing academic responsibilities (Nayak et al., 2023). Good time management, an adequate study space, and strategic planning are practices that not only optimize academic performance but also reduce anxiety associated with evaluations and excessive work (Enríquez et al., 2022). Furthermore, collaboration between the educational community and students is essential to promote and maintain healthy study practices that allow students to effectively manage stress and achieve academic and personal success (Kohansal et al., 2023; Remaycuna-Vasquez et al., 2023).

Academic literature provides an integrated view of academic stress and study habits in university students, with significant contributions from various regions and academic contexts. According to Clabaugh et al. (2021) in the United States, academic stress is defined as a

psychological response to demands perceived as excessive within the educational environment, and its measurement has been carried out through instruments like the SISCO Inventory of Academic Stress, developed by Barraza (2007) in Mexico and widely used in Latin America. The causes of academic stress, including workload and exam pressure, are consistent with findings from researchers like Green et al. (2022) in Afghanistan and Zhang et al. (2022) in China. The adverse effects of academic stress on the mental and physical health of students have been evidenced in studies across various continents, with researchers like Chen et al. (2020) in China and Araoz et al. (2021) in Peru documenting symptoms such as anxiety, depression, sleep disorders, and somatization. Additionally, the relationship between study habits and academic performance has been underscored in research by Solano Dávila et al. (2022) in Peru, who argue that adopting effective study techniques can be a key intervention to improve educational outcomes and reduce stress among students.

Coping strategies, such as active stress management and social support, have been linked to better outcomes in student well-being and academic performance in works by Nayak et al. (2023) in India. Individual and contextual differences in the experience of academic stress, highlighted by researchers like de la Fuente et al. (2021) in 642 universities around the world, suggest that the student's personality and gender, as well as the institutional environment examined by Barbayannis et al. (2022) in the United States, play a significant role in how students experience and manage stress. Finally, interventions and recommendations to address academic stress and promote healthy study habits have been focused on research in universities, with programs and workshops that have proven to be effective, according to Chandra et al. (2021) and Huang et al. (2020) in India and China, respectively. These studies collectively point to the need for proactive coping strategies and robust institutional support to facilitate success and well-being for university students in the global context.

The importance of this research lies in the growing concern about the repercussions of stress on the mental health and academic performance of university students. It has been recognized that academic stress is associated with adverse consequences, including mental health disorders of the magnitude of suicidal ideation. The existence of methodological tools to assess academic stress provides the possibility to address this issue objectively and systematically. Considering the high incidence of disorders such as depression and anxiety among the student body, along with the influence of study habits on academic performance, conducting this study becomes essential in Peru. This study not only aims to understand in detail the academic stress in this specific environment but also to devise interventions that promote a better quality of life and greater success in the educational realm for students. Under these considerations, the present study investigates the existing correlation between academic stress and study habits in the students of the Professional School of Education at the Catholic University of Santa Maria. In this sense, the following hypothesis system is established:

- Main Hypothesis: There is a significant correlation between academic stress and study habits in the students of the Professional School of Education at the Catholic University of Santa Maria.
- H1: Students of the Professional School of Education at the Catholic University of Santa Maria present a high level of academic stress.
- H2: The use of study habits by the students of the Professional School of Education at the Catholic University of Santa Maria is insufficient.
- H3: There is a significant relationship between the intensity of academic stress and the practice of study habits in the students of the Professional School of Education at the Catholic University of Santa Maria

Methodology

The study adopted a quantitative approach, aiming to explore and deepen the understanding of a specific situation through concrete data and well-established theoretical frameworks. This approach seeks to analyze the causes of human behavior in a way that maintains its independence from individual subjective opinions, thus ensuring the objectivity of the analysis. The research's methodological framework is normative, and based on universal principles applied to the phenomenon of interest. The data collection methodologies are objective, as are the measurement tools used, including statistics and various tests and assessments. Regarding the design, a non-experimental one was chosen, which means that the study variables will not be intentionally manipulated. The research type is basic, focusing on enriching the existing knowledge about the issue in the long term rather than on the immediate application of objectives. It focuses on expanding and refining previous theories related to the topic. The research level is relational, allowing for the examination of the interaction and correlation between the variables or problems under study.

To carry out the research, a population of 99 students from the Professional School of Education at the Catholic University of Santa Maria in Arequipa was chosen, and distributed evenly among the specialties of Early Childhood Education, Primary Education, and Secondary Education. To obtain the necessary data for the study, a survey was selected as the collection technique, and a Likert scale questionnaire was implemented to assess the quality of service from the student satisfaction perspective. The instruments used in this process were, firstly, the SISCO Inventory of Academic Stress, developed by Barraza (2006), aimed at identifying the characteristics of stress common in students of upper-middle, higher, and postgraduate levels. Secondly, the Study Habits Inventory CASM-85 (Vicuña Peri, 1998) was applied, intended to measure and diagnose the study habits of both high school students and those in the first years of university or higher institutes.

Results and Discussion

The overview of academic stress is divided into five distinct dimensions, evaluating a group of 99 individuals. It is observed that most participants indicate having a high level of stressors, although the highest stress level is the least frequent. Regarding physical reactions to stress, the trend in reports ranges from low to moderate levels. Psychological reactions follow a similar trend, with low responses being the most common and very high ones the least reported. In terms of behavioral reactions, the majority lean towards low responses, and very few people report extremely high reactions. Lastly, regarding coping strategies, it is identified that a considerable proportion of subjects use high-level strategies, while only a small group reports using very high-level strategies. In summary, although high-level stressors are common, most participants tend to experience low to moderate levels of physical and psychological stress reactions and use various strategies to manage them.

Table 1 reveals a significant division in the perception of academic stress among university students, showing that approximately half experience their stress as manageable, with 46.4% reporting Very Low or Low levels. This could indicate that these students have effective stress management strategies or face fewer stressful situations. However, the other half of the sample reports a higher stress level, with 47.5% classifying their stress as High and 6.1% as Very High. These data suggest that a considerable portion of students are dealing with stress levels that could negatively impact their well-being and academic performance:

Table 1. Academic stress/dimension 1: stressors

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very low	23	23,2	23,2	23,2
	Low	23	23,2	23,2	46,5
	High	47	47,5	47,5	93,9
	Very high	6	6,1	6,1	100,0
	Total	99	100,0	100,0	

This distribution underscores the importance of adopting a personalized approach to addressing academic stress, considering the variability in stress experiences among students. The existence of a group reporting very high levels of stress highlights the urgency of implementing support programs that provide effective coping strategies and improve study habits. This analysis not only offers a deeper understanding of the dynamics of academic stress but also emphasizes the critical need for tailored educational and psychological interventions to foster a healthier and more conducive academic environment for learning.

Table 2 sheds light on the physical reactions of university students to academic stress. A total of 24.2% of students reported very low physical reactions to stress, and 39.4% indicated having low reactions, which adds up to 63.6% of the sample experiencing mild or insignificant physical effects due to academic stress. This finding suggests that most students do not experience severe physical impacts from academic stress, possibly due to effective stress management or a lower predisposition to physical manifestations of stress. On the other hand, 31.3% of students reported high physical reactions, and 5.1% experienced very high reactions to stress, indicating that more than a third of the sample suffers from moderate to severe physical effects related to academic stress:

Table 2. Academic stress / dimension 2: physical reactions

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very low	24	24,2	24,2	24,2
	Low	39	39,4	39,4	63,6
	High	31	31,3	31,3	94,9
	Very high	5	5,1	5,1	100,0
	Total	99	100,0	100,0	

The results underscore the importance of addressing physical reactions to academic stress through comprehensive approaches that cater to both psychological causes and physical manifestations, promoting healthy practices that enhance the overall well-being and academic performance of students.

Table 3 illustrates how college students psychologically respond to academic stress. In a sample of 99 students, a notable majority, 76.8%, report low or very low psychological reactions to academic stress, with 27.3% reporting very low levels and 49.5% reporting low levels. This indicates that a large portion of students seem to manage academic stress well from a psychological perspective, possibly thanks to effective coping strategies or a lesser perception of academic demands as stressful. On the other hand, 19.2% of the students experience high psychological reactions to stress, and 4% report very high reactions, revealing that a significant fraction of the sample faces considerable psychological challenges due to academic stress.

Table 3. Academic stress / dimension 3: psychological reactions

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very low	27	27,3	27,3	27,3
	Low	49	49,5	49,5	76,8
	High	19	19,2	19,2	96,0
	Very high	4	4,0	4,0	100,0
	Total	99	100,0	100,0	

These challenges can manifest in the form of anxiety, depression, or concentration difficulties, among others, underscoring the need to address these reactions through psychological support and stress management strategies tailored to the student's needs to improve their well-being and academic performance. Table 4 displays the behavioral reactions to academic stress among college students. It highlights that a large majority, 53.5%, report low behavioral reactions to stress, and an additional 22.2% indicate very low levels, suggesting that approximately 75.8% of students effectively manage academic stress without it severely impacting their behavior. However, 22.2% of the students show high behavioral reactions, and 2.0% experience very high reactions, evidencing that a quarter of the studied population suffers from significant behavioral challenges stemming from academic stress. These challenges can include issues such as procrastination, changes in sleep patterns, and alterations in eating habits or social participation, underscoring the need to implement support programs that promote effective stress management strategies and healthy behaviors:

Table 4. Academic stress / dimension 4: behavioral reactions

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very low	22	22,2	22,2	22,2
	Low	53	53,5	53,5	75,8
	High	22	22,2	22,2	98,0
	Very high	2	2,0	2,0	100,0
	Total	99	100,0	100,0	

In summary, Table 4 illustrates that, although a significant majority of students report low or very low behavioral impacts due to academic stress, there is a non-negligible proportion that experiences moderate to severe effects on their behavior. This finding highlights the importance of addressing behavioral reactions to academic stress through interventions focused on the development of stress management skills and the promotion of adaptive behaviors, thus contributing to improving students' well-being and academic performance.

Table 5 details the coping strategies used by college students in response to academic stress. It is observed that 55.6% of the sample, composed of 19.2% with very low use and 36.4% with low use of coping strategies, seems not to apply these techniques effectively to manage stress, which could indicate a lack of knowledge or difficulties in implementing such strategies. However, 44.4% of the students, divided into 33.3% with high use and 11.1% with very high use, report actively employing stress management tactics, suggesting that this group is better prepared to effectively face academic demands. The distribution of responses in Table 5 highlights the variety in the use of coping strategies among college students facing academic stress. While a significant proportion of the sample is not using these strategies extensively, there is a notable group that effectively applies them.

Table 5. Academic stress / dimension 5: coping strategies

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very low	19	19,2	19,2	19,2
	Low	36	36,4	36,4	55,6
	High	33	33,3	33,3	88,9
	Very high	11	11,1	11,1	100,0
	Total	99	100,0	100,0	

This underscores the importance of promoting education and training in coping strategies among college students to improve their well-being and academic performance. The promotion of stress management skills development programs could be a valuable intervention to increase students' resilience to academic pressures.

Table 6 provides an overview of the level of academic stress perceived by the participants. The distribution of responses indicates that one-third of the sample, specifically 33.3%, reports a Low level of academic stress. This suggests that a significant proportion of students feel that the academic stress they face is manageable or not particularly impactful on their daily lives. The majority of students, 61.6%, classify their academic stress as Medium, indicating that, while stress is more palpable for this group, it possibly does not reach a severity point that critically affects their well-being or academic performance. Finally, only 5.1% of the students perceive their level of academic stress as High, indicating that only a small fraction of the sample experiences a high magnitude of stress that could require specific interventions for its management:

Table 6. Summary of the variable: academic stress

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Low	33	33,3	33,3	33,3
	Medium	61	61,6	61,6	94,9
	High	5	5,1	5,1	100,0
	Total	99	100,0	100,0	

These findings suggest that the majority of college students are positioned on an academic stress spectrum ranging from low to medium, with only a small percentage facing high levels of stress. This distribution emphasizes the importance of having appropriate support strategies and resources for managing academic stress, especially aimed at those experiencing higher levels of stress. Furthermore, it highlights the need for further research into the factors contributing to Medium academic stress, to provide preventive or corrective measures that assist students in better managing academic pressures and minimizing the negative impact on their performance and mental health.

Table 7, presenting results on study habits among college students, offers a detailed breakdown of how students adopt various study techniques, revealing a varied approach to learning. The most used technique is self-assessment and personal reformulation of content, employed by 84.8% of respondents, indicating a preference for strategies that involve a deep interaction with the material. In contrast, only 49.5% of students resort to writing nearly verbatim responses from the book, showing a lesser inclination towards rote learning. Other popular strategies include reading and highlighting important points (81.8%), clarifying the highlighted (72.7%), and transcribing the understood content into the student's language (69.7%), evidencing a preference for an active study approach. Less used techniques are looking up unknown words in the dictionary (55.6%) and giving a general read without further depth (64.6%), reflecting

variations in how students prioritize and focus their learning. Additionally, the 66.7% of students who study only for exams suggest an orientation towards assessment rather than continuous learning, highlighting the diversity in study strategies and underscoring the importance of adapting learning techniques to improve understanding and retention of academic material:

Table 7. Questions to measure the variable: study habits - dimension 1: study

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	I read everything I have to study, highlighting the most important points.	81	81,8%
	I highlight the words whose meaning I do not know.	65	65,7%
	I return to the highlighted points to clarify them.	72	72,7%
	I immediately look up in the dictionary the words I do not know.	55	55,6%
	I ask myself questions and answer in my language what I have understood.	84	84,8%
	Then, I write in my language what I have understood.	69	69,7%
	I read part by part and repeat several times until I can recite it from memory.	71	71,7%
	I try to memorize everything I study.	63	63,6%
	I review what I have studied after 4 or 8 hours.	54	54,5%
	I just give a general read to everything I have to study.	64	64,6%
	I try to relate the topic I am studying to other topics already studied.	78	78,8%
	I study only for exams.	66	66,7%
	I read the question, looked it up in the book, and wrote the answer almost as the book says.	49	49,5%
	I read the question, looked it up in the book, read everything, and then answered as I understood.	72	72,7%
	The words I do not understand, I write them as they are in the book, without finding out their meaning.	54	54,5%
	I give more importance to the order and presentation of the work than to the understanding of the topic.	53	53,5%

Table 7 provides a complex look at the study habits of college students, showing a clear preference for techniques that involve a deep and personal interaction with the study material. The variety in the strategies used highlights the importance of promoting effective and adaptive study methods that can meet diverse learning needs, fostering a deeper and more enduring understanding of academic material.

Table 8, which examines how college students manage their assignments, reveals important trends in study habits and task management. 58.6% of students report not having enough time at home to complete their assignments, opting to finish them at the university with the help of friends, indicating a tendency towards collaboration and peer support in the face of time constraints. On the other hand, 37.4% seek help from parents or others, letting them solve much of their assignments, suggesting a dependency on external help and raising questions about autonomy in learning. Additionally, 42.4% leave their assignments until the last minute, facing

procrastination issues. Another 43.4% switch tasks when feeling tired, and 33.3% abandon the task when frustrated, showing challenges in emotional management and attention. However, a positive note is that 64.6% start with the most difficult tasks, which could facilitate better work management. Nevertheless, only 36.4% dedicate at least two hours daily to studying, pointing to potential limitations in daily commitment to studying:

Table 8. Questions to measure the variable: study habits - dimension 2: tasks

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	At home, I run out of time to finish my tasks; I complete them at the university by asking my friends.	58	58,6%
	I ask for help from my parents or other people and let them solve everything or a large part of the task.	37	37,4%
	I leave the completion of my tasks to the last minute, which is why I do not finish them within the established time.	42	42.4%
	I start solving a task, get tired, and move on to another.	43	43.4%
	When I can't solve a task, it makes me angry, and I just stop doing it.	33	33.3%
	When I have homework, I start with the most difficult and then move on to the easier ones.	64	64.6%
	I study for at least two hours a day.	36	36.4%

Table 8 provides a comprehensive view of how college students approach their assignments, highlighting both effective strategies and areas for improvement in time management, dependence on external support, procrastination, and emotional regulation. These findings are crucial for understanding the challenges students face in their academic lives and can guide the development of support programs to improve study habits and autonomy in learning.

Table 9 reveals the practices and challenges of college students regarding exams, showing a clear tendency towards procrastination with 64.6% beginning their study only after knowing the exam date and last-minute strategies, such as reviewing notes in the classroom (41%) or studying on the day of the exam (34.3%). Despite this, the majority (85.9%) review shortly before the test, evidencing a preference for final reviews. Questionable tactics are also common, with 44.4% preparing means to cheat and 53.5% expecting help from peers, raising ethical concerns. However, 68.7% tackle the most difficult topics first when there are multiple exams, indicating effective time management. Yet, the same proportion admits to taking exams without having fully covered the syllabus, and 35.4% report confusion and forgetting under pressure, reflecting anxiety and memory issues. These findings underline the need for improved study and exam preparation strategies that promote more effective and ethical habits among students. These results highlight various strategies and challenges faced by students in relation to exams, ranging from procrastination and reliance on unethical methods to last-minute study techniques and managing anxiety. The information can be used to develop interventions aimed at improving study habits and exam preparation techniques, encouraging more effective and ethical practices in the academic environment.

Table 9. Questions to measure the variable: study habits - dimension 3: exams

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	I hope an exam date is set so I can start studying.	64	64,6%
	When there is an oral exam, I only start reviewing my notes in the classroom.	41	41,0%
	I start studying on the day of the exam.	34	34,3%
	I review moments before the exam.	85	85,9%
	I prepare a cheat sheet in case I forget about the exam.	44	44,4%
	I rely on a classmate to give me some answers during the exam.	53	53,5%
	When I have two or more exams on the same day, I start studying with the most difficult subject and then the easiest.	68	68,7%
	I take my exams without having finished studying the entire course.	53	53,5%
	During an exam, I get the topics mixed up and forget what I have studied.	35	35,4%

Table 10 details how college students manage their study habits in class, ranging from meticulous note-taking to dealing with distractions. While 67.7% attempt to capture everything the professor says, 79.8% choose to focus on the most crucial aspects, showing a preference for filtering essential information. Nearly half (52.5%) organize their notes post-class, demonstrating an effort to maintain order. However, distractions are common: only 36.4% ask for clarifications on unknown terms; 30.3% pay more attention to distractions such as jokes among classmates; 38.4% are easily distracted by engaging in other activities; and 50.5% entertain themselves with games or chatting when bored. Moreover, 34.3% abandon note-taking if they cannot keep up with the professor, and more than half (51.5%) mentally wander when the topic is unclear. Surprisingly, 66.7% would prefer to sleep or leave during class, and 48.5% need music to concentrate while studying, reflecting a wide spectrum of strategies and challenges in concentration and active learning in the classroom:

Table 10. Questions to measure the variable: study habits - dimension 4: classes

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	I try to take notes on everything the teacher says.	67	67,7%
	I only take notes on the most important things.	79	79,8%
	Immediately after a class, I organize my notes.	52	52,5%
	When the teacher uses a word I don't know, I raise my hand and ask for its meaning.	36	36,4%
	I pay more attention to my classmates' jokes than to the class.	30	30,3%
	I get tired quickly and start doing other things.	38	38,4%
	When I get bored, I start playing or talking to my friends.	50	50,5%

When I can't take notes on what the teacher is saying, I get bored and give up on everything.	34	34,3%
When I don't understand a topic, my mind starts to wander and daydream.	51	51,5%
My thoughts or fantasies distract me during class.	38	38,4%
During class, I get distracted thinking about what I'm going to do afterward.	40	40,4%
During classes, I wish I could sleep or maybe leave the class.	66	66,7%
I need music, whether from the radio, cellphone, or iPhone to study.	48	48,5%

These data reveal a mix of effective practices and challenges in the classroom environment, from helpful note-taking techniques to issues with concentration and motivation. The tendency to be easily distracted, along with a preference for non-academic activities during class time, underscores the need for teaching strategies that better capture students' attention and study methods that promote concentration and active engagement with learning material.

Table 11 explores the dimension of optimal study times according to college students' study habits, showing preferences and challenges in their study environment. 29.3% of students indicate that they need the company of television to study, while a significant majority, 68.7%, prefers peace and quiet, demonstrating a clear preference for a more serene and distraction-free study atmosphere. Additionally, half of the students (50.5%) mention the need to have some food while studying, suggesting that eating may be part of their study routine or a way to maintain concentration. Interruptions at home are common, with 46.5% of students reporting that their family members talk, watch TV, or listen to music while they try to study, and 44.4% face interruptions from parents asking for favors. Moreover, visits and friends represent a distraction for 39.4% of students, and 30.3% indicate that social interruptions such as parties, outings, or dates take away from their study time:

Table 11. Questions to measure the variable: study habits - dimension 5: moments

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	I need the company of the TV to study.	29	29,3%
	I need peace to study.	68	68,7%
	I need some food to eat while I study.	50	50,5%
	My family talks, watches TV, or listens to music while I study.	46	46,5%
	Interruptions by my parents asking me for a favor.	44	44,4%
	Interruptions from visitors, and friends who take up my time.	39	39,4%
	Social interruptions, parties, outings, dates, etc.	30	30,3%

These results underline the importance of an appropriate study space and the management of interruptions to maintain an effective study routine, highlighting the need for strategies to improve concentration and minimize distractions in college students' study environments. Table 12 provides a general overview of the study habits of a sample of 99 college students. Notably, no students with study habits classified as Very Low are reported, indicating that none of the

respondents consider themselves extremely deficient in their study habits. A significant proportion, 41.4%, have study habits considered as Low, suggesting that although these students engage in study practices, they might be facing challenges in studying effectively or consistently. The majority of the sample, 54.5%, exhibits study habits classified as High, indicating a good level of study practices that likely contribute positively to their academic performance. A small percentage, 4.0%, reaches the level of Very High, highlighting those few students as exemplary in their study practices:

Table 12. Summary of variable y: study habits

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very low	00	00,0	00,0	00,0
	Low	41	41,4	41,4	41,4
	High	54	54,5	54,5	96,0
	Very high	4	4,0	4,0	100,0
	Total	99	100,0	100,0	

This summary reveals a predominantly positive distribution of study habits among respondents, with a lean toward effective study practices, though there is still room for improvement, especially for those in the Low category. The provision Table 13 showing Pearson correlation coefficients between academic stress and various dimensions of study habits among Peruvian university students indicates a consistent and negative relationship between the different dimensions of academic stress and the quality of study habits. This suggests that as academic stress increases, the quality of study habits tends to decrease, highlighting the impact of stress on students' ability to maintain effective study practices.

Table 13. Pearson Correlation

			Variable y: study habits
Valid	Academic stress / dimension 1: stressors	Pearson Correlation	-0,755**
		Sig. (two-tailed)	,000
		N	99
	Academic stress / dimension 2: physical reactions	Pearson Correlation	-0,722**
		Sig. (two-tailed)	,000
		N	99
	Academic stress / dimension 3: psychological reactions	Pearson Correlation	-0,721**
		Sig. (two-tailed)	,000
		N	99
	Academic stress / dimension 4: behavioral reactions	Pearson Correlation	-0,629**
		Sig. (two-tailed)	,000
		N	99
	Academic stress / dimension 5: coping strategies	Pearson Correlation	-0,740**
		Sig. (two-tailed)	,000
		N	99
	Variable x. Academic stress	Pearson Correlation	-0,840**
		Sig. (two-tailed)	,000
		N	99

**. The correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (two-tailed).

It underscores the importance of addressing academic stress to support the development of better study habits, thereby potentially enhancing academic performance and overall student well-being. In the first dimension, which examines stressors, a strong negative correlation ($r = -0.755$) is found, indicating that as levels of stressors increase, study habits tend to deteriorate. This relationship is statistically significant, with a significance level ($p < 0.001$, two-tailed), confirming the reliability of this relationship within the sample size of 99 students.

The second dimension focuses on physical reactions to stress and also shows a strong negative correlation ($r = -0.722$). This suggests that intense physical reactions to stress are significantly related to less effective study habits. The statistical significance of these findings is high, reflecting a reliable association within the sample. Similar to the first two dimensions, the third dimension, dealing with psychological reactions to stress, displays an equally strong negative correlation ($r = -0.721$). This indicates that as psychological reactions to stress increase, study habits are negatively impacted. The statistical significance is very strong, underscoring a considerable negative relationship between these variables.

Regarding the fourth dimension, behavioral reactions, a moderate negative correlation ($r = -0.629$) is presented. This shows that as behavioral reactions to stress intensify, study habits tend to worsen, with this relationship also being statistically significant ($p < 0.001$, two-tailed). The fifth dimension examines coping strategies and their relation to study habits, revealing a strong negative correlation ($r = -0.740$). This implies that the use of coping strategies is associated with poorer study habits, or that those with poorer study habits tend to report greater use of coping strategies. The statistical significance is high, reinforcing the validity of this association.

The strongest correlation is observed in the overall variable of academic stress ($r = -0.840$), suggesting a very strong and significant relationship with study habits. This high correlation is statistically significant, indicating a robust inverse relationship between overall academic stress and study habits in the sample. The double asterisks (**) next to the correlation coefficients denote that the correlations are significant at the 0.01 level (two-tailed), meaning there is less than a 1% probability that these correlations are due to chance, which strengthens the robustness of these findings. The consistency in significance levels across all dimensions indicates a strong and reliable set of relationships within this sample of university students. The negative direction of all correlations suggests that as academic stress in each dimension increases, study habits become less effective.

Conclusion

These programs could be key in fostering support communities among students and facilitating greater emotional and academic collaboration. In this regard, regarding Hypothesis H1: Evidence suggests that students from the Professional School of Education at the Catholic University of Santa María experience high levels of academic stress. These findings are consistent with current literature indicating an increase in stress in academic settings, exacerbated by exceptional circumstances such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Regarding Hypothesis H2: Students' study habits appear to be deficient. Research points to a disconnect between current study practices and the techniques recommended for effective learning, suggesting the need for a review and improvement of these practices. Concerning Hypothesis H3: There is a significant correlation between academic stress and the application of study habits. Higher stress tends to negatively impact the quality and effectiveness of study habits, which in turn can affect academic performance and student well-being. This study concludes that the academic experience of students at the Professional School of Education at the Catholic University of Santa María is marked by a high level of stress. This stress aligns with broader trends observed in higher education and is intensified by additional stressors such as those associated with the COVID-19

pandemic. As for study habits, there is a clear deficiency in the practice of effective learning strategies, indicating the need to improve study techniques to facilitate more effective learning. Finally, a direct relationship between academic stress and study habits is highlighted, where higher levels of stress have a negative influence on the adoption of efficient study habits, which could lead to a decrease in academic performance and affect the mental health and overall well-being of students. The recommendations derived from the study emphasize the importance of an integrated institutional approach to improve student well-being. Educational institutions must implement psychological support and stress management programs that are accessible to students, as well as evidence-based workshops to develop effective study habits. The implementation of proactive systems for the early identification and support of students with high academic stress is also essential. Mental health professionals and counselors should work closely with teaching staff to offer specific counseling services and support to students at risk. Teachers should adopt pedagogical methods that promote autonomy minimize academic pressure, and provide constructive feedback to improve study techniques. Students are encouraged to form study groups and proactively seek support resources, which can enhance their performance and emotional well-being. Future research could benefit from examining the durability of the effects of psychological support and stress management programs within various learning environments, as well as assessing how seminars focused on improving study habits can influence academic success and knowledge retention over time. Additionally, it would be worthwhile to explore how enhanced collaboration between mental health professionals and educators can contribute to student well-being. Similarly, it would be timely to analyze the impact of teaching methodologies that promote students' independence on their motivation and self-management of learning. It would also be relevant to consider how study groups and peer support networks can reduce academic stress and foster a healthier educational climate. Lastly, it's essential to develop personalized interventions that cater to student diversity and promote greater equity in terms of their well-being.

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