

**CenRaPS Journal of Social Sciences**

International Indexed & Refereed



ISSN: 2687-2226 (Online)  
<https://cenraps.org/journal/>



**Original Article**

10.65826/CenRaPS.8.1.1.179

**Association between Mental Health and Academic Performance: A Study among the Students of Jatiya Kabi Kazi Nazrul Islam University, Trishal, Mymensingh, Bangladesh**

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**ABSTRACT**

This study investigates the association between mental health and academic performance among the students of Jatiya Kabi Kazi Nazrul Islam University, Trishal, Mymensingh, Bangladesh, and also explores the mental health challenges faced by students in balancing their academic well-being. In this context, a mixed-method approach has been used, including both quantitative and qualitative data provided by the students of Jatiya Kabi Kazi Nazrul Islam University. The findings will not only examine the association between mental health and academic performance but also investigate the key challenges regarding academic performance and mental health among university students. In this study, the total sample size is 144, consisting of 137 quantitative survey respondents and 7 qualitative participants (5 case studies and 2 KIIs) of Jatiya Kabi Kazi Nazrul Islam University. In the quantitative method, a semi-structured questionnaire administered using both online (using Google form) and face-to-face survey methods. On the contrary, in the qualitative method with five case studies and two key informant interviews (KII) have also been taken through structured checklist. Convenience sampling was used for quantitative survey to prioritize the voluntarily participation; the purposive sampling technique was adopted for the case studies and KII. The measurement of “Mental Health” operationalized through a self-developed questionnaire focusing on key indicators such as stress, depression, anxiety, and sleep quality. This study was guided by the Stress-coping Model by Lazarus and Folkman (1984) and Resilience Theory by Dr. Norman Garmezy (1991). After analyzing data by using SPSS software 25 & MS Excel, the findings reveal that 74.5% of students experience mental health challenges, including stress, depression, anxiety, poor sleeping quality, trauma, sadness, hopelessness, etc., negatively affect their academic performances. As university students are the

intellectual assets of a nation by contributing their progress through academic excellence, we should prioritize their mental well-being to ensure constant success & a bright future.

**Keywords:** mental health, academic performance, university students, Bangladesh

## **INTRODUCTION**

Mental health and academic performance are two critical aspects of every students & their overall well-being. Mental health obstacles, such as depression, anxiety, and stress etc., can significantly impact a student's ability to learn, concentration, and retain information, leading to poor academic performance. Conversely, academic stress and performance pressure can exacerbate mental health concerns, creating a vicious cycle. World Health Organization (WHO, 2025) defines mental health as a “state of mental well-being that qualifies people to cope with the stresses of life, comprehend their abilities, learn and functioning well, and contribute to their community”. On the other hand, academic outcomes that show how well a student has met their learning objectives are referred to as academic achievement includes, a range of elements, such as: grades, extracurricular activities, test scores, participation in class etc. (Pintrich et al., 1992). As we know that for any individual from childhood and youth to maturity, mental health is essential at every stage of life. After graduating from higher secondary school, students may experience a range of problems in their new academic environment, including living in hostels, study pressure, inefficient time management, improper nutrition, insomnia, tobacco use, problematic internet usage, and lazy behavior (Mohammad et al., 2018). Statistical analysis showed that there is a significant association between mental health and educational performance, that is, the higher the students' level of mental health, the better their educational performance. Thus, students who have good mental health, can perform better on study than those with poor mental health. A number of factors also have impacts on students' academic success, including student' knowledge skills, parental background, peer influence, teachers' teaching and behavior quality, and learning setup. Specifically, indicators of severe mental health problems may lead to low academic self-efficacy. Similarly, there is a correlation between low academic achievement and symptoms of serious mental health issues. "A lack of psychosocial resources" (i.e., exposure to more daily stressors and a lack of control, resilience, ability to defer gratification, and access to cultural activities) is associated to having less education, according to Niemeyer, H. et al. (2020). Though students are the backbone of a nation, in the context of Bangladesh, university students play a vital role for their nation as an intellectual human resource by contributing their creativity and innovation needed for the nation’s progress and success. However, their overall

state of mind and academic achievement are frequently hampered by the unacknowledged burden of mental health conditions like anxiety, depression, and so on. Understanding the challenges concerning mental health issues, is important for effectively developing students' mental health and academic performance. The results of this study can support to address students' mental health issues and improve academic performance by informing academic assistance programs, counseling services, and policies. This study also provides insights for researchers and policymakers by ensuring that the nation's youth keep sound mental well-being for academic success and future progress.

## **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

### **General Objectives:**

To assess the association between mental health and academic performance among the students of Jatiya Kabi Kazi Nazrul Islam University, Trishal, Mymensingh, Bangladesh is the specific aim of this research.

### **Secondary Objectives:**

1. To find out the scenarios of mental health condition of the university students.
2. To examine how mental health impact on academic performance among university students.
3. To investigate the challenges regarding academic performance of students and strategies to improve the mental health problems among university students.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

In this 21st century, mental health is becoming a challenge for our society because this concept has not gotten the necessary attention despite its reflective influence on our daily lives. Life is becoming challenging for many of us due to irrational anxieties, uncontrollable thought or behaviors, severe physical instances, feelings of emptiness or apathy, or even runaway euphoria or biased conceptions of them, (Porrás, 2020). Mental health can be defined as a crucial component of overall health, characterized in three ways: the absence of disease, the functioning state of an organism, and a state of balance between oneself and the physical and social environment (Bhugra et al. (2019). This study examines the relation between mental health and academic performance among university students. Consequently, the main concern was mental wellbeing of students. Though educational institutions are considered to inspire intellectual progression but they often become significant sources of mental distress. Because,

anxiety, depression, and stress are some of the most prevalent mental health issues that students interact with and this was also said by Hunt and Eisenberg (2010). As university students frequently deal with academic strain, which can be detrimental for both mental health and academic performance, so high levels of academic pressure may lead anxiety, depression, and difficulty sleeping which is also stated by Kankaraš et al. (2016). By following this statement, Kourgiannis & Shepard (2016) informed that, academic performance may be significantly harmed by those above circumstances. For example, anxious students might find it challenging to focus, complete their homework, and maintain regular class attendance. Depression in students can lead to low motivation, hopelessness, and difficulty in making decisions—all of which can be dangerous for their academic performance. The developmental trajectory of mental health issues often starts prior to students' entry into higher education also stated by Kessler et al. (2019). They also found that approximately 50% of mental health conditions manifest by age 14, and 75% by age 24. When first-year university students arrive, they feel a wide range of unique feelings. Universities must evaluate and identify students who are at risk of leaving school during their first year in order to raise their retention rate. Additionally, Alim et al. (2017) also said as Kessler et al.(2019), students seem to be more vulnerable with mental diseases, especially first-year university students who have to adjust to living away from home, moving to a new neighborhood or city, and adjusting to new circumstances. Furthermore, Ahmadi Z. (2007), emphasizes that young adults in university settings are particularly prone to psychological stress, which can manifest as apathy and aggression, further impairing their academic and social functioning. The long-term impact of these early-onset issues is added supported by Deighton et al. (2018), who indicates a strong correlation between academic achievement in early adolescence and internalizing problems that develop during middle childhood. This connection between mental health and academic achievement persists into adulthood, as demonstrated by Singh et al. (2015). Their comparative study of college students who found a significant difference in mental health outcomes based on academic achievement and gender, observing that high-achieving students and male participants stated better mental well-being. Notably, this is consistent with the findings of from Thilagavathy's study (2014), Kumar et al (2019) observed a significant positive correlation between mental health and academic achievement among students, noting that those with higher mental well-being consistently outperformed their peers. Based on the above circumstance, students in Bangladesh have severe cases of mental health issues, and it is high time adequate concern is given to these issues. For example, in October, 2022, a headline was published in a news portal

titled with “*Over 75% of university students in Bangladesh struggle with mental health issues due to academic pressure*” (bdnews24.com, 2023). Mental health issues in Bangladesh have become a significant public health concern, as highlighted by Alim et al. (2017). Terms such as depression, anxiety, stress, and sleep disorders are increasingly recognized. First-year university students are particularly vulnerable, facing challenges related to living away from home and adapting to new environments. In Bangladesh, the rate of mental health disorders is 11.2% as reported by Mohammad et al. (2021). According to the 2017 Global Burden of Disease (GBD) report, the incidence of schizophrenia is 0.2% in Bangladesh, lower than the global and Asian rates of 0.3%. The estimates for bipolar disorder and epilepsy are similar to those elsewhere. Bangladesh shows a higher prevalence of depression at 2.8%, compared to 2.2% in Southeast Asia, with women experiencing a higher rate (3.6% vs. 2.7%) than men. According to the Bangladesh household mental health survey (2019), the adult population's prevalence estimates for schizophrenia and related psychotic diseases were 1.0% and 6.7%, respectively. Related to GBD reports, these estimates are significantly higher. In this case, the inconsistency between global data and local surveys highlights the requirement of doing context-based research to find out the real time incidence of mental health conditions in Bangladesh. In light of this, according to a survey conducted by the Aachol Foundation in 2022, approximately 80.79% of students stated that mental health conditions like depression and bipolar disorder, among others, directly exaggerated their academic performance. These conditions were often made worse by sleep disorders and technology misuse. Additionally, Kazemi (2003) claims that mental health is a primary element for success in all life phases, including marital life and career securing, which are main concerns for university-level students. The impacts of mental health on academic performance has multi-dimensional effects. Among them first one is, mental health issues such as anxiety and depression significantly spoil a student's intellectual capacity, difficulties in focus during class lectures and study efficiently. Secondly, mental health issues can lead to fluctuations in sleeping patterns and hunger as, when students are not getting enough sleep or eating healthy foods, they are more likely to experience fatigue and cognitive impairment. Finally, mental health problems can create social isolation and extraction. Students who are struggling with their mental health, may avoid regularity in attending class, participation in extracurricular activities, or interacting with their friends, classmates and so on as stated by Agnafors et al. (2021). Furthermore, Halpern-Manners A et al. (2016) establish an opposing association between mental health and academic performance. They stated that mental issues such as anxiety,

depression, and stress hinder learning and intellectual procedures. Conversely, academic pressure can lead to repeated failures and low self-esteem which can also contribute to mental health disorders. This vice versa relationship aligns with the Stress-Coping Model which suggests that while mental health issues hinder learning, the subsequent academic struggles and low self-esteem can, in turn, create a cycle of further mental distress. This study also investigates these issues which affecting students' regular activities of studies. Rahman et al. (2022) conducted research, analyzing the significant change undergone by the Bangladesh's education system since COVID-19. All colleges and universities were closed during the pandemic and some psychological problems which affected a number of the students resulted from the pandemic with university students reporting normal levels of stress (47.40), anxiety (43.29%), and depression (30.41%). Female students were shown to be noticeably more anxious and nervous than their male counterparts. Students in Dhaka City's capital were more nervous and depressed than those in other cities. Students may benefit from psychological and financial support to lessen the psychological effects. From a recent study, Kuhn et al. (2025) found that, all mental health measures correlated with academic performance, both in unadjusted and adjusted models. Higher perceived stress negatively impacted academic outcomes until it plateaued at moderate to high levels. Increased depressive symptoms were linked to worse performance. Anxiety exhibited a complex relationship, where performance improved with rising anxiety levels to a point, but declined at extremely high anxiety levels. According to US National Epidemiological Studies (2024), more than half of college students suffer from mental illness, yet only 25% of them seek treatment. Psychological morbidity among students is a major public health concern, with 70–80% of young adults worldwide lacking necessary care. This stage of schooling is essential for creating intervention strategies and preventive systems for mental health problems.

## **CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

The conceptual framework shows how different independent factors affect the dependent variable, university students' academic achievement. The independent variable interacts with educational, social, psychological, economic, familial, and individual mental health aspects to various degrees.

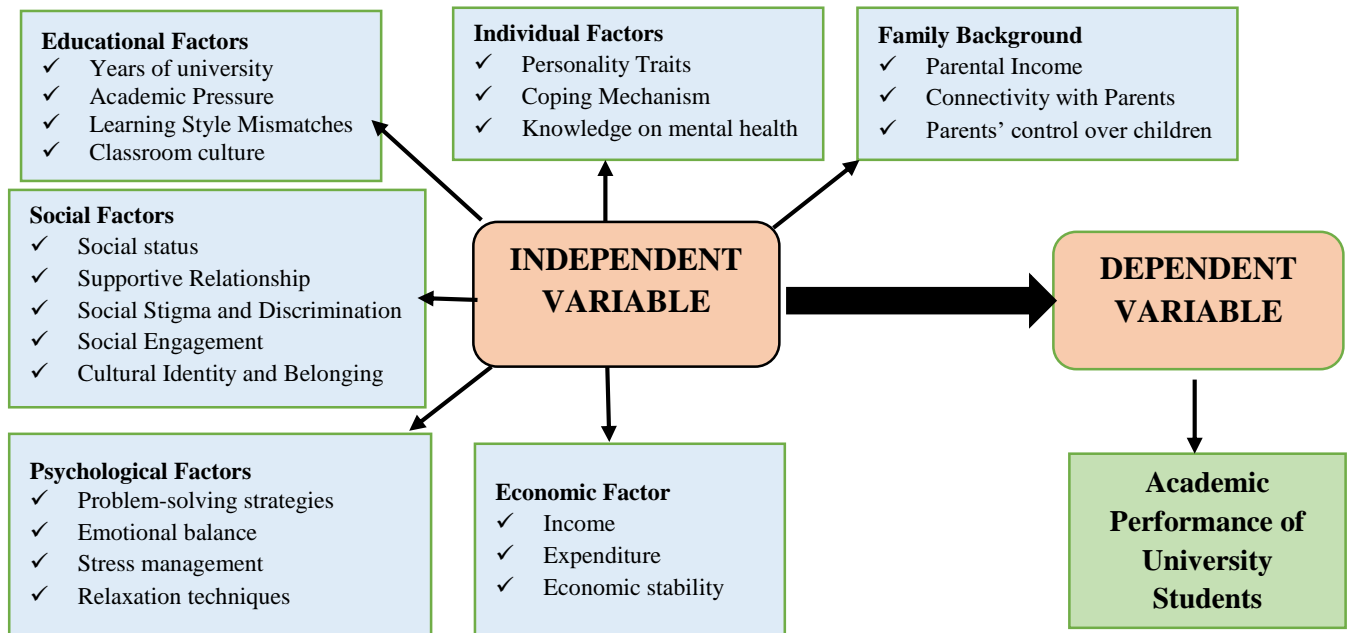


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework (Author's own creation)

This conceptual framework (figure01) determines the relationship between mental health conditions as the independent variable, and academic performance as the dependent variable, between university students. The independent variable remains influenced by several factors which categorized by educational, individual, social, family background, economic, and psychological. In brief, the educational factors include years of university experience, academic pressure, classroom culture, and mismatched education styles all of these implicitly affect students' mental health and academic performance. Additionally, individual factors such as: personality traits, coping mechanisms, and mental health awareness that directly influence a student's mental wellbeing. Social factors include aspects such as social status, supportive relationships, social stigma, cultural identity, and social engagement, which foster a sense of belonging and affect mental health. Family background has a vital role based on parental income, connection with parents, and parental control, affecting students' stress levels. Furthermore, financial support from families inclines to decrease academic-related stress. Economic factor highlights the importance of financial constancy on mental health and academic achievement. Last of all, psychological factors include, problem solving strategies, emotional balance, stress management, and relaxation techniques etc. are essential for maintaining mental strength and positively helps in academic performance. This framework thoroughly discovers how these interrelated factors mutually influence the mental health of students and their academic achievement.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

There is a wide-ranging understanding of the relationship between mental health and academic performance of university students, which can be achieved by the contamination of various theoretical perspectives. Though, academic achievements and mental health have a complicated and mutual relationship also both can affect one another. This study uses two theoretical frameworks, one is the 'Stress and Coping Model' by Lazarus and Folkman, and another one is the 'Resilience Theory' by Norman Garmezy, to clarify these interrelationships between mental health and academic performance of university students.

### **'Stress and Coping Model' by Lazarus and Folkman (1984)**

The "Stress-coping Model" given by Lazarus and Folkman (1984) which offers a comprehensive theoretical framework to understand how persons react with stress and how these reactions impact their mental and physical health. The core idea suggested by the model is that, *“Stress is a natural human reaction to challenging situations, while coping encompasses the strategies employed by individuals to manage stress and its consequences”*.

The model highlights that an individual's perceived confidence in dealing a stressor significantly influences their stress levels; thus, interpretation of events frequently plays a greater role than the events themselves. In the context of academic performance, the model advocates a strong correlation between mental health and academic success. As students often face various stressors from both internal (like anxiety and overthinking) and external (such as academic pressure and financial challenges). For example, financial crises can lead to depression or anxiety and then negatively impacting academic performance. According to this model, although students encounter with stress, they can utilize coping strategies to address and manage these issues. Lazarus and Folkman categorize coping strategies into two main types as: behavioral attitudes and cognitive approaches. Additionally, dividing them into four categories: problem-focused coping (e.g., seeking help, developing study skills), emotion-focused coping (e.g., relaxation techniques), support-seeking coping (e.g., seeking social support), and meaning-making coping. These empower students to adopt appropriate approaches for managing stress, there by promoting better mental health in academic settings.

### **'Resilience Theory' by Norman Garmezy (1991)**

A subfield of positive psychology, Norman Garmezy's 'Resilience Theory' (1991) focuses on how people adapt and overcome hardships. The American Psychological Association (2020) defines,

*“Resilience as the process of effectively coping with adversity, trauma, or significant stress”*. Garmezy posits that resilience encompasses any one's ability to recover from any obstacles and maintain well-being within challenges. He identifies three defensive factors inherent in resilient individuals: personal traits, supportive family relationships, and external social support. These defensive factors have profound implications for students' mental health and academic performance. Resilience is crucial for managing stress and emotional breakdown, ultimately it influencing students' mental health outcomes. Those who have higher resilience, are less susceptible to depression, anxiety, and other mental health issues. Among above defensive factors of resilience, the first factor related to personal traits, suggests that resilient person typically exhibit above-average intelligence and problem-solving skills, allowing them to effectively cope with stress. Then the second factor emphasizes the importance of close familial relationships, providing students with trust, emotional support, and security. Additionally, surveys conducted in the study reveal that strong family networks enhance students' resilience, allowing them to meet up challenges more effectively. Lastly, the theory underlines the significance of third factor as social support networks beyond the family, including friends, teachers, and community organizations. For university students, fostering good relationships within their educational environment is critical, as it boosts their resilience. Failure to establish such connections can lead to detrimental mental health consequences, such as loneliness and depression, negatively impacting their academic experiences and overall well-being.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study used a mixed method study including both qualitative and quantitative methods to find out the actual scenario of the association between mental health and academic performances among the students of Jatiya Kabi Kazi Nazrul Islam University, Trishal, Mymensingh, Bangladesh. In the quantitative method, a survey is conducted using a semi-structured questionnaire to collect numeric data on the socio-economic background of the university students and also, provides detailed information about their mental health condition and academic records. On the other hand, the qualitative method finds the use of case studies and key informant interviews to find out the factors which are influencing students' mental health and how these factors are affecting in their academic performance. This study has been conducted in Jatiya Kabi Kazi Nazrul Islam University which is located at Trishal Pourashava of Mymensingh district in Bangladesh represent a student group who are from 23 different departments. A total of 144 respondents were selected where 137 respondents were for survey

(by following Sample Size Formula of Naing *et al.* (2006)<sup>1</sup>, five (5) case studies and two (2) Key Informant Interviews (KII). Following the convenience sampling technic, survey data was collected via both online (using Google Forms) and face-to-face surveys through a semi-structured questionnaire. This study used convenience sampling technique because of prioritize voluntary participation and ethical considerations. Though, the sensitive nature of mental health topics, this research wanted to engage respondents who were genuinely willing to share their personal experiences without any external pressure or force. While purposive sampling technic used for in-depth case studies and KII by using a structured questionnaire. The measurement of “Mental Health” was operationalized through a self-developed questionnaire based on existing literature and focused on specific indicators such as, self-reported levels of stress, anxiety, depression, and sleep quality, rather than a single quantifiable measuring scale. These indicators were chosen as they are most prevalent and impactful within the university student context. Furthermore, a wide-ranging literature review is conducted from various secondary sources including reports, research articles, published papers, books, newspapers, online news portals and academic essays. Data processing and analysis were completed by using Microsoft Excel and the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) for describing statistical data including, frequency, percentage, and, methods of calculation and also summarize quantitative data. On the other hand, thematic analysis was used to the quality of open-ended surveys and interviews. During the data collection and analysis period, all the ethical issues were considered as, informed consent and ensuring respondents’ identity and opinions keep anonymous and confidential, specially before starting record in case studies and KII. The limitations of this study are oversaw by its focus on a single university and a small respondent size, while the utilization of a convenience sampling technique further constrains the generalizability of the findings to a broader context.

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<sup>1</sup> Naing L, Winn T, Rusli BN 2006: Practical Issues in Calculating the Sample Size for Prevalence Studies rusli nordin Practical Issues in Calculating the Sample Size for Prevalence Studies. In Archives of Orofacial Sciences (Vol. 1).

## FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

### Socio-Economic Background of the Respondents

**Table 01:** Socio-economic characteristics of the respondents (n=137) (Field Data, 2023)

<i>Characteristics</i>	<i>Categories</i>	<i>Frequency (n=137) / Percentage (%)</i>
<b>Sex</b>	Male	75 (54.74%)
	Female	62 (45.26%)
<b>Age</b>	18-20	11 (8%)
	21-23	82 (59.9%)
	24-26	39 (28.5%)
	27-29	5 (3.6%)
<b>Education Level</b>	Undergraduate	109 (79.60%)
	Postgraduate	28 (20.40%)
<b>Residential Status of the Respondents</b>	University Hall	88 (60.6%)
	Private Hostel	27 (19.7%)
	With family	22 (16.1%)
	Others	5 (3.6%)
<b>Family Status</b>	Upper-class	5 (3%)
	Upper-middle class	30 (22%)
	Middle class	90 (66%)
	Lower-middle class	12 (9%)
<b>Monthly Expenditure of the Respondents</b>	BDT 2000-4000	19 (13.8%)
	BDT 5000-6000	64 (46.7%)
	BDT 7000-8000	29 (21.1%)
	BDT 9000-10000	14 (10.3%)
	BDT 11000+	11 (8.04%)
<b>Current Relationship Status</b>	Single	83 (60.60%)
	Married	12 (8.80%)
	In Love Affairs	29 (21.20%)
	Engaged	13 (9.50%)

From the table 1, the socio-economic background of respondents is vital as per these factors significantly impact students' mental health and academic results. The above findings observe the demographic characteristics of 137 participants from Jatiya Kabi Kazi Nazrul Islam University of their academic experiences. The gender distribution is neutrally balanced, with males at 54.74% and females at 45.26%. In the age distribution, the majority (59.9%) are between 21-23 years, followed by 28.5% in the 24-26 age group; smaller proportions include

those aged 18-20 (8%) and 27-29 (3.6%). After that, educational qualifications disclose that 79.60% are undergraduates and 20.40% are postgraduates. About residential status, 60.6% respondents live in University Halls, 19.7% in private hostels, and 16.1% with families. Economic backgrounds show diversity, with 66% identifying as middle class, 22% as upper-middle class, 9% as lower-middle class, and 3% as upper-class.

Mrs. Hamida (pseudonym) who is one of key Informant 01 said,

*“Most of the students in university comes from middle- and lower-income family because, the cost of public universities is much less than private universities. Therefore, most of the intelligent students from middle income class and lower income-class families, prefer public universities for higher education”.*

Then, monthly expenditures differ, with 46.7% spending between BDT 5,000-6,000, followed by 21.1% who spend BDT 7,000-8,000, and smaller group reported other expenditure ranges.

One respondent added that,

*“I take five to six thousand bdt from home in every month. But it is very difficult to get through every month with this money because everything costs more. So, I eat only two meals a day and skip breakfast to cut costs. But due to not doing breakfast in the morning, I can't concentrate properly in class, and sometimes it suffers me a lot.”*

Lastly, the relationship status of respondents shows their current engagement with their partners or non-engagement with anyone where majority of respondents added they are non-engaged with any partners and 21.20% respondents are in a romantic relationship.

#### **Case 01**

*Mamun (pseudonym), a student from the department of population science at Jatiya Kabi Kazi Nazrul Islam University. His age is 26 and he belongs to an upper-middle-class family. According to him, mental health is a state of well-being in which an individual can cope with the normal stresses of life and can work productively. Based on his previous experience, a couple of months ago, he faced depression and anxiety problems and several reasons behind these are family problems and academic performance. His academic result is 3.31, and he is not satisfied with his CGPA. As he thinks, it will not be enough for him to get a good job. In his 3rd semester, his father was ill, and for that reason, his mental health situation was poor and he failed in one course. Sometimes he faced academic stress due to too many classes, assignments, and presentations. And he overcomes these situations by focusing more and more on his academic studies. Also, when he feels stressed, he usually meets with his friends and teachers. Finally, he agreed with the statement, “Mental health issues hamper academic performance.”*

## Psychological Profile and Mental Health Status of the Respondents

**Table 02:** Psychological profile and mental health status of the respondents (n=137) (Field Data, 2023)

<i>Characteristics</i>	<i>Categories</i>	<i>Frequency (n=137) / Percentage (%)</i>
<b><i>Mental Health Experience</i></b>	Familiar with psychiatric terms (Yes)	124 (90.5%)
	Personally faced mental health issues (Yes)	102 (74.5%)
<b><i>Determinants of Issues</i></b> <i>(Multiple Answers)</i>	Carrier/Future oriented	90 (65.75%)
	Academic Stress	64 (46.7%)
	Family problems	41 (29.9%)
	Financial Crisis	33 (24.1%)
	Physical Health issues	32 (23.4%)
	Residential issues	16 (11.7%)
	Others	24 (17.5%)

The data of Table 02, presents a profound connection between the psychological state of students. Most of the respondents have familiarity over mental health issues where 74.5% respondents directly experienced. A noteworthy majority of students (74.5%) have personally faced mental health issues, which directly impacts their educational constancy. The furthest leading stressor is 'Career and Future-oriented' anxieties (65.75%), followed by 'Academic Stress' (46.7%), suggesting that the burden of maintaining a career pathway is a primary driver of mental instability. As this study found a noteworthy majority of students experience several mental health challenges, and this high frequency aligns with recent reports in Bangladesh. BDnews24.com (2023) highlighted, over 75% of university students struggle with mental health due to academic stress. Similarly, relating with this, Alim et al. (2017) observed high levels of depression and anxiety among medical students in Bangladesh and suggested that the competitive academic environment is a major stressor across various disciplines.

### Case 02

*Arif (pseudonym) is an undergraduate student in the department of Accounting at Jatiya Kabi Kazi Nazrul Islam University. He is 24 years old, and his family status is middle-income. He faces mental stress from financial crises, semester pressure from the department, assignments, presentations, classmates, and girlfriends as mostly faces stress and anger as a mental health issue. His academic performance is not good enough, and he can't study regularly. According to Arif, mental health and academic performance are always linked together and he hardly overcomes stress. He tries to sleep a lot when under stress and stay away from everything, like*

*switching off his phone, keeping distance from friends and girlfriends, stopping talking with family, and staying in his room without going outside or taking classes. He finds the unsupportive environment at the university and that university authorities are not enough concerned about students' mental health. Most of the teachers are biased, and they are not so cooperative, especially with new students who suffer a lot.*

**Academic Performance in Relation with Mental Health**

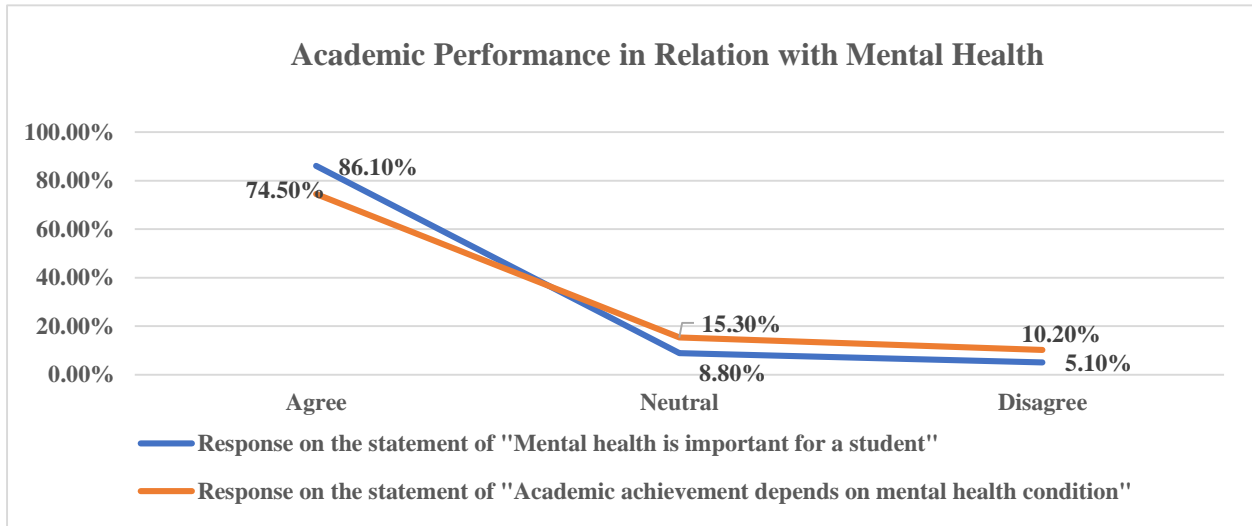
**Table 03:** Academic performance in relation with mental health (n=137) (Field Data, 2023)

<i>Characteristics</i>	<i>Categories</i>	<i>Frequency (n=137) / Percentage (%)</i>
<i>Respondents' academic performance in their perspective</i>	Very Good	12 (8.76%)
	Good	34 (24.82%)
	Improving	17 (12.40%)
	Average	66 (48.18%)
	Poor	8 (5.84%)
<i>Response on the statement, "mental health is important for a student"</i>	Agree	118 (86.1%)
	Neutral	12 (8.8%)
	Disagree	7 (5.1%)
<i>Response on the statement, "Academic achievement depends on mental health condition"</i>	Agree	102 (74.5%)
	Neutral	21 (15.3%)
	Disagree	14 (10.2%)
<i>Response on the statement, "Poor mental health negatively affects academic performance"</i>	Yes	109 (79.6%)
	No	28 (20.4%)
<i>Respondents' satisfaction with CGPA affects mental health</i>	Yes	95 (69.3%)
	No	42 (30.7%)

According to the findings of table 03, while a plurality of students (48.18%) describes their academic performance as "Average," there is a resounding consensus regarding the impact of psychological well-being on academic success. Specifically, a substantial majority of participants agreed that mental health is crucial for students (86.1%) and that academic achievement is directly dependent on one's mental health condition (74.5%). This connection has added strength by the fact that, 79.6% of respondents believe poor mental health harmfully affects academic results. One survey respondent added that,

*“When I get good marks and highest GPA in semester, I feel very happy and proud also, I get more encourage to do well in future. So, that I can study more attentively and I’m very satisfied with my CGPA. But there are many students who are not satisfied with their CGPA. When they get dissatisfactory result, it makes them more depressed.”*

Figure 02: Academic performance in relation with mental health (n=137) (Field Data, 2023)



The line graph of figure 02, highlights this trend by showing a sharp decline from high levels of agreement to very low levels of disagreement, suggesting that students overwhelmingly recognize mental health as a primary factor influencing their educational journey. So, the findings disclose a strong contrary correlation between mental health issues and academic performance, suggests that, students with higher levels of stress and depression have a tendency to to have lower CGPAs and higher absenteeism. This relationship aligns with the findings of Kuhn et al. (2025), who established that increased depressive symptoms are directly linked to worse academic outcomes. Furthermore, the observed cognitive diminishing in stressed students resonates with the Stress-Coping Model, which suggests that mental distress hinders the education process and decreases focus on studies (Halpern-Manners et al., 2016).

### Case 03

*Sazedul (pseudonym) is an undergraduate student in the department of Sociology at Jatiya Kabi Kazi Nazrul Islam University. He is 25 years old, and his family status is lower-middle-income. He defined mental health as being free from tension, depression, and stress and staying relaxed, but severely he faces stress because of his academic work, job preparation for the future, and tension for his thesis work. Sazedul’s academic result is good, and he is satisfied with his CGPA. The understanding of his classmates is average because he is somewhat*

*introverted and tries to maintain fewer friends. According to Sazedul, mental health and academic performance are very connected with each other because when we are mentally disturbed, we can't give attention and concentration to academic study or class lectures. The reasons behind his academic stress are spending time on tuition, job preparation, irregular study, and also using social media for a long time. He doesn't find his university supportive of influencing the relationship between mental health and academic performance by suggesting, university should behave supportively towards financially unstable students, provide residential and counseling facilities, reduce political pressure, and stop ragging and harassment.*

### **Challenges Regarding Academic Performance and Strategies to Improve Mental Health among University Students**

**Table 04:** Challenges regarding academic performance and strategies to improve mental health among university students (n = 137) (Field Data, 2023)

<i>Characteristics</i>	<i>Categories</i>	<i>Frequency (n=137) / Percentage (%)</i>
<b>Academic Challenges</b> <i>(Multiple responses)</i>	Academic pressure & exam stress	96 (70.1%)
	Lack of concentration due to mental stress	89 (65.0%)
	Poor time management	72 (52.6%)
	Low motivation toward study	78 (56.9%)
	Unsatisfactory CGPA	64 (46.7%)
	Irregular class attendance	58 (42.3%)
<b>Mental Health Challenges</b> <i>(Multiple responses)</i>	Anxiety and overthinking	91 (66.4%)
	Depression or persistent sadness	76 (55.5%)
	Poor sleeping quality	98 (71.5%)
	Emotional stress from family/social issues	69 (50.4%)
<b>Coping &amp; Support Strategies</b> <i>(Multiple responses)</i>	Sharing problems with friends/family	84 (61.3%)
	Self-coping strategies (music, rest, distraction)	73 (53.3%)
	Seeking academic support from peers/teachers	59 (43.1%)
	Consulting psychologist/counselor	28 (20.4%)
<b>Suggested University Strategies</b> <i>(Multiple responses)</i>	Counseling services on campus	101 (73.7%)
	Mental health awareness programs	94 (68.6%)
	Reducing academic pressure	87 (63.5%)
	Friendly teacher-student relationship	79 (57.7%)
	Recreational & stress-relief activities	71 (51.8%)

Based on the above data provided in Table 04 concerning university students' challenges and mental health strategies, the data reveals that academic burden and exam stress are the most significant challenges, affecting 70.1% of the 137 respondents. This is closely followed by a lack of concentration due to mental stress (65.0%) and low motivation (56.9%). About mental health specifically, 'poor sleeping' quality is the most prevalent issue at 71.5%, while anxiety and overthinking affect 66.4% of the students. In that case, one respondent added that,

*“My sleeping quality is not good because my roommate studies at room at late night and the noise of his reading and lights disturbs while I'm sleeping. For that reason, I feel sleepy all day and couldn't give focus in class time and also it hampers me in semester time.”*

As a significant portion of respondents stated poor sleep quality, which negatively affected their concentration. This information is supported by Aachol Foundation (2022) data, which indicated that over 71% of Bangladeshi students suffer from sleep disorders and directly linked to academic anxiety and excessive technology use. As noted by Agnafors et al. (2021), such lifestyle aspects can create a cycle where physical fatigue further exacerbates mental health decline, leading to a drop in academic achievement. To survive with these pressures, a majority of students (61.3%) choose sharing problems with friends or family, whereas only 20.4% currently prefer consultation with a psychologist or counselor. Consequently, when asked for suggested university-level improvements, the highest demand is for counseling services on campus (73.7%) and the implementation of mental health awareness programs (68.6%) to better support the student body. Key Informant (01) quote should be added that,

*“We are very concern about student's welfare and also their mental health well-being. We work and are working towards the holistic development of students. But there are many students who are not too much aware of themselves. Most of the university students are mature enough and they can take care of themselves. But most of the students are not concern about their physical and mental health issues. Irregularity of food, late sleeping, excessive chatting, gossiping, wandering, irregular study, smoking, using drugs etc. problems are intentionally done by university student which are affecting them both physically and mentally.”*

#### **Case 05**

*Ela (pseudonym) is a student of Jatiya Kabi Kazi Nazrul Islam University. Her age is 22 and she belongs to a middle-income family. For her, mental health is a state of emotional, psychological, and sometimes social fact. She hardly faced severe mental health issues, but stress, anxiety, and tensions are normal for her. The reasons behind these mental states are mainly academic life and career-related thoughts, as well as sometimes family pressure. According to her, she is very satisfied with her academic result; her current academic*

*performance is good. In her academic life, her understanding with classmates are very good. She finds the association between mental health and academic performance because there are many students who couldn't study because of depression. If she faces any mental health issues, she can overcome them as fast as she can and focus on academic study. She also added that the reasons behind mental health are uncooperativeness from the department, teachers, session jams, misunderstandings with friends, coping with problems, etc. When she faces stress, she tries to overcome the stress by doing productive work, self-motivation, journaling, sharing with family, teachers, etc.*

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, based on the findings of this research, there is an association between mental health and academic performance. As university students' academic performance is significantly influenced by their mental health, mental health issues were the main focus of this study, as was the negative influence of mental health issues on students' academic performance. So, this study tries to find out the mental health factors that are influencing the mental health and academic performance of university students. Mental health and academic performance are interrelated. Several factors, including stress, depression, anxiety, sleeping quality, social and emotional well-being, trauma, tension, sadness, physical health, hopelessness, etc., relate to both mental health and academic performance. By investigating these factors, we will contribute to mitigating mental health problems, and the academic performance of students will be better. Authorities should appoint more psychologists and also take efficient interventions, such as department-wise counseling services every week, stress management training, trauma-informed approaches, social and emotional learning programs, education on good sleep and hygiene, prevention of drug use, and physical health promotion.

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