

The Relationship Between Stressful Environment and Academic Performance Among University of Mindanao Students: The Mediating Role of Psychological Well-Being

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ABSTRACT : This study aimed to deduce the academic performance of the University of Mindanao Criminology students and its relationship with stressful environments and mediated by their psychological well-being. The stratified simple random sampling technique selected 300 Criminology students as respondents. The study utilized an adapted questionnaire to gather the needed data. The study used Mean, Pearson Product Moment Correlation, Medgraph using Sobel z-test, and path analysis to analyze the collected data. The study disclosed that the Criminology students' psychological well-being and academic performance are high. On the other hand, the stressful environment they experienced was rated moderately. A significant correlation was observed between the stressful environment and the academic performance of Criminology. Furthermore, there is a significant correlation between the stressful environment and the psychological well-being of Criminology students and the psychological well-being and academic performance of the Criminology students. The mediation test revealed that psychological well-being fully mediated the relationship between the stressful environment the Criminology students experience and their academic performance.

KEYWORDS - *stressful environment, academic performance, psychological wellbeing, mediation.*

I. INTRODUCTION

A stressful environment is detrimental to the overall academic performance of students. Stress is present daily inside academic institutions as different factors involving social relationships, environmental issues, and educational responsibilities are introduced to the students. Accordingly, university students experience a higher degree of stress during predictable periods in a semester due to the elevation of the pressure brought about by their learning circumstances, financial strains, and difficulty in managing their respective schedules (Yumba, 2010). Due to these stress factors, the student's academic performance is jeopardized, preventing them from performing and participating actively in classes. Furthermore, experiencing excessive stress and pressure can ruin a student's focus in attaining their objectives as well as become an additional burden that will hinder them from performing better and achieving more (Hicks, 2021).

Studying the academic performance of students can contribute to identifying factors that may affect their future employment and career success (Dogaru & Popescu, 2021). In addition, successful academic performance equates to students having high self-confidence, understanding their self-worth, and accepting their whole self (Hua, 2022). Furthermore, academic performance also reflects the student's ability to control their desire, thoughts, and emotions and focus on long term goals (Hua, 2022).

Accordingly, the university and college students' success depend on their academic skills, exposure to the labor environment, and overall health (Chiang, Arendt, Sápp, 2020). However, many research studies concluded that stress elements, like academic activities, student and faculty relations, personal life, and professional identity, influence students' academic performance. (Yunusa, Bello, Babazhitsu, Rini, Sidi, & Taqiyya, 2022). Stress can be a burden that students have to carry as they continue the educational journey, which could make or break them, as it is regarded in modern reality as the "career stopper" (Reddy, Menon, Thattil, 2018). Furthermore, a stressful environment affects not only the student's academic life today but also their future career, as the likelihood of discontinuing their pursuit of education is very high.

Throughout the recent decade, students' performance in academic institutions and the factors that influence it have been the main topic for scholars and experts (Walton, 2014). Academic achievement results from the student's dedication and determination for their studies (Ifeoma, Chinyere, Efeyadu, 2017). It is measured through the grade point average (GPA), academic achievements, examinations, and graduation rates. It is also one of the indicators to ensure students' career success in the future (Hakim, Fajri, Faizah, 2022).

Tertiary students are mentally and physically challenged in their academic journey. They are faced with numerous responsibilities not just in school but also in their respective household. It is shown that the socioeconomic status of families affects students' academic performance (Bruce & Attom, 2021). However, it was also concluded that some students still tend to excel despite the socioeconomic status of their families due to having a high intelligence quotient (Bruce & Attom, 2021). Furthermore, students supported positively and constantly by their families tend to perform better academically (Mfum-Appiah, Asiamah, OfosuAmaah, & Quansah, 2022).

Academic performance and education are short-term achievements for students and academic institutions (Tadese, Yeshaneh, & Mulu, 2022). These are also some key areas employers look for in their applicants. Aside from having elevated self-esteem and self-confidence, academically inclined students experience a much lower level of anxiety and depression, have a more active social life, and are less likely to be involved in illegal substances (Regier, 2011). Moreover, a study conducted in Indonesia stated that students who excel in academics tend to have higher incomes and salaries and a higher chance of employment (Tentama & Abdillah, 2019).

On the contrary, a stressful environment refers to a subjective psychological response to an environmental stimulus (Gatersleben & Griffin, 2016). A stressful environment is prevalent in an undergraduate environment as they experience higher levels of anxiety brought about by different stressors such as academic demand, alcoholism, peer pressure, and financial independence (Lilley, Oberle, & Thompson, 2014). A stressful environment not only affects the mind but also manifests in the physical well-being of students and will eventually lead to impaired academic functioning and adds more burden to students, thus developing a syndrome called "Burnout" (Sufia & Latif, 2018).

Environmental stress includes aspects inside the environment that unfavorably influence the capacity and growth of the environment (Washmuth & Williams, 2022). Furthermore, stress that appears from different academic and environmental factors is frequent in the case of college students. Unmanageable stress negatively affects students' academic, social, environmental, psychological, and physical adaptation. College and university students are prone to many forms of stress, especially in distressed situations, allowing them to be innovative in handling and adapting to stress. The stress components between college students appear in the subject or the environment. These factors connect with academic, socioeconomic, and subjective successes, which, if failed to control may cause stress (Yikealo, Yemane, & Karvinen, 2018).

In addition, stress among students originates from academic-related activities and their lives outside the academic institution. The constant pressure and strain that students experience throughout their academic journey may lead to stress (Aafreen, Vishnu Priya, & Gayathri, 2018). Stress can quickly reduce a person's self-esteem and self-confidence (Wang, Wen., Zhang, Ni, Jiang, & Cheng, 2021), resulting in much lower productivity and efficiency (Gómez-Jorge & Díaz Garrido, 2023).

Stress is detrimental for college students, as reports show that stress causes mental health problems such as depression and suicidal ideation (Barbayannis, Bandari, Zheng, Baquerizo, Pecor & Ming, 2022). A stressful environment creates unfavorable learning conditions that lower student productivity, resulting in an unfavorable learning outcome (Hakim et al., 2022). Furthermore, stress is also found to be the primary cause of the diminishing of motivation and interest as well as the likelihood of making wrong decisions (Hollon, Burgeno, & Phillips, 2015).

Nevertheless, psychological well-being is defined as enjoyment, fulfillment, happiness, and resilience (Tang, Tang, & Gross, 2019). It is further associated with the capacity to govern one's emotions, thoughts, relationships with others, and personal goals (Feller, Castillo, Greenberg, Abascal, Van Horn, Wells, 2018). Furthermore, psychological well-being is directly correlated with the potential to recover from the damages caused by stress and to be determined to overcome it. (Klainin-Yobas, Vongsirimas, Ramirez, 2021).

Psychological well-being is also regarded as a coping mechanism during stressful times (Freire, Mar Ferradas, Nunez, & Vallejo, 2016). There is also an inverse correlation between stress and psychological well-being (Suleman, Hussain, Shehzad, Syed & Raja, 2018). Thus, individuals with higher psychological well-being tend to overcome stress and be more productive.

However, students' psychological well-being and academic performance were concluded to have a positive relationship (Zefi, Beka, Celcima, & Uka, 2022) (Coronel, 2020). Furthermore, aside from providing mental health intervention during difficult times, another alternative to combat mental health problems is to promote psychological well-being (Rivero, Garcia, Torres, Mellado, Pozuello, Veguilla & Facorrom, 2023). It is further emphasized that students with a positive outlook on education who exhibit positive thinking tend to have lower stress levels (Chui, 2020).

The cornerstone of this study was the understanding that the performance of the University of Mindanao Criminology students in the academic institution is influenced by significant stress factors observed in their environment. These stressors may relate to relationships with other people, personal factors, academic factors, and environmental factors. The Stress and Coping Theory by Surachman and Almeida (2018) supported the idea that students' comprehension and evaluations of the existing stressors might impact their psychological well-being and capability to utilize their cognitive and emotional resources, allowing them to perform well in their studies.

Thus, a high degree of psychological well-being could change the relationship between the stressful environment and academic performance. Furthermore, The Transactional Model of Stress and Coping Theory by Lazarus and Folkman (1984) indicates that stress is not only a consequence of external stressors but also a result of communication between the environment and an individual. If an individual recognizes the stress factors but cannot manage them effectively, there is a possibility that an increased level of stress will be experienced.

Further, stress results from an individual's perception of changes in his surroundings. Thus, if students have a negative perception of changes and academic responsibilities, they tend to be more prone to stress and are more likely to be affected by it, resulting in a higher rate of failure. By researching how psychological well-being functions as a mediator, this study aimed to give valuable insights into the intricate interplay between stress, mental health, and academic achievement within the environment of the University of Mindanao.

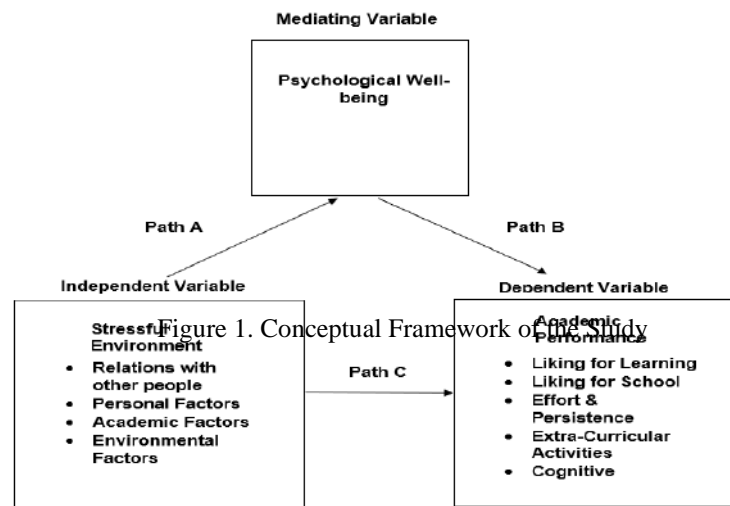


Figure 1 shows the conceptual framework of this study, composed of the independent variable, the stressful environment (Yumba, 2010). The dependent variable was the academic performance (Hart, Stewart, & Jimerson, 2011). Moreover, the mediating variable was psychological well-being (Ryff, 1989).

In the context of Davao City, specifically in the University of Mindanao, there were limited sources concerning literature having three or more variables that examined the correlation between stressful environments and students' academic performance and the potential mediating role of psychological well-being. Despite numerous internationally published studies, limited investigations have been conducted on the unique circumstances and experiences surrounding the University of Mindanao students. This prompted the researchers to conduct a study to bridge the gap concerning the extent of the stressful environment and academic performance of the University of Mindanao students and their psychological well-being, which could affect their views and perspectives regarding their environment and performance in the academic institution. Considering that the University of Mindanao is one of the prestigious schools in Davao City, it is advantageous to conduct the study to represent the effect of each variable on the student.

This study sought to determine the relationship between the stressful environment and academic performance among the University of Mindanao students and the mediating role of psychological well-being. The study sought to address these specific objectives. Firstly, it aimed to determine the stress level among the University of Mindanao students. Secondly, the study sought to ascertain the level of academic performance among the University of Mindanao students. Subsequently, the study aimed to determine the level of psychological well-being among the University of Mindanao students.

Additionally, this assessed whether there is a significant relationship between stressful environments and academic performance among the University of Mindanao students. It investigated the relationship between stressful environments and psychological well-being among the University of Mindanao students. It sought to determine whether there is a significant relationship between academic performance and psychological well-being among the University of Mindanao students. Lastly, this study examined whether psychological well-being mediated the relationship between stressful environments and academic performance.

The study on academic performance, the stressful environment of University of Mindanao students, and psychological well-being mediating is significant for several reasons. The study provided underlying data to enhance our perception of the intricate link between stress, performance in the academic institution, and overall psychological well-being among university students, specifically those enrolled in the criminology department. Stress is prevalent for students and significantly affects their academic performance and overall well-being. The investigation identified specific environmental factors at the University of Mindanao contributing to student stress.

This research can be utilized to develop targeted interventions to reduce student tension and enhance the university environment. The study examined the impact of psychological well-being as a mediator between stress and academic performance. This is necessary because psychological well-being is a crucial success factor for students. Psychologically well-adjusted students are more likely to be stress-resistant and academically successful. In general, the findings of this study could be beneficial for educators, administrators, and future researchers interested in increasing the rate of success in the field of academic learning and the well-being of university students, as well as for the students themselves, who were the primary focus of this study.

II. Methods

2.1. Research Respondents

The research respondents of the study were 300 Criminology students from the University of Mindanao from the 1st to 4th-year levels. The researchers utilized a stratified simple random sampling technique. The number of respondents was equally allocated within the four strata, and respondents were randomly chosen from each stratum. Using this technique, the researchers effectively established a population that validly showcased the total populace undergoing scrutiny. (Qualtrics, 2022).

2.2. Materials and Instruments

The researchers used an adapted survey questionnaire consisting of three variables, and each variable was taken from three individual sources. The independent variable was taken from Yumba (2010), the dependent variable was from Hart et al. (2011) study, and the mediating variable was taken from Ryff's (1989) research. The research adviser checked the drafted survey questionnaire, which was further validated by the validators and guaranteed its consistency with the study's objectives. The questionnaire contained three individual sections. The first section was the independent variable, which was the Stressful Environment. The second section was the dependent variable, which is the Academic Performance. Lastly, the third section, the mediating variable, was Psychological well-being.

The responses obtained from the respondents were interpreted using the Likert's Scale. The findings, with an overall mean ranging from 4.20-5.00, were very high, implying that the respondents completely acknowledge the given circumstance or experiences. Subsequently, a mean ranging from 3.40-4.19 was defined as high, which implied that the respondents often concurred with the given circumstances or experiences. A mean ranging from 2.60-3.39 was described as moderate, which assured that the respondents sometimes agree with the given circumstances or experiences. Moreover, a mean ranging from 1.80-2.59 was low, meaning the respondents seldom agreed with the given circumstances or experiences. Lastly, a mean ranging from 1.00-1.79 was described as very low, meaning the respondents rarely concurred with the stated circumstances or experiences.

2.3. Design and Procedure

The study employed quantitative nonexperimental research using the descriptive-correlation approach. This research did not manipulate both the independent and dependent variables. A descriptive research design provided a precise, comprehensive representation of the study's subject. A correlational design scrutinizes the correlation between two or more variables.

Before conducting the study, the researchers obtained a letter of title approval and a letter to conduct the study from the Dean of the College of Criminal Justice Education, which ensured that permissions and approvals were met and followed. During the data collection, criminology students of the University of Mindanao were involved. After the researchers collected the answered questionnaires, the responses were encoded, tallied, and endorsed to the school statistician for statistical analysis.

Mean, Pearson Product Moment Correlation, Regression, and Medgraph employing Sobel z-test were all used in the study. The levels of stressful environment, academic performance, and psychological well-being of the Criminology students of the University of Mindanao were calculated using the mean. The Pearson Product Correlation was used to ascertain the connection between psychological well-being and stressful environment, as well as psychological well-being and academic performance. Medgraph with Sobel z-test was employed to determine whether psychological well-being mediated the connection between academic performance and stressful environment.

Regression analysis was used to analyze the links between academic performance and psychological well-being, psychological well-being and stressful environment, and academic performance and stressful environment. Lastly, the Sobel test in the Medgraph mediation analysis assessed the importance of the mediation effect. Findings that result in full mediation mean that all effects were mediated by the mediating variable (MV) in the case where the influence of the independent variable (IV) on the dependent variable (DV) ceased to be statistically significant at the last stage of the analysis.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

3.1 Stressful Environment Among University of Mindanao Students

Table 1 presents the findings regarding the stress level among University of Mindanao Criminology students. The findings discovered that personal factors acquired the highest mean of 3.56, reflecting a high level with a standard deviation of .798, indicating a clustered response among the respondents. On the contrary, environmental factors acquired the lowest mean of 2.66, reflecting a low degree and a standard deviation of .900, reflecting a moderate answer dispersion among the respondents.

TABLE 1.

Level of Stressful Environment among University of Mindanao Criminology Students

Indicators	Standard Deviation	Mean	Descriptive Equivalent
Relations with other people	.685	3.47	High
Personal Factors	.798	3.56	High
Academic Factors	.770	3.27	Moderate
Environmental Factors	.900	2.66	Low
Overall	.637	3.24	Moderate

The overall mean score for this variable was 3.24; this indicated a moderate level of stress experienced by the criminology students. The overall standard deviation was .637, which means the dispersion among the respondents' answers is relatively close to the mean, indicating a degree of uniformity in the level of stressful environment among the criminology students. Overall, the results demonstrated that the stressful environment experienced by the University of Mindanao Criminology students is moderate, providing some reassurance about their situation.

The findings aligned with those (Kaczmarek & Trambacz-Oleszak, 2021), stating that students experience various stress factors in school-based environments and exposure. This gives rise to concern about the different circumstances in the academic institution that contribute to the overall negative experiences of the students. Even in a moderately stressful environment, students are still burdened with excessive responsibilities, expectations, and duties expected from them.

3.2. Academic Performance Among University of Mindanao Students

Table 2 exhibits the findings concerning the level of academic performance of University of Mindanao Criminology students. The results uncovered that liking for school acquired the highest mean, with 4.22, indicating a high level. Also, its standard deviation was .623, which revealed a clustered response. Conversely, extracurricular activities acquired the lowest mean with 3.20 and a standard deviation of .979, reflecting a degree of dispersion of answers.

TABLE 2

Level of Academic Performance Among University of Mindanao Criminology Students

Indicators	Standard Deviation	Mean	Descriptive Equivalent
Liking for Learning	.609	3.98	High
Liking for School	.623	4.22	Very high
Efforts and Persistence	.615	4.11	High
Extracurricular Activities	.979	3.20	Moderate
Cognitive	.599	4.18	High
Overall	.450	3.94	High

The overall mean score for this variable was 3.94, indicating high academic performance. The standard deviation of .450 suggested that the dispersion of answers among students is close to the mean. This implied that students actively try to improve and maintain their academic performance. These findings expressed the students' dedication to actively participating in academic activities, doing their duties and responsibilities, studying their lessons, and maintaining a positive outlook in their academic journey.

These findings aligned with the conclusions of Tadese, Yeshaneh, and Mulu (2022), who stated that students showcasing high academic performance put significant effort into studying, time management, and paying attention in class. Academic performance is a short-term achievement for students that they can use for future endeavors. Furthermore, students with high academic performance enabled them to understand and appreciate information and use it in real-life scenarios.

3.3. Psychological Well-being Among University of Mindanao Students

As presented in Table 3, the mean score for the students' psychological well-being was 3.60, describing a high degree of psychological well-being. The standard deviation of .553 indicates a clustered response among the respondents that the dispersion of answers among students was close to the mean. This indicated that the respondents displayed high happiness, satisfaction, confidence, and resilience. Furthermore, the findings suggest that the respondents have a positive perspective on their academic and personal lives. Despite any circumstance that may come their way, they still tend to pursue their goals and ambitions.

TABLE 3

Level of Psychological Well-being among University of Mindanao Criminology Students

	Standard Deviation	Mean	Descriptive Equivalent
Overall	.553	3.60	High

The student's high degree of psychological well-being indicates that they are resilient and flexible in maintaining their dedication and determination to succeed, establishing positive mental health, knowing how to balance academic and environmental stress, and striving to make positive alternatives. This implies that the students understand the significance of psychological well-being for success in education. The findings agree with the perspective of Morin (2024), who emphasized that people with high psychological well-being feel happy, confident, content, well-supported, and satisfied with their lives.

3.4. Correlation among the Variables

Table 4 uncovered the results concerning the relationship between stressful environment and academic performance. Considering the acquired results, the correlation between academic factors as a source of the stressful environment and the overall academic performance of the respondents obtained the highest computed R-value of .240, which indicates a low relationship, and a p-value of .000, which was less than 0.05. Hence, the null hypothesis was rejected, showing a positive significant relationship, which means that the academic factors resulting from a stressful environment can affect their academic performance. Furthermore, the lowest correlation coefficient was between environmental factors and academic performance among criminology students with an R-value of .142, which indicated a slight positive relationship between the environmental factors as a source of a stressful environment for the Criminology students. The acquired p-value was .014, suggesting it was lower than the predetermined significance level of 0.05. Hence, the null hypothesis was declined.

The overall computed R-value between the independent and dependent variables was .229, which denoted a low positive correlation between the stressful environment and the respondents' academic performance. The overall p-value was .000, lower than the predetermined significance level of $p \leq 0.05$. Hence, the null hypothesis was rejected, and this provided compelling evidence for a significant association between the stressful environment and academic performance. These findings implied that despite the stress factors surrounding a student, they still tend to enhance and increase their overall academic performance. Moreover, this represents the students' eagerness to maintain and improve their overall academic performance and not allow internal and external factors to hinder them from excelling academically.

The findings revealed a significant correlation between the independent and dependent variables. These results aligned with the study of Soomro, Mahesar, and Rani (2020), which also found that several factors, such as relationship, environmental, academic, and personal factors, can affect the student's academic performance. Furthermore, this study contradicted the findings of Zavaleta, Alva, Vargas, Medina, Somoza, and Andrade-Arenas (2021), stating that stress and academic performance had no significant correlation.

TABLE 4

The Relationship between Stressful Environment and Academic Performance

Stressful Environment	Academic performance						
	Liking for Learning	Liking for School	Efforts and Persistence	Extracurricular Activities	Cognitive	Overall	Decision on Ho
Relations with other people	.326**	.96	.098	.46	.093	.187**	Reject
Personal Factors	.000	.96	.089	.425	.108	.001	Reject
	.214**	.083	.109	.86	.114*	.178**	Reject

	.000	.152	.060	.138	.49	.002	
Academic Factors	283**	.96	.122*	.194**	.072	.240**	Reject
	.000	.98	.035	.001	.212	.000	
Environmental Factors	162**	.045	.046	.152**	.027	.142*	Reject
	.005	.433	.425	.008	.642	.014	
Overall	297**	.97	.114*	.152**	.092	.229**	Reject
	.000	.094	.049	.009	.112	.000	

*p<0.05

Furthermore, Table 5 displays the relationship between a stressful environment and psychological well-being. The results discovered that relations with others have the highest computed R-value of .399. It was also discovered to have a p-value of .000, lower than the predetermined significance level of $p \leq 0.05$. Hence, this supported the rejection of the null hypothesis. Conversely, the lowest computed R-value was with the environmental factor with .267 and a p-value of .000, which was lower than the predetermined significance level of $p \leq 0.05$. Hence, this supported rejecting the null hypothesis and provided strong evidence for a significant association between the stressful environment and psychological well-being.

Subsequently, the overall computed R-value for the correlation between the stressful environment and psychological well-being was .399, indicating a low correlation with $p \leq 0.05$. This denoted that a proportional relationship exists between the variables. This is to say that whenever criminology students experience a highly stressful environment, it often increases their psychological well-being. In addition, the resulting p-value of .000, which is less than $p \leq 0.05$, reinforced the rejection of the null hypothesis and proved the existence of a meaningful relationship between stressful environment and psychological well-being. Furthermore, the results showcased the respondents' optimistic mindset and adaptability to the existing stress factors in their surroundings, indicating that despite stressful situations, they still possess the hope and confidence to overcome their current circumstances.

The results indicated the presence of a direct link between the independent variable and the mediating variable, highlighting the existence of a low correlation between the level of the stressful environment and the student's psychological well-being. This implies that University of Mindanao Criminology students often persevere and are, most of the time, resilient whenever they experience stressful environments. The results were corroborated by (Barbayannis et al., 2022), indicating a correlational relationship between the student's psychological well-being and the stress they experience in their environment. However, this link between the two variables contradicts the findings of (Malik et al., 2020), indicating an inverse or negative relationship between environmental stress and the psychological well-being of college students.

TABLE 5
The relationship between Stressful Environment and Psychological Well-being

Psychological Well-being	Relations with other people	Stressful Environment			Overall	Decision on Ho
		Personal Factors	Academic Factors	Environmental Factors		
Overall	r	.371*	.298**	.368**	.399**	Reject
	p	.000	.000	.000	.000	

*p<0.05

As per Table 6, this represents the relationship between psychological well-being and academic performance. The student's psychological well-being was discovered to have the highest computed R-value of .304 regarding their efforts and persistence, indicating a low positive correlation between the variables. Moreover, the results also showed that the lowest calculated R-value was observed between psychological well-being and liking for learning, with an R-value of .241 with a p-value lower than the predetermined $p \leq 0.05$, thus rejecting the null hypothesis.

In addition, the overall computed R-value is .415, which describes a moderate correlation with a p-value of less than 0.05. This indicates a significant positive moderate correlation between the University of Mindanao Criminology students' psychological well-being and academic performance. This means that Criminology students with low psychological well-being tend to have low academic performance. Likewise, learners with a high psychological well-being were inclined to excel academically. Since the p-value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected. Furthermore, the results highlighted that.

Furthermore, the results indicated a correlation between psychological well-being and academic performance of the Criminology students of the University of Mindanao, highlighting the moderate positive relationship between the two variables. This finding supports the results of the study of (González Calle, Vicuña-Palacios, Latacela, and Godoy Durán, 2022), which concluded that the students' psychological well-being has a positive significant relationship with their academic performance. Hence, improving students' psychological well-being can enable them to have a higher rate of success in their academics.

TABLE 6
The Relationship between Psychological Well-being and Academic Performance

Psychological Well-being	Academic Performance						Decision on Ho
	Liking for learning	Liking for school	Extracurricular activities	Efforts and persistence	Cognitive	Overall	
Overall	R .241**	.269**	.261**	.304**	.293**	.415**	Reject
	p .000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	

*p<0.05

3.5. Mediating Effect of Psychological Well-Being on Stressful Environment and Academic Performance among University of Mindanao Criminology Students

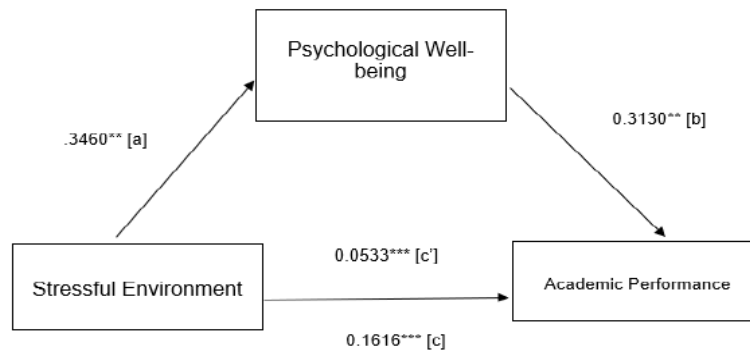
Table 7 exhibits the path analysis, examining the Mediating Effect of Psychological Well-Being on Stressful Environments and Academic Performance among the University of Mindanao Students demonstrated by students. The mentioned steps in Table 7 revealed that all three links (a, b, and c) indicated a statically valid significance, a testament to the robustness of our findings, as implied by the values obtained in the Sobel test with a resulting p-value below 0.05.

The results are relevant as they showcased evidence of full mediation. The relationship between a stressful environment and academic performance, an essential element in a learner's life, showed a significant depreciation upon introducing the mediating variable, psychological well-being. This can be perceived in Table 7, where the statistical coefficient decreased from 0.1616 to 0.0533 in the ensuing regression analysis—moreover, the 17.70- percent confidence interval bestowed proof of a relevant mediating role. After the introduction of the mediating variable (Psychological Well-Being), the effect of the independent variable (Stressful Environment) on the dependent variable (Academic Performance) was markedly neutralized. Hence, the mediation that occurred was of great importance.

Regression analyses were utilized to determine if psychological well-being mediates the correlation between the stressful environment and academic performance. First, it was observed that a stressful environment predicted student achievement without the mediator (b = 0.1616, p = 0.0001). In addition, a significant positive relationship between the stressful environment and psychological behavior (b = 0.3460, p = 0.0000) links the independent variable and the mediator.

TABLE 7
Mediation Analysis

Sobel z	1.85602667, p<0.05*
Percentage of the total effect that is mediated:	17.70%
The ratio of the indirect to direct effect	0.1083
Effect Size Measures	
Unstandardized Coefficients	
Total:	0533
Direct:	3460
Indirect:	.1616
Ratio Index:	.1083



IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study uncovered that the level of stressful environment experienced by the students was at a moderate level. However, their overall academic performance and psychological well-being were both at a high level. Furthermore, the results indicated a low correlation between stressful environment and academic performance and between stressful environment and psychological well-being. Conversely, a moderate correlation was observed between the psychological well-being and the respondents' academic performance. Also, a complete mediation was observed in psychological well-being towards the relationship between stressful environment and academic performance of the University of Mindanao Criminology students.

Upon the determination of the significant role of psychological well-being in determining the academic performance of the students despite the existence of stress factors in their environments, researchers offer recommendations such as students seeking emotional and social support systems from their families, friends, and guidance experts who are available in the academic institution to avoid and negate a stressful environment. Furthermore, seeking help from educators when having difficulty understanding topics and lessons helps lessen students' learning burden. Moreover, engaging in extracurricular activities in the academic institution helps students acquire skills to be more responsible and improve their academic performance. Furthermore, students should cultivate an attitude of seeing their academic journey as a fun and precious experience.

Subsequently, researchers recommend that Criminology students learn to adapt to the changes in their environment and avoid unnecessary compromises in their sleep and eating habits to maintain a higher academic performance. Likewise, the researchers recommend that students retain and enhance their positive outlook to strengthen resiliency and persevere whenever a stressful environment arises. Criminology students of the University of Mindanao should exert efforts to develop and improve their psychological state, given the importance of psychological well-being in their academic journey.

Subsequently, the researchers recommend that the University of Mindanao Criminology Department apply a proactive approach to develop the students' psychological well-being to achieve better academic performance. They are formulating strategies and programs such as mental health development and conducting seminars that may establish the students' overall psychological well-being, which includes having a positive perception of oneself, setting one's goals, having meaningful and positive social relationships, being aware of one's abilities and limitations, and embracing opportunities to learn new experiences and for personal growth. Furthermore, the University of Mindanao Criminology Department may utilize the data of this study to establish plans and objectives that seek to provide a much more conducive environment for learning.

Moreover, the researchers offer recommendations for educators and administrators of the University of Mindanao Criminology Department to help students develop their self-confidence and self-esteem while learning. This ensures that students can cope with stress, perform better, and participate more during class sessions. Furthermore, future researchers could utilize the findings of this study, providing them firsthand knowledge and references of the personal experiences of the University of Mindanao Criminology students regarding stress, their academic performance, and the mediating role of psychological well-being.

The study proved the proposition Surachman and Almeida (2018) adopted, which is the stress and coping theory. Accordingly, a stressful environment can impact a person's ability to think correctly and control emotions, influencing their overall psychological well-being and academic performance. Furthermore, the study proved the proposition of Lazarus and Folkman (2018) in their Transactional Model of Stress and Coping Theory, in which they stated that recognition of stress factors and having the personal ability and resources to manage it effectively would result in a higher likelihood of success in the academic field. Therefore, students with higher psychological well-being tend to overcome stress and perform better academically.

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