



The Relationship Between Academic Stress Level and Emotional Eating Among Undergraduate Nursing Students at Stikes Muhammadiyah Ciamis

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ABSTRACT

Academic stress is a condition of psychological pressure experienced by students in response to excessive or sustained academic demands. Emotional eating refers to eating behavior triggered by emotional states rather than physiological hunger, and is used to obtain emotional comfort or alleviate emotional distress. Undergraduate nursing students are a population particularly vulnerable to academic stress due to the demands of mastering nursing concepts and theories, clinical practice, intensive academic evaluations, and social expectations. These conditions may influence students' eating behaviors, increase the tendency toward emotional eating, disrupt eating patterns, and negatively affect overall health. This study aimed to examine the relationship between the level of academic stress and emotional eating among undergraduate nursing students at STIKes Muhammadiyah Ciamis. This study employed a quantitative analytic design with a cross-sectional approach. The sampling technique used was purposive sampling, resulting in a total of 153 respondents. The research instruments were The Perception of Academic Stress Scale (PASS) and the Dutch Eating Behavior Questionnaire (DEBQ). The study was conducted from September to November 2025. The results showed that the majority of students experienced moderate levels of academic stress (146 respondents; 95.4%) and moderate levels of emotional eating (84 respondents; 54.9%). Data analysis using the alternative Chi-Square test,

namely Fisher's Exact Test, yielded a p-value of 0.006 ($p < 0.05$), while the Linear-by-Linear Association test yielded a p-value of 0.043 ($p < 0.05$). The findings indicate a significant relationship between academic stress and emotional eating among undergraduate nursing students. These results suggest that higher levels of academic stress are associated with a greater tendency toward emotional eating.

INTRODUCTION

The average college student in Indonesia is between 18 and 25 years old, which according to developmental stages is classified as emerging adulthood (Shatwan & Alzharani, 2024). Emerging adulthood is a developmental transitional phase that marks the transition from adolescence to adulthood, where individuals begin to face more complex demands for independence and responsibility. During this period, most individuals are studying at university and are required to adjust to various academic and social changes (Sze et al., 2021). Academic stress is a type of mental pressure that arises when the academic load is perceived to exceed one's capabilities (Bedewy & Gabriel in Prasetyo & Andriana, 2022).

Stressors in college students can originate from internal factors, such as low self-efficacy, personal resilience, learning motivation, procrastination, and difficulty adapting. Furthermore, external factors also play a significant role, including lack of social support, financial problems, academic pressure from the environment, learning methods, and the burden of assignments and exams (Harahap et al., 2022).

The prevalence of stress among university students has been reported to be quite significant in various countries. In the UK, stress levels among students reached 31.2%, in Malaysia 41.9%, in Thailand 61.4%, and in Saudi Arabia even reached 85.5%, categorized as moderate to high (Al-Shahrani et al., 2023). Research conducted on nursing students in China showed that 36.1% experienced mental exhaustion, and 85.3% showed moderate to high levels of stress (Huan et al., 2022).

Meanwhile, in Indonesia, the prevalence of stress among university students ranged from 36.7% to 71.6% (Bayantari et al., 2022). Furthermore, a report by the Ruang Tengah Association showed that 69% of students in West Java experienced stress during their studies (Hakiki, 2021).

Unmanaged stress can develop into psychological disorders, including depression and emotional mental disorders (Deng et al., 2022). Data from the 2023 Indonesian Health Survey (SKI) shows that the average prevalence of depression at the national level is 1.4%, while emotional mental disorders reach 2%. The highest prevalence of depression is in West Java at 3.3% and emotional mental disorders at 4.4% among the 15-24 age group (Ministry of Health, 2023).

Academic pressure has long been associated with stress, particularly among healthcare students, who are often reported to be at higher risk of stress than students in other fields (Avila-Carrasco et al., 2023). Nursing students are particularly susceptible to high levels of stress due to limited free time, heavy study loads, the demands of clinical practice, and the emotional pressures they face during their studies. This stressful environment not only impacts their educational experience but also has the potential to impact their quality of life and future career development as healthcare professionals (Maisa et al., 2021).

Each person's response to stress varies, as each individual has a different way of dealing with pressure. Coping mechanisms are adaptive and maladaptive strategies that individuals use to adjust to changes originating from the external environment and internal conditions (Rachma et al., 2024).

In an academic context, unmanaged stress can lead to unhealthy coping mechanisms, such as emotional responses such as anger, frustration, and even despair. One common form of maladaptive coping is emotional eating (Syafiqah et al., 2024).

Eating theories are grouped according to three psychological dimensions: emotional eating, restrained eating, and external eating (Van Strien in Gryzela & Ariana, 2021). Restrained eating is an attempt to limit food intake to control weight, while

External eating is triggered by environmental stimuli such as the aroma, appearance, or taste of food, rather than by actual hunger (Fathanah & Hasanah, 2021). Meanwhile, emotional eating is an eating behavior that arises from emotional states, such as stress, anxiety, or emotional distress, rather than physical hunger (Savitri et al., 2022). In this condition, food is used as an emotional escape for temporary comfort, with a tendency to choose fast food and foods high in sugar and fat because they can provide a quick calming effect and relieve the emotional distress being experienced (Sukianto et al., 2020).

Compared to other aspects of eating behavior, emotional eating is one of the less healthy eating behaviors that can significantly impact health. In the long term, it can increase the risk of metabolic disorders, nutritional problems, insulin resistance, digestive disorders, decreased sleep quality, and an increased risk of degenerative diseases (Kustanti & Gori, 2020).

In accordance with a preliminary study conducted on April 21-24, 2025 by interviewing 10 undergraduate nursing students. The results showed that most

students responded to frequently experiencing academic pressure, such as differences in the density of academic activities and difficulties such as assignments and exams between secondary and tertiary education, anxiety when facing exams or practicals, and fear of failing in completing the courses they are taking. Interestingly, most students also revealed that this pressure affects their eating patterns, where they tend to choose sweet and fatty foods as a way to release emotions to improve their mood when under stress, and as many as 5 out of 10 people said that they experienced weight gain during their studies.

Based on the background of this study, researchers are increasingly motivated to conduct research considering the indications that academic stress not only affects mental health, but also causes poor eating patterns if it occurs excessively and continuously, which in the long term can increase the risk of health problems. Therefore, researchers want to conduct research on "The Relationship Between Academic Stress Levels and Emotional Eating in Undergraduate Nursing Students at Muhammadiyah Ciamis College of Health Sciences."

METHOD

This research is a quantitative study with an analytical design using a correlational approach and is cross-sectional in nature. The population studied included all 307 active students enrolled in the Undergraduate Nursing Study Program at Muhammadiyah Ciamis College of Health Sciences. The sampling technique used was purposive sampling, which is a method of selecting samples based on certain criteria in accordance with the research objectives determined by the

researcher (Sugiyono, 2020). The inclusion criteria in this study included students aged 18-25 years, active students in the 1st-3rd year of the Undergraduate Nursing Study Program, students who were present and willing to be respondents. Meanwhile, the exclusion criteria included students who were inactive or on leave, and students with a history of severe psychological disorders. In determining the sample size, the researcher utilized G*Power software which showed a statistical power of 0.80 and an effect size of 0.214. From these calculations, it was determined that the minimum sample size required for this study was 133 people. In this study, there were 153 people who were willing to be respondents and met the inclusion criteria.

Academic stress in this study was measured using the Perception of Academic Stress Scale (PASS) designed by Bedewy and Gabriel. This measuring instrument is used to assess students' perceptions of academic stress, encompassing various aspects, including academic expectations, workload, and academic performance.

and exams, as well as academic self-perception. The PASS instrument consists of 18 statement items, but in the study, only 16 statement items met the validity test with a coefficient value of 0.481-0.781 and had a good consistency or reliability value with a Chronbach's Alpha value of 0.878.

Meanwhile, emotional eating assessment was measured using the Dutch Eating Behavior Questionnaire (DEBQ) designed by Van Strien. This instrument is used to identify students' tendencies in engaging in eating behaviors that cover two dimensions: as a non-specific emotional dampener (boredom, inactivity, and loneliness) and as a response to specific negative emotions (stress, depression, anger, disappointment, sadness, fear, worry, and anxiety). The DEBQ instrument consists of 13 question items that have met the validity test with a coefficient value of 0.474-0.890 and has a good consistency or

reliability value with a Chronbach's Alpha value of 0.887.

The data collection process begins with a preparation phase, which involves conducting preliminary study observations and obtaining research permits from relevant institutions. During the implementation phase, the researcher coordinates with class representatives to assist with the data collection process. Respondents are collected in class at different times. Respondents who attend will be given informed consent via WhatsApp in the form of a Google Form link, which will explain the intent, purpose, and benefits of the research, as well as instructions for completing the form as proof of their understanding and willingness to participate. Respondents who are willing and meet the criteria can then directly complete the research questionnaire provided via the Google Form link. After completing the questionnaire, the researcher will examine the results by processing and analyzing the data through computerization.

Data analysis in this study was conducted in two steps: univariate analysis and bivariate analysis. Univariate analysis aims to explain the description and frequency distribution of each variable. The results of univariate analysis are generated by adding the scores of each measurement item and then categorized to facilitate interpretation of the results. The results are displayed in frequency and percentage tables to provide an overview of the respondents' conditions. Bivariate analysis was conducted to determine the relationship between two variables. The statistical test used was the alternative Chi-Square test, namely Fisher's Exact Test. The selection of this test was based on the assumptions and conditions of Chi-Square that were not met, indicating the presence of cells with expected frequencies <5 . The significance level used in this study was $\alpha = 0.05$. A p-value <0.05 indicates a significant relationship between academic stress and

emotional eating in undergraduate nursing students at Muhammadiyah Ciamis College of Health Sciences.

Location And Time of Research

Held in September-November 2025, at the S1 Nursing Study Program, Muhammadiyah Ciamis Health College.

46 respondents were obtained. The second phase was conducted on September 17, 2025, and 43 respondents were obtained. Meanwhile, the third phase was conducted on September 16, 2025, and November 11, 2025, and 64 respondents were obtained. This resulted in a total of 153 respondents. The data used in this study were primary data, namely data from Data was obtained directly from respondents by gathering them in one room and distributing the questionnaire online. Respondents who attended were asked to complete the questionnaire but were first asked to provide their consent by completing the informed consent link.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Research Process

This research was conducted at Muhammadiyah Health College in Ciamis, with undergraduate nursing students. The first phase of the study was conducted on September 30, 2025 and

Respondent Characteristics

Table 1. Frequency Distribution General Characteristics of Respondents

Respondent Characteristics	F	%
Gender		
Man	40	26,1
Woman	113	73,9
Age		
18 Years	29	19,0
19 Years	45	29,4
20 Years	46	30,1
21 Years	27	17,6
22 Years	3	2
23 Years	2	1,3
24 Years	1	0,7
Semester		
Semester 1	46	30,1
Semester 3	43	28,1
Semester 5	64	41,8

Table 1 shows that of the 153 respondents in this study, the majority were female, 13 (73.9%). The majority of respondents were in their 20s, with a frequency of 46 (30.1%). Furthermore, the majority of respondents were in their fifth semester, 64 (41.8%).

2. Data analysis

a. Univariate Analysis

Table 2. Frequency Distribution of Academic Stress in Undergraduate Nursing Students at Muhammadiyah Ciamis Health College

Academic Stress	F	%
Low Academic Stress	3	2,0
Moderate Academic Stress	146	95,4
High Academic Stress	4	2,6
Total	153	100

Based on Table 2, it can be seen that of the 153 respondents in this study, the majority of students fell into the moderate academic stress category, with a total of 146 students (95.4%). Meanwhile, only 3 respondents (2%) experienced low academic stress, while

respondents who were in high academic stress.

There were 4 students with high academic stress (2.6%). This indicates that most students experience academic stress at a level that is considered moderate.

Table 3. Frequency Distribution of Emotional Eating for Undergraduate Nursing Students at Muhammadiyah Ciamis Health College

<i>Emotional Eating</i>	F	%
<i>Low Emotional Eating</i>	42	27,5
<i>Moderate Emotional Eating</i>	84	54,9
<i>High Emotional Eating</i>	27	17,6
Total	153	100

Table 3 shows that of the 153 respondents in this study, the majority of students, 84 (54.9%), fell into the moderate emotional eating category. Forty-two (27.5%) fell into the low emotional eating category, while 27 (17.6%) fell into the high emotional eating category. This indicates that the majority of students tend to experience moderate emotional eating.

b. Bivariate Analysis

Table 4. Cross Tabulation of the Relationship Between Academic Stress Levels and Emotional Eating for Undergraduate Nursing Students at Muhammadiyah Ciamis Health College

Academic Stress	Emotional Eating			Total	P Value
	Low	Medium	High		
Low	0	0	3	3	0,006
Medium	40	83	23	146	
High	2	1	1	4	
Total	42	84	27	153	

Based on the tabulation analysis results shown in Table 4.4, it can be seen that of the 153 respondents in this study, none of the 3 students with low academic stress experienced emotional eating in the low and medium categories, because all three experienced high emotional eating. On the other hand, of the 146 students with moderate levels of academic stress, 40 people showed low emotional eating behavior, 83 people experienced moderate emotional eating, and 23 people showed high emotional eating. Meanwhile, of the 4 students with high academic stress, 2 people experienced low emotional eating, 1 person was in moderate emotional eating, and 1 person experienced high emotional eating.

A significance value of $p = 0.004$ was obtained based on the results of the Chi-Square test. However, one of the assumptions of the Chi-Square test was not met because there were 6 cells (66.7%) with an expected count < 5 . Therefore, the interpretation of the Chi-Square test results must be strengthened using a more appropriate alternative test, namely the Fisher Freeman Halton Exact Test.

The Fisher Exact test results showed a p-value of 0.006, and the Linear-by-Linear Association test showed a p-value of 0.043 (p-value < 0.05). Thus, it can be concluded that there is a significant and linear relationship between variables in the ordinal categorical data in undergraduate nursing students at

Muhammadiyah Ciamis College of Health Sciences. Therefore, this indicates that increased academic stress is followed by an increased tendency for emotional eating behavior in students.

Research Discussion

Overview of Academic Stress in Undergraduate Nursing Students at Muhammadiyah Ciamis Health College

The level of academic stress in this study was determined by referring to respondents' scores for each statement, which were then grouped into low, medium, and high categories. The study findings showed that the majority of undergraduate nursing students at Muhammadiyah Ciamis College of Health Sciences (146 respondents) were in the moderate academic stress category, indicating that academic stress is a common condition.

Based on gender characteristics, female students experience academic stress more frequently than male students. This is in line with a study by Mahmudah et al. (2025), which stated that this condition may be influenced by women's sensitivity to academic demands and their tendency to process stress emotionally, resulting in a more likely stress response.

In terms of age, most respondents were in the 19-20 age group and experienced moderate levels of academic stress. This finding aligns with research conducted by Sutisna and Merida (2025), which states that this age group represents a transitional phase from secondary to higher education, marked by changes in the learning system and increased demands for academic independence. During this phase, emotional regulation and academic management are not yet optimally developed, making academic pressure more easily perceived as stress.

Based on semester level, most students were in their fifth semester and experienced moderate academic stress. This

finding is supported by Pratama et al. (2023), who stated that students in their middle to final semesters tended to experience higher levels of academic stress than those in their first semesters. This condition is related to the increasing complexity of academic demands, such as assignments and exams, the density of lecture activities, and preparation for the final stages of study and career planning.

One of the main triggers of academic stress is pressure during exams. According to Bedewy and Gabriel (in Prasetyo & Andriana, 2022), this condition falls under the workload and exam pressure, where tight exam deadlines can increase students' psychological stress. The questionnaire results showed that the statement regarding feelings of stress when facing exams with limited time received the highest score, with 74 respondents (48.4%) agreeing and 18 (11.8%) strongly agreeing. This indicates that exam pressure significantly impacts students' psychological well-being.

These findings support research conducted by Kusuma et al. (2022), which found that the majority of students, 239 (49%), fell into the moderate academic stress category. This condition is influenced by high academic pressure, particularly time constraints during exams, which can reduce students' mental preparedness and self-confidence. When academic demands are perceived as exceeding an individual's capabilities, the stress response tends to increase and persist.

The results of this study were also supported by Dodikrisno et al. (2024), who showed that the majority of students, 37 (48.7%), fell into the moderate academic stress category. The pressure of exams with tight deadlines triggers anxiety, a feeling of being rushed, and difficulty maximizing critical thinking skills. This situation causes students to focus more on solving problems than on deeply understanding the material.

In addition to exam pressure, academic stress is also triggered by concerns about the chances of finding a job

that matches one's abilities even after passing the exam. According to Bedewy and Gabriel (in Prasetyo & Andriana, 2022), this condition falls under the individual's academic self-perception. The questionnaire results showed that concerns about finding a job that matches one's abilities ranked second highest, with 59 respondents (38.6%) agreeing and 29 (19%) strongly agreeing, reflecting high levels of anxiety about the future.

This finding aligns with research by Dwi et al. (2025), which showed that the majority of students, 133 (52.2%), fell into the moderate academic stress category. This condition reflects low self-efficacy accompanied by concerns about academic abilities. Self-doubt exacerbates academic stress and tends to persist.

This is supported by Rossanti & Mudhar (2025), who showed that 25 students (34.7%) experienced moderate academic stress. This suggests that a tendency to feel like a failure and academic anxiety contribute to increased stress. Students' self-assessment of their competencies is a crucial factor in understanding academic demands and preparing for the future.

According to Bedewy and Gabriel (in Kusuma et al., 2022), stress is influenced by self-perception and cognitive processes in assessing internal and external demands. In an academic context, pressure becomes a stressor when the academic situation is perceived as exceeding an individual's ability to manage it. When academic demands are labeled as a threat, perceived academic stress forms and impacts a student's entire academic experience.

Based on these findings, it can be concluded that the majority of undergraduate nursing students at Muhammadiyah Ciamis College of Health Sciences (STIKes) experience moderate levels of academic stress. This condition is primarily triggered by the pressure of exams with limited time, compounded by low self-efficacy and negative perceptions

of personal abilities. A less adaptive self-perception is a dominant factor increasing students' vulnerability to academic stress.

A Description of Emotional Eating in Undergraduate Nursing Students at Muhammadiyah Ciamis Health College

In this study, respondents were categorized into three levels of emotional eating: low, moderate, and high. Of the 153 respondents, the majority of students, 84 (54.9%), fell into the moderate emotional eating category. This is in line with research by Rachma et al. (2024), who found that 182 of 247 respondents (73.7%) also fell into the moderate emotional eating category. This finding is supported by Savitri et al. (2022), who found that 45.9% of students from the Faculty of Medicine, Warmadewa University, experienced moderate emotional eating. The consistency of these results indicates that moderate emotional eating is the most dominant category level in the student population.

Based on gender characteristics, female students exhibited emotional eating behaviors more frequently than male students. This finding aligns with Handayani and Lestari (2022), who stated that this condition is related to women's tendency to use food as a means of emotional regulation, particularly when facing uncomfortable feelings such as sadness, anxiety, or disappointment, resulting in emotional responses being more often expressed through eating behavior.

In terms of age, the majority of respondents were 19-20 years old and fell into the moderate emotional eating category. This finding aligns with Wulandari (2021), who stated that students in the early stages of college (18-21 years old) tend to be more prone to emotional eating. This condition is related to underdeveloped emotional regulation, which tends to express negative emotions through eating as a coping strategy.

Based on semester level, the majority of students were in their fifth semester and experienced moderate emotional eating. This finding aligns with Sari et al. (2024), who stated that middle to advanced students have a higher prevalence of emotional eating. In this phase, increasingly complex academic demands and more flexible consumption patterns encourage the use of food as a source of emotional comfort.

The questionnaire results showed that students tend to use food to improve their mood and alleviate negative emotions. Of the 13 questions, the majority of respondents answered sometimes (39.97%), followed by often (15.5%), and always (12%). This pattern suggests that emotional eating occurs quite frequently, although not consistently, and serves more as an emotional coping mechanism than to satisfy physiological hunger.

According to Van Strien (in Gryzela & Ariana, 2021), emotional eating occurs when someone eats in response to negative emotions, where food is consumed not because of physical hunger but to relieve emotional distress. This finding aligns with research conducted by Gusni et al. (2022), which found that individuals with emotional eating use food to help improve mood and reduce stress-related discomfort.

Negative emotions such as stress, depression, loneliness, anger, disappointment, anxiety, and restlessness are among the factors that influence emotional eating behavior. In such situations, people often use food consumption as a quick strategy to relieve psychological distress, even though the effects are only temporary (Ljubičić et al., 2023). This is in line with Savitri et al. (2022), who explained that stress increases cortisol production through the brain's reward system, stimulating cravings for sweet, salty, and fatty foods.

Based on research results, the majority of undergraduate nursing students at Muhammadiyah Ciamis College of Health Sciences (STIKes) fall into the

moderate emotional eating category. This condition is primarily triggered by emotional pressures such as stress and anxiety, which encourage the use of food as an emotional coping strategy, as explained in Van Strien's theory. This pattern is reflected in the tendency to eat when experiencing negative emotions. Although classified as moderate, if it persists, emotional eating behavior has the potential to impact physical and psychological health later in life.

The Relationship Between Academic Stress Levels and Emotional Eating in Undergraduate Nursing Students at Muhammadiyah Ciamis Health College

The Fisher Exact test yielded a p-value of 0.006 ($p < 0.05$), which rejected the null hypothesis (H_0) and accepted the alternative hypothesis (H_a), thus indicating a significant relationship between academic stress levels and emotional eating in students. Furthermore, Linear-by-Linear association analysis was used to assess the linear relationship between ordinal categories resulting in a p-value of 0.043 ($p < 0.05$), indicating a significant and linear relationship between the two variables. This finding indicates that increasing levels of academic stress correlate with emotional eating tendencies, although most respondents were in the moderate category for both variables. Variations across ordinal categories still form a linear and gradual relationship pattern.

The findings of this study align with those of Ramadhani (2025), who reported a p-value of 0.001 ($p < 0.05$) and demonstrated a positive correlation. These results indicate a significant relationship between academic stress levels and emotional eating, where the higher the level of academic stress experienced, the greater the individual's tendency to exhibit eating behaviors influenced by emotional conditions. This condition occurs because academic stress triggers negative emotions such as anxiety, tension, and mental fatigue,

so students tend to use food as a quick coping strategy to relieve psychological discomfort.

The results of this study are consistent with the findings of Syafiqah et al. (2024), who reported a p-value of 0.001 ($p < 0.05$) and indicated a positive relationship. These findings confirm a significant relationship between stress levels and emotional eating behavior. Stressful conditions can disrupt emotional instability, so students tend to seek ways to achieve a sense of comfort and self-control. Consuming food, especially those high in sugar and fat, can provide a calming effect in the short term, so increasing stress levels are directly proportional to an increased tendency for emotional eating.

According to Van Strien (in Gryzela & Ariana, 2021), emotional eating is defined as eating behavior triggered by emotional states, rather than physical hunger, where food or drink is used as a means to reduce emotional distress. Conceptually, emotional eating encompasses two main dimensions: a response to general negative emotions such as boredom and loneliness, and a response to more specific negative emotions including stress, anger, disappointment, fear, and anxiety.

According to Lazarevich et al. (2020), various negative emotions such as anxiety, sadness, loneliness, and stress can trigger emotional eating. This behavior acts as a coping mechanism to relieve psychological stress. According to Folkman and Lazarus (in Pertiwi & Wahyuni Ulandari, 2023), coping is generally divided into problem-focused coping, which focuses on solving problems, and emotion-focused coping, which aims to

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the analysis of research results regarding the relationship between academic stress and emotional eating in

reduce emotional tension without changing the source of stress.

Emotional eating This is considered emotion-focused coping because food is used as a quick way to relieve negative emotions. Furthermore, Ramadhani & Mastuti (2022) also explained that women are more likely to use emotion-focused coping, while men are more likely to use problem-focused coping, which may explain the higher tendency for emotional eating in women.

In addition to academic stress, emotional regulation skills also play a significant role in influencing stress levels and the tendency for emotional eating. Barus et al. (2024) explains that ineffective emotional regulation can increase academic stress. Meanwhile, Shriver et al. (2020) states that poor emotional regulation also triggers emotional eating. Although early adulthood students are developmentally expected to be able to manage their emotions well, in reality, many students are unable to optimally control their emotional responses.

Researchers concluded that academic stress levels are significantly associated with emotional eating in college students. Increased stress encourages students to use food as an emotional coping strategy, not due to physiological hunger, but to alleviate negative emotions caused by academic demands. In addition to academic stress, suboptimal emotional regulation also strengthens the tendency for emotional eating. Therefore, academic stress and emotional regulation are important factors in understanding emotional eating behavior in college students.

undergraduate nursing students at Muhammadiyah Ciamis Health College, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. Most of the undergraduate nursing students at Muhammadiyah Ciamis College of Health Sciences experienced

moderate levels of academic stress, with a total of 146 respondents (95.4%).

2. Emotional eating behavior in undergraduate nursing students at Muhammadiyah Ciamis Health College was mostly in the moderate category, namely 84 respondents (54.9%).
3. The results of the statistical test show a significant relationship between the level of academic stress and emotional eating in undergraduate nursing students at Muhammadiyah Ciamis Health College, as evidenced by a p value of 0.006 ($p < 0.05$).

Suggestion

1. For Students: Students should pay more attention to their mental health and daily diet, given that academic stress can trigger emotional eating. Adaptive stress management practices, such as study time management, relaxation techniques, physical activity, and a balanced diet, are essential to prevent negative health impacts.
2. For Educational Institutions: Educational institutions are expected to develop student mental health support programs, such as counseling services, academic guidance, and nutrition education. Furthermore, regular mental health promotion is necessary to create a more supportive academic environment.
3. For Further Researchers: Future research is recommended to expand the study of academic stress and emotional eating with a larger sample size or using qualitative and mixed methods. The addition of variables such as social support, emotional regulation, and nutritional status should also be considered to obtain more comprehensive results.

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