

PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECTS AND COPING MECHANISMS OF STRESS AMONG
DAYSTAR UNIVERSITY UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

by

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In accordance with Daystar University policies, this thesis is accepted in partial fulfillment of requirement of the award of Master of Arts Degree in Counseling Psychology.

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DECLARATION

PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECTS AND COPING MECHANISMS OF STRESS AMONG
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I declare that this is my original work and has not been submitted to any college or university for academic benefit.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Naomi Gol

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DEDICATION

To my parents Jotham Kamau and Grace Muthoni, who started the good work in me of working hard in school and their great encouragement to aim higher in life. Their words still linger in my heart, "I can achieve anything I set my heart to". That is my life's driving force. I am forever indebted to them. God bless you.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ACHS – American College Health Association

AIDS – Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome

CAT - Continuous Assessment Test

DSM IV – Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders

GAS – General Adaptation Syndrome

GPA – Grade Point Average

GHQ – General Health Questionnaire

HIV – Human Immunodeficiency Virus

NCHA – National College Health Assessment

NCRS – National College Risk Survey

NIOSH – National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health

SPSS – Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

ABSTRACT

Stress is an important issue in university environment as well as in the society. There has been a growing appreciation of the issues of quality of life and stress involved in students' training as this may affect their learning and academic performance. Specifically, stress in academic institutions can stimulate both positive and negative consequences depending on certain factors. The main objective of the study was to identify the effects and ways to alleviate or minimize the impact of stress among students. The study used a descriptive design and combined both qualitative and quantitative research methods approaches. The sample of 234 respondents was randomly selected. Data was collected from the students using self-administered questionnaires and student counselors were interviewed using semi structured questionnaires. Data was coded and analyzed using the SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) version 18. The findings from the study showed that stress originated from academic related work and resulted in negative emotions such as helplessness and hopelessness for those who did not use effective methods of coping. The study identified coping mechanisms used by most respondents as social support (68.3%), prayer (62.4%) and hobbies (57.9%). In regard to the general health of the students, the study showed that 68.7% had good control of stress. Based on the findings, Daystar University should therefore offer many resources to help students develop appropriate coping skills of reducing the levels of academic related stress such as time management, stress management, and relaxation.