



# The interconnectedness of parents' educational aspiration, academic stress and healthy and unhealthy behavior of nursing students

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## ABSTRACT

The study aimed to investigate the influence of parents' educational aspirations on students' academic stress, healthy behaviors, and unhealthy behaviors, as well as the effect of academic stress on these behaviors. To deepen the conceptual framework, relevant literature was reviewed. The research employed a descriptive and correlational design. The population consisted of nursing students enrolled in the 2023-2024 school year. Data were collected using questionnaires, and inferential statistics were used for analysis. The results revealed a significant correlation between parents' educational aspirations and academic stress, as well as between parents' educational aspirations and healthy behaviors, though not with unhealthy behaviors. Additionally, a significant correlation was found between academic stress and both healthy and unhealthy behaviors. The study acknowledged its limitation, as the sample was restricted to nursing students; expanding the study to include students from other courses is recommended.

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## Introduction

Academic stress is a common issue experienced by students across all educational levels, whether in elementary, high school, college, or graduate studies. It affects students of all ages (Maykel et al., 2018). While the level of stress varies among individuals, heightened academic stress is a widespread concern that requires attention (Wuthrich et al., 2020). A recent study found that stress

and anxiety are two key factors contributing to poor academic performance and discouraging students from completing their studies (Jimenez-Mijangos et al., 2022). Beyond academic failure and dropouts, academic stress has also been identified as a significant factor that diminishes students' overall well-being (Barbayannis et al., 2022). It has a profound impact on mental health and psychological well-being, affecting happiness, life satisfaction, and psychological functioning (Ryan & Deci, 2001; Tennant et al., 2007; Li & Lin, 2003; Eisenberg et al., 2009).

Several studies have explored the effects of parents' educational aspirations on students' academic performance. On the positive side, Pérez Sánchez et al. (2013) and Tárraga et al. (2017) found a positive correlation between parental aspirations and academic achievement. Similarly, Trinidad (2019) observed a positive connection between parents' aspirations and students' academic advancement. However, Schoon and Burger (2021) reported that parental aspirations can lead to lower academic performance. These studies indicate that parents' aspirations do not always result in positive outcomes. Based on the literature review, there is limited research on the effects of parents' academic aspirations on students' academic stress and healthy and unhealthy behaviors. Thus, this study aims to fill this gap and provide valuable information to student services officers for improving students' well-being.

This study is organized into several sections. The first section is the introduction, which outlines the rationale of the study. The second section is the literature review, providing the foundational theories and concepts of the study. The third section is the research methodology, which explains the research design, population, research instruments, study location, and statistical tools used for data analysis.

## ***Literature review***

### ***The meaning of education***

Clarifying the concept of education is crucial for parents, teachers, and students alike. A comprehensive understanding helps parents articulate their expectations for their children's schooling and what they anticipate schools should deliver. Moreover, it empowers educators and school administrators to align educational practices with both parental and student expectations.

The primary aim is to explore the essence and purpose of education rather than to devise new theories. The researchers seek to evaluate parental aspirations within the framework of education's core principles. To achieve this, they will examine the perspectives of educational philosophers who offer diverse interpretations of the concept.

For instance, Scheffler (1960) outlines three meanings of education. Firstly, education is seen as a formative process, molding individuals (Miovska-Spaseda, 2016) for future endeavors. This is distinct from mere training, which focuses solely on skill acquisition (Fry, 1969). Education, in contrast, encompasses the systematic acquisition of knowledge, fostering critical thinking and problem-solving abilities (The Performance Center, n.d.; Raj et al., 2022).

Secondly, education has programmatic significance, defining acceptable educational practices (Chazan, 2022; Smedsrud, 2020). Lastly, stipulative definitions of education vary based on context, allowing for flexible interpretation (Scheffler, 1974; Chazan, 2022).

Various philosophers offer distinct perspectives on education. Idealists such as Kant and Hegel emphasize reasoning and spiritual formation (Louden, 2017; Tubbs, 2015), while social realists like Rorty stress acculturation and edification (Noaparast, 2014). Dewey highlights education's role in fostering societal continuity and practical life skills (Garrison et al., 2012). Locke emphasizes preparation for social participation and problem-solving (Goodyear, 2018), while Montaigne prioritizes holistic individual development (Ferrari, 2023). Aristotle focuses on the cultivation of intellect, morality, and skills (Gotz, 2003).

Cremin's definition of education captures these diverse perspectives, emphasizing the deliberate transmission of knowledge, values, attitudes, and skills (Cremin, 1975, 1976). This definition underscores the multifaceted nature of education and serves as a lens through which to evaluate educational outcomes.

In summary, this exploration aims to provide clarity on the essence of education by drawing from a variety of philosophical perspectives. Such clarity enables a nuanced understanding of contemporary educational practices and outcomes.

### ***Common parents' aspiration for the education of their children***

Aspiration, is defined as a fervent desire to achieve something, a guiding force for individuals' future endeavours (Britannica Dictionary, n.d; APA Dictionary of Psychology, n.d; Cherry, 2021). In the context of parental educational aspirations, it refers to parents' ambitions, hopes, and dreams for their children's educational achievements (Gutman & Akerman, 2008; Holloway & Yamamoto, 2010; Spera et al., 2009; Trinidad, 2019).

Parental aspirations are influenced by various sociocultural and socioeconomic factors. Sociocultural factors such as religious practices, cultural environment, and home environment impact children's academic performance (Ternenge & Torkuma, 2021). Meanwhile, socioeconomic conditions including income, parental education, and children's academic performance shape parental aspirations (Spera et al., 2009; Oketch et al., 2012; Gorard et al., 2012).

The significance of parental aspirations in motivating children's academic performance is well-documented. Studies by Spera et al. (2009), Finlayson (1971), Schorner and Bittmann (2023), and Arockia and Prakash (2019) highlight the positive impact of parental aspirations on children's academic achievement. Furthermore, Dubow et al. (2009) suggest that parental aspirations not only influence academic success but also predict future career success. However, Murayama et al. (2016) caution against excessive parental aspirations, which may lead to children feeling

overwhelmed and frustrated.

In summary, parental educational aspirations play a pivotal role in shaping children's academic motivation and performance, though striking a balance is crucial to prevent undue pressure on children.

### ***Academic stress and students' coping mechanism***

Just as stress does not affect all people equally, academic stress also varies in its impact. Academic stress does not always lead to negative outcomes when a student can change their perception of stressors (Yumba, 2010). When a person perceives stressors as highly negative, it consequently heightens the level of negative emotions (Hammen, 2015). This is also true for academic stress. As Bedewy and Gabriel (2015) pointed out, not all students experience stress at the same level. If a student views stressors as highly negative, it will affect their psychological and physical well-being. Conversely, if students consider stressors as positive, they can serve as motivation (Ardi, 2012; Murdiana et al., 2023) and improve academic performance.

Following these findings, it is clear that not all students have the same perception of stressors. Scott (2023) identified three reasons why individuals experience different levels of stress: resources (external resources like money, help from others, job/food security, and internal resources including coping mechanisms, life experience, and resilience), body (individual differences in how bodies handle stress, which leads some people to be more sensitive and reactive), and perception of the situation (varying interpretations of events). A study also suggested that positive and negative perceptions of stressors influence stress levels among students, indicating that a positive mindset can result in lower stress levels (Zhao et al., 2023). Selye (1983) argued that the stress response results in either positive or negative outcomes, based on the interpretation of physical symptoms or physiological experiences. In other words, stress can become "eustress" (positive) or "distress" (negative). Consequently, different perceptions lead to different coping mechanisms. According to Anshel (2012), coping is both a dispositional and situational construct. It involves personal disposition as well as strategies to improve internal resources such as confidence, resourcefulness, hardiness, and mental toughness.

As a dispositional and situational mechanism, coping with stress can vary from person to person. Walinga (2008) identified various types of coping mechanisms, including cognitive (therapy, hobbies, meditation, mindfulness, planning, reading, time management), physical (artistic expression, deep breathing, natural medicine, physical exercise, relaxation, yoga), environmental (music, nature, pets, spa visits), and other (conflict resolution, prayer). Folkman and Lazarus (1988) and Lazarus and Folkman (1987) presented cognitive coping strategies to manage stress, which involve using mental activities such as assessing resources, understanding the causes of problems, identifying steps to solve issues, and focusing on pleasant experiences rather than current difficulties. If cognitive coping fails, individuals may switch to other strategies such as problem-focused coping or emotion-focused coping (Folkman & Lazarus, 1980; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Problem-focused coping, or active coping, involves addressing the problem

directly to eliminate it. In addition to active coping, Wood and Bathnager (2015) suggest passive coping, which involves maladaptive strategies such as negative self-targeting and avoidance. Maladaptive strategies can manifest through behaviors that interfere with daily living, such as substance use, avoidance, withdrawal, passive-aggressiveness, self-harm, and risky sexual behavior. Emotion-focused coping involves regulating physiological, emotional, cognitive, and behavioral responses to stressors (Ben-Zur, 2020). This type of coping includes wishful thinking, distancing (trying to forget the issue), finding positive lessons in negative experiences, positive refocusing, and putting things in perspective (Lazarus & Folkman, 1987).

### ***Healthy and unhealthy behavior***

Students employ various coping mechanisms to manage stress, with some viewing it positively as motivation for improvement, engaging in activities like breaks, self-care, and social interaction (Lingen, 2008; Folkman & Moskowitz, 2004). However, others react negatively, resorting to unhealthy behaviors such as smoking, alcohol consumption, and poor dietary choices (Friedman, 2001; Lazzeri et al., 2014; Jacob, 2024). These behaviors are linked to low academic achievement and emotional well-being (Vereecken et al., 2004; Richter & Leppin, 2007; Ravens-Sieberer et al., 2004; Vuille & Schenkel, 2001), often influenced by peer dynamics (ter Bogt et al., 2006; Settertobulte & de Matos Gaspar, 2004).

Studies indicate that healthy behaviors, such as balanced diets and responsible internet use, predict academic success, whereas unhealthy habits contribute to academic failure (Maniaci et al., 2021; Shank et al., 2024). Recommendations emphasize adopting healthy lifestyles to enhance academic performance (Maniaci et al., 2021; Sogari et al., 2018).

### ***Research questions***

The study aims to investigate the interconnectedness of parents' academic aspirations, academic stress and the unhealthy behavior of students. It specifically answers the following questions:

1. What are the educational aspirations of parents?
2. What are the educational stresses of students?
3. What are the healthy and unhealthy behavior of the students?
4. Is there a relationship between parents' educational aspirations and students' academic stress?
5. Is there a relationship between parents' educational aspirations and students' unhealthy behavior?
6. Is there a relationship between academic stress and the healthy and unhealthy behavior of students?

### ***Hypothesis***

Pérez Sánchez et al., (2013), Tárraga et al., (2017), and Trinidad (2019) have discovered a positive correlation between the educational aspirations of parents and the academic performance of the students. In the same vein, the current study hypothesizes that there is a correlation between parents'

educational aspirations and academic stress and the unhealthy behavior of students.

## ***Research methodology***

The study employs a quantitative approach utilizing a descriptive assessment and correlational research design. The research is conducted at Divine Word College of Laoag, focusing on nursing students as the study population. Data collection is facilitated through questionnaires, with statistical analysis employing both descriptive and inferential statistics, specifically utilizing weighted mean and Pearson r.

To initiate data collection, the researcher obtained approval from the college President to distribute the questionnaires. The collection process was facilitated through designated employee representatives. Ethical considerations were considered, and due to the non-involvement of sensitive human issues, ethical review was waived.

The following ranges of values with their descriptive interpretation will be used:

<b><i>Statistical Range</i></b>	<b><i>Descriptive Interpretation</i></b>
4.21-5.00	<i>Strongly Agree/Very High</i>
3.41-4.20	<i>Agree/High</i>
2.61-3.40	<i>Somewhat Agree/Moderate</i>
1.81-2.60	<i>Disagree/Low</i>
1.00-1.80	<i>Strongly Disagree/Very Low</i>

## ***Data presentation and analysis***

The data presentation and analysis followed the statement of the problems of the study.

### ***Problem 1: What are the educational aspirations of your parents?***

***Table 1: Parents' educational aspiration***

	<b>Parents' educational aspiration</b>	<b>Weighted mean</b>	<b>DI</b>
<i>No</i>	<i>In your opinion, what is your parent's aspiration for your education</i>		
1	Possessing skills for future work	4.06	High
2	Learned new knowledge, skills, new values, attitudes, and new behavior	4.19	High
3	Improved reasoning ability and moral character	4.12	High
4	Increased intellectual capacity and critical thinking to solve problems in the future	4.09	High
5	Become a good Filipino citizen and a good Christian	4.12	High
6	To help the family and other siblings when he/she will work	4.15	High
	<b>Composite mean</b>	<b>4.12</b>	<b>High</b>

Source: Abun (2024).

### **Legend:**

<b><i>Statistical Range</i></b>	<b><i>Descriptive Interpretation</i></b>
4.21-5.00	<i>Strongly Agree/Very High</i>
3.41-4.20	<i>Agree/High</i>

2.61-3.40	<i>Somewhat Agree/Moderate</i>
1.81-2.60	<i>Disagree/Low</i>
1.00-1.80	<i>Strongly Disagree/Very Low</i>

Looking at the data in the table, it shows that, as a whole, the academic aspiration of parents has a composite mean of 4.12, which is interpreted as "agree/high." This implies that the educational aspirations of parents are not extremely high, but rather high overall. The ratings for all individual indicators fall within the same level of mean rating, which is high. A closer examination of these ratings reveals that the highest educational aspiration parents have for their children is for them to acquire new skills, values, attitudes, and behaviors. The second-highest aspiration is for children to assist their family and siblings in the future. The third-highest aspiration is for children to become good Filipino citizens and Christians, and to develop the reasoning capabilities needed to solve problems in the future. The lowest aspiration is for children to possess skills for future work. The ranking of mean ratings suggests that parents' educational aspirations extend beyond just acquiring skills, focusing also on the development of new values, attitudes, and behaviors. In other words, the educational aspiration of parents aims at the transformation of the whole person, which aligns with the purpose of education (Chu, 2022), including identity formation (Li, 2020).

**Problem 2: What are the academic stresses of students?**

**Table 2: Academic stress**

No	Academic stress	Weighted Mean	DI
<b>A. External pressure and expectation</b>			
<i>I am stressed because:</i>			
1	I am ashamed of my friends if I will get low grades	3.22	High
2	I don't want to be looked down on by my teachers, friends and parents	3.77	High
3	I do not want to fail my parent's expectations	4.18	High
4	I am worried about my future if I fail my study	4.28	High
<b>Composite Mean</b>		<b>3.86</b>	<b>High</b>
<b>B. Course requirement overload and examination</b>			
<i>I am stressed because:</i>			
1	I enrolled in many subjects and each subject has requirements	3.38	High
2	I am rushed to finish my many assignments	3.30	Moderate
3	I am worried that I cannot meet the deadline	3.87	High
4	I am afraid if I fail the coming examination	4.10	High
<b>Composite mean</b>		<b>3.66</b>	<b>High</b>
<b>C. Self-efficacy</b>			
<i>I am stressed because:</i>			
1	I am worried if I can answer the examination correctly	3.52	High
2	I am not confident that I can finish my study	3.00	Moderate
3	I am not confident that I can focus on schoolwork when faced with many distractions	3.32	Moderate
4	I am not confident that I can meet the deadline with a few reminders from teachers	3.23	Moderate
<b>Composite Mean</b>		<b>3.26</b>	<b>Moderate</b>
<b>Overall mean</b>		<b>3.59</b>	<b>High</b>

Source: Abun (2024).

Based on the data in the table, it shows that the academic stress of students has an overall mean rating of 3.59, which is interpreted as “agree/high.” This overall mean rating suggests that while academic stress is not extremely high, it is still considered high. When examining the dimensions of academic stress separately, it appears that the highest source of stress is external pressure and expectations. Students report being worried about their future if they fail and do not want to disappoint their parents. Additionally, they feel ashamed in front of their parents, teachers, and friends if they fail. The second highest source of academic stress is course requirement overload and examinations. Students express concern about their fear of failing exams and the worry of not completing their requirements on time due to having too many subjects. The least severe or moderate source of academic stress is self-efficacy. Students moderately agree that their stress stems from a lack of confidence in answering test questions correctly, focusing on schoolwork, handling distractions, meeting deadlines, and completing their studies. Although support from parents, friends, and teachers is often beneficial for academic achievement, a study also indicated that these sources can contribute to students' academic stress (Zimmer-Gembeck et al., 2023). Students fear disappointing their parents and feel ashamed in front of their friends and teachers. Additionally, a lack of capability to complete assignments and finish courses exacerbates the problem. Zajacova et al. (2005) pointed out that students' self-efficacy is related to their stress levels.

**Problem 3: What are the healthy and unhealthy behavior of the students?**

**Table 3: Healthy and unhealthy behavior**

A.	Healthy Behavior	Weighted Mean	DI
No	<i>When I am stressed</i>		
1	I take a break	3.84	High
2	I talk to friends	3.75	High
3	I take care of myself not to get sick.	3.72	High
4	I take time to unwind	3.75	High
5	I join other organizations or groups like sports, music, and dance.	2.90	Moderate
	<b>Composite mean</b>	<b>3.59</b>	<b>High</b>
B.	Unhealthy behavior		
	When I am stressed:		
1	I used to smoke cigarettes	1.42	Very low
2	I used to join my friends to drink alcohol	1.81	Very low
3	I watched movies, Tik- Tok and slept late at night	3.42	High
4	I ate a lot and forgot my diet	3.17	Moderate
5	I escaped breakfast	3.38	Moderate
	<b>Composite mean</b>	<b>2.64</b>	<b>Moderate</b>

Source: Abun (2024).

As indicated by the data in the table, the healthy behavior of students has a composite mean rating of 3.59, which is considered "agree/high." This mean rating suggests that while the healthy behavior of students is not extremely high, it is still high overall. When examining the indicators separately, students agree that they take breaks when stressed, care for their health to avoid illness, take time to unwind, talk to friends, and occasionally join organizations. In contrast, the unhealthy behavior lifestyle has a composite mean rating of 2.64, which is considered moderate. Students moderately

agree that they skip breakfast, eat excessively when stressed, and spend time watching movies and TikTok, though they do not engage in smoking or alcohol consumption.

The comparison of healthy and unhealthy behavior ratings suggests that nursing students maintain a healthier lifestyle compared to an unhealthy one when under stress. This may be a result of their educational background as nursing students.

***Problem 4: Is there a relationship between parents' educational aspirations and students' academic stress?***

**Relationship between parents' educational aspirations and academic stress**

The parents' educational aspirations are positively related to the student's academic stress in terms of external pressure and expectations ( $r= 0.615$ ), course requirement overload and examination ( $r= 0.515$ ), and self-efficacy ( $r= 0.240$ ).

The positive relationships between the parents' educational aspirations and the students' academic stress factors imply that the higher the parents' educational aspirations the higher also is the students' academic stress due to external pressure and expectations, course requirement overload and examination, and self-efficacy. Thus, the parents' educational aspirations could determine the students' academic stress.

***Table 4: Coefficients of correlation obtained on the test of relationships between the parents' educational aspirations and students' academic stress (n= 198)***

Academic stress	Parents' educational aspirations	
External pressure and expectations	r	<b>.615**</b>
	(Sig. 2 - tailed)	.000
Course requirement overload and examination	r	<b>.515**</b>
	(Sig. 2-tailed)	<b>.000</b>
Self-efficacy	r	<b>.240**</b>
	(Sig. 2-tailed)	<b>.001</b>

\*\* Significant at .01 level of significance (2-tailed)

***Problem 5: Is there a relationship between parents' educational aspirations and students' healthy and unhealthy behavior***

**Relationship between parents' educational aspirations and healthy and unhealthy behavior**

The correlation analysis revealed that the parents' educational aspirations are positively related to the students' healthy behavior ( $r=0.488$ ). This result indicates that the higher the parents' educational aspirations, the higher the students' inclination towards healthy behavior activities and/or orientations.

Conversely, the correlation analysis done showed that the parents' educational aspirations are insignificantly related to the students' unhealthy behavior ( $r= 0.035$ ) indicating that regardless of the parent's educational aspirations, the students' inclination towards unhealthy behavior remains the same.

**Table 5. Coefficients of correlation obtained on the test of relationships between the parents' educational aspirations and students' healthy and unhealthy behaviors (n= 198)**

Healthy and unhealthy behaviors		Parents' educational aspirations
Healthy Behavior	r	<b>.488**</b>
	(Sig. 2 - tailed)	.000
Unhealthy Behavior	r	.035
	(Sig. 2-tailed)	.628

\*\* Significant at .01 level of significance (2-tailed)

**Problem 6: Is there a relationship between academic stress and the healthy and unhealthy behavior of students?**

**Table 6: Relationships between academic stress and healthy and unhealthy behaviors**

**A. Academic stress and healthy behavior**

The results of the multiple regression analysis between the students' academic stress in terms of external pressure and expectations, course requirement overload and examination, and self-efficacy indicated that these academic stressors as a group could significantly predict the students' healthy behavior,  $F = 93,194) = 6.623, p < .01$ , with 8.80 per cent overlap between the three predictor variables and the students' healthy behavior.

However, when the students' academic stress factors were considered separately towards their influence on the students' healthy behavior, it was only the academic stress factor of external pressure and expectations that could predict the students' healthy behavior  $B = 0.259, p < .01$ , 2.690 quantified the Y-intercept for the regression equation.

These findings imply that the differences observed in the students' healthy behavior are attributed to the combined variations of their academic stress in terms of external pressure and expectations, course requirement overload and examination, and self-efficacy.

However, when the three academic stress factors were considered separately towards their influence on the students' healthy behavior, it was only external pressure and expectations that could predict the students' healthy behavior implying that this is the only factor that could contribute to the variations on the students' healthy behavior.

**Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Error of the Estimate
1	.297 <sup>a</sup>	.088	.074	.94205

a. Predictors: (Constant), self-efficacy, external pressure and expectations, course requirement overload and examination

**ANOVA<sup>a</sup>**

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	16.673	3	5.558	6.263	.000 <sup>b</sup>
Residual	172.165	194	.887		
Total	188.838	197			

a. Dependent variable: Healthy behavior

b. Predictors: (Constant), self-efficacy, external pressure and expectations, course requirement overload and examination

**Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	2.690	.310		8.691	.000
External pressure and expectations	.259	.090	.268	2.882	.004
Course requirement overload and examination	.110	.108	.100	1.024	.307
Self-efficacy	-.153	.079	-.157	-1.930	.055

a. Dependent variable: Healthy behavior

**B. Academic stress and unhealthy behavior**

The results of the multiple regression analysis done between the students' academic stress factors of external pressure and expectations, course requirement overload and examination, and self-efficacy and their unhealthy behavior revealed that these previously mentioned academic stress factors as a group could significantly predict the students' unhealthy behavior,  $f(3,194) = 3.704$ ,  $p < .05$ , with 5.40 per cent overlap between the three predictor variables and the students' unhealthy behavior.

However, when the three academic stress factors were considered separately towards their effects on the students' unhealthy behavior, it was only self-efficacy that was found to significantly predict the variations of the students' unhealthy behavior  $B = 0.155$ ,  $p < .05$ , 1.936 quantified the Y-intercept for the regression equation.

These findings denote that the observed differences in the students' unhealthy behavior are attributed to the variations in the combined influence of external pressure and expectations, course requirement overload and examination, and self-efficacy.

However, when the influence of the three academic stress factors towards the students' unhealthy behavior was treated separately, it was only self-efficacy that contributed to the differences in their observed unhealthy behavior.

**Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.233 <sup>a</sup>	.054	.040	.78006

a. Predictors: (Constant), self-efficacy, external pressure and expectations, course requirement overload and examination

**ANOVA<sup>a</sup>**

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	6.762	3	2.254	3.704	.013 <sup>b</sup>
Residual	118.047	194	.608		
Total	124.809	197			

a. Dependent variable: Unhealthy behavior

b. Predictors: Constant, self-efficacy, external pressure and expectations, course requirement overload and examination

**Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	1.936	.256		7.551	.000
External pressure and expectations	.046	.075	.058	.615	.539
Course requirement overload and examination	.006	.089	.007	.070	.944
Self-efficacy	.155	.066	.196	2.369	.019

a. Dependent variable: Unhealthy behavior

**Discussion**

The results of the current study present several important findings. First is the effect of parents' educational aspirations on students' academic stress. The results indicate that parents' educational aspirations significantly influence students' academic stress. While other studies have shown that parents' aspirations positively contribute to students' academic performance (Dockery et al., 2022; Liu et al., 2022), the current study suggests that parents' aspirations could lead to increased academic stress. Trinidad (2019) notes that parents' expectations can negatively impact their children when those aspirations exceed the children's own expectations. A significant gap between parents' expectations and children's expectations can affect academic performance (Schoon & Burger, 2021). Academic stress not only negatively impacts academic performance but can also lead to both healthy and unhealthy behaviors (Caso et al., 2020). Cassidy and Boulos (2023) observed that parents' academic expectations could affect children's well-being and quality of life.

Therefore, parents' educational expectations should be moderate, allowing children to set their own pace according to their capabilities.

The first finding is related to the second finding concerning the effect of parents' educational aspirations on students' healthy and unhealthy behaviors. The results reveal that parents' aspirations impact students' healthy behaviors but not their unhealthy behaviors. Specifically, higher parental educational aspirations are associated with improved students' healthy behaviors, provided students perceive these aspirations positively as motivation. Yamamoto and Holloway (2010) found that high parental expectations can encourage and motivate students, leading to greater academic and social resilience. In this context, students view parents' aspirations as empowering rather than burdensome (Peng et al., 2024).

The third result of the study examines the influence of academic stress on students' healthy and unhealthy behaviors. Regarding the relationship between academic stress and healthy behavior, the findings show a significant association. Higher academic stress can serve as a challenge and motivation for students to enhance their healthy lifestyles and improve their work quality, especially when students effectively manage their academic stress (Brobbey, 2021). Conversely, the results also reveal a significant correlation between academic stress and unhealthy behavior. This suggests that academic stress can negatively impact students' unhealthy behaviors, with higher academic stress leading to more unhealthy behaviors (Cassidy & Boulos, 2023). This effect is observed when students perceive academic stress negatively.

## ***Conclusion***

The study aimed to examine the relationship between parents' educational aspirations, academic stress, and both healthy and unhealthy behaviors. The study concluded that parents' educational aspirations significantly affect students' academic stress and also have a significant impact on healthy behavior, though they do not significantly influence unhealthy behavior. Similarly, academic stress was found to impact both healthy and unhealthy behaviors. Specifically, academic stress can lead to both improved healthy behavior and increased unhealthy behavior. In summary, parents' educational aspirations and students' academic stress can have both positive and negative effects, depending on the levels of aspirations and stress. Both factors can act as motivators or demotivators and influence students' healthy and unhealthy lifestyles. Balancing aspirations and managing academic stress are crucial for maintaining students' quality of life.

***Author's contribution:*** **Conceptualization:** C.U. D., S.MT.C., M.L.M.S., R.M.C. **Methodology:** C.U. D., S.MT.C., M.L.M.S., R.M.C **Data collection:** M.L.M.S., R.M. C. **Formal Analysis:** C.U. D., S.MT.C., M.L.M.S., R.M.C. **Writing-Review and Editing:** C.U. D., S.MT.C., M.L.M.S

All authors have read and agreed to the published final version of the manuscript

***Institutional review board statement:*** Ethical review and approval were waived for this study, due to the research does not deal with vulnerable groups or sensitive issues.

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