

After-dark Filipino Learners: Addressing the Stress Level and Grit among Higher Educational Learners and its Relationship to Academic Performance

Kadesh Angela B. Caballero
La Consolacion University Philippines, Malolos, Bulacan, Philippines

*Corresponding Author email: baincokadesh@gmail.com

Date received: February 26, 2024

Date revised: March 2, 2024

Date accepted: March 5, 2024

Originality: 91%

Grammarly Score: 99%

Similarity: 9%

Recommended citation:

Caballero, K. A. (2024). After-dark Filipino Learners: Addressing the Stress Level and Grit among Higher Educational Learners and its Relationship to Academic Performance. *Journal of Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, 2(4), 13–19. <https://doi.org/10.69569/jip.2024.0047>

Abstract. In the Philippines, a distinctive phenomenon exists wherein some Filipino learners nationwide engage in their pursuit of education through evening classes. The complex interplay of factors deeply rooted in the socio-economic realities of the country drives this practice, although it is not uncommon. This study sought to describe the relationships between stress level, grit level, and academic performance of Filipino after-dark learners in higher education. A descriptive-correlational research method was employed with 185 participants who answered the survey questionnaire. The results revealed that in terms of stress levels, after-dark learners reported experiencing stress at a somewhat frequent level across various domains, including physical, interpersonal, academic, and environmental. Also, respondents displayed strong traits of grit, indicating their capability to overcome setbacks, maintain commitment to goals, and handle challenges with determination. Furthermore, the study found weak positive and negative correlations between GPA and stress level and grit, respectively. These correlations were not statistically significant, suggesting that other factors may influence academic performance.

Keywords: After-dark learners; Stress level; Grit; Higher education; Academic performance; Philippines

1.0 Introduction

According to Al-Shuaibi (2014), possessing essential knowledge in a field enables an individual to think, feel, and act in ways that support their success and enhance both their happiness and that of their community. Education also contributes to the development of an individual's personality, cognitive processes, interpersonal skills, and preparedness for life's occurrences. It elevates individuals to a higher social status within their cultural context and on a global scale.

A distinctive phenomenon unfolds each night. As the world quiets down, learners around the world engage in their nocturnal pursuit of education. The complex interplay of factors deeply rooted in the socio-economic realities of each country drives this practice, although it is not uncommon. One study examined the impact of "night class" on the performance of 65 undergraduate learners in the Faculty of Engineering, University of Uyo. A survey research design was used, and a response rate of 84.6% was obtained. The results showed that 41-45% of learners were affected by night classes, affecting their academic performance in terms of health, physical fitness, mental coordination, learning ability, and security. The study concluded that night class negatively impacts learners' academic performance. (KMDFace, 2017).

In the Philippines, the primary driver compelling Filipino learners to study at night is the demands of work or family during the day. Many learners manage multiple jobs or commitments, leaving the serenity of nighttime

as their only viable study period. The night's quietude provides an environment conducive to focused learning, devoid of the distractions and responsibilities associated with daylight hours (Sygaco, 2021).

Economic constraints also significantly influence this practice. Some learners, constrained by financial limitations, must work multiple jobs during the day, compelling them to dedicate their nights to studying. Despite these challenges, the determination and resilience of Filipino learners shine through as they persist in their pursuit of academic success (Sygaco, 2021). For many working professionals, the only available time for further education is after work hours, and night classes provide an opportunity for them to advance their education without disrupting their professional commitments (Carlton, 2023). Motivations behind the decision to study at night are multifaceted, including the need to acquire new skills or enhance existing ones to remain competitive in the job market, given the rapidly changing nature of many industries (Cappello, 2020).

After-dark learners are those who are engaged in night classes. They are motivated by a combination of professional advancement, the need for continuous learning, and the convenience of night classes. Their commitment to balancing work and study underscores their dedication and grit. However, it is essential to note that studying at night can have implications for learners' health and academic performance. Studies have shown that insufficient sleep negatively impacts academic performance, limiting the acquisition and retention of information. Therefore, learners must maintain a balanced lifestyle and ensure they get adequate sleep (Sygaco, 2021).

The primary rationale for undertaking this study is that schools need awareness of learners' lives, both at school and in their immediate surroundings. This understanding enables schools to tailor educational initiatives to the needs of after-dark Filipino learners, whether they are recent graduates from senior high school, individuals who have worked before enrolling in higher education, or those enrolled in night classes while working full-time or part-time during the day. A key strategy to achieve this is to listen to learners' voices. A deeper understanding of the current generation, experiencing heightened stress levels due to environmental pressures, is crucial. Educational institutions should establish procedures to address mental health concerns among youth and recognize the relationship between learner mental health, academic engagement, and the educational environment (Cleofas, 2019).

The study aimed to address the unique situation that after-dark Filipino learners face, desiring to continue learning despite schedules differing from the norm. Additionally, the study sought to contribute to the understanding of stress levels and grit among after-dark learners by exploring specific factors. Given the significant role education plays in individuals' lives, offering various benefits in diverse areas, it is crucial for future success and a wealth of opportunities.

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Research Design

This study employed a descriptive-correlational research method to describe the relationships between stress level, grit level, and academic performance of Filipino after-dark learners in higher education. Descriptive research involves systematically gathering, analyzing, and interpreting data to provide a comprehensive description and understanding of prevailing conditions, behaviors, or characteristics of a specific population, group, event, or phenomenon (Smith, 2018). Descriptive correlational research design allowed researchers to understand the strength and/or direction of the relationship between the variables of the study (Bhandari, 2022).

2.2 Research Participants

The study was conducted at a Philippine university. Participants were chosen to employ a purposive sampling method. The inclusion criteria include Filipino learners attending night classes and working or employed in the daytime. The selection criteria encompassed learners ranging from the 1st to the 4th year of college across any enrolled course, aged 18 years old and above, irrespective of gender or civil status.

2.3 Research Instrument

The researcher utilized two (2) standardized quantitative instruments and one (1) self-made descriptive correlational instrument as tools for collecting the data needed in the study. First, the stress level was assessed

with the help of the Stress Learner Inventory (SSI) developed by Arip et al. (2018). The questionnaire's reliability and validity were tested using Cronbach's alpha, with a result greater than 0.7. The researcher added questions related to the study, validated by experts in the field. Second, the grit level was surveyed with the assistance of a 12-item scale developed by Duckworth, et al. (2007), to weigh trait-level perseverance and passion for a longer period. The study result of Beri and Sharma (2019) revealed that the grit scale possessed good reliability, as the calculated value of Cronbach's alpha was 0.724, and the value of composite reliability ranged from .85 to .86, reflecting the high internal consistency of the construct. Third, the descriptive correlational self-made instrument consisted of two questions validated by three experts in the field. It focused on identifying the challenges encountered as after-dark learners during the academic journey and how they overcame them.

2.4 Data Gathering Procedure

The researcher obtained necessary permits for data collection, informed participants about the study's aims and criteria, and collected responses using Google Forms. After data analysis with a statistician's assistance, conclusions were drawn, and recommendations were made to address stress and grit levels. Upon approval from the relevant authorities, the study was presented to the university, highlighting key findings and recommendations for supporting after-dark learners. The goal was to contribute to a more equitable higher education system.

2.5 Data Analysis Procedure

The data gathered shall be compiled and processed through Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS), a widely recognized software suite for statistical analysis in social science research (Huck, 2016). SPSS is versatile and can be applied to various purposes such as market research, surveys, and data mining. To analyze and interpret the gathered data, the SPSS approach will be employed to assess the stress level, grit level, and academic performance of after-dark learners in higher education. Additionally, multiple regression analysis will be used in this study to understand the relationship between the three variables and the extent to which they correspond with each other. Finally, descriptive statistics, including measures such as mean and frequency, will be utilized by the researcher to summarize and present the data obtained from the respondents.

2.6 Ethical Considerations

The researcher carefully considered ethical considerations in conducting research, ensuring transparency, informed consent, voluntary participation, confidentiality, and the well-being of the participants. Before the survey, learners were thoroughly informed about the study's details and purpose. Respondents were made aware of the importance of their participation and consent, emphasizing voluntary involvement. The survey process was designed to guarantee voluntary and coercion-free participation, with confidentiality maintained by not requesting respondent identities. This approach aimed to protect research respondents and preserve anonymity. Throughout the research, the researcher refrained from altering or challenging respondents' responses and treated all participants equally. The study's findings are intended solely for academic purposes.

3.0 Results and Discussion

3.1 Stress Level of the Respondents

Table 1 illustrates the stress level of respondents across various domains, along with their respective mean values, standard deviations, and interpretations. The calculated weighted mean of stress level in terms of physical is 2.25, Interpersonal is 1.91, Academic is 2.30, and Environmental is 2.47. This suggests that, overall, respondents tend to experience stress at a frequent level in different given indicators, and areas of their lives, but it is not exceptionally intense.

Table 1. The stress level of the respondents

		Indicators	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Physical	1.	Headache	2.34	0.84	Somewhat Frequent
	2.	Backpain	2.53	0.95	Frequent
	3.	Sleep Problem	2.88	0.99	Frequent
	4.	Difficulty breathing	1.88	0.88	Somewhat Frequent
	5.	Excessive worry	2.42	0.95	Somewhat Frequent
	6.	Stomach pain/nausea	1.89	0.81	Somewhat Frequent
	7.	Constant tiredness/fatigue	2.50	0.96	Frequent
	8.	Sweating/sweaty hands	2.45	1.08	Somewhat Frequent

	9.	Frequent cold/flu/fever	1.84	0.72	Somewhat Frequent
	10.	Drastic weight loss	1.77	0.84	Somewhat Frequent
		Weighted Mean	2.25	0.90	Somewhat Frequent
Interpersonal Relationship	1.	I find it difficult to meet my high parent's expectations.	1.95	0.93	Somewhat Frequent
	2.	My parents treat me as a helpless person.	1.48	0.74	Never
	3.	I feel guilty if I fail to fulfill my parent's hope.	2.61	1.12	Frequent
	4.	My parents wish only for my success.	3.02	1.17	Frequent
	5.	I find it difficult to get along with groupmates in doing academic tasks.	2.05	0.90	Somewhat Frequent
	6.	My friends did not care about me.	1.58	0.80	Somewhat Frequent
	7.	I feel disturbed when having problems with my boyfriend/girlfriend.	1.56	0.85	Somewhat Frequent
	8.	My family is not supportive.	1.45	0.74	Never
	9.	My lecturers/ teachers are not supportive.	1.57	0.75	Somewhat Frequent
	10.	I feel frustrated by the lack of faculty management.	1.84	0.84	Somewhat Frequent
		Weighted Mean	1.91	0.88	Somewhat Frequent
Academic	1.	I have a financial problem because of the expenses of the university.	2.05	0.85	Somewhat Frequent
	2.	I find it difficult to juggle time between study and social activity.	2.16	0.80	Somewhat Frequent
	3.	I feel nervous about delivering the class presentation.	2.64	1.05	Frequent
	4.	I feel stressed as the submission deadline neared.	2.49	0.98	Somewhat Frequent
	5.	I feel stressed to sit for the examination.	2.45	0.99	Somewhat Frequent
	6.	I find it difficult to juggle time between study and societal involvement.	2.23	0.90	Somewhat Frequent
	7.	I lose interest in courses.	1.82	0.82	Somewhat Frequent
	8.	I feel burdened by my academic workload.	2.26	0.96	Somewhat Frequent
	9.	I feel stressed dealing with difficult subjects.	2.54	0.97	Frequent
	10.	I find it difficult to handle my academic problems.	2.36	0.91	Somewhat Frequent
		Weighted Mean	2.30	0.92	Somewhat Frequent
Environmental	1.	I have a transportation problem.	2.12	1.00	Somewhat Frequent
	2.	I feel stressed by the bad living conditions of the room.	1.86	0.89	Somewhat Frequent
	3.	The surrounding noise distracted me.	2.64	1.05	Frequent
	4.	Pollution makes me uneasy.	2.63	1.00	Frequent
	5.	Hot weather makes me avoid going out.	2.91	1.02	Frequent
	6.	Messy living conditions distracted me.	2.74	1.01	Frequent
	7.	I feel frustrated with inadequate campus facilities.	2.22	0.90	Somewhat Frequent
	8.	Crowding makes me feel uneasy.	2.52	1.01	Frequent
	9.	Waiting in a long line made me feel uneasy.	2.59	1.01	Frequent
	10.	I feel scared of being in an insecure place.	2.50	1.08	Frequent
		Weighted Mean	2.47	1.00	Somewhat Frequent

3.2 Grit Level of the Respondents

Table 2 presented below illustrates the grit level of respondents across various domains, along with their respective mean values, standard deviations, and interpretations. The weighted mean, which stands at 3.70 (SD = 0.95), signifies that, on average, the respondents strongly demonstrate qualities of grit. This interpretation, "Mostly like me," suggests that most respondents consistently exhibit these traits, with only minor variations in individual responses.

Table 2. The grit level of the respondents

	Indicators	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1.	I have overcome setbacks to conquer an important challenge.	3.69	0.90	Mostly like me
2.	New ideas and projects sometimes distract me from previous ones.	3.51	0.96	Mostly like me
3.	My interests change from year to year.	3.77	0.99	Mostly like me
4.	Setbacks don't discourage me.	3.34	0.97	Somewhat like me
5.	I have been obsessed with a certain idea or project for a short time but later lost interest.	3.52	1.04	Mostly like me
6.	I am a hard worker.	4.02	0.96	Mostly like me
7.	I often set a goal, but later choose to pursue a different one.	3.50	1.01	Mostly like me

8.	I have difficulty maintaining my focus on projects that take more than a few months to complete.	3.48	1.02	Somewhat like me
9.	I finish whatever I begin.	3.95	0.91	Mostly like me
10.	I have achieved a goal that took years of work.	3.84	0.87	Mostly like me
11.	I become interested in new pursuits every few months.	3.74	0.95	Mostly like me
12.	I am diligent.	3.99	0.83	Mostly like me
Weighted Mean		3.70	0.95	Mostly like me

3.3 General Point Average of the Respondents

Table 3 presented below illustrates the general point average (GPA) of the respondents along with their respective frequency and percentage. GPA ranges from 1 to 1.49 with 42 respondents (22.70%), 1.5 to 1.99 with 131 respondents (70.81%), 2 to 2.49 with 8 respondents (4.32%), and 2.5 to 2.99 with 4 respondents (2.16%).

Table 3. The general point average of the respondents

GPA	Frequency	Percentage
1.00 - 1.49	42	22.70%
1.50 - 1.99	131	70.81%
2.00 - 2.49	8	4.32%
2.50 - 2.99	4	2.16%
Total	185	100.00%

3.4 The Relationship between the Stress Level, Grit Level, and Academic Performance of After-dark Learners

The correlation between GPA and stress level (Pearson Correlation) is 0.072, indicating a weak positive correlation. The p-value is 0.331, which is not statistically significant. Since the significance level (Sig) is > 0.05 , the null hypothesis is accepted. Similarly, the correlation between GPA and grit level (Pearson Correlation) is -0.063, indicating a weak negative correlation. The p-value is 0.391, which is not statistically significant. Again, since the significance level (Sig) is > 0.05 , the null hypothesis is accepted.

Given these results, it's essential to consider other potential factors that could influence the performance of learners academically. A study carried out in the Philippines identified several significant contributors to academic performance, including self-driven activities, challenges, learning styles, references utilized in learning, frameworks in learning, and adapting components in learning (Peñeda, Ticoy, & Rabuya, 2019). This suggests that individual learning approaches, coping strategies, and the nature of learning challenges play a crucial role in academic outcomes.

Another study emphasized the impact of various external factors on learners' academic performance. These factors include the learners' environment, parenting style, characteristics of the learners, level of internet effectiveness, teachers' effectiveness, lack of motivation, and learners' career choices (Briones, Dagamac, David, & Landero, 2021). This highlights the significance of external influences, support systems, and motivational factors in shaping academic success.

Furthermore, a study focusing on first-year university learners identified several key factors that affect academic performance. These integrate learners' inspiration, lecturers' educational information, abilities, proficient information and accreditations, learning assets and conditions, and course structures (Le et al., 2020). This underscores the multifaceted nature of academic performance, suggesting that a combination of internal and external factors, along with the educational environment, can collectively impact learners' success in higher education.

4.0 Conclusion

Based on the conclusion of the study, several conclusions were formulated:

In terms of stress levels, after-dark learners reported experiencing stress at a somewhat frequent level across various domains, including physical, interpersonal, academic, and environmental. However, stress levels were not overwhelmingly severe. Respondents displayed strong traits of grit, indicating their capability to navigate through difficulties, maintain commitment to goals, and handle challenges with determination.

The data presented in the study reflected the distribution of General Point Averages (GPAs) among 185 respondents, with the majority falling within the 1.5 to 1.99 GPA range. Furthermore, the study found weak positive and negative correlations between GPA and stress level and grit, respectively. These correlations were not statistically significant, suggesting that other factors may influence academic performance.

Considering these findings, several recommendations are proposed. Firstly, stress management workshops should be offered to help learners cope with stress more effectively, providing practical strategies for dealing with various stressors. Techniques such as mindfulness, relaxation exercises, and cognitive behavioral strategies can be taught to help learners manage their stress more effectively. By learning to cope with stress, learners can improve their mental well-being, which can positively impact their academic performance.

Additionally, the implementation of grit enhancement programs is suggested to cultivate the exhibited grit traits among respondents. These programs can help learners persevere and stay committed to their academic goals, even in challenging situations. Activities could include goal-setting workshops, resilience training, and motivational talks. By enhancing grit, learners can remain focused and committed to their academic goals, even when faced with challenges.

For learners with low GPAs, it is recommended to provide additional academic support and resources, including tutoring, study skills development, and academic advising. Institutions can create a supportive environment for learners to thrive and overcome academic challenges by implementing these supports. Each learner's journey is unique and personalized support can make a big difference in their success.

Lastly, further research is encouraged to explore additional factors, influencing academic performance among after-dark learners. Factors such as self-driven learning, learning styles, support systems, and the impact of environmental factors should be investigated to justify a better comprehensive understanding of the extraordinary challenges confronted by this group.

5.0 Contributions of Authors

This is single-author research.

6.0 Funding

This work received no specific grant from any funding agency.

7.0 Conflict of Interests

The author declares no conflicts of interest about the publication of this paper.

8.0 Acknowledgment

The researcher extends heartfelt gratitude to everyone who supported this endeavor.

9.0 References

- Al-Shuaibi, A. (2014, January). The Importance of Education. Research Gate.
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/260075970_The_Importance_of_Education
- Arip, M. a. S. M. (2018). LEARNER STRESS INVENTORY (SSI) Development, Validity And Reliability of Learner Stress Inventory (SSI). ResearchGate.
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/329555313_LEARNER_STRESS_INVENTORY_SSI_Development_VValidity_And_Reliability_of_Learner_Stress_Inventory_SSI
- Beri, N., & Sharma, A. (2019). An evaluative study of reliability and validity of Grit 12 item scale in Indian Context. *Journal of Indian Association for Child and Adolescent Mental Health*, 15(3), 48–60.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0973134220190304>
- Bhandari, P. (2022, December 5). Correlational Research | Guide, design & examples. Scribbr.
<https://www.scribbr.co.uk/research-methods/correlational-research-design/>

- Briones, S. K. F., Dagamac, R. J. R., David, J. D., & Landerio, C. A. B. (2022). Factors affecting the learners' scholastic performance: A survey study. *Indonesian Journal of Educational Research and Technology*, 2(2), 97–102. <https://doi.org/10.17509/ijert.v2i2.41394>
- Cappello, K. (2020, December 21). The Impact of Sleep on Learning and Memory Chronobiology and Sleep Institute | Perelman School of Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania. Retrieved December 6, 2023, from <https://www.med.upenn.edu/csi/the-impact-of-sleep-on-learning-and-memory.html>
- Carlton, G. (2023, March 22). What Are Night Classes? 6 Tips to Help You Succeed | BestColleges (T. Epps, Ed.). BestColleges.com. Retrieved December 6, 2023, from <https://www.bestcolleges.com/blog/what-are-night-classes-tips-to-succeed/>
- Cleofas, J. V. (2019). Learner involvement, mental health and quality of life of college learners in a selected university in Manila, Philippines. *International Journal of Adolescence and Youth*, 25(1), 435–447. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02673843.2019.1670683>
- Duckworth, A.L., Peterson, C., Matthews, M.D., & Kelly, D.R. (2007). Personality Processes And Individual Differences Grit: Perseverance and Passion for Long-Term Goals.
- Huck, S. W. (2016). *Using SPSS and PASW: An Integrated Guide to Research Design and Statistics*. SAGE Publications.
- KMDFace, D. (2017). Effect of “Night Class” on academic performance of learners in the Faculty of Engineering, University of UYO. Uniuyo. https://www.academia.edu/31923419/Effect_of_Night_Class_on_Academic_Performance_of_Learners_In_the_Faculty_of_Engineering_University_of_Uyo
- Peñeda, F. P., Ticoy, T. A., & Rabuya, C. J. (2019). Filipino Learners' Perceptions of Factors Affecting Their Academic Performance in School: A Qualitative Study. *Journal of Education and Society*, 3(1), 19–30. Retrieved from <https://lnu.edu.ph/lnujournals/index.php/jes/article/view/24>
- Smith, J. (2018). Descriptive research methods: An overview. *Journal of Social Sciences*, 42(3), 123–137.
- Sygaco, K. P. (2021). The Correlation of Sleep and Academic Performance. *Asian Journal of Interdisciplinary Research*. <https://doi.org/10.34256/ajir2115>