

Sources of Stress for First Year Students and Their Perception of the University
Employed Support Services: A Case Study.

Thesis Submitted for the degree of
Doctor of Education
at the University of Leicester

By

Leila Canaan Messarra

Department of Education

University of Leicester

July 2005

UMI Number: U521407

All rights reserved

INFORMATION TO ALL USERS

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.



UMI U521407

Published by ProQuest LLC 2013. Copyright in the Dissertation held by the Author.
Microform Edition © ProQuest LLC.

All rights reserved. This work is protected against
unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code.



ProQuest LLC
789 East Eisenhower Parkway
P.O. Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346

Abstract

Sources of Stress for First-Year Students and Their Perception of the University-Employed Support Services: A Case Study.

**By Leila Canaan Messarra
Doctor of Education
Leicester University, July 2005**

**Major Advisor: Dr. Hugh Busher
Second Advisor: Professor Ken Fogelman**

A significant number of first-year students find their college experience very stressful. This study aimed at developing a profile of first year students at the Lebanese American University (LAU) with respect to their primary sources of stress; examined the main academic and non-academic support services used by the students and offered by the university in order to help reduce stress; and examined the students' perception of these support functions.

Undergraduate newly admitted first year students were approached for the participation in this study, among which 235 taking English courses consented to taking a self-administered questionnaire and of which 21 students were interviewed using a semi-structured interview.

The majority of the respondents were males between the ages of 17 and 20, living with their parents and not regular practitioners of religious activities. Most are full timers with a declared major. All are single with the vast majority not working, and many are sojourners.

The results indicated that the main sources of stress for first-year students corresponded to academic factors, decision-making, and time pressure issues. Males experienced more stress than females, in the area of "Developmental Challenges", first generation students experienced less stress than did those students who were not first-generation in the areas of "Developmental Challenges" and Social Problems", and students who did not have a declared course of study (mostly males) had more stress than those students who had a declared course of study. Working students' stress came from various areas such as time constraints, personal issues, transportation and financial concerns, while non-working students had more social stress. The majority of students are religiously affiliated. Yet, the majority of students who affiliated with religion and attended religious activities were females and had less stress than did those students who did not affiliate with religion and/or attended religious activities. Semi-residents experienced stress relating mainly to social problem, and students who lived outside Lebanon all their life had more stress in relation to cultural adjustment issues but had less stress in relation to parental pressure and financial matters.

With respect to the academic and social support services, the students in this study stressed the importance of communicating with faculty and advisors. Peer interaction was the main non-academic service used by students although it did not reduce the stress for all students equally, for some it actually increased it.

Finally, more effort is needed to investigate the reasons behind the ineffectiveness of the university support systems.

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my late father,
Charles Joseph Canaan,
who believed that education is one of the few things no one can take away from you.

Table of Contents

	Page numbers
CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION.....	1
Introduction.....	1
Statement of the Problem.....	2
Importance of the Study.....	3
Objectives of the Study.....	4
Focus of the Study.....	4
Setting of the Study.....	5
Lebanese Culture.....	7
Organization of the Study.....	8
 CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW.....	 10
Introduction.....	10
Stress and its Impact on Individuals.....	11
Individual factors and Stress.....	13
Underlying Factors Affecting Stress in First Year Students.....	21
-Change and Adjustment for Students.....	21
Stressors at the University.....	24
Social Stress.....	24
- <i>Culture Shock</i>	24
- <i>Relationships among Students</i>	29
- <i>Living on Campus/ Commuting to College</i>	29
- <i>Homesickness</i>	31
- <i>New Environment (new rules, regulations, and procedures)</i>	32
Academic Stress.....	33
- <i>Stress and Main Course of Study</i>	34
- <i>Grades</i>	34
- <i>Faculty/ staff interaction with Students</i>	35
- <i>Students Status (full/part time and working/ non-working)</i>	36
Microstressores.....	37
Support Services to Enhance First-Year Students' Stress.....	38
Community/ Family Generated Support.....	38
- <i>Social Support</i>	38
- <i>Peer Support</i>	40
- <i>Financial Support</i>	40
- <i>Organizational Socialization</i>	41
Institutional Generated Support	43
- <i>Orientation programs/first year seminars</i>	44
- <i>Financial Aid</i>	45
- <i>Academic Advising/ Counselling</i>	46
- <i>Health promoting University</i>	47
- <i>Mentoring</i>	50
- <i>Faculty as Mentors</i>	52
- <i>Peer Mentoring</i>	52

A Model to Conclude the Literature Review.....	53
Conclusion.....	54
CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH DESIGN.....	57
Focus and Purpose of Investigation.....	57
Key Research Questions.....	58
Qualitative and Quantitative Methods.....	58
Choice of Research Approach.....	60
Validity and Trustworthiness of the Study.....	62
Access and Ethical Issues.....	64
Research Design.....	66
Sampling.....	67
- <i>Questionnaire Sampling</i>	67
- <i>Interview Sampling</i>	68
Piloting.....	69
- <i>Piloting the Questionnaire</i>	69
- <i>Piloting the Interview Schedule</i>	70
Questionnaire Construction and Implementation.....	71
- <i>The Questionnaire/ Instrumentation for the Main Study</i>	72
- <i>Analyzing the Qualitative Data</i>	73
Interview Schedule Construction and implementation.....	75
- <i>Interview Schedule for the Main Study</i>	76
- <i>Analysing the Interview Data</i>	78
CHAPTER 4 Results of The Study.....	81
Purpose of the Study.....	81
General Characteristics of the Study.....	81
Characteristics of the Sample.....	82
Research Question One.....	85
- <i>Sojourn Students</i>	88
Research Question Two.....	90
Research Question Three.....	95
Research Question Four.....	95
CHAPTER 5 Discussion of the Findings.....	104
Stressors at the University.....	104
- <i>Age</i>	106
- <i>Gender</i>	106
- <i>Course of Study</i>	106
- <i>Student Status</i>	107
- <i>Work status</i>	107
- <i>Parents' Level of Education</i>	108
- <i>Religiosity</i>	108
- <i>Place of living</i>	109
- <i>Sojourn Students</i>	109
Academic and Non-academic Services.....	110

- <i>Academic Services</i>	110
- <i>Non-academic services</i>	112
Sources of Stress and Their Consequences for First-Year Students.....	113
 CHAPTER 6 Conclusion.....	 115
The Importance of the Study Findings.....	118
Limitations.....	119
Recommendations.....	119
Recommendations for Future Research.....	121
Conclusions.....	121
 References.....	 123
 Appendix.....	 148
Appendix A: Questionnaire After Piloting.....	148
Appendix B: Interview Schedule After Piloting.....	153
Appendix C: Questionnaire Before Piloting.....	156
Appendix D: Interview Schedule Before Piloting.....	161
Appendix E: Statistical Data	164
Appendix F: Statistical Data.....	171
Appendix G: Socio-demographic Profiles of Interviewees.....	173
Appendix H: Matrix Sample Summary. Comparing the data gathered from the interviews.....	174

List of Tables and Figures

	Pages
• Figure 2-1 Model of the Sources of Stress and their Consequences for the First-Year College Students.....	56
• Table 4-1 Socio-demographic Profiles of Respondents.....	83
• Table 4-2 Ranked Mean and Standard Deviation Scores of Each Stressor in a Descending Order.....	86
• Table 4-3 Ranked Mean and Standard Deviation Scores of stressors by Groups in a Descending Order	87
• Table 4-4 Means and standard deviations of stressors That are specifically related to the students who lived outside Lebanon only.....	89
• Table 4-5 Ranked Order of the Used Academic and Non-academic Support Items and their Effect on Stress in a Descending Order.....	98
• Table 4-6 Frequency Distribution by Gender of Students Who Used the Academic and Non-academic Support Items and their Effect on Stress.....	102
• Table 4-7 Frequency Distribution by Status of Students Who Used the Academic and Non-Academic Support Items and Their Effect on Stress.....	103

Glossary of Terms

AUB	American University of Beirut
BCW	Beirut College for Women
BUC	Beirut University College
ERIC	Educational Resources Information Center
LAU	Lebanese American University
NEASC	New England Association of Schools and Colleges
PsyclINFO	Psychological Abstracts
UK	United Kingdom
UMI	University of Michigan Index
USA	United States of America
HPU	Health Promoting University

The following terms are defined as used in this study:

First-Year Student: A freshmen or sophomore student who has never experienced college life before.

Stressor: A life event that causes stress and requires changes and adjustment in an individual's daily life.

Sojourners: Students who lived all their life or part of their life outside Lebanon and are currently in Lebanon to attend the university.

Acknowledgement

It would have been impossible to complete this study without the advice, cooperation, and patience of many people. I would like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation to the following individuals for their assistance:

To Dr. Hugh Busher who gave of his time and counsel throughout the study. I am so happy and honored to have had you as my tutor these past five years.

To Dr. Ken Foulman for his valuable advice.

The directors and English tutors at the Lebanese American University for cooperating in making the institution and their classes available for the study.

To the first-year students who participated and made this study possible.

Thanks to Alice Ashkar and Nadia Moussa for all the help with the statistics. I couldn't have done it without you.

My sincere thanks to Dr. Karkoulian, who made it through before me and for all her advice, and to Dr. Rima Bahous who helped me with the final revision.

To my mother Mary Canaan, thank you for everything.

Finally, thanks to my husband, Samir, for his support for without it I would not have been able to complete this work. Also to my daughter Grace, and son Daniel, thanks for your love and understanding.

Chapter One

Introduction

Introduction

All individuals, in the course of living, experience a variety of stressful life events, which might include such diverse events as divorce, death of a family member, change in living conditions, and illnesses. These events are stressful because they often require significant social readjustment and adaptation. While the public has long been aware of the intense stress in the corporate world, only since the beginning of the 1980's have leaders in academia begun to realize that stress also prevails in their world as well (Benjamin and Walz, 1987).

Recently, some research has been done on the stress factors usually encountered by university students during their first academic year (Greenberg, 2004; Blonna, 2004; Benjamin, 1987; Whitman 1987, 1985; Kaplan, 1981); nevertheless the amount of recent research is still slim and scattered (refer to page 10 for research engine used). These factors as well as the way the university helps them to cope are vital to the successful achievement of their studies and have a direct influence on how their careers in the business life will develop.

Stress constitutes a normal part of life and is often motivating and helpful. Yet, one must keep in mind that constant or excessive stress has negative effects on the body making it unable to deal with the pressures associated with that stress (Eysenck, 1996). This might lead to many illnesses ranging from headaches, high blood pressure, and various psychotic and neurotic disorders (Mondy, et al., 2004; Kutash, Schlesinger & Associates, 1980; Gunderson & Rahe, 1974).

At the societal level, there is a rise in the rate of suicides, drug addiction, and alcoholism, implying that people are unable to cope with the changes in their lives (Blonna, 2004). Some researchers (Hirsch & Ellis, 1996; Morgan, 1997) have observed that stress can often lead to depression, which in severe cases may lead to suicide. Moreover, once students are depressed they tend to resort to drinking and drugs to ease their problems.

Stress exists in various aspects of our lives such as family and work, however, the university environment though a different setting can be as stressful as other settings if not more (Blonna, 2004). In fact, Ramsey, Greenberg and Hale (1989 as cited in Olpin, 1996) claim that the most stressful years in one's life could be the years spent in college.

When students move away from home and support systems, they face not only social challenges in developing peer networks, but also intellectual challenges from the rigorous academic curriculum and university environment. Some researchers have suggested that the problems induced by such changes are responsible, at least in part, for student dropout (Whitman et al., 1985). Pantage and Creedon (1978) reported that the largest attrition rate occurs among first-year students and such group is less likely to return to college at a later date.

Students who come to a university to learn are likely to become victims of stress due to the intense competition for grades, examination worries, problems associated with choosing a career, and also dividing their time for a satisfying social life with the necessity to study (Whitman et al., 1987).

Statement of the Problem

Past research has tended to focus on the college student population in general and mostly on psychological symptoms such as depression and anxiety (Jackson, 2001; Misra et al., 2000) and on the relationship of stress to physical illnesses (Von Ah et al., 2004; Hudd et al., 2000;) rather than on the environmental stressors at the university such as relationship problems, academic difficulties, and others for first-year students.

A considerable number of college students find their college experience very stressful (Schafer, 2000; Swick, 1987). However, existing literature regarding stress and the college student (Greenberg, 2004; Towbes and Cohen, 1996; Tinto, 1993; D'Zurilla and Sheedy: 1991; Mechanic and Greenley, 1976; Baker and Nidrof, 1964) suggests the idea that first-year students are particularly vulnerable to stress, and if many students are to remain in college, assistance must be given to deal with stress. Students that enter college are faced with countless new

responsibilities that may cause them a certain shock. The experiences are numerous such as developing time management skills, coping with a new and wider campus, and learning how to handle new relationships (Benjamin, 1987).

The extreme high attrition rates during the first year underline the difficulties students face in making the adjustment to college life (Kalsner, 1991). A study conducted by Hirsch and Keniston (1970) estimates that 50% of entering students do not finish college 4 years later. According to Tinto (1993), the highest dropout rates occur in the first-year because of the students' inability to cope with the stressors of the academic environment. Consequently, there is a need to focus on the stressors in the lives of first-year college students as they occur in the academic environment and look at what universities are doing to help them cope with these stressors.

Importance of the Study

Some research has been carried out on the sources of stress for college students and their coping strategies (Greenberg, 2004, Schafer, 2000; Crawford, 1997, and Johnson, 1978). However, very little research has focused on the sources of first-year students' stress in general and in a Middle Eastern environment in particular. Being a faculty member and advisor at the Lebanese American university (LAU) prompted the awareness of the researcher for the need of such study hoping that accurate information concerning stress at the university and its primary sources particularly for first-year students, would be a key to better understand the first-year students' behaviour (for example, course selection, attrition and academic performance). The researcher also hoped to contribute to an improved understanding of the learning process by identifying specific support services at the university that students perceive as influencing their academic performance.

This research may help educators in developing preventive services, which could assist in the area of student retention. A more in-depth understanding of this process could lead university administrators and counsellors to enact programs, workshops, seminars, and/or services that will lead to a less stressful environment and assist students in handling their stressors more

effectively. Also the results of this case study will add to the general body of knowledge in this area.

Objectives of the Study

This study has several purposes:

- To develop a profile of first-year students at LAU (Lebanese American University) with respect to their primary sources of stress.
- To examine the main support services used by the students and offered by the university in order to help reduce stress.
- To examine the students' perception of these support functions (See research questions p. 58).

Focus of the Study

This study focuses on first-year college students who are thought to experience a great deal of stress. The sources of this stress are diverse: being away from home for the first time, needing to budget their finances, developing new networks of boys and girlfriends, learning about a new town and school, and, generally assuming greater responsibilities for their lives, studies, and behaviour (Greenberg, 2004).

Sources of stress for first-year students illustrated in the literature can be grouped in two categories. University stressors include factors intrinsic to academic duties, relationships on campus, institutional structure and climate, and role in institution. Personal stressors relate to extra- institutional sources, and individual factors (Greenberg, 2004; Blonna, 2004; Schafer, 2000; Benjamin, 1987). The university plays a major role in helping students cope with their stressors, mainly by initiating campus support services. These include academic and non-academic support. Academic support includes: mentoring, tutoring, academic advising, study group, library, and interaction inside classroom. On the other hand, non-academic support includes: orientation, non-academic advising, financial aid, counselling, university health service, career service, faculty interaction outside the classroom, peer interaction, residence hall service, extra curricular activities, and international student service. Some of these services are

designed to facilitate a student's transition to college and help him/ her adjust to college level work.

Setting of the Study

This is a case study involving students of LAU. LAU is a private non-profit organization founded in 1924 as a two-year junior college for women. In 1948-49 it became known as Beirut College for Women (BCW), in which it grew into a university level institution. As a result of the expansion of its program, the university was granted a provisional charter by the Board of Regents of the State of New York. It was not until 1955 that it was given an absolute charter by the same board for granting a BA, BS, AA, and AAS degrees. It took another 15 years for the Lebanese Government to officially grant the university's degrees equivalence to the national License. Soon after that the university changed its name from Beirut College for Women (BCW) to Beirut University College (BUC), and began to admit men into some of its programs. Again in 1994, the university saw a change in its name, after the Board of Regents in New York accepted to change it into its present name and status "Lebanese American University" (LAU). Currently, LAU has a School of Pharmacy, School of Engineering and Architecture, School of Business, and School of Arts and Sciences. LAU is currently seeking accreditation by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) in the U.S.

LAU follows the American system of higher education; therefore the instruction is in the English language. The academic calendar is divided into the fall semester, which extends from October to February, and the spring semester, which extends from February till June. The university also offers two summer sessions in late June and early September. LAU also uses the American credit system, and classroom attendance is mandatory.

The university creates a dynamic community that will provide intellectual stimulation in order to satisfy the educational needs of Lebanon and the Middle East with high standards. LAU grew from the humble beginnings of 1,000 students with one campus, to two campuses (Beirut and Byblos) and close to 5,900 students. The university student body is diverse with around 68 nationalities, with 60% male and 40% female (Registrar's office, Fall 2003/04).

The researcher identified three categories of sojourners (defined as: a temporary stay in a new place): (1) those who lived outside Lebanon all their life, (2) those who lived outside Lebanon for the last 3 years or more but not all their lives, and (3) those who lived outside Lebanon for the last 3 years or less.

LAU is a residential university. The housing services are provided for both females and males (capacity 59 females and 27 males in the Beirut Campus; started accepting male residents since 2001). A residence hall supervisor with the help of the students' floors assistants helps run the dormitory. Comfortable settings are provided that contribute to the student's academic and social needs. The rooms are nicely furnished and provided with such facilities as a cable TV, Internet connection, and telephones, in addition to a fully equipped kitchen in all the wings. However, students who wish to reside on campus have to sign a special form of the governing rules and regulations, while their parents sign the permission of outstay and contact persons in case of emergency. Visitors of the same gender only are permitted in the residents' rooms during visitation hours from 8 a.m. until 10 p.m. after signing in at the front desk and out before departure.

Students are admitted to LAU to the sophomore class if they have passed the Lebanese Baccalaureate II exam or equivalent. However, if they have a high school diploma or an international Baccalaureate, they are admitted as freshmen. Also students who have not decided on a course of study are admitted as undecided and can later on choose their major.

At the start of the academic year 2003/04, the University boasted a student population of approximately 5860 students with a student/FTE faculty ratio (full time employment) of 20:1. 4200 students are registered in the main campus (Beirut) out of which 770 students are newly admitted (not including transfers from other universities) but including 234 foreign students (LAU Registrar, Fall 2003/04). Around 30% of the students receive some form of financial aid based on financial needs only such as, soft loans and work-study grants (Financial Aid Committee, Fall 2003/04).

Lebanese Culture

Lebanon is a country that enjoys a beautiful nature and a diversified culture. Some unique characteristics of the Lebanese are their warm reception, fine cuisine and friendship with strong family ties, a passion for socialization and hospitality (The Sword of the Spirit, 2000). The dominant culture across the various communities is Arabic with noticeable western influences; mainly French and Anglo Saxon. This has given the country a cosmopolitan aspect (Arab net, 2002).

“Lebanon's shared language, heritage, history, and religion with its Arab neighbors, tended to minimize the distinctiveness of the Lebanese culture....Despite the commonalities in Lebanese society, sectarianism (or confessionalism) is the dominant social, economic, and political reality” (Ghazi, 1997, p.1). Lebanese people in general strongly affiliate with religion as a phenomenon, which determine their social and political identities rather than ceremonial practice of devotion (Ghazi, 1997). Although for a long time Muslims and Christians have lived together, one cannot consider them as one social entity because of disagreements over political and state issues such as the relationship with Syria (their neighbor), the Palestinian crisis, and reforms (Ghazi, 1997). In general, it can be said that the “Lebanese are loyal first to their family, then to religion, then to their village, and only last to their country” (McDaniel, 2004, p.51).

The Lebanese population is rightfully considered as one of the most educated, and technically competent in the Middle Eastern region (Arab net, 2004) with an estimated rate of 88% in the 1960's for those aged above 15 and 86% today keeping in mind that primary education is mandatory and free for five years starting the age of 5 (McDaniel, 2004).

According to Ghazi (1997) the decision to an individual's access to education as well as the chances of achieving good standing and wealth is usually driven by family status and position in the Lebanese society. Given that honour is so important in the Lebanese culture, conformity to accepted standards of behaviours is an important issue. Strongly Linked transocially (Peleikis, 2003), Lebanese families tend to provide, support, protection, and opportunities to its members, in return the member is expected to offer loyalty and provide services (Ghazi, 1997). Traditionally, children remain under parental control not only until the age of 18 but extends as

long as the child lives in the family residence or until he/she marries. Most children are dependent and expect care from their families while remaining obedient and loyal (Ghazi, 1997). This practice has gradually changed after the civil war (1975-1991) especially for young women. They have started to have more freedom and greater independence and parental control over them has noticeably relaxed. Their education became an important factor because of so many men dead and gone during the war. Over and above, women are staying single much longer than before and are obliged to provide for themselves economically (Neave, 1995).

In Lebanon, the family structure is patriarchal (Barakat, 1993). Traditionally, the roles of women were those of mothers and homemakers. However, since 1970's the perception towards women as an active member in the workforce has changed and they have succeeded to permeate much strongly in the business environment. This was induced by both the rise in education for women, and the heavy migration of men to the gulf countries leading to manpower shortage. A large number of women attend institutions of higher education and enjoy to a certain degree equal civil rights. Still, sexual relations for women whether premarital or marital is still considered taboo and prohibited by the family and society (Ghazi, 1997).

Organization of the Study

This thesis is organized into six chapters.

Chapter one provides the introduction, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, importance of the study, setting of the study, Lebanese culture, research questions, and the scope of the study.

Chapter two contains a review of the literature on the definition of stress, underlying factors affecting stress, stressors at the university for first-year students categorized into social, academic and microstressors. The last part discusses institutional generated support to enhance first-year students' success with a model to conclude the literature review.

Chapter three describes the methodology and type of research, which include the population and sample selection variables, research techniques, instruments, data collection, and statistical analysis.

Chapter four presents the analysis and interpretation of the data.

Chapter five gives a summary of the study, discusses the results and how they relate to the literature.

Chapter six presents the findings and the implications of the research, its limitations and recommendations for future research.

Chapter Two

Review of the Literature

Introduction

All individuals will face stressful events in their lives, such as illnesses, divorce, death, examinations, and change in living conditions. Stress resulting from these events is due to the need for adaptation and social readjustment.

One group that has been identified as suitable for stress-related research is the college student population (Greenberg, 2004; Schafer, 2000; Fisher, 1994). A closer look at the literature review will support the claim that college students in general are exposed to a variety of stressors such as exam preparation, test taking, career indecisions, and other related problems (Greenberg, 2004; Blonna, 2004; Whitman et al., 1985). Whitman et al. (1985) asserted that educational programs in which many students find themselves could produce increasing levels of stress. These levels may stem from what students perceive as extreme demands, too little or inappropriate feedback from teachers, feelings of not belonging in the academic environment, and lack of personal relationships with teachers. However, some existing literature suggests that first-year students are more likely to experience stress than upper level students (D’Zurilla and Sheedy, 1991; Waltz and Benjamin, 1987; Mechanic and Greenley, 1976; Baker and Nidorf, 1964).

Although the concept of stress and its harmful effects has been gaining more attention recently; nevertheless, the very recent literature on first-year student stress is rather slim and scattered. This is rather surprising, considering the large number of first-year students and the constant changes and challenges they face that are stress producing. For this literature review, computer-based information searches were conducted using the keywords *first year students*, paired with the words *stress*, *sources*, *support services* and *higher education* plus the different support services such as *mentoring*, *social support*, etc. These keywords were searched in the following databases: Education Resources Information Centre (ERIC), Psychological Abstracts

(PsycINFO), Dissertation Abstracts and through the web sites of the University of Leicester (Athens), University of Michigan index (UMI), Yahoo and Msn. The researcher also searched through the Education index and the reference lists of LAU and the American University of Beirut (AUB) libraries and numerous review articles, chapters, and books, as well as the reference lists of all located studies. From the results of this search only 25 articles were written recently (from 1998-2005). It also seems that most of the relevant studies were done before 1993 and in the United States (see references). Nevertheless, the researcher found this to be appropriate as the university in which this study is carried out (LAU chartered by the Board of Regents of the State of New York; see page 5) is strongly influenced by American traditions and academic structure.

Stress and its Impact on Individuals

One of the first researchers to define stress and its effects was Hans Selye who explained that stress is an imprecise body reaction to any demand (Selye, 1983). What is most important about stress is the way one perceives it, and thus the way in which he/she considers it as stressful or not. Lazarus and Folkman's (1984 as quoted in Day and Livingstone, 2003, p. 74) explained that stress is a "relationship between the person and the environment that is appraised by the person as taxing or exceeding his or her coping resources and endangering his or her well-being". In other words, stress is an active condition in which an individual is faced with an opportunity, constraint, or demand associated with what he/she desires and for which the outcome is perceived to be uncertain and important (Schuler, 1984).

Stress is usually thought of in negative terms caused by something bad; for example, a college student is placed on scholastic probation (Luthans, 2005). However, sources of stress need not be bad; for example, a college student makes the honour's list (a form of recognition for high academic achievement) since this is very difficult to maintain (Luthans, 2005; Moorhead & Griffin, 2003). Mild stress actually improves productivity and can be helpful in developing creative ideas (Vecchio, 2005). The Yerkes-Dodson Law (1908 as cited in Whitman, & Others, 1987, p.1) differentiates between high, low and moderate stress; postulating that moderate stress contributes positively to the learning process, where as high and low stress has negative effects on learning. Selye (1978) developed a framework for describing four variations of stress: (a)

Hyperstress or too much stress, (b) Distress or bad stress, (c) Hypostress or understress, and (d) Eustress or good stress (from the Greek eu-good, as in euphoria). Nevertheless, the intensity of stress seems largely dependent on three factors: (a) the availability of external resources for support (b) individual stress tolerance, and (c) individual perception of stressful events (Selye, 1996). According to Zitzow (1992, p. 20) “the factor that seems most important is individual perception.” Cannon (1932) was the first to describe the body’s reaction to stress. When people experience stress, they respond by what he called the “fight or flight” response. This response helps the body cope with stimulants of threat or danger.

Cannon discussed how primitive people used this response as they faced a variety of threats in their environment. Herbert Benson (1994) believes that the “fight or flight” emergency response is not a suitable one for dealing with today’s social stress, yet people’s bodies still react in the same way when they come across threats, whether these threats are real or imagined.

Studies reveal that the aversive side of the “fight and flight” formula is related to the levels of college dropouts, for example, students who don’t feel comfortable at their university tend to move away from the source of stress, and thus will eventually end up leaving it (Hirsh and Keniston, 1970; Katz, 1969).

Inspired by Cannon’s work, Selye (1996), an endocrinologist, was able to specify the changes in the body’s physiology. He concluded that, regardless of the sources of stress, the body reacted in the same manner. The body responds by increasing the heart rate, blood pressure, and muscle tension, therefore increasing production of glucose, and others (Greenberg, 2004). When people are feeling stressed, there are many noticeable responses, for example anxiety, poor concentration, and difficulty in decision-making (Crawford, 1997 as cited in Bush & Middlewood 1997). Selye (1996) summarized stress reactivity as a three-face process and termed it the general adaptation syndrome (GAS). He discussed three separate stages of stress: Alarm reaction, resistance, and exhaustion. These stages are the body’s attempt to become accustomed to the stressor in order to re-establish equilibrium (the pre-stressed stage). However, if it is severe enough and persists long enough, it can be harmful; for example, it may result in poor attendance or poor performance (Mondy, et al., 2004). There is increasing proof indicating that severe, prolonged stress, is related to the diseases that are the leading causes of death such as,

coronary heart diseases, stroke, hypertension, cancer, etc., stress may even lead to suicide (Mondy, et al., 2004).

Lazarus (1966) considered the GAS approach identified by Selye (1996) as limited for its treatment of everybody as having the same automatic response; to him stress is situation specific. Lazarus and Cohen (1978) defined three categories of stressors, varying mostly in intensity: cataclysmic events, such as war or natural disaster, major life events, such as death or personal illness, and minor daily irritants. These irritants such as traffic and interpersonal relationship problems are described as “ongoing and chronic problems for which one has adapted at some level but that still can take psychological toll over time” (Whitman et al., 1985, p. 12).

Each person has a normal level of resistance to stressful events. Some people can stand a great deal of stress and others much less. Ivancevich and Matteson (1993, p. 244) defined stress as “an adaptive response, mediated by individual differences and/or psychological processes that is a consequence of any external (environmental) action, situation, or event that places excessive psychological and/or physical demands on a person”. Luthans (2002, p. 396) points out three critical components of this definition: “(1) It refers to a reaction to a situation or event, not the situation or event itself, (2) It emphasizes that stress can be impacted by individual differences, and (3) it highlights the phrase ‘excessive psychological and/or physical demands’, because only special or unusual situations (as opposed to minor life adjustments) can really be said to produce stress.” According to D’Zurilla and Sheedy (1991) one’s ability to accommodate stressful stimulants determines the amount of stress he/she experiences. However, there are many factors that determine how one might cope with stress, such as, the intensity of the stressor and one’s knowledge of his/her ability to deal with stress (Benjamin, 1987).

Individual Factors and Stress

In this section the researcher will present some important elements relevant to the individual factors influencing stress. Although this thesis will emphasize the environmental factors i.e. stress at the university, it will not dismiss the individual factors relevant to first- year students and to this study for a more comprehensive understanding of the topic since these factors along with the environmental factors lead to stress (see model page 56). These factors which could

make students either distress-prone or distress-resistant include Type A, B, and C personalities, locus of control, self-esteem, perception, age, gender, religion, and first generation students (defined from pages 14-20).

Not everybody experiences stress in the same manner and not everybody respond to stress in the same manner. Some may perceive stress as challenging and thus respond positively, while others may experience anxiety and fear due to stress. Moreover, the same stressor may change from being exciting to becoming quite stressful (Benjamin, 1987).

Basic research on personality has often focused on identifying the key dimensions along which people differ and the complex interrelation between individuals (Baron and Greenberg, 1990). Studies also suggest that personality affects a wide range of organizational processes from task performance to absenteeism (Ferris, et al., 1988).

Personality characteristics (such as, Type A, B, and C personalities, locus of control and perception) as well as demographic variables can affect how an individual appraises stressful situations and copes with them (Whitman et al., 1985). Whitman et al. propose that the three specific demographic variables, which influence students, are race, sex, and marital status. However, the three factors, which seem more relevant to the group of students under study, are gender, religion, and first generation student (defined on page 20).

Two personality types A and B were first identified by two cardiologists Meyer Friedman and Ray Rosenman, who were conducting research on the impact job stress has on heart diseases (Friedman and Rosenman, 1974). Type A personalities are aggressive and competitive, set high standards, and put themselves under constant time pressures. They even make extreme demands on themselves in recreation and leisure. They often fail to realize that many of the pressures they feel are of their own making rather than products of their environment. Because of the constant stress that they feel, they are more prone to physical ailments related to stress, such as heart attacks (Friedman and Ulmer, 1985). In contrast, Type B personalities are more relaxed and easygoing. They accept situations and work within them rather than fighting them competitively. Such people are especially relaxed regarding time pressures, and so they are less prone to have problems associated with stress (Davis and Newstrom, 1989).

Temoshok and Dreher (1992) in their book *Type C Behavior and Cancer* discussed another personality type called “Type C”. These individuals respond to repeated failure and stress by giving up and developing a sense of helplessness about their problems. They show a suppression or absence of emotion and resign themselves to their fate. According to Eysenck (1996), one can almost characterize the Type C personality as the complete opposite of personality Type A.

Another significant personality dimension is the concept of ‘locus of control,’ which is the degree to which a person considers either him/herself or an outside force directly related to the impact on certain events (Moorhead and Griffen, 2003). People usually vary along a continuum of two kinds related to how much they think they are or not responsible for happenings in their lives. The first end being the internal locus of control, or the internals, which are those who believe that they have control over the events in their lives. The second kind known as the externals have an external locus of control and they believe that outside forces, such as luck, control events (Spector, 1982). Phares (1976) reported that internals try to control their environment, search for new information and use it better; therefore they are concerned with information, rather than with the social demands of the situation that the externals seem interested in. Findley and Cooper (1983) suggested a significant positive relation between academic achievement and internal locus of control. Lefcourt (1982) even suggested that the relation between locus of control and achievement might be stronger for males than for females. However, it is interesting to note that, ‘a country's culture influences the dominant personality characteristics of its population’ (Robbins 2003, p.102). The individual's control originates in his or her structural milieu and socialization experience (Young, 1988). According to Robbins (2003), people in the Middle East believe that life is essentially preordained; therefore, large proportions of externals (defined above) are expected to be found in such countries.

What one thinks of him/her-self affects how one behaves. If the individual does not think well of him/her-self, then that person will not trust others’ opinion and decisions. The individual will, therefore, be more apt to be influenced by others, which may result in his/her conforming to the behaviours of those with whom he/she frequently interacts. Poor self-esteem results in a poor social support network, knowing that a positive social support network is an important component of stress management (Greenberg, 2004).

According to Romano (1992) the interaction between the stressor's and the individual's understanding and reaction to such stressors is what causes stress. According to Cox and Mackay (1976, as quoted in Cox, 1978, p 18) stress can occur "when there is an imbalance between the perceived demand and the person's perception of his capability to meet that demand." Rather than how much stress individuals experience, the critical issues seem to be how we perceive stress and respond to it (Massey, 1998). Lazarus (1984, 1966) emphasized the importance of an individual's perception of the event. The degree to which an event is perceived as threatening, harmful, or challenging is what makes an event stressful. Thus an individual's perception of an event is the key to understanding what triggers stress in one individual and not another.

Threat occurs when the individual experiences resources as inadequate to meet demands, and challenge occurs when resources are felt to be adequate to demands. It is important to determine the difference between the perception of an event as challenging or as threatening. Individuals who perceive events as challenging demonstrate more confidence in their ability to adapt and will cope differently from those who perceive the event as threatening (Baum, et al., 1981). Stress is, therefore, situation specific (Dobson and Metcalfe, 1983).

Some students perceive the rigors of academia as exciting and challenging and thus stress resulting from such events gives them a sense of competence and evidently increases their capacity to learn (Whitman et al., 1985). On the other hand, many perceive the rigors of academia as a threat (e.g. course work is extremely stressful, lack the study skill required to wade through hundreds of pages of text and to compose research papers, or lack the self-discipline necessary to get their work done), stress can then elicit a feeling of vulnerability and a threatening sense of failure (Whitman et al., 1985).

According to Blascovich and Mendes (2001) demand evaluations of the situations are based on perceptions of the amount of required effort, danger, and uncertainty involved in the particular performance situation. The first year of college might contain elements of all three of these factors in varying amounts. During their first year at college students consider academic performance of primary importance (Whitman et al., 1985), thus estimates of required effort are very prominent in the new student's appraisal of the situation (Blascovich and Mendes 2001).

Relationship with teacher/staff (Whitman et al., 1987; Ramsden 1981), uncertainty about new friends, living conditions, and finances are also likely to be part of many students' worries. The potential for academic failure, social embarrassment, or even physical threats (e.g. from sexual attack, drug or alcoholic availability, etc.) may also enter into a new student's evaluation of situational demand (Blascovich and Mendes 2001).

Stress may not necessarily be associated with what is happening in people's environment or their situation, rather with their understanding of the events (Folkman et al., 1979). The cognitive judgement people make gives meaning to their situation, such people when faced with trouble always try to think of a way to deal with it (Folkman et al., 1979).

Negatively perceived stress, which is taken to extremes results in adverse physical and psychological consequences (Murphy and Archer, 1996) and will have an adverse effect on their motivation and performance (Amirkhan, 1998; Covington, 1993). One of these adverse effects is "hyper vigilance," which is excessive alertness causing panic, thus one example could be over-studying for an exam. Another adverse effect is "premature closure," which is when one doesn't take the time to think of a solution for the stressful event, such as, rushing through an exam (Whitman, et al, 1985). A study conducted in England, which focused on 60 first-year undergraduates, concluded that stress weakens the immunity system. The sample of students were vaccinated against meningitis C before they began college, however stress made their immunity system more vulnerable (Fushfield, 2002). As such, it is important to search for various ways to help in the reduction of the adverse effects of stress, in order to strengthen the students' learning and performance (Whitman, et al, 1985). Stress can be reduced through providing students with a comfortable environment that will give them agency over their education, clarify their expectations, as well as helpful feedback to improve their performance (Whitman, et al, 1985). When stress is reduced, students no longer feel distressed and thus they will be able to find their own strategies to deal with stress (ibid, 1985).

Goal orientation and coping styles differ from one student to the next, especially between the traditional and non-traditional college students (Morris, et al., 2003). Traditional students are defined as those college students who are straight out of high school, not married, and are between the ages of 18-22. On the other hand, non-traditional students are usually older than 24

years, maybe married, with children, a full time worker and who went to work after graduation or got married and decided to return to college or are retraining for another career (Rosenthal et al., 2000, Dill and Henley, 1998).

Many researchers seem to indicate that female college students tend to experience higher levels of stress than their male counterparts (Misra and McKean 2000: Cushway, 1992) in general and academically (Abouserie, 1994). A study at the University Of California by the Higher Education Research Institute, concluded from the responses of students, that women usually engage in goal oriented and thus more stressful activities such as housework, studying, and participating in student activities, whereas men participate in activities that are more recreational and thus release stress, such as, playing sports and watching television (Reisberg, 2000). However, other studies (Hamilton and Fagot, 1988) reported that both men and women consider such factors as appearance and personal relationships as stressful. The difference between men and women is seen in the way stress is expressed; Misra and McKean (2000), explained that men report lower levels of stress due to socialization. In other words, men are socialized in a way as to not express their emotions and be more self-reliant than women, thus they may appear to be experiencing less stress. When it comes to gender differences and stress it is essential to bear in mind that men and women experience the same amount of stress, yet they differ in the way they express it.

Frazier & Schauben (1994) assessed stress among 282 female college students recruited from psychology and women's study courses at a large Midwestern university in the United States and concluded that financial problems, test pressure, and relationship problems are the primary sources for stress. More over, Endres (1992) also reported that the personal desire for perfection, the performance in a course, and the opinion of friends are important issues that cause stress for females. However, Allen and Hiebert (1991) note that women tend to be more expressive of negative events, thus one must not conclude that higher academic stress among females is related to an inequality in stressful events due to gender.

Since various life events research has pointed out to the consistent yet low relationship between psychological distress and unconstructive events, there was a need for stress-moderating variables (Cohen, 1988). Being a member of/or participating in a religious or spiritual group,

often brings one in close contact, on a very personal level, with other people of the same mind (Greenberg, 2004). Although religion refers to a set of beliefs and spirituality is related to the experience that provides meanings for life (Graham, et al., 2001), this study will use the terms interchangeably.

Spilka, et al. (1985) explains that religion plays an important role in coping with stress for it, builds self-esteem, it offers a meaning to life, and it allows the individual to gain more control over his/her life. Further more, Hathway and Pargament (1992) explain that religious individuals use religious coping strategies that are derived from the cognitive, spiritual, behavioural, and social properties of faith. The affiliation of individuals with spirituality provides them with emotional or financial support during tough times, which is an effective means for lessening stress (Greenberg, 2004).

A study by Schafer and King (1990) on religiousness and stress from among 698 college students in a northern California community in the United States attending 2-year community college and a public state university concluded that religiousness has no association with frequency of great stress. However, they reported that religious students, as compared with non-religious students, might be less inclined to seek secular help such as alcohol abuse or drug abuse in dealing with stress in their college experience. Similarly, Strawbridge, et al. (2001) claim that individuals who are religious practitioners usually do not drink or smoke excessively; rather they have good health behaviours and are more engaged in society.

Maton (1989) conducted a longitudinal analysis study on the relationship between well being and spiritual support of first-year college students in their first semester at a US university in the East Coast. Results indicated that well-being was positively related to spiritual support for those who experienced high stress, indicating a higher level of personal-emotional adjustment, where as well-being was not related to spiritual support for those who experienced low stress (Maton, 1989). Low and Handal (1995) also revealed a significant relationship between religion and college adjustment for students in transition, mainly college first-year at three different universities in the United States. However, Trockel, et al., (2000) and Zern (1987) reported a strong correlation between belief and grade point average (GPA) that was positively related. Although studies range from establishing a direct relation between religion and stress, and those

who believe there is no relation, one cannot deny that religion is an important tool for dealing with stress, which may or may not help in reducing its effects.

Institutions of higher education combine diverse students with a wide range of needs. The group of students that is significant for my study is the first-generation college students, meaning that their parents have never attended college/university (Billson and Terry, 1982).

According Mitchel (1997) it is evident that the college environment always presents new challenges to any student, yet these challenges are multiplied when it comes to the first-generation college students. These students are less prepared for college life than their classmates that come from educated families, have false expectations and conflicting obligations with lack or insufficient family support and are perceived as having poorer academic and social preparation (Zalaquette, 1999; Terenzini et al., 1996; Richardson and Skinner, 1992; Hsiao, 1992). They also have greater financial constraints (Terenzini et al., 1996) and lower self-esteem (Mitchell, 1997; London, 1996). It would seem logical then that they may experience more stress than other college students.

According to London (1996) the main goal for the first-generation college students is upward mobility, for they realize the importance of a first degree or a master's degree to be able to compete in today's job market. To experience academic success and social mobility, they must shed one social identity and take on another. This can be a slow, painful process in which what is gained is often offset by both personal and social losses (London, 1992). Thus, one of the greatest challenges facing first-generation students is their place on the margin of two cultures, that of their family and friends and that of their college environment (London, 1992). According to Terenzini et al. (1996), London (1996) and York-Anderson and Bowman (1991) first-generation students consider their parent less supportive of their decision to pursue higher education than non-first generation students. Moreover, these students are quite dubious of their academic abilities for they think that they are not college material (Mitchell, 1997).

It is evident that there are many causes of stress. However, the theories, which seem most relevant to an examination of stress and the first-year students (Ivancervich, and Matteson, 1993; Lazarus and Folkman 1984; Cox and Mackey, 1976) suggest that an individual perception of an

event is the key to understanding what triggers stress in one individual and not another; thus, it is important to (1) identify precise environmental events that are appraised by the first-year students as exceeding their coping resources and threatening their well-being such as those stressors at the university academic, social or others and (2) identify possible mediating factors in order to relieve them from harmful stress such as academic and non-academic support services available at the university.

Underlying Factors Affecting Stress in First-Year Students

Change and Adjustment for Students

Change can be worrying. In order to change, the person must leave something behind. Such loss is usually experienced as a threat and therefore a danger (Maurer, undated). According to Robbins (2003) and Nadler (1987), there are several factors that are known to make people resistant to change: (a) Economic insecurity, (b) Fear of the unknown, (c) Threats to social relationships, (d) Habit, (e) not being able to recognize the need for change, and (f) Selective information processing and consequently less inclined to adjust.

The concept of adjustment is generally used to express a dependent relationship in which changes take place in the individual as a result of new conditions in his surroundings (Torbion, 1982). The adjustment and transition to college can be stressful for most students because they can experience a loss of control over their new environment (Fisher, 1994). The new environment will have new properties and the student needs to adapt to the new places, faces, and routines. Students should be able to cope with being away from home for the first time, and adjusting to a new environment, while trying to maintain a high level of academic achievement (Ross et al., 1999). According to Lysgaard (1955), adjustment follows a U-shaped curve. The students feel comfortable and successful at the beginning, but then he/she faces a crisis and feels lonely, and finally he/she will begin to cope again. Consequently, the first weeks and months at university are considered the most stressful for students as many studies have emphasized (Pancer et al., 2000; Fisher, 1994).

Selye (1996) concluded that any major change in one's life could lead to stress. Being in a different environment can cause first-year students a great deal of stress, especially the change of environment from high-school to college which demands a great deal of adjustment from first-year students (Tinto, 1993). Similarly Rice (1992) explains that as students leave home for the first time, they leave friends and family behind, thus being cut off from much needed social support. Lokitz and Sprandel (1976) gave an account of interview data, which indicate that the shift from the students' parents' home and high school and peers to college causes them to experience detachment from their social identities. College life can be difficult and stressful (Noel et al., 1985); needs high levels of independence, initiative, and self-regulation (Bryde and Milburn, 1990).

For many first-year students, the move to college is a time of personal confusion as well as a time to develop independence and other social skills (Robbins, et al., 1993). The young persons may be moving away from home for the first time as well as facing decisions and challenges they have never before met. Pascarella and Terenzini (1991, p. 174)¹ highlighted the importance of social adjustment to college for first-year students:

“The transition from high school to college appears to be as hard on students' social self-concepts (popularity, popularity with the opposite sex, leadership ability, social self-confidence, understanding others, and the like) as it is on their academic self-images.”

Many students also state family concerns and interpersonal difficulties in dormitories or other social contexts (Archer and Lamnin, 1985) leading to difficulty in adjusting.

Apart from the social adjustment to that first-year experience, they also have to cope with academic adjustment. According to Beard et al., (1982) many first-year students experience adjustment problems such as academic difficulty and career indecisions. Tinto (1993) suggested that academic integration seems to influence first-year students' improvement of academic skills. College level academic work can be very demanding, and for some students, this represents a real change from their work in high school. In most cases, college classes demand much more reading and written work (Blonna, 2004). In addition, many colleges stress communication skills and require students to present their work to their classmates and to take part in classroom discussion (ibid, 2004). Although some stress is essential to challenge students to learn, the

amount of stress can overwhelm a student and have an effect on his/her ability to cope (Kaplan, 1980).

The usual first-year student comes to college with uninformed or unrealistic expectations. First-year students do not come to college as “finished learners” (Levitz and Noel, 1989); they come to the university expecting a somewhat more sophisticated style of their high school experience (Greenberg, 2004; Chaskes, 1996). However, these students soon find that the reality of college is quite different from their expectations. It brings separation from home and parents. Living in a residence hall can have its ups and downs, making new friends is tough, greater academic demands than that of high school, and they face questions about personal identity and career choices (Greenberg, 2004).

Jackson et al. (2000) distinguished between four types of students based on their analysis of students' expectations: (1) optimistic students whose expectations about the university experience is very positive, (2) prepared students showed positive expectations about university, but they knew that the university experience brought new challenges that require them to adapt and grow personally, (3) fearful students were very fearful and anxious about the university life, (4) complacent students did not expect much from the university experience.

According to Jackson et al. (2000) and Aspinwall & Taylor (1992 as cited in Alisat 2000) students who successfully adjusted to their new environment were those who expected what the difficulties would be and how they might deal with them, thus they were either optimistic or prepared students.

First-year students are dependent learners who need to become independent. They need to learn to comprehend and meet the expectations in their new setting, particularly with study skills, independent living, and time management (Levitz and Noel, 1989). Some professors expect students to be active participants in the learning process while most students come to class with the expectation that the professor will limit him/herself to explaining just enough of the lesson in order for the students to pass the course (Karp and Yoels, 1991).

A study by Robbins et al. (1993) that sampled 198 first-year students attending Introduction to College Life seminars at a large south-eastern university in the United States, stated that first-

year students form their first impression at the first few weeks in their first semester, setting expectations for later college life. However, students quickly begin to come across a new set of “rules of the game” and begin to adapt (Chaskes, 1996).

Stressors at the University

Stressors for first-year students are categorized by the researcher into the following broad areas: (a) Social (b) Academic (c) and Microstressors.

Social Stress

Most first-year students find a puzzling range of social and personal tasks facing them when they start university. For many students, this is their first chance to exercise their impatiently expected independence fully along with its pleasures and displeasures. These include “doing one’s own laundry, budgeting, balancing a cheque book, establishing a *modus vivendi* with strangers as their roommate and suitemates, and making friends and finding social activities from among virtual strangers” (Chaskes, 1996, p. 88). Some first-year students seek a social fit first by joining structural groups such as clubs, teams and fraternities, or sororities. This is conducted by developing new friendships with classmates or persons in their residence halls, or less often, by getting to know some teachers, advisors, and middle level administrators (Frost, 1993). Some students, who do not get involved with extracurricular activities or new friends, may offset this by quickly becoming part of the academic environment; studying hard, getting high grades, visiting faculty during office hours, and attending campus lectures and cultural events. However, a feeling of social isolation often leads first-year students to be dissatisfied with the institution; connections between students, and the life of the institution need to be made early in the first term of enrolment (Martin and Arendale, 1993).

Culture Shock

Culture has its roots in human societies. There are many historical influences on the values and beliefs that form the basis of a society. They include nationhood and ethnicity, religion, linguistic affiliation, gender, generation, social class and work (Chell, 2001).

Sociologists and anthropologists have studied the culture of societies and communities for many years. However, only recently they began to study organizational culture. According to anthropologist Geertz (1973) culture is referred to as the transferred patterns of meanings. Culture is an inherited system of concepts that creates a mean in which people communicate and develop their attitude and knowledge toward life (Geertz 1973). “Organizational culture exists, then, in part through the actors’ interpretation of historical and symbolic forms” (Tierney and Rhoads, 1988, p.4). Organizational culture is based on common assumptions of individuals in an organization, such as special language, norms, and institutional ideology (Tierney and Rhoads, 1988). This anthropological view is known as the “semiotic” tradition (Cameron and Ettington, 1988).

A second school of thought in anthropology the “functionalist” tradition focuses on the group, the organization, or the society as a whole and considers how social control is maintained through values, beliefs and practices (Cameron and Ettington, 1988). For example, Deal and Kennedy (1982) define a firm’s culture as core understandings, implicit rules, and set of assumptions that control everyday behaviour in the working environment. Hofstede (2002) defines it as the shared values and beliefs that eventually result in behavioural models used when solving problems. Hofstede describes how in his terms people acquire ‘mental programs’ or ‘the software of the mind’ (p. 4), which create patterns of thinking, feeling and action. Similarly, Schein (2004) explains that an organizational culture is “a pattern of basic assumptions – invented, discovered, or developed by a given group as it learns to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration- that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems” (p. 12).

Sociologists developed a different cultural perspective. While “anthropological literature tends to view culture as something an organization is, sociological literature tends to view culture as something an organization has” (Cameron and Ettington, 1988, p.360). According to Cameron and Ettington (1988) some authors developed explanations and frameworks of social life through the eyes of those taking part in the phenomena and through their own eyes such as Goffman’s (1999) analysis of face-saving devices. Others analysed culture as an essential part of social (not

individual) activity and behaviour, and the interpretive sketch is generated by the researcher such as Whyte's (1993) analysis of gang behaviour in Chicago slums and Clark's (1970) analysis of colleges.

A culture is the general pattern of behaviour, shared beliefs, and principles that members have in common (Schein, 1986). Hofstede (2003) pointed out that within any society people face a number of common problems and the way they deal with it form the basis of cultural differences. These include individualism, gender, uncertainty and the balance of society's values towards the past, present, and future.

Organizational culture on the other hand, dates back to ancient Greece, specifically "in a speech Pericles made at the funeral of Athenian soldiers in 431 B.C." (Clemens, 1986, p. 116), in which he described his ideal society, and discussed the culture of such a society (Clemens, 1986). However, the definition of organizational culture differs among researchers (Schein 2004; Hofstede, 2002; Cameron and Ettington, 1988; Deal and Kennedy, 1982; Geertz, 1973).

An organization's culture works on a conscious and an unconscious level. It includes often-unconscious beliefs, norms, and values that are common among members of the organization (Hagberg and Heifetz, 2000). Schein (2004) describes various elements that explain different aspects of culture in great detail. He claims the levels of culture include: (1) "artefacts," which are obvious aspects that are difficult to understand such as dress; (2) "espoused values," which are related to goals and philosophies; (3) basic underlying assumptions and values; which are at the heart of the culture. These basic underlying assumptions and values exist on an unconscious level, thus they are difficult to understand. However, they are important to make sense out of events in life. Basic assumptions represent the thought and action processes from which there is no variation or deviation since members of a given group or organization "would find behaviour based on any other premise inconceivable" (ibid, 1992, p. 20). These assumptions are likewise described as "theories in use" or those non-debatable assumptions that direct behaviour and instruct group members on how to think and feel about things (Schein, 2004). Thus, students may experience stress due to the culture shock (see next paragraph for definition) and isolation from arriving from another environment. According to Weis (1992) cultural conflicts may exist

between students of different backgrounds such as, first generation students, middle-class faculty, poor students, and even between genders.

Every culture expects and trains its members to act in the ways that are satisfactory to the group (Luthans, 2005). When a person moves from one setting to another, he/she often experiences various degrees of culture shock, which is a feeling of confusion, lack of confidence, and anxiety, caused by a strange new place (Adler, 1975). They become worried about not knowing how to act and about losing their self-confidence when the incorrect responses are made (Davis and Newstrom, 1989). All their old ways of accomplishing a variety of social and academic tasks are no longer helpful. Research data imply that both the academic and social aspects of self-concept experience a decline throughout the student's first year (Pascarella and Terenzini, 1991). At first the students celebrate their newfound freedom away from close parental supervision (Chaskes, 1996). However, for individuals who are not ready, the new environment can also appear to be chaotic. They become confused, move back into isolation, and want to return home (Davis and Newstrom, 1989). Nevertheless, a different culture is not behavioural chaos; it is an orderly structure of behavioural patterns (Ibid, 1989). It can be understood if individuals have responsive attitudes and receive advance preparation. Yet, it is different, and these differences are a struggle for newcomers regardless of their flexibility (Daves, et al., 1989). Culture shock may not overwhelm some students until well into the first semester (e.g., the "midterm") (Chaskes, 1996).

In general, university students fall within a minority group since they have a socially and politically inferior standing to the faculty, staff, and administration. In addition, the first-year students, having just arrived, are also in a socially inferior position to students in their second year and beyond (Horowitz and Friedland, 1972). However, just like members of the host culture expect newcomers to accept the new culture, first-year students are expected to integrate into the "campus culture." In addition, these students are also expected to settle in their instant local neighbourhoods (i.e., the particular college or university they are attending) (Chaskes, 1996).

At LAU, a number of students are sojourners (see page 6). The pressures faced by these sojourn students are similar to those of local students. However, these students may also experience problems that are culture-based or are at least provoked by the stresses of the new cultural

experience (Zurin, et al., 1967). Bochner (1972) perceived the foreign students as needing to achieve adjustment to four different roles: (1) as a foreigner with special cultural learning problems, (2) as a student adjusting to the stress common to all first-year students, (3) as a maturing, developing person concerned about purposes, meanings, and goals, (4) as a national representative sensitive about his/her ethnic background and national status. When individuals have contact with members of other cultures, their physical appearance and language, and/or accent present unavoidable cues to their ethnic origin, and by insinuation to their status as stranger. They are directly placed into the category "they", distinguishing "them" from the locals (Bochner, 1972 as cited in Bochner and Wicks, 1982). The most significant problems appear to be coping with new educational systems social customs and norms, language difficulties, financial problems, homesickness, and for some racial discrimination (Church, 1982). Others may relate to the task of finding appropriate lodging and the establishment of friendly relations (Klinberg and Hull, 1979). Cultural shock may also affect some aspects of social life including, male-female relationship, food habits, table manners, personal status, politics, national pride, and the kind and meaning of friendship (Klinberg and Hull, 1979).

One of the obstacles faced by these students is approaching the concept of sojourning as taking a trip, and so turning themselves into special tourists, and consequently, they are neither prepared nor willing to become part of the culture (Axelrod, et al, 1968). A second obstacle is the student himself/herself. He/she may not be either adequately prepared for the experience and as a result maybe left with shock and nothing else, or is over oriented in the culture (in the abstract), and has formed a symbolic barrier to a real learning situation (Axelrod, et al, 1968).

"A point of agreement among most organizational-culture scholars is the notion that cultures are socially created through the interaction of organizational actors" (Miller, 2002, p.112) and the needs to shift due to environmental changes (Miller, 1990). It is obviously important that these students adapt to the new culture quickly in order that they may operate effectively (Furnham & Bochner, 1994).

Relationships among students

Another source of stress for first-year students is making new friends. Upcraft and Gardner (1989) suggested that the development of friendship is an important factor affecting first-year students. "Giving up or changing new friendships and developing new ones is often a stressful activity associated with college life" (Greenberg, 2004, p.304). Many questions of concern to students are raised during this phase of their life such as: Will I be popular? Will I meet friends that share my interest? What about romance? (Greenberg, 2004). It can be stressful for some students to try and find someone they can share things with. The process of developing new friendships for these students while integrating themselves into a new social network is an important source of support and well-being. New friends require a period of testing to see how much they can self-disclose to that person and feel comfortable at the same time (Greenberg, 2004). Without self-disclosure of a significant degree, the new relationship stops at the acquaintance level (ibid, 1999). According to Upcraft and Gardner (1989) establishing close friendship particularly during the first month of enrolment is an important factor for first-year students' future success and the making and breaking of intimate relationships is a major source of upset for many students (Pistole, 1995) upsetting their emotional life, their study habits academic performance, and other relationships (Schafer, 2000). Tinto (1988) hypothesized that the student who was more socially integrated was more likely to be academically integrated also and so more likely to stay in college.

Living on Campus / Commuting to college

A considerable body of research has addressed the educational and social influence on living on campus versus commuting to college. It suggested that resident students are more involved in the various educational and social systems of the institutions and appear less stressed than their commuter counterparts.

During their college years, students may live at home, in private housing off campus, or in dormitories. However, due to the cultural values of the Arab community and the limited space at the Lebanese American University, the majority of female students live in the dormitories.

Lounsbury and DeNuie (1995) and Pascarella et al. (1993) reported that students living on campus would demonstrate greater first-year cognitive gains, and a higher sense of community than similar students who lived off campus and commute to college. According to Spitzberg and Schroeder and Mable (1995) identified four essential principles of community in college residence halls: (a) involvement, (b) investment, (c) influence, and (d) identity. However, according to Johnson (1978) campus residents had more problems with social adjustment than commuting students. Further more, inadequate accommodations and housing problems have also been cited as major causes of distress for residence students (Student Mental Health Manual, 2000-2002). However, the researcher is not implying that students living on campus do not experience stress since they might adjust better, on the contrary all first-year students experience stress, and for this reason it is important to shed light on the various factors that create stress for these students.

One of the stress factors felt by first-year dormitory students is attributed to the need to connect with their roommate (Bentman, 2000). The relationship between student roommates is somewhat unique in that they can involve high levels of contact with a relatively unfamiliar person. According to Pace (1970) students who are dissatisfied with their roommates show significantly lower academic achievement than students who are satisfied. They associate their satisfaction with perceived quality of college life and can better psychologically adjust (Waldo, 1984; Pace, 1970). The variables that relate to roommate satisfaction in residence halls are a combination of personal and situational characteristics such as: personality, values and attitudes, background, and living habits (Lapidus et al., 1985).

On the other hand, commuting students as a group appear to be at a particular risk for attrition (Noel et al., 1985). The true commuter student is one who lives at least 50 miles from the educational institution he/she attends and has not packed up and moved from home (Allen, 1994). Studies on retention and attrition indicated that students who live in residence halls continue with their education at a much greater rate than do commuter students (Pascarella et al., 1986; Mallette and Cabrera, 1991).

Traffic in Lebanon is a major problem that could be significant to commuters. Students need to either ride a bus, *serveece* (a shared taxi ride), or drive their car to campus. This can increase

their stress level. They may have to schedule a lot of time in order to make it to class on time. Those who need to use the library to complete assignments may sometimes neglect their work or stay on campus to do it with much stress involved with the journey back home after the assignment is completed especially if the student is a female and it is night time.

Homesickness

Homesickness is a negative emotional reaction to leaving home (Guinagh, 1992). It is a result of one leaving a well-developed social support network and the challenges faced when attempting to adjust to a new social network (Beck et al., 2002). Thus, it refers to a yearning for certain conditions which a person was used to and had grown up with and with which he/she felt emotional ties. After reviewing the literature on homesickness, Van Tilburg, et al. (1996) found a strong agreement that “homesickness is a psychological state that is primarily centred on a preoccupation with the home environment. This state is accompanied by specific physical, cognitive, emotional, and behavioural reactions” (p.910). Homesick individuals do not necessarily want to give up what they have and get back what they ‘miss’; they simply feel something is missing (Torbiörn, 1982).

Since first-year students leave home to enter a new environment, homesickness leads to stressful and unpleasant emotions. For some, this negative experience is mild, but for others it can lead them to a state of grief, anxiety, and depression (Fisher, 1994). Although some students’ homesickness diminishes as the academic year passes, others may experience homesickness throughout their academic life.

Burt (1993) concluded, from a study among first-year students, that homesickness is a reaction to a lack of control over the environment. A person does not know how to cope with the demands of the new situation resulting in increased perceived threat. According to Fisher (1989) homesick first-year students differed from non-homesick students in terms of both perceived demands of university life and lower control over these threats and requirements. This feeling can harm students causing them more stress and thus making them unable to cope efficiently (Fisher, 1994). Nevertheless, factors such as the freedom of choice over the move (example the choice of university (Fisher, 1989), the length of the stay away from home, and the presence of an

acquaintance or familiar persons may help reduce the likelihood of becoming homesick (Gruijters, 1992 as cited in Van Tilburg et al, 1996).

Homesick persons seem to have a strong need for social support (Sarason et al., 1990). However, homesick individuals are inclined to affiliate themselves with other individuals who have similar or other experiences. These contacts can intensify the homesickness through modelling and positive reinforcement (Brewin et al., 1989; Fisher, 1989).

Males and females experience homesickness differently (Woulff, 1975). In a study by Guinagh (1992) measuring the extent of homesickness among 304 first-year students at the University of Florida (USA) noted that while the majority of all students were homesick during their first-year, a greater percentage of females than males were homesick. However, when males do become homesick, the intensity is the same. Woulff (1975) also reported greater sensitivity to homesickness for females than males. On the other hand, Fisher (1989) did not find sex differences in populations in university students and student nurses. Brewin et al. (1989) also reported that homesickness was equally common among male and female students, although they also highlight sex differences in coping with homesickness. Women were more likely than men to talk about their feelings with others, to look for cheery company, and to try to find out if others feel the same. The research with regards to gender differences in experiencing homesickness is divided, even though one might conclude that women may experience more homesickness than men, this does not necessarily mean that men do not experience homesickness. More research is needed in this area to clarify whether both male and female students experience similar amounts of stress related to homesickness, or whether it is a matter of women being able to speak more openly about their feelings.

New Environment (new rules, regulations, and procedures)

College or university life presents a challenging bureaucratic environment for the first-year students to manage. According to Chaskes (1996, p. 87) “the first-year student is thrust into a more formal, complex, and impersonal organizational environment than a secondary school setting. The student is expected to interpret established policy correctly and then successfully take part in a broad range of bureaucratic processes and procedures.” The student is also

confronted with different individuals with whom he/she may have to interact with. These may include professors, the bursars, registrars, an assortment of residence hall staff, and department chairpersons to name only a few. "First-year students often do not know what they need to know before attempting processes that could add to their stress level. For example, students do not find out how to withdraw from a course until they perceive their situation to be critical, and only then do they learn that they are past the deadline date for withdrawal" (Chaskes, 1996, p. 88).

Each organizational unit has various sets of rules and procedures that may cause some form of stress. The student must learn for example different set of rules regulating behaviour in residence halls, another for financial aid and another for on campus work assignments. Even the academic clock and calendar are much different from that of high school. Classes meet less frequently while semesters, trimesters, or quarters replace the school year. The workload increases and the pace at which the material is covered quicken (Chaskes, 1996).

At times college norms label behaviours as "appropriate," and these may cause stress for students for example, the notion of having to spend the whole night studying for a certain exam (Hudd et al, 2000). As such, students are exposed to some kind of culture shock while adjusting to this new organisational set up, which may be stress inducing.

Academic Stress

The incapability to become accustomed to college life leads to a lower performance by the students (Tinto, 1982). Erickson and Strommer (1991) state that academic performance during a student's first year is critical to his or her general adjustment. According to Pascarella and Terenzini (1991) academic fit appears to be the most important influence on the development of academic skills. Tinto's analysis of college attrition (1988) indicated that students' academic functioning during their first semester at university is critical to their perception of their incorporation into the university community. The students will meet many stressors relating to choice of major, grades, professors, and their status.

Stress and Main Course of Study

Educational and career indecisiveness of college students have been of concern to many counselling psychologists, both practitioners and researchers.

Gordon (1995, p. X) defines the group of students who have not decided on a course of study as “unwilling, unable or unready to make educational or vocational decisions.” According to Slowinski and Hammock (2003), students go into higher education at different levels of undecidedness. They may be in a cyclical process; they will make a decision and then go back to undecidedness due to doubt, lack of information, peer influence, fear, parental pressures, and others or as indicated by Shimizu, et al., (1990) can see themselves in various occupational roles, are unable to see themselves in any particular occupation, have limited hope of attaining their first career choice or have difficulty deciding anything at all. According to Lunneborg (1976), students with undecided course of study seem to be less content with college. They experience more anxiety, depression, feelings of inadequacy and discouragement (Larson et al., 1988; O’Hare and Tamburri, 1986); appear to be attrition-prone and vary noticeably from career decided students (Lewallen 1993; Foote, 1980; Astin, 1975).

Titley and Titley (1980) conducted a study of college-bound students attending a comprehensive orientation program. Behavioural and subjective report measures indicated that some form of undecidedness, tentativeness, or doubt about choice of course of study existed in at least three out of four college first-year. A two-year follow up research by the same authors (1980) indicated a relationship between uncertainty about course of study and attrition.

Grades

During their first year students are pressured to achieve good grades (Hirsh and Ellis, 1996), therefore one of the major sources of stress that is often reported is students receiving a lower grade than they expected. Most students see their goal as getting good grades as an alternative to learning (Greenberg, 2004). Others are ready to give up a high grade in one class in order to do better in another class. Some may connect their self-worth with their grades, for example they

believe they did not do well in a course because they are stupid (Blonna, 2004). Grades are also significant to students who want to go to graduate school or whose potential employer considers them before hiring. They are also significant to the university that wants its graduates considered competent and well educated. The university will use grades to remove those who will not reflect well upon it. Students who are worried about grades will lead a stressful life giving up exercise, their social life, their good eating, and sleeping habits in exchange for increased levels of studying (Greenberg, 2004).

According to Schafer (2000) a central cause of grade-related distress is test anxiety. Fear of failing or receiving a low-grade can sometimes help to motivate students to prepare and perform well on an exam. However, too much stress can affect the students' performance, concentration, and preparations. "Stress is marked by overly high performance standards, with high levels of worry, self-criticism of attention while preparing for or taking exams" (Altmaier, 1983, p.52). Also, some families place a great deal of stress on college students by telling them that they need to acquire good grades and will remind them of this fact always especially if they are not doing well in their courses. Potter and Field (1981) found stress resulting from the high expectations of parents and academic instructors lowered intellectual performance.

Faculty/staff Interaction with Students

According to Gerdes and Mallinckrodt (1994), the faculty's support may have an effect on students' academic achievement. Astin (1997) and Pascarella (1980) suggested that the students' involvement and motivation increases when they are in meaningful contact with faculty specifically when the issues discussed are intellectual or related to students' career. Pascarella (1980) state that, "informal contacts with faculty that most positively influence freshman academics achievement and intellectual development are those that extend the intellectual content of the curriculum into students' non-classroom lives" (p. 527).

Tutors make quite a few assumptions about the student's academic management skills. "They assume that students can read and write at the level they are demanding, that they will use their study time wisely, and that they require few reminders of deadlines for assignments or the dates of examinations" (Chaskes, 1996, p.86). "The student encounters a confusing diversity of

lecture styles among professors, ranging from the very formal and precise to the very Socratic and informal style of class discussion" (ibid, 1996, p.86).

"Good teaching" cannot be considered as a major factor in the prevention or reduction of stress among students (Whitman et al, 1985). However, good teaching can have a measurable effect on student's attitude to learn and act as an intrinsic motivator (Ramsden, 1981). Positive teacher-student relationships, in which the students consider the teacher as a partner in the learning process, will motivate and enable them to feel satisfied with college and their educational goals and accomplishments (Whitman et al, 1987).

Good relationship between students and staff was also reported to be an important element in anticipating potential difficulties and in providing sympathetic feedback on assignments and help with problems (Ramsden 1981). Furthermore, the college experience has a greater impact when students feel they are valuable and when students and college personnel interaction is frequent and meaningful (Pascarella and Terenzini, 1991).

Student Status (full/part time and working/non-working)

Researchers have difficulty coming to an agreement relating stress to student status.

Okun et al., (1986) state that there is a tendency for full-time students to experience less stress than part-time students, because they have more opportunities to interact with agents of socialization and other important aspects of the institution's environment. On the other hand, many believe that part-time students, who usually mix several roles, experience more stress due to the various roles and social isolation, and often perform more poorly than full-time students (Lusk and Miller, 1985; Cruthirds and Strong 1984).

Students holding part-time or full-time jobs operate on a tight schedule; therefore they feel overwhelmed because they cannot accomplish all that is required from them (Macan et al., 1990). There are many times when students have to work late at night and then do not have the time to study, which can reflect on their academic work and grades. According to Astin (1997) holding a full-time job during college had a considerable impact on students' grades because the time spent at work should be devoted to academic work or study, leading to higher levels of

stress. Thus, while trying to ease their financial stress, students may build up more stress because they now have to be worried about the possibility of becoming dropouts or struggling with low grades. Trockel et al. (2000) reported in their study at a private university in the US, which studied a random sample of 200 students that as the hours worked per week increase the students' grade point averages decreased. A study by Wilkie and Jones, 1994 revealed that traditional-age developmental education students that worked for an average of 8hrs/week during their first week at university tended to study harder and achieve higher grades when compared to students with a lower frequency of employment or no campus employment.

Researchers seem to disagree on whether full-timers or part-timers experience more stress. However, stress and the reaction to it is an individualistic phenomena.

Microstressors

While traumatic life events such as the death of loved ones or the loss of one's job are stressful and have unfavourable effect on health, the minor irritants or "microstressors" of daily life perhaps, because of their frequent, repetitive nature such as noise, car problem, financial issues, misplacing keys, etc. may sometimes prove even more vital in this respect. Whatever their relative importance, both traumatic life events and daily irritants are important sources of stress for many people (Baron and Greenberg, 1990; Weinberger, et al., 1987). Dohrenwend and Shrout (1985) called them Microstressors. Lazarus and Folkman (1984) defined microstressors as the negative interactions with the environment that occur on a daily basis, thus microstressors could be seen as those irritating and frustrating demands that we encounter each day of our lives. Kohn, Lafreniere, and Gurevich (1991) called them mild stressors, which are an amalgamation of small negative occurrences that exhaust an individual physically and mentally (Schafer, 2000). According to Schafer (2000), the more the accumulation of daily negative annoyances, the more the emotional difficulties on students. However, the presence of these microstressors is not a problem unless they are interpreted by the individual concerned as irritating (Schafer, 2000).

Support Services to Enhance First-year Students' Success

When a person attends college for the first time, the unfamiliar environment of college may cause such individual a great deal of stress. College can bring about a great deal of pressure that can affect the way in which a student views the college experience leading to success or failure. However, if the right support is made available for them, it can enhance first-year students' chances of success in college. The researcher grouped these support services in two categories: Community/Family Generated Support and Institutional Generated Support.

Community/Family Generated Support

In this section, the researcher will present important support factors influencing first-year student stress. The factors that could increase or decrease the stress level of the students include: social support, peer support, financial support, and organisational socialisation/climate can be a potential influence in supporting a student's ability to succeed in college.

Social support

Social support consists of interactions where meaningful support occurs between people. It refers to the perceived emotional, informational, and active help a person receives from other people or group (House, 1981). According to Misra and Mckean (2000) adequate social support can be a deterrent to stress overload for students within the college social system, where they conducted their research at a Midwestern university in the United States taking a sample of 294 full-time students, where freshmen had the least social support than upper class men. Cobb (1976) suggested that social support protects one from deleterious health and psychological consequences because it gives individuals the sense that they are cared for, loved, valued, esteemed, and included in social network. House (1981) extended this view to include four kinds of support; first, social support such as trust and concern; second, appraisal support such as feedback and affirmation; third, informational support such as suggestions and advice, and fourth

instrumental support such as money and financial aid. Cohen and Wills (1985) point out that in naturalistic settings they are not usually independent.

Traditional support systems such as family members and high school friends decrease when college begins (Hudd et al, 2000). According to various researchers such examples of social support intercedes the effect of exposure to stress (Misra and McKean 2000; Thoits, 1995; Schutt et al., 1994; Ensel and Lin, 1991). Social support can help students by offering distractions from sadness caused by stress, or by helping the student re-work and change personal perspectives on what has happened. It is helpful because “it provides the individual with feedback, validation, and a sense that one can master one’s environment” (Hobfoll, 1988, p. 120). A study by Nelson et al. (2001) found that increased interpersonal contact and social support were closely related to decreasing stress. The shaping of new systems of social support experienced in college is also stressful. Research by Hudd et al. (2000) and Dill and Henley (1998) has shown that events that usually reduce stress, such as, unfamiliar social activities and outings, in fact increase stress during university years. According to Allen and Heibert (1991), first-year students who are provided with strong social support networks through special programs, advising, and attentive dormitory counsellors are better able to adjust to college life.

Many studies maintain that social support acts in a shielding fashion as a “buffer” against the effect of stress on well-being (Cohen and Wills, 1985; Thoits, 1982; Eaton, 1978). According to Cohen and Wills (1985) individuals with high levels of social support may be less likely to continually appraise a situation as stressful if they know someone who can and will help them, for example, by lending them money or books, or receiving help from friends and family who provided advice, a shoulder to cry on, and reassurance that things are not as terrible as they seem. On the other hand, others suggested that the stress buffering aspect of social support is overstated. Kessler and Mcleod (1985) reviewed 25 studies that neither showed positive nor negative results of the stress buffering effect of social support. They concluded “emotional support has a buffering effect, while membership in ‘affiliative network’ does not” (p.233).

Several researchers have suggested that students’ academic satisfaction and progress is linked directly to student-faculty and student-peer relations (Astin, 1997; Pascarella and Terenzini, 1991). According to Kanoy and Bruhn (1996), structured peer environments can promote

involvement and academic competence. Astin (1997) studies support the belief that “The single most important environmental influence on student development is the peer group” (pp. xiv).

Peer Support

The new environment of college creates new peer groups that contribute to the shaping of attitudes and behavioural patterns throughout the college years (Dalton, 2003; Hudd, et al., 2000), as well as affect the reception and reaction to stress (ibid, 2000). Peer groups can and do device norms, roles and attitudes that place social pressure on some members of the group (Brody, 1976). According to Brody (1976, p.37) “The peer group is one of the most powerful, yet subtle, forces in the socialization of an individual to norms, roles, values and attitude.” However, Brody suggests that peer groups are primarily concerned with meeting the social needs of their members. They provide the means for giving people the social rewards of esteem, status and recognition by providing a reference for evaluating behaviour. Peer groups provide invaluable support in many ways. Members share the work of preparing course assignment, studying for tests, and interpreting lecture and reading materials. They advise each other about course selection, identify the best instructors as well as those who should be avoided. Students also teach each other the basics of negotiating the bureaucracy of the university and others may benefit from social networks that provide them essential links to future opportunity (Richardson and Skinner, 1992). According to Frost (1993) first-year students who do not form supportive peer relationships are less likely to return for the sophomore year.

Financial support

A student’s financial situation can be a significant stressor; especially because of the financial uncertainties the students face during college (Ross et al., 1999; Dunkel-Schetter and Lobel, 1990). Financial pressure can take its toll on students in many ways including anxiety and distractions associated with one’s ability to pay the next set of bills, registration fees, tuition and books. Also the need to hold one or more jobs while going to school can cause time pressure, erode sleep, and decrease time devoted to exercise, healthy play, and friendship (Schafer, 2000). According to Student Mental Health Manual (2000-2002) the students’ need to cope with full-time study and paid employment is a major stressor for many students and many studies have

emphasized its impact on mental health. A survey by Coxon (2001) at two London universities found a direct relation between depression/anxiety and financial problems. Students who worked long hours outside the university or who were thinking about giving up university due to lack of finances had poor mental health. However, college students' financial uncertainty is usually temporary not like low-income families whose stressors may include such things as: limited money for basic needs, limited job opportunities, poor community services, inadequate health care and poor housing (Schafer, 2000).

Organizational Socialisation/Climate

Culture shapes and is shaped by social contact, and, consequently, socialization then becomes a significant constituent (Geertz, 1973). Organizational socialization is the course through which individuals learn about their institution's culture and pass their knowledge and understanding on to others (Moorhead and Griffin, 2003). Over time, new comers (such as first-year students) come to know what is acceptable in the organization and what is not, how to communicate their feelings, and how to interact with others (ibid, 1998).

Organizational socialization is a continuous process- one that begins before individuals actually arrive and carry on with their work for weeks or months after their admission (Baron and Greenberg, 1990). Feldmen (1980) describes the procedure in three stages: (1) getting in (anticipatory socialization), (2) breaking in (the encounter stage), and (3) setting in (the metamorphosis stage). In the first stage, the person arrives with a set of principles, attitudes, and expectations covering the work to be done and the organization. In the encounter stage, the individual sees what the organization is really like and is faced with the likelihood that expectation and reality may differ. In the metamorphosis stage, the new comer changes and adjusts to the new environment (Feldmen, 1980; Van Mannen and Schein, 1977). However, Hebden (1986) points out that the socialization process does not necessarily change the values of many individuals but makes them more aware of the differences between personal and organization values and aids them in developing ways to deal with the differences.

Having a campus climate with a supportive environment is an important factor that contributes to the comfort and educational success of students (Clements, undated, as cited in Szelenyi, 2001).

According to McCarthy et al. (1990) the sense of community is a key element that helps students adjust to and cope with college life. He found that students who felt a lack of sense of community were more likely to experience higher degrees of physical and emotional exhaustion in the campus environment.

Students on small college campuses typically know most class members, join campus organizations, and participate in many extracurricular activities. Thus, a type of peer community develops through time spent together (Kuh, et al., 1991). Students in general seek involvement, for it helps them to develop a social niche in the campus environment that support their choice to continue their education beyond the first year.

Astin's theory (1984) of student involvement emphasizes that as students become physically and psychologically active in the social and academic culture of the university, the possibility for success increases. Astin's theory of involvement states that for a student to achieve intended results from a particular curriculum, he/she must exert sufficient psychological and physical effort (Astin, 1999). Astin based his research on the following factors which he explained were related to the students' involvement in college; place of residence, involvements with faculty, familiarity with professor in major field, verbal aggressiveness, academic involvement, involvement with research, involvement with student government, and athletic involvement. However, bear in mind that Astin does not tackle the correlation between such characteristics as socio-economic status, academic preparation, and sex and the different forms of involvement (for example: in extracurricular activities). Astin's theory belongs to the input-output model used to study college effects, which relies on computing an expected "output" through using regression analysis to control student input (Werts and Watley, 1968). Therefore, the college's influence on the output is measured through the correlation between the school environment variable and the output (ibid, 1968).

One must keep in mind two important difficulties one might face if he/she relies on the input-output approach. According to Richards (1966), residual values are reputed to being unreliable, and are often considered indirect ways to measure change in college effects. Another problem is related to the notion of "correlation is no proof of causation," in which the college effects become obscure and are often underestimated. Richards (1966) takes the example of small

colleges and their effect being to promote warm personal relationship between student and faculty, and assumes that socio-economic status is not related to the development of this relationship, thus he notes: "Consideration of the basic formula for computing partial correlations makes it clear that, in these circumstances, controlling for differences in socio-economic status will tend to reduce the correlation between college size and the extent to which students develop warm relations with the faculty, and therefore to obscure the true causal relationship" (p.381). These two difficulties do not disprove Astin's basic point that one cannot measure the effect of the college without considering both the input and the output; however it is important to take into consideration outside variables that might effect the correlation among the input and the output.

Pascarella and Terenzini's (1991) research supported Astin's work by stating that the students' level of involvement and quality of effort in academic and non-academic activities determines the effect of college on the individual. Gardner (1996) indicates that when new college students become involved in activities such as study groups and co-curricular activities, which require students to spend more time on campus, will increase the possibility for their success.

For first-generation college students, an organized form of campus participation and involving them in the classrooms as much as possible with additional support services, counselling and tutoring will enhance the likelihood of this groups' success. This idea was echoed by Gardner (1996), who further noted that having role models that are committed to and understood the university, would increase first-generation students' likelihood of persistence and success.

Institutional Generated Support

In an attempt to help reduce stress to enhance the probability of students' success, more and more universities are now providing their first-year students with a variety of support services. These services are provided in various forms such as orientation programs or first-year seminars, financial aid, academic advising/counselling, and mentoring. Another important tool that is being used by numerous universities to help reduce stress while trying to maintain the well-being of the students is health-promoting programs.

Orientation programs/first-year seminars

Orientation programs are considered one of the most widely relied upon intervention strategies with significant evidence that they help retain students (Brawer, 1996; Hoff, 1996). Any effort that aims at helping first-year students to cope with the change from their preceding environment to the new and challenging college environment as well as improve their chances of success is classified as a form of orientation (Perigo and Upcraft, 1989). Using college faculty, staff, and students, the orientation program gives the students an exceptional opportunity to learn all they can about the college before they begin the rushed life as college students. It is an experience that comes only once and could be one of the most meaningful experiences of a student's entire college years. Titley (1985) went so far as to say that an orientation course is the single most effective intervention technique available to colleges for enhancing first-year success. However, it is not obligatory and first-year students should be aware of the consequences of not accepting it (Gardner and Jewler, 1985).

Orientation programs vary in scope, purpose, timing, length, and content. However, orientation programs clarify various ambiguous elements essential for the students' academic socialization, for example, college expectations, financial aid transformation, and descriptions of college programs and requirements (Coll and VonSeggern, 1991). Nevertheless, it is important to realize that no first-year orientation program can orient students to everything they need to know before classes actually begin. Often the students will not even know what they need to be oriented with until after classes have already started (Gardner and Jewler, 1985). According to Gardner (1996) orientation is especially important for first-generation students, who often lack essential background knowledge about higher education.

With the importance of the first-year in mind, many colleges and universities have put into practice extended orientation programs to ease the transition into college life. These orientation programs are described by Gardner (1986, p.226) as, "a deliberately designed attempt to provide a rite of passage in which students are supported, welcomed, celebrated, and ultimately (hopefully) assimilated".

Pascarella et al. (1986) encouraged institutions to develop yearlong programs to facilitate first-year students' academic and social transition. Many colleges and universities now offer extended orientation periods and some even offer it as for-credit orientation courses. According to Brubacher and Rudy (1997) "the orientation program generally assumed at first the definite form of a 'Freshmen week'; an introductory period of from one to seven days preceding the regular work of the term and devoted to the task of adjusting the entering student to his/her new environment. In contrast to this, the general orientation course, while attacking much the same problem, extend the time over a longer period varying from two weeks to a full college year... Courses of this type usually tried to teach first-year students how to use the library, how to study, what the purpose and aims of the college were, and how to participate in campus activities" (p. 343).

Cuseo (1997) reviewed courses, textbooks, and first-year-related conferences and concluded that orientation seminars stress on the development of academic skills, the value of college experience, education-for-life skills and complete development, and academic and career planning.

On the other hand, library instructions are also emphasized for first-year students at colleges and universities either through "one-shot sessions" tied to core courses, or through credit classes that introduce students to research and study skills (Seamans, 2002). A study by Kuh and Gonyea (2003) sampling 300,000 students from about 300 different four-year universities and colleges in the United States showed that the library is considered a positive learning atmosphere, especially that the library experience has increased the students' use of computing and information technology as well as the interaction with the faculty members.

Financial Aid

Receiving financial assistance influences the students' decision to attend college in the first place, as well the selection of the university (Lorenzen, 2004). Student financial aid is defined as "money provided to students to help them meet college costs beyond the amount which they and their families can reasonably be expected to pay" (Washington State Higher education Board, 1990, p. 9). They may be in the form of grants or scholarship, work-study, and loans

(Washington State Higher education Board, 1990). Having sufficient funds available for financial assistance aids students in better social integration on campus, improves the students' academic performance, and raises the possibility of their graduation from college (Nora and Cabrera, 1996). All types of financial aid have influenced low-income students' enrolment and retention positively (St. John and Noell, 1989). According to the Student Mental Health Manual (2000-2002), institutions may help in alleviating few of the effects caused by financial pressures through: (1) Advisory services such as offering professional advice to students on how to plan financially, (2) Hardship funds targeted to the potentially most financially vulnerable groups, for example single parents and disabled students, and (3) Information and resources such as widely distributed information leaflets, debt counselling services, and well publicized money advice sessions.

Academic Advising/ Counselling

Advising a first-year student is especially important (Frost, 2003) because it will aid in the student's academic integration and thus develop his/her academic skills (Tinto, 1993). Research indicates that students' involvement in college increases with advising (Astin, 1984) (see page 42-43 for discussion Astin's theory).

Academic advising was defined by Jacksonville University (USA) as "an on-going process that assists students to develop and pursue educational and career goals and to achieve academic success. Academic advisors inform, support, and encourage students to become self-directed in their educational planning" (See www.ju.edu/academics/academicAdvising.asp).

"Ideally, advising is a means of exploring careers and majors and then a method for selecting courses and arranging schedules" (Frost, 2003, p.3). Academic advisors can help students with some of the academic stress they may be experiencing yet some students may require additional Counselling support.

Counselling services are provided by colleges for students who are having a hard time adjusting or who need help in other ways. Counselling can aid first-year students by helping them successfully make the transition to college through: (1) personal development (adjusting

personally and socially by establishing effective interpersonal relations and coping skills), (2) academic development (selecting suitable courses of study and performing academically at a level that is consistent with their abilities and expectations), and (3) career development (exploring and clarifying career-related interest, abilities, and life values) (Rayman and Garis, 1989). A study by Hill and Sedlacek (1995) using 2574 entering first-year students at a large Eastern university in the United States to assess first-year counselling needs, reported that males and females express different counselling concerns. Females reported more interest in counselling for educational/vocational concerns and for emotional/social concerns, while males reported more interest in improving their learning skills and in counselling for problems with alcohol.

Counselling may help students relieve some of the anxieties associated with college and to feel well. According to Schafer (2000, p. 55) “Wellness is the process of living at one’s highest possible level as a whole person and promoting the same for other.” A wellness lifestyle is mutually reinforcing positive habits in the following areas: environmental, intellectual, emotional, spiritual, physical, social and time (ibid, 2000). Hettler (1980) identified six dimensions of wellness: (1) emotional development: the capacity to manage feelings and related behaviours, including development of autonomy, and the ability to cope effectively with stress, (2) intellectual wellness through creative and stimulating mental activities, (3) physical wellness which includes learning about nutrition and diet and other issues that have an impact on the physical health such as the use of drugs and tobacco and sexually transmitted diseases, (4) social wellness which emphasizes the interdependence with others and nature , (5) occupational wellness: including preparing for work that will provide personal satisfaction and enrichment in life, and (6) spiritual wellness: which involves seeking meaning and purpose in human existence. A lack of wellness in one of these dimensions will affect other dimensions negatively and visa versa.

Health promoting universities

One important notion with regards to wellness is related to the social and environmental surroundings of a student. A trend which gained significance in the late 1980s and early 1990s is related to the importance of having a “healthy, safe, and supportive” environment in a collegiate

setting (Deroos, 1997). This notion is important for it sheds light on the importance of the university as a key setting for promoting public and private health.

In 1986, the World Health Organization in its meeting in Ottawa Canada, identified schools as key environments for public health and indicated the need to approach the health issue in the different settings holistically (WHO, 1986). However, only recently, did some universities such as the University of Central Lancashire and New York Medical College recognize the importance of health promotion in their settings which could affect students' life in general.

The concept of health promoting universities begins by rejecting the view that health promotion is about coercing people to change their behaviour and lifestyle (Dooris, 2001). Therefore, the aim of Health Promoting Universities (HPU) is based on creating appropriate policy and providing a supportive environment that in turn will allow the students to become more knowledgeable and thus be able to make more informed choices, with regards to various issues such as sex and drugs (Dooris, 2001). It is worth mentioning that health-promoting universities rely on a holistic approach to personal and community health promotion (Moon, et al., 1999), in which everything and everyone is taken into consideration when creating the organisational scheme. The framework of a Health Promoting University begins with adopting and reforming policies that aim at making the university a healthy environment for teachers, students, and staff (Xiangyang, et al., 2003). Another step is to create health-promoting physical and social environments such as sanitary facilities and appropriate help for handicapped students (Xiangyang, et al., 2003). Moreover, the university should organize lectures as well as regular consultation on such issues as mental health, STD/AIDS prevention, and smoking (Xiangyang, et al., 2003). The framework of HPU stresses that "Health promotion represents a mediating strategy between people and their environments, synthesizing personal choice, and social responsibility to health to create a healthier future" (WHO, 1984 as quoted in Naidoo & Wilk, 1994, p.76).

The University of Central Lancashire in North England was one of the earliest adopters of the idea of a 'health promoting university' (HPU) in Europe (Dooris, 2001). This emphasized the need to approach the health issue at the university with a different perspective in order to promote a healthier environment for both students and staff since they all share such things as

buildings, periods of stress during the academic year relating to exam time, deadlines and registration period to name a few (Uclan, n.d.).

Dooris (2001) explains how the University of Central Lancashire went about implementing the health promotion strategy. The University began by making policies such as that created for “guidelines on drug misuse” in which the staff enrolled in a training program aimed at creating awareness and identifying key legal, educational, and health issues related to drugs. After creating policies, the second priority is supporting the healthy personal and social development of students. For example, the University launched “Touch,” which focuses on sexual health promotion and safer drug use within UK’s most popular nightclub for students. This kind of campaign allowed students to explore and better understand themselves, and thus were able to develop even further. Next is the commitment to making the University more of a supportive and healthier workplace. For example, the University provided the staff with supportive service and staffing procedures. Another way of creating a supportive and healthy workplace was by publishing a men and women’s health handbook. The next step was to create healthy, sustainable, and supportive physical environments, such as, giving special attention to food, or by creating a “green” environment through new building schemes. Moreover, the University aimed at integrating the commitment to health through academic development. By teaching students such skills as assertive communication and informed decision-making, the students acquire skills that are necessary to empower them to take control over their health. The final step is the need to promote health outside the university i.e. within the wider community. One way that this could be achieved is by encouraging the students to get involved in the community through internships, so that they learn by working. In summary the implementation of the program at the University of Lancashire included the areas of policy changes, student development, developing the university as an empowering supportive and healthy work place, physical environment, academic development i.e. setting in health within the curriculum, and health of the wider community (Dooris, 2001).

Besides the University of Lancashire, other universities in the U.S. have followed suit such as Duke University Health System, New York Medical College, and the University of Nebraska Medical Centre (Evans & Mrazik, 2005). These universities have also extended their efforts for health promotion to their communities. For example, Duke University Health System launched a

program extended toward the whole Duke Community and distributed more than 8,000 health passports. Similarly, New York Medical College, in an effort to address health care needs of the immigrant population in New York, launched a needs assessment campaign, in order to identify the healthcare needs of the immigrant population in their community (Evans & Mrazik, 2005).

It is significant to bear in mind that health-promoting universities create a healthier setting for the students as well all those he/she interacts with in the university, thus giving support to the student on the social as well as personal level.

Mentoring

Mentoring is also a form of support in addition to academic advising and counselling. According to Campbell and Campbell (2000) formal mentoring in an academic institution occurs when a more experienced individual provides a new member to the institution with guidance, information, and support, in order to aid individuals who are less experienced to develop and thus increase his/her chances to succeed in the institution and beyond. Mentoring makes newcomers more familiar with the organizational culture (Bierema, 1996) and facilitates their personal, as well as their career growth and development (Gunn, 1995). The mentoring relationship can be as brief as a single encounter (Phillip-Jones, 1982) or can last as long as 10 years (Levinson, 1986).

Mentoring in academic institutions mostly occurs informally, and is rarely visible, while formal mentoring has long been associated with graduate education. Nevertheless, formal mentoring is becoming more popular as a retention strategy for undergraduate education (Jacobi, 1991). Formal mentoring or the purposeful matching of students with personnel at the university that is provided by academic institutions in order to enhance students' adjustment into college (Wallace and Abel, 1997).

Mentors, mentees, and those who are not mentored, very often resent mentoring in institutions of higher education. Mentors feel it adds extra work to their already busy schedule (Hudson and Latham, 1995), mentees' resentment is because of the jealousy of others, and non-recipients feel they are excluded. Nevertheless, West-Burnham (1992 as quoted in Bush 1995 p.7) stressed that

“the mentoring relationship has the potential to be mutually beneficial” on the bases of equality and trust (Levinson, 1986). However, the relationship needs to be an active two-way exchange (Arizona Leadership 2000 and Beyond, 1999) in order to be an equally rewarding experience and to provide motivation for both parties (Bush, 1995).

Mentors become role models for their protégés, and the latter imitate the actions and traits of their mentors so as to accommodate to the institution’s behaviours and attitudes (Robbins, 2003). They "often serve dual interpersonal roles, acting as an outlet for protégés to discuss confidentially their personal concerns and fears (counselling) and to facilitate informal exchanges of information about work and non work experience" (Noe, 1988, p.66). According to Campbell and Campbell, (2000) the major benefits from the relationship pointed out by the students the authors interviewed were receiving advice, guidance, and information.

Mentoring can offer excellent support, challenge, and development opportunities for the mentee and the mentor (Garvey, 1997; and Gay, 1994). Mentoring provides developmental support by providing students with a person who can give feedback, question, share, discuss, challenge, confront and guide one through the learning cycle (Kelly et al., 1992). Shaw (1992) describes the ideal mentor as a good listener, encouraging, empathetic, organized, analytical, and approachable. Mentoring can alleviate students’ sense of disorientation, anxiety, and isolation and thus reduce some of the major sources of stress that students often deal with upon their first year in college (Student Mental Health Manual, 2000-2002).

There is no agreement as to whether it is better to have voluntary (Phillip-Jones, 1982) or mandatory mentoring (Gray and Gray, 1985). However, the creation of a formal mentoring program in which individuals are officially assigned a mentor increases the probability of success (Robbins, 2003). Thus, higher education institutions should consider initiating mentoring programs for first-year students. Mentoring these students in ways consistent with Astin’s theory of involvement, where interaction with faculty members, with fellow students and/or other staff is seen as a critical factor in student involvement (Astin, 1993) (see pages 42-43 for discussion of Astin’s theory). Astin (1984, p. 134) states that “student involvement refers to the amount of physical and psychological energy that a student devotes to the academic experience.”

- *Faculty as mentors*

An aim of the mentoring relationship between a faculty member of the university and a student is to make it easier for the student to progress and improve his/her academic performance (Campbell & Campbell, 2000). By providing career-related and psychological assistance to their protégés, mentors are able to offer the individualized attention students need in dealing with the everyday problems that they come across in the college environment (Szelenyi, 2001). However, according to Campbell & Campbell (2000, p.518), “the faculty mentor approaches the relationship with a set of perceived needs that include: (1) altruistic desire to help students (beyond the help afforded through assigned teaching and advising), (2) need for evidence of activities demonstrating service to the university (for tenure and promotion decisions), and (3) opportunity for enjoyment of the friendship and relationship with students provided by mentoring.” Moreover, the student protégé also has demands and expectations such as: “(1) help with scheduling and enrolment decisions, (2) help interpreting degree requirement, (3) career guidance, (4) assistance in coping with academic demands (general study skills tutoring for specific courses), and (5) help in addressing personal problems and crises” (ibid). Cox et al. (1985) claimed that mentorship aims at shaping the student’s outlook on life, therefore mentorship aids in developing students beyond intellect and skills level (Chan, 2000).

- *Peer mentoring*

Another form of mentoring that has proven to be effective in keeping students enrolled in college, as well as clarifying the pressures and requirements of higher education is peer-mentoring programs (Brawer, 1996). As the name suggests peer-mentoring programs are support given by students to each other, and the students could be on the same level or different levels (Student Mental Health Manual, 2000-2002). Stevens (1973) suggest that students become academically oriented through contact with more advanced students and their friends. For example, they can learn about what classes to take, and how to do well in courses which helps make an unfamiliar surrounding more familiar and thus can help reduce stress in students. Peer mentors understand what the new student is going through at a particular time because they have already had the same type of experience. The peer mentor can determine how the student is

adjusting and if a situation arises that the new student cannot handle a peer mentor can refer the student to the appropriate office to ensure that the situation does not escalate and endanger the student's success (King and Wooten, 2003). Wide variety of peer support programs designed to accomplish purposes ranging from improving relationship skills (Waldo, 1989) to increasing the effectiveness of student organizations (Presser, et. al., 1984) seem to be effective in reducing students' stress.

A Model to conclude the literature review

College stresses all students whether first-year or not. Researches have documented the impact of stress on first-year students to be very high. However, Marshall and Cooper (1979) emphasized that stress reactions are extremely individualistic. In their words, "stress is the outcome of the interaction of a particular individual with a particular environment at a particular point in time" (Marshall and Cooper, 1979, pp. 74). According to Long (1995), each individual copes with stress in a different way and has a different endurance than another individual; moreover, sources of stress vary from one person to the other.

Based on the literature review, the researcher developed a model (Figure 2-1, p 56) for the common causes of stress for first-year students and their consequences. The model was designed to help students and administrators better understand stress for first-year students and the role of the university support services.

The first-year student stressors have been attributed to individual factors as well as to institutional factors. The model starts with the causes of stress for first-year students that are classified into two categories:

Individual differences: This category comprises individual differences that control the relationship between experienced stress and potential stressors. Variable such as Type A, B, and C personalities, locus of control, self-esteem, perception, gender, age, religion, and being a first generation student or not have been found to be relevant moderators. As the student interacts with the different stressors, his/her reaction will be determined in part by these individual differences.

Stressors at the University: The model divides the possible environmental sources of stress at the university into three general categories: (1) Social including culture shock, relationship among students, living on campus/commuting to college, homesickness, new environment; (2) Academic factors relating to college demands. These include choice of a main course of study, grades, faculty/staff interaction with students, and student status; and (3) Microstressors, in combination or singly, these stressors represent a tremendous amount of potential stress impinging on today's first-year students. If stress is low-moderate meaning Eustress or good stress, the result is favourable (persistence, high GPA, and satisfaction with college); certain amount of stress is required as an incentive to challenge students to study (Whitman et al, 1985). However, if the stress is high meaning too much stress or distress, the result is unfavourable (attrition, drop out, or dissatisfaction with college). A number of support services can act as moderators to cope with the stress induced problems (a moderator is a variable that causes the relationship between two variables –such as stressors and outcomes). These support services are provided by two groups: (1) the institution by providing such services as: financial aid, academic advising, counselling and wellness programs, orientation and freshmen seminars, and mentoring; (2) community/family related support services such as: social support, peer support, financial support, organizational socialization and climate. Nevertheless, students' perception of these support services is the bases for their effectiveness or not. If the students perceive these support services positively, it could lead to the reduction of stress resulting in more favourable outcomes (persistence, better performance, and satisfaction with college) and thus lowering the unfavourable results (attrition, drop out, or dissatisfaction with college). However, if the students perceive the support services negatively, distress remains and the unfavourable outcomes persist.

Conclusion

The model in figure 2-1 page 56 serves as a conclusion to the literature review for it summarises the causes of stress for first-year students and their consequences with or without the intervention of the support services. The literature review in turn shaped the research questions (see research questions pages 58). Key questions one and two dealing with identifying the sources of stress first-year students face and whether they vary by specific demographic variables was thoroughly discussed in the literature review chapter specifically in the section titled "Underlying Factors

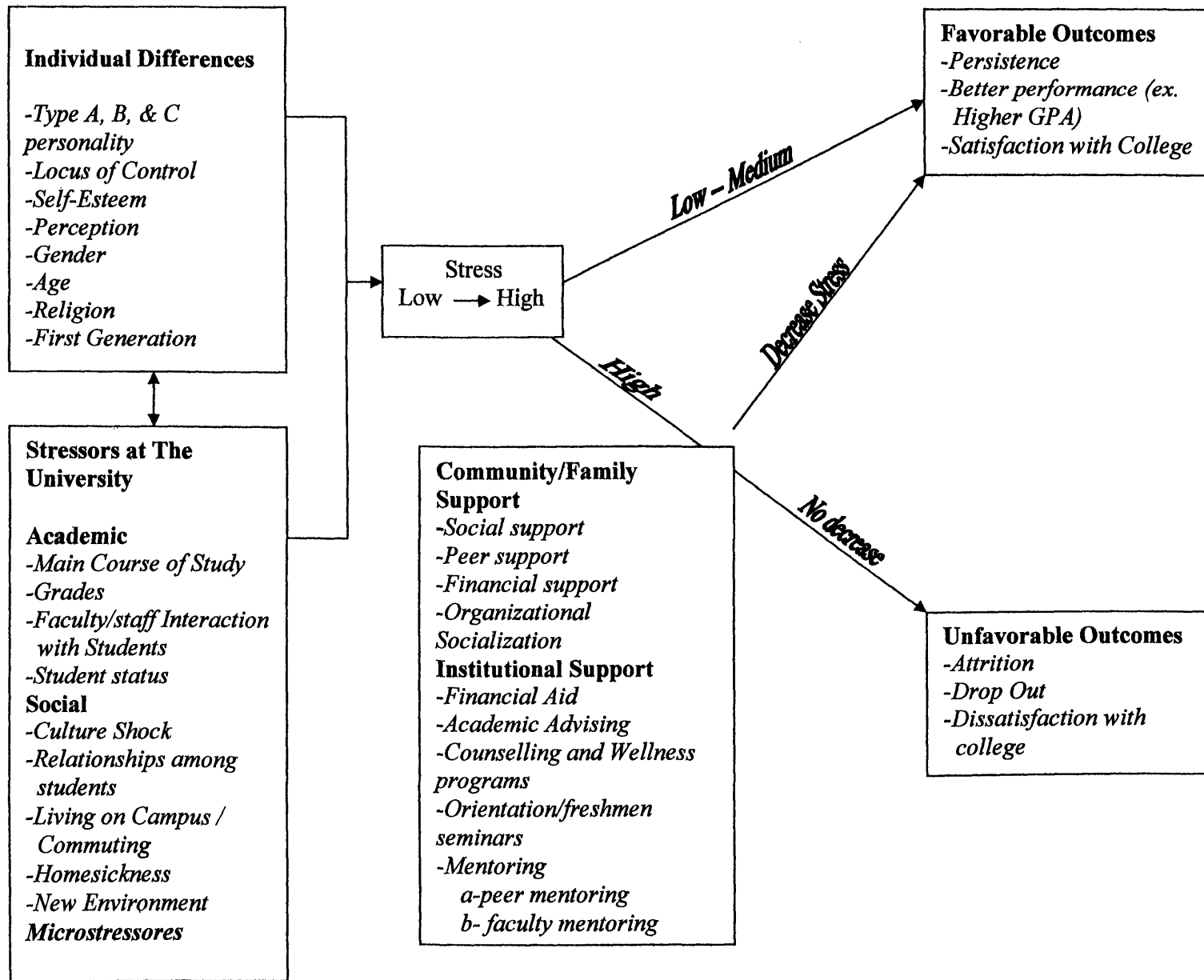
Affecting Stress in First-Year Students”. Key question three dealt with academic and non-academic support services available for students to help with reducing stress first-year students feel. The question was covered in two sections titled “Community/Family Generated Support” and “Institutional Generated Support”. Finally, Key question four dealt with the students’ perception of the support services, which was reviewed in the section titled “Individual Factors and Stress”.

Presently, no research has been conducted in Lebanon that deals with first-year college student stress although such research has taken place in other countries of the world such as in the U.K. and the U.S.

The following chapter makes clear the key research questions and the methodology used in this thesis.

Figure 2-1 A Model of the Sources of Stress and their Consequences for the First-Year College Students.

56



Chapter Three

Methodology and Research Design

In the following chapter the researcher will present the plan for the study. It describes the methods and procedures used to obtain information about the stressors first-year students at LAU face and the support services used by the students to help reduce their stress, and whether they perceive these services as effective.

Focus and Purpose of Investigation

This study took into consideration stress experienced by first-year students at LAU and the campus support services to help them cope with the stress. LAU is a private, not for profit, university with its main branch in the heart of the city of Beirut and with one other branch in Byblos.

This study had several objectives: First, developing a description of first-year students with regards to primary sources that cause stress; second, examining the support services used by first-year students that help in the reduction of stress; and finally, studying the ways in which the students receive such support functions.

The following key questions were drawn from the literature review and from the comments of various students during piloting and confirm with the purpose of the study. It intended to understand the first-year students' sources of stress at the university, identify the support services available for them and how they perceive it, and recommend changes that might help in retaining those students and making their experience more satisfactory.

Key Research Questions

This research aims at answering the following questions:

- 1- What do first-year students at LAU identify as their sources of stress?
- 2- Do these stressors vary among the sample group of first-year students at LAU based on: gender, age, marital status, declaration of course of study, place of living, work status, student status, sojourning status, first generation student and religiosity?
- 3- What kind of institutional support services do LAU students actively use that help in the reduction of stress?
- 4- What is the awareness of the students to the effectiveness of the university –employed support services on their stress level? Do these stressors vary among the sample group of first-year students at LAU based on: gender, age, marital status, declaration of course of study, place of living, work status, student status, sojourning status, first generation student and religiosity?

Qualitative and Quantitative Methods

This study used qualitative and quantitative research for comprehending the first-year students' view in relation to their perception of stress and the different support services to help reduce their stress at LAU.

Qualitative research (e.g. case study, ethnography, biography, observation) seeks to comprehend phenomena in context-specific settings using a naturalistic approach (Hoepfl, 1997). It entails the use of humans as the instruments of study, purposeful sampling, inductive analysis, and detailed descriptive reports (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). In contrast, quantitative research examines hypothetical generalizations through the use of experimental methods or quantitative measures (Hoepfl, 1997). Respondents are confined to predetermined responses that are influenced by the researcher, and may not necessarily echo the respondents' view (Patton, 2002; Converse and Presser, 1986). Each method corresponds to an essentially different inquiry paradigm, thus the research actions are influenced greatly by the underlying assumption of each paradigm (Hoepfl,

1997). It is worth noting that these two paradigms are not in opposition. Patton (2002) claims that a “paradigm of choices” looks for “methodological appropriateness as the primary criterion for judging methodological quality” (p.30). According to Patton (2002) when one follows one paradigm there will be no space for what is known as “situational responsiveness,” which is present when one follows a “paradigm of choices”. Moreover, some researchers explain that these two methodologies combined together and applied to the same research project, in what is known as the process of triangulation (Strauss and Corbin, 1990; Patton 2002). Denzin (1970, p. 310) refers to triangulation as an approach that uses “multiple observers, theoretical perspectives, sources of data and methodologies,” but the stress has tended to be on methods of investigation and sources of data (Bryman, 2001). Triangulation is also used to refer to a process of crosschecking findings obtained from both quantitative and qualitative research (Deacon et. al., 1998) (see also section on validity and trustworthiness of the study).

Isaac and Michael (1995) explain that one of the most commonly used research techniques in behavioral and educational sciences is surveys. Surveys are defined as “a means of gathering information that describes the nature and extent of a specified set of data ranging from physical counts and frequencies to attitudes and opinions” (Isaac and Michael, 1995, p.136). The information gathered from surveys has various uses for the researcher some of which are answering question and solving problems that have been observed. Surveys also help in determining whether the objectives of the research have been met, as well as assessing needs and setting future goals.

There are numerous aspects one must take into consideration when deciding whether to use a qualitative or quantitative research methodology. According to Strauss and Corbin (1990), qualitative methods can be more effective when trying to understand any phenomenon about which there is scarce information. Moreover, such methods help in the retrieval of more comprehensive information that may be difficult to find quantitatively, as well as gain new perspectives on well-known issues. Qualitative data describes a phenomenon in a more comprehensive manner, thus it becomes significant for both the reader and the researcher. Lincoln and Guba (1985, p 120) stated, “If you want people to understand better than they otherwise might, provide them information in which they usually experience it.” Qualitative research reports are more meaningful because they contain insights and details into the

participants' world and thus they are often "epistemologically in harmony with readers' experience" (Stake, 1978, p. 5).

One of the preferred tools of qualitative research is interviewing (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). Miles and Huberman (1994) believe that qualitative researchers work with small samples of people, because unlike the quantitative researchers they don't aim for larger numbers to achieve statistical significance. On the other hand, Fogelman (2002) explains that questionnaires, which aim at investigating a variety of research questions at a particular moment in time, are used to attain factual information or a mixture of both. "It is the appropriate method when systematic and comparable data are needed, and can be obtained directly from a large number of individuals" (ibid, 2002, p. 96).

For the above-mentioned reasons, this study will consider qualitative and quantitative approaches. These methods employed simultaneously in the study will help to overcome the disadvantages of both methods leading to triangulation.

Choice of Research Approach

This research is a case study that investigates the types of stressors LAU first-year students face and the support services that might act as a buffer against these stressors. Case studies assist in understanding intricate social phenomenon (Yin, 2003a). The case study researcher generally observes the characteristics of an individual, a group, an institution or a community to answer specific research questions (Gillham, 2000; Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, 2000). It looks for a variety of different kinds of evidence that is abstracted and collected to determine the factors, and the relationships among the factors, that have resulted in the present behaviour or status of the subject under study (Gay and Diehl, 1992).

Defined by Yin (2003b) a case study is "an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (p. 13) i.e. researcher would use this method of inquiry because he/she intends to comprehensively explain contextual circumstances since he/she believes them to be highly relevant to his/her the study. According to Bassey (2000) educational

case studies are “empirical equity which is conducted within a localized boundary of space and time” (p. 109). Educational case studies are conducted within a natural context and have various goals. Some of the goals listed by Bassey (2000) are: “inform the judgments and decisions of practitioners or policy or a theoretician who are working to these ends in such a way that sufficient data are collected to explore significant features of the case, to create plausible interpretations of what is found, to test the trustworthiness of these interpretations, to relate the argument or story to any relevant research in the literature, to construct a worthwhile argument or story and to convey convincingly to an audience this argument or story and to provide an audit trail by which other researchers may validate or challenge the findings or construct alternative arguments” (p. 109).

As a learning tool, case studies can help individuals inquire into real issues critically. As future career problems arise for those individuals, they can then refer to other people’s experiences to better deal with these problems. The meaning individuals attach to the analysis of case studies is not simply stagnant knowledge, but is knowledge that can be organized in different ways to enable them to deal with different issues (Yin, 2003 a). In general, the results from this study cannot be generalized because it has restricted external validity, which means it has limited the amount of research results that can be generalized to encompass all social settings (Bryman, 2001). However, according to Bassey (1998) fuzzy generalization maybe possible, i.e., the transferability of the results to other contexts. Nevertheless, researchers need to asses the degree to which these findings can be generalized from case studies to other situations (Miles and Huberman, 1994). According to Firestone (1993) the transferability of findings can take the form of: (1) transfer from sample to population (less pertinent to qualitative studies); (2) analytic (i.e. theory-connected); and (3) case to case transfer. Miles and Huberman (1994) pointed out that generalization however necessitates connection-making between either unstudied parts from the original case study or to other cases to inspect transferability of results of the original study. Thus, the whole process is more like translating, disproving, or combining two or more studies or similar phenomena with careful interpretation.

According to Yin (2003a) “case study research can be based on single or multiple case studies” (p. 5) and can be (a) exploratory (define questions of inquiry or feasibility of the desired research procedure), (b) descriptive (describing the phenomenon within its context), or (c) exploratory

(cause-effect relationship). This study is exploratory in nature i.e. investigating first –year students’ stressors and the support services to help them reduce stress. It is also evaluative, formative and summative. Bassey (2002) defined an evaluative case study as one that sets out to explore some educational program, system, project or event in order to focus on how valuable it is. While formative and summative means helping to develop programs and/or assessing after the event. It draws on theoretical ideas but is not necessarily intended to add to the development of theory. The researcher hopes that this work will be a major contribution to existing educational research.

Validity and Trustworthiness of the Study

Many researchers agree that biases cannot be totally avoided no matter what research method the researcher uses, however they can be decreased to a large extent through awareness and self-control (Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, 2000; Drever, 1995; Bell, 1993), and through the use of another research method in conjunction leading to triangulation (Bryman, 2001). According to Yin (2003a), one is able to use multiple measures for the same phenomenon due to the multiple sources of evidence thus achieving more efficient and broader results.

Denzin (1970, p. 310) refers to triangulation as an approach that uses “multiple observers, theoretical perspectives, sources of data and methodologies,” but the emphasis has tended to be on methods of investigation and sources of data (Bryman, 2001). Triangulation is also used to refer to a process of crosschecking findings arising from both quantitative and qualitative research (Deacon et. al., 1998). Denzin (1978) claims that it is often difficult to find a single method that will solve the problem effectively and adequately. Since each method implies different characteristics of empirical reality, then it is more appropriate to use multiple methods of observation, or what is termed triangulation. Since with triangulation the numerous sources of proof give numerous measures when it comes to similar phenomenon, therefore possible problems of ‘construct validity’ can be dealt with (Yin, 2003a).

Thus after careful consideration, the researcher decided that the most appropriate strategy to address the research questions in this study was to combine both qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection. These methods employed simultaneously will help to overcome the

disadvantages of both methods producing insight and understanding in a way that cannot be done by either approach alone.

To carry out this study, the target population was defined as all first-year freshman or sophomore non-transfer students attending the LAU in the fall semester 2003/04. First-year college students in Lebanon could be either freshman or sophomore students depending on their background in High school. Those students who sit for the Lebanese Baccalaureate (government official examination) or its equivalency start college as sophomores. Those who finish High school or its equivalent, start as freshman.

It was important to check the study's validity and reliability in order to decrease the effect of researcher biases.

Reliability refers to the extent to which an instrument that is used with the same subjects and under the same conditions will yield the same results (Colosi, 1997). Reliability is validated using two ways; internal consistency and test/retest.

Test/retest is when a person achieves similar scores on the test given twice (Colosi, 1997). This type of testing was carried out by the researcher while piloting the instrument (see section on piloting page 69).

Internal consistency groups questions that measure the same concept into one questionnaire. Cronbach's Alpha is a common way of measuring correlation values among the questions on the questionnaire instrument (Colosi, 1997). The researcher used the statistical package for the social science (SPSS version 10) computer package's test Cronbach's Alpha to find out the degree to which the items in the newly constructed questionnaire relate to each other (average inter-item correlation). The coefficient that measures this relationship ranges from a value of zero (no relationship) to one (perfect relationship). The overall reliability coefficient was satisfactory (Alpha (α) = 0.8530), which is above the minimum accepted level of $\alpha = 0.6$ suggested by McDermott and Sarvela (2000). The tests for the reliability of the different groups were: Developmental Challenges ($\alpha = 0.6807$), Time Pressure ($\alpha = 0.6501$), Social Problems ($\alpha =$

0.7135), and Assorted Annoyances ($\alpha = 0.6166$). As for the support services: Academic Support Services ($\alpha = 0.6234$), and Non-academic Services ($\alpha = 0.7432$).

On the other hand, validity examines whether the test measures exactly what it was supposed to measure (Wragg, 2002). There are three types of validity commonly examined in social research. These are internal validity, external validity, and measurement validity.

First, internal validity examines if the study conducted was rigorous enough (Gerring, 2001), and whether the study's designer has considered alternative explanations for any causal relationship he/she has come across (Bryman, 2001). Second, external validity measures whether the results could be transferred to other settings or generalized. The choice of the sample from the population can improve external validity accuracy (see sampling page 67). Third, measurement validity examines whether the test measures exactly what it was supposed to measure through different approaches such as criterion validity, face validity, construct validity, and content validity. The researcher checked content validity by asking those who read the questions whether or not they believe the questions asked addressed the objectives. According to Vockell and Asher (1995) "Content validity is assured by logically analysing the domain of subject matter and examining the items to make sure that a representative sample of the possible domain is included" (p.109). Construct validity assesses how well the researcher applied his/her theories or ideas into actual measures or programs (Yin, 2003a). In order to ensure construct validity, the researcher included questions in the instruments drawn from the literature review able to assess the full range of factors intended to be assessed.

Piloting the instruments also helped in enhancing the reliability and validity of this study. How the pilot study was carried out will be discussed later. The interview and questionnaire were checked for content validity and clarity with faculty members and students (see details on pages 69-70).

Access and Ethical Issues

Being a full time faculty member at the university (LAU main campus) provided the researcher with easier access to needed information and to carry out the investigation, using the newly

admitted first-year students for the academic year 2003/04. All participants were informed about the purpose of the research either verbally when the interviews were conducted or in an introductory letter when the questionnaires were administered (see appendix-A).

Fundamental ethical issue such as confidentiality, consent, anonymity, the right for privacy, deception concerning the purpose of the investigation and potential damaging consequences of the research were fully taken into consideration in the overall research design in the following manner: first, permission from the Vice president of Academic Affairs, the Deans of the Business School and Arts and Science School in October 2003, was sought out in order to have access and acceptance by demonstrating the researchers' ethical position with respect to the proposed research (Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, 2000). Second, all participants were made aware of the purpose and aim of both the investigation and the study, with an agreement to allow them to modify or amend any statement the researcher quotes from their interview if they deemed necessary. Participants were then assured that the information collected is for a research project only will be kept confidential, and their identity will remain anonymous. The anonymity of the participants is preserved in this research by referring to them by first names only. Third, the researcher made certain that none of the interviewees were taking classes with the researcher at the time.

The ethical framework for protecting the participants in the research will be reflected in: (a) the process of informed consent and confidentiality, with the risks and benefits of the research revealed to the subject, (b) maximising possible benefits and good for the subject while minimising the possible harm and risks resulting from the research. Preserving confidentiality implies that "although researchers know who has provided the information or are able to identify participants from the information given, they will in no way make the connection known publicly; the boundaries surrounding the shared secret will be protected" (Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, 2000, p. 368). Benefits are the gains to society by giving the participant a voice, while harm is the psychological abuse, the loss of privacy and public exposure not only to individuals but also to the specific population under study. "Social scientists generally have a responsibility not only to their professions in their search for knowledge and search for truth, but also for the subjects they depend on for their work" (Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, 2000, p.360). The foremost rule of ethics is that the subjects should not be harmed in any way (physically or

mentally) in the name of research and that ends should not justify the means (Gay and Diehl, 1992).

Research Design

Originally when approaching the project in the Fall semester 2003/04, the researcher intended to sample first-year students from both campuses at LAU (Beirut and Byblos). The choice of the two campuses was taken in order to gain a greater response rate and to be able to have more reliable findings that can be generalized to all the LAU population. However, after failed attempts to gain permission from the different faculty at the Byblos campus to run the questionnaire in their classes, the researcher had to carry out a different plan.

The new plan was to carry out the research on the Beirut campus only. However, by restricting the sample to only one campus, the researcher was no longer able to generalize from the findings to the LAU first-year student population.

At first, the researcher intended to distribute the questionnaire toward the end of the fall semester 2003/04 to newly admitted first-year students (not transfer) randomly selected from a name list requested from the registrar's office. Second, to conduct semi-structured interviews with as many of these students as possible given the time constraint (3 weeks toward the end of the semester). However, no name list was available from the registrar and the researcher had to resort to contacting different faculty members teaching English courses (required for all students) for assistance in distributing the questionnaires to students who fit the criteria and also to check whether those students who respond to the questionnaire would like to be interviewed (see details page 67).

The plan was implemented, and all faculty members teaching English courses for first-year students were approached (22 faculty members). However, only 14 faculty members responded and distributed the questionnaire to their students. The sample size result was 235 students (151 males and 84 females). The students who accepted to be interviewed at first were 20 students. The researcher thought this to be a poor result and follow-up visits to the different faculty were conducted to urge their students to participate. Nonetheless, only one additional student

responded. The final result was 21 students (12 males and 9 females). According to Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2000) there is no clear-cut answer for the correct sample size, it all depends on the study along with the type of the population being studied.

The study was organized in two stages:

- Distribution of questionnaire to first-year students at LAU Beirut branch.
- In-depth interviews with a number of first-year students in order to gather more insight information and to check the validity of information gathered in the questionnaire.

In order to draw on the strengths of both quantitative and qualitative research, the researcher adopted a questionnaire that included quantitative methods through the use of attitude questions and ranking scales followed by a semi-structured interview that was qualitative in nature. The combination of both research methods can produce insight and understanding in a way that cannot be researched by either method alone.

Sampling

Questionnaire Sampling

At first, the researcher had intended to use a probability sampling method in which the members of the target population have equal chances in being selected. However, since no name list of the newly admitted first-year students was available from the registrar, the researcher had to resort to a non-probability sampling method using *Convenience Sampling* (here the sampled population is selected according to its availability) (Fink and Kosecoff, 2005). This method allowed the selection of a sample to serve the exact purpose of the study, even if the selected sample was not completely representative (Zikmund, 2002).

In order to collect the sample for this study, a name list of all faculty members teaching freshmen and sophomore English courses (required courses for all majors) was obtained from the Humanities Division (22 faculty members). The researcher approached these faculty members and asked them whether they would distribute the questionnaire in their classes only to students who fit the inclusion criteria (newly admitted first-year students, first semester attendance); ask

them if they like to participate in the research, and give them the questionnaire to complete. However, only 14 faculty members responded.

From among 770 undergraduate newly admitted (not transferring from another university) students to LAU (Beirut campus) in the fall semester of 2003/04 (LAU Registrar), 235 students volunteered to fill the questionnaire, 151 males and 84 females.

Information was collected using a self-administered, voluntary, and anonymous questionnaire that took place during the month of January 2004 prior to final examination. The rationale for administering the questionnaire at this time is that the newly admitted students would have experienced almost a full academic semester. A cover letter was attached to the questionnaire that explained the purpose of the study, thanked the participants, and informed them that all information will be kept confidential and to direct any questions to the researcher (see Appendix A).

Interview Sampling

For this part of the study, the students interviewed were among those students who took part in the questionnaire. However, since no name list for first- year students was available, the researcher had to use opportunity sampling. According to Wragg (2002, p.146) “an opportunity sample consists of those whom it is convenient to interview either because they are willing to talk or they come your way.” The faculty members who administered the questionnaire asked those who responded to the questionnaire whether they would like to participate in an interview relating to the same subject and referred them to the researcher.

The number of students participated in the interview was 21 students (January, 2004) out of which 12 were males and 9 females. The researcher had expected a higher response rate due to the importance of the topic and its relevance to the students involved. However, the low response rate could have been due to a number of reasons such as: students’ attitudes, time of the interview (towards the end of the semester when students are overloaded with work), or any other reason such as the reason mentioned by Durauti (1997) stating that members may have distrustful attitudes toward interaction, especially when taking notes or audio-taping while

talking to them. Nevertheless, those relatively few interviews allowed the researcher more flexibility and depth in reaching information and answers to questions not possible with questionnaires. According to Wragg (2002), it is not how many you interview you could interview a few or 1000, but if they were badly selected or unrepresentative, then, the results will not be valid.

All interviews were carried out the beginning 3 weeks of January since the last day of classes was January 21, 2004.

Piloting

The purpose of the pilot test is to learn whether the research structure is suitable for the study the researcher foresees (Seidman, 1998) and to find out weaknesses in the questions and in the method of administration (Thomas, 1998). This helps strengthen the validity and reliability of the study.

Babbie (1991, p.220) argues that it is important for every researcher to “conduct some form of testing of the research design” and data collection tools “prior to the major research effort. Moreover, running a pilot test is a way to “shape future research and to generate hypothesis; your pilot is exploratory not confirmatory and deductive” (Light, et al., 1990, p. 216). According to Yin (2003b), pilot tests assist investigators to enhance the procedure to be followed in data collection and the content of the date, this it improves the date collection plans. Feedback from the pilot study can be used to modify questions that are unclear, do not ask for the desired information, or produce negative reactions in subjects (Gay and Diehl, 1992). In other words, it is a “laboratory for the investigators, allowing them to observe different approaches on a trial bases” (Yin, 2003b, p.79).

Piloting the Questionnaire

A three-part questionnaire for the pilot test was derived mainly from the literature review and was piloted in December 2003 (see Appendix C) after checking for content validity with two faculty members, a graduate assistant and two first-year first semester students.

From among 807 undergraduate newly admitted students (not transfer) to LAU (Beirut campus) in the fall semester 2002/03 (LAU Registrar), 31 students volunteered to fill the questionnaire for the pilot testing and all participants were informed of the reasons for conducting the pilot study (Zikmond, 2002). The researcher considered this sample size appropriate for Isaac and Michael (1995, p. 101) suggest a sample size “between 10 and 30” is adequate for a pilot study. On the other hand, Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2000) suggest a minimum sample size of 30 as the minimum requirement for statistical analysis. The researcher administered the pilot test twice 10 days apart for the same group of students in order to check reliability and stability of results (test/retest) and allowed students to ask questions for clarification. The overall reliability coefficient for the pilot study was satisfactory ($\text{Alpha } (\alpha) = 0.9576$), which is above the minimum accepted level of $\alpha = 0.6$ suggested by McDermott and Sarvela (2000).

The result of this pilot test helped the researcher to fine tune the questionnaire that lead to the addition of questions and to changing others such as dividing the support services into 2 groups ‘Academic Support’ and ‘Non Academic Support’, changing the order of the last 2 questions, and adding question number 9 “Do any of your parents have a college degree?” and defining the terms in questions number 52 (mentoring) and 53 (tutorial) for clarification (compare appendix C questionnaire before piloting with appendix A questionnaire after piloting).

Piloting the Interview Schedule

The interview questions were derived mainly from the literature and the comments of the students from the open-ended questions on the questionnaire; they were pilot tested. However, when writing the interview schedule, the researcher made sure that the questions were in harmony with the questionnaire questions with the intention to probe further for information. The aim is to cross check the findings with the results of the questionnaire for triangulation (see interview schedule appendix D).

In November 2004, a copy of the interview schedule was drafted. Later in the month, it was pilot tested with a faculty member, a graduate assistant and two first-year first semester students. The pre-interviews with selected participant, especially the students assisted the researcher to focus

on particular areas that were previously unclear. Piloting the interview also helped the researcher to explore the possible time needed to carry out the interview and to practice the establishment of effective communication patterns in order to establish rapport with participants. The researcher also checked content validity and clarity of the pre-interview questions by asking those who read them whether or not they believe the questions asked addressed the objectives (see interview schedule before piloting appendix D). It was important to check validity, because it designates the extent to which the test measured what it has planned to measure (Wragg, 2002; Gay and Diehl, 1992), which helps to reduce the effect of researcher bias. According to Vockell and Asher (1995), "Content validity is assured by logically analysing the domain of subject matter and examining the items to make sure that a representative sample of the possible domain is included" (p.109).

The questions were then reviewed and changes were implemented. According to Lofland and Lofland (1984) interview guides are changed in such a way as to emphasize areas that are more important than others, and/or questions that the researcher considers insignificant to the research aims. Examples of changes are: changing the order of the questions, combining two other questions and adding some, such as question number 4 "Does any of your parents have a college degree?" added question number 9 "Were you living outside Lebanon before you joined LAU?", probing about cultural adjustment issues and probing to see if religious support was a factor in reducing stress, and asking about type of counselling needed or sought (Compare appendix C interview schedule before piloting with appendix D interview scheduling after piloting).

Questionnaire Construction and Implementation

Quantitative research uses quantitative measures to test hypothetical generalizations (Hoepfl, 1997). It de-emphasizes individual judgment while stressing the use of established procedures thus resulting in more precise generalization (Coolican, 2003).

Questionnaires used in quantitative research have broad coverage and collect data that are adaptable to statistical analysis (Luthans, 2005). They also require less time and are less expensive (Gay and Diehl, 1992). They allow respondents the opportunity to complete the questions themselves and to consider their answers before filling in the form (Bell, 1993; Drever,

1995). However, these questions reflect perceptions of behaviour rather than the actual behaviour in the real setting (Luthans, 2005).

The questionnaire design can range from open-ended questions to close –ended questions and can be structured, distributed, and analysed in many different ways to meet the researcher's specific needs (Bell, 1993). Open-ended questions ask respondents to give an answer in his or her words; however, they are more difficult to interpret and analyse due to the uniqueness of each answer and responses can be influenced by the interviewer's bias and subjectivity (Zikmund, 2002). Closed questions consist of standardized questions with alternatives to choose from making it much easier to tabulate, code, and interpret; however, some respondents may be forced to choose an alternative they do not mean (ibid, 2001).

The Questionnaire/Instrumentation for the Main Study

An introductory letter was attached to the questionnaire instrument, thanking the participants and informing them about the research purpose with the assurance that their identity will be kept confidential. The address of the researcher was also included for any clarifications (see Appendix A).

The primary methods of data collection were: (a) demographic questionnaire, (b) set of questions to determine the sources of stress, or stressors in the lives of college students, and (c) questions relating to academic and non-academic support system.

The first part the demographic questions, asked each student to provide information on gender, major, living status, work status, sojourning status, marital status and religiosity as measured by the regular attendance of religious activities and affiliation. The researcher defined religious individuals as those attending regularly and affiliated.

The second instrument used in collecting data for this study, included experience found to be stressful for first-year students developed by the researcher and drawn from the literature review and from the comments of various students during the piloting. The questions identified individual exposure to sources of stress or stressors, and allowed for an identification of the

extent to which those stressors are experienced since the beginning of the semester: not a problem, a slight problem, a clear problem, and a major problem. Scoring for the questions ranged from 0-3 for each item (not a problem = 0, slight problem = 1, clear problem = 2, and major problem = 3). However, after preliminary analysis this method of scoring showed that the majority of students who indicated that the stressors were a problem chose the columns not a problem and a slight problem thus the researcher decided to use a new classification of two categories. Not a problem = 0, problem = 1 (problem category included slight problem, clear problem, and major problem) (refer to table 4-2 page 86). This instrument was divided into 4 groups of factors: factor 1, 11 items relating to developmental challenges, factor 2, 6 items relating to time pressure, factor 3, 13 items relating to social problems, factor 4, 5 items relating to assorted annoyances, factor 5, 3 items relating to sojourning students. This part ended with an open-ended question about students' expectations.

The third instrument, a questionnaire relating to the university support services (questions 50-66) listed 17 items also drawn from the literature review and from the comments of various students during the piloting. 6 items are related to academic support (tutorial, academic advising, faculty interaction inside classroom, mentoring, study group, and library). The remaining 11 items are related to non-academic support (career service, university health service, orientation, peer interaction, faculty interaction outside classroom, non academic advising, counselling service, extra curricular activities, financial aid, residence hall services, and computer services). The student had to mark whether he/she had used the service or not (yes, no answers). If the answer was a yes, the student was then asked to indicate whether the service had decreased, increased or had no effect on his/her stress level. Two open-ended questions were added at the end of this part to achieve more insight about these services. The first question asked the students to list the obstacles that prevented them from taking advantage of the available support services. The second question asked about whether other services not mentioned would have been helpful in reducing stress.

Analysing the Questionnaire Data

All generated data were coded. SPSS computerized software for data analysis was used to analyse the data for this study. The research questions, methods, and appropriate statistics design

used for this study are as follows:

-Research Question One

What do first-year students at LAU identify as their sources of stress?

Descriptive statistics such as ranking and mean scores were used to answer the question based upon individual responses from second part of the questionnaire that included different possible stressors. Ranking was determined from the mean scores for each stressor from highest level of severity to the lowest and also reported by groups as indicated in the questionnaire. No responses were given a score of “a” or 0 for that stressor.

-Research Question Two

Do these stressors vary among the sample group of first-year students at LAU based on: gender, declaration of major, place of living, working status, religiosity, student status, first generation student and marital status?

Chi -square test was carried out in order to determine whether a significant relationship exist between the demographic variables and the experiences found to be stressful for first-year students. According to Burns (2000) Chi-square tests hypotheses about the association of frequency counts in various categories, significance level 0.05.

-Research Question Three

What support services do LAU students actively use in order to reduce stress?

To answer this question, frequencies and percentage were calculated based on a yes/no answers.

-Research Question Four

What are the students' perceptions of the effectiveness of the university –employed support systems on their stress level?

Descriptive statistics was used to answer this question. The percentage of students who used the support items (yes answers) were then divided according to whether these items contributed to lowering their stress level, increased their stress level, or had no effect on their stress level. Chi - square test was carried out in order to determine whether a significant relationship exist between the experiences found to be stressful for first-year students across the demographic variables.

Interview Schedule Construction and Implementation

The interview is defined as a conversation with a purpose involving two or more people (Leedy and Ormord, 2004; Babbie, 1991; Morgan, 1988). According to Cannell and Khan (1968, quoted in Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, 2000), it is a “conversation initiated by the interviewer for the specific purpose of obtaining research-relevant information and focused by him [her] on content specified by research objectives of systematic description, prediction or explanation” (p. 271). Patton (2002) maintains that, “The purpose of interviewing is to find out what is in and on someone else’s mind” (p. 278).

The type of interview designed for this research is a semi-structured interview, which falls somewhere in the middle between structured and unstructured interviews where the interviewer has clearly defined purposes, but seeks to achieve them by using flexible words and question that could be changed around (Robson, 2002). The overall structure is created by the main questions of the study and employs a mix of closed and open-ended questions and filled by prompts and probes. The first encourages broad coverage, and the second explores answers in depth (Drever, 1995). This allows for more adaptability, permits the interviewer to follow up participants' ideas and motives (Bell, 1993), and to have more flexibility in the way questions are asked and answered (Fontana and Frey, 2000). According to Wragg (2002) this type of interviews “allows respondents to express themselves at some length but offers enough shape to prevent aimless rambling” (p. 149). It also allows participants to ask questions and the researcher

to explain the aim of the research (Bell, 1993). The semi-structured interview provides a complete set of high quality data from all selected interviewees (Drever, 1995), which is due to the possibility of explaining any ambiguities, correcting any misunderstandings and probing for clarification whenever the answers are not clear (ibid, 1995). In general, this type of interview is the favourite methodological tool for a qualitative researcher, for it allows greater depth than other methods and the opportunity of response is broader (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). However, its main disadvantage is that it is prone to subjectivity and bias on the part of the interviewer (Bell, 1993), which will be tackled in due course.

A structured interview was not considered for this research. According to Wragg (2002) what is being investigated requires deeper deliberation, and the respondent may become annoyed at being forced into one word or one category answer. The unstructured interview was not considered either in this research, for the more structured type of interviewing tends to work more favourably when working along positivist lines (ibid, 2002).

In typical interviews there exists a hierarchical relation, with the respondents being in the lesser position (Fontana and Frey, 2000). This could have been a source of limitation in this research since the respondents are first-year students and the interviewer is a faculty member. To minimize the effect of this limitation, the interview was carried out in the friendliest way possible and in a conversational manner after informing the participants about the purpose of the research and assuring them that the information collected is for the thesis only and will be kept confidential with an agreement to allow them to modify or amend any statement the researcher quotes from their interview if they deemed it necessary.

Interview Schedule for the Main Study

The interview was conducted using a face-to-face one time, verbal interchange that lasted an average of 35 minutes. During face-to-face interviews the interviewer interacts more with the participant than with postal and other self-administered questionnaires, because he/she pursues interesting responses, and tries to uncover hidden motives, emotions, and thoughts thus altering his/her path of inquiry (Robson, 2002; Thomas, 1998). In this kind of interview the interviewer is able to observe non-verbal cues that will help in interpreting and understanding verbal

responses in a better way (ibid, 1998). The interview schedule was comprised of 16 questions that related to the key questions of the research, and employed a mixture of closed and open-ended questions with many prompts and probes. The first encourages broad coverage while the latter explores answers in depth (Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, 2000) for the collection of the personal account data.

The interview started with general questions about the student's choice of a university and major, and proceeded to more specific questions regarding the intended research, for example, "do you feel that you have too heavy a work load, one that you can not possibly finish during the required time?" Or, "do you feel that LAU in general was successful in reducing some of the stress associated with the adjustment process to the university environment?" Also while interviewing, when one or more of the interviewees mentioned a new idea that the research thought was worthwhile investigating, the researcher built on the idea by asking other interviewees about the subject matter and how they felt about it; such as, the issue of parental pressure and finding studies less demanding yet running out of time.

The interview was tape recorded after the agreement with the interviewees to the procedure and were told they could ask questions at any time or conclude the interview if they wished and that they can amend or clarify any statement if they deemed necessary. According to Seidman (1991) interviewers should agree to give the participants a copy of the transcripts or audiotapes after the interview in order to see if there is any part with which he/she might not be comfortable with (issues of accuracy and vulnerability) and wish to have excluded from the study. Although the presence of an audiotape may initially be of concern to students, having a complete and accurate record of each interview was considered vital for later analysis. Tape recording helps the interviewer get the material down in an accurate and retrievable form (Rubin and Rubin, 1995) thus the interviewer is able to concentrate on the task of carrying out a quality interview when he/she develops a good rapport at a natural speed (Robson, 2002).

All interviews were concluded by thanking the student for his/her participation and asked if he/she had any questions, comments or concerns about what they had been asked.

The transcribed interviews were numbered, and only first names were used in order to preserve the anonymity of the participants. Preserving confidence means, even though researchers know who has supplied the information or are able to name participants from the information given, they will, in no way, make the connection known publicly (Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, 2000).

When processing the interview tapes for analysing and interpretation, the researcher tried to extract those themes that dominate respondent's replies. According to Thomas (1998), interpreting interviews may entail the following modes: (a) extracting themes from the pattern of respondents' answers by identifying the themes that dominate respondents' replies, (b) introducing a new perspective of viewing a practice and how it differs from traditional points of view, (c) appraising pedagogical innovation, and (d) eliciting people's meanings.

Analysing the Interview Data:

Case study research usually produces an abundance of data which needs to be analysed and condensed into meaningful statements (Bassey, 1999). After collecting the data, the researcher began the process of analysis by adopting the framework developed by Miles and Huberman (1994) i.e. data reduction, display, conclusion and verification.

By utilising data reduction, the massive data collected can be condensed and organized and focused. As a result, the data can then be better managed as well as transformed to address the research questions. Thus, the researcher will be able to emphasis, minimize, or eliminate parts of the gathered data to serve the objectives of the research at hand (Frechtling & Sharp Westat, 1997). According to Miles and Huberman (1994), the goal of the researcher in identifying what is of interest in the interview transcripts is to reduce and then shape the material into a form in which it can be shared or displayed.

After listening to the tapes, the researcher analysed the data collected from the taped interviews by extracting themes from the pattern of respondents' answers and then identifying the themes that dominate respondents' replies to match the research questions. The researcher also looked for deviation or convergence from patterns and identified those unique themes that are unique to

a single interview or a minority of interviews, for example the issue of semi-residents (see page 94). About fifteen days later, the researcher listened to the tapes another time in order to make sure she did not miss any important area of agreement or disagreement. According to Thomas (1998), interpreting interviews may entail the following modes: (a) extracting themes from the pattern of respondents' answers by identifying the themes that dominate respondents' replies, (b) introducing a new perspective of viewing a practice and how it differs from traditional points of view, (c) appraising pedagogical innovation, and (d) eliciting people's meanings.

When analysing qualitative data, the researcher has to make critical choices about which data to select. This process involves deductive and inductive analysis from the accumulated data. Nevertheless, the researcher must identify and take into consideration the relative frequency of raising different issues, and the intensity with which they were expressed (Frechtling & Sharp Westat, 1997).

To Miles and Huberman (1994) data display provides an organized collection of information that allows conclusions to be drawn. Data can be displayed in a form of an extend text or diagram, chart or a matrix that enables the researcher to arrange his thoughts in a new way, and draw interrelationships. Thus, additional and higher themes may emerge. The researcher chose to display her data in an extended text.

Once the themes were identified, the researcher entered them into a computer system using Microsoft Word. The researcher then counted the participants' responses to the different themes dividing them by gender, status or other demographic factors. For example, when discussing orientation, the researcher carefully ticked and counted the times the participants focused on this topic (refer to Appendix-H- for a sample). In addition the researcher also concentrated on the context in which the different topics were discussed in order to convert their verbal meanings into a written text, and identified the different areas in which the interviewees agreed or disagreed and why they did. This allowed the researcher to transform the verbally recorded opinions of the participants from the tapes to written and documented text. The researcher kept enough space in order to add illustrative quotes or comments by different interviewees using first names bases for reference. Also responses to closed ended questions were codified by the researcher and reported. According to Hitchcock and Hughes (1989) coding the data is important

to ensure that the data can be viewed in a complete manner. For data analysis in this study, the researcher engaged in a practice of comparison across interview statements, analyzing and referring to the relevant literature until she felt confident that the data produced was trustworthy. In addition before the concluding report for the data analysis was finalized, the researcher sent two copies to the interviewees asking them to confirm what they had said allowing them to modify any of their comments if they deemed it necessary and send back one copy to the researcher. This process was done in order to establish trustworthiness of the statements reported.

The following chapter will present the results from the questionnaires and the interviews.

Chapter Four

Results of the Study

Purpose of the Study

This study had several purposes. The first purpose was to detect the primary sources of stress for first-year students. A second purpose was to find out the academic and non-academic support services that help students reduce stress and how effective are they perceived by the students. A final purpose was to determine if any difference exist among selected variables (age, marital status, declaration of major, place of living, working status, student status, sojourning status, first generation student and religiosity) for sources of stress and for the support services used.

General Characteristics of the Study

The data was collected from the total population (N=770; 151males and 84females) of first-year students at LAU Beirut campus.

Two methods were utilized for the collection of data for this study: A questionnaire and a semi-structured interview.

For the questionnaire, the data was collected from 235 students out of the total population of first-year, first semester undergraduate students attending LAU Beirut campus. The questionnaire was divided into three parts: (1) a brief demographic survey, (2) first-year stress questionnaire and (3) academic and non-academic support services (see appendix-A).

The data for the interview was collected from 21 first-year students (12 males and 9 females). The students volunteered to take part in the semi-structured interview and the conversations were tape-recorded (see appendix-B).

Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained throughout the study.

Characteristics of the Sample

Frequencies and percentages were calculated for age, marital status, declaration of course of study, place of living, work status, student status, sojourn status, first generation student, and religiosity and then broken down by gender (see table 4-1).

The study population consisted of 235 students. Of these, 151 were males (64.3 %) and 84 (35.7 %) females. This is a representative sample, considering that 60% of the general student population at LAU is male (Registrar's Office, Fall 2003/04).

It is interesting to note that the majority of the respondents are single (99.6%), only 5 are above 23 years old, two thirds of them (69.4%) are still living with their parents, and 80% full timers. This indicates that the majority of students are traditional first-year students (see page 18 for definition).

One third of male students (31.8%) reported living outside Lebanon for more than three years as compared to 19% of females.

Table 4-1
Socio-demographic Profiles of Respondents

Variable	Frequency by Gender				Total Frequencies	Percentage
	Male	% Male	Female	%Female		
Age						
17-18	55	36.4%	34	40.5%	89	37.9%
19-20	76	50.3%	46	54.8%	122	51.9%
21-22	15	9.9%	4	4.8%	19	8.1%
23or above	5	3.3%	0	0.0%	5	2.1%
Marital Status						
Single	150	99.3%	84	100.0%	234	99.6%
Married	1	0.7%	0	0.0%	1	0.4%
Living status						
On campus	4	2.6%	2	2.4%	6	2.5%
Off campus without parents	48	31.8%	18	21.4%	66	28.1%
Off #ampus with parents	99	65.6%	64	76.2%	163	69.4%
Living Outside Lebanon						
Last 3 years	6	4.0%	6	7.1%	12	5.2%
More than 3 years	9	31.8%	16	19.0%	64	27.2%
All your life	26	17.2%	15	17.9%	41	17.4%
Never	71	41.0%	47	56.0%	118	50.2%
Course of study						
No	30	19.9%	9	10.7%	39	16.6%
Yes	121	80.1%	75	89.3%	196	
					47	20.0%
Work Status						
Yes	30	19.9%	13	15.5%	43	18.3%
No	121	80.1%	71	84.5%	192	81.7%
First Generation Student						
Yes	52	34.4%	20	23.8%	72	30.6%
No	99	65.6%	64	76.2%	163	69.4%
Religious Affiliation						
Yes	69	45.7%	52	61.9%	121	51.5%
No	82	54.3%	32	38.1%	114	48.0%
Regular Attendance of Religious Activities						
Yes	32	21.2%	27	32.1%	59	25.1%
No	119	78.8%	57	67.9%	176	74.9%

Table 4-1 also indicates that more males are full time students (85.4%) compared to (70.2%) females and more males (19.9%) than females (10.7%) have not declared a course of study and. In addition, 34.4% of males are first-generation students compared to 23.8% females. This indicates that males attend the university more than females in order to secure their family's future (see Lebanese culture page 7).

Although 51.5% of students reported religious affiliation, yet 74.9% said that they do not regularly attend religious activities. This is in harmony with the Lebanese culture (see Lebanese culture page 7). However, more females reported religious affiliation and regular attendance (61.9% and 32.1% respectively) compared to males (45.7% and. 21.2%). This is an interesting finding; however, further research is needed to explore its meaning.

In addition, from among the students who responded to the questionnaire, 21 students voluntarily accepted to be interviewed by the researcher. They were 12 males and 9 females. All students had no problem with having the interview audio-taped except for one. She was extremely sensitive to its presence and required a lot of reassurance that the data collected would not be listened to by anyone except the researcher.

Demographic profile of the semi-structured interview showed that in this particular sample of students, all were full time students and single. Out of the 12 males, 3 were sojourn students (fewer sojourner compared to the sample), 7 were still living with their parents and 2 local students but not living with parents, 3 were first-generation, 3 had not declared a course of study, 2 considered themselves religious and 5 were working out of which 3 received work study financial aid. As for the 9 females, 3 lived in the dormitory out of which 2 were local students and 1 a sojourner, 6 are still living with parents, 2 had not declared a course of study, 4 were first generation students, 3 considered themselves religious and 4 were on work-study financial aid (refer to Appendix –G for table).

Research Question One

What do first-year students at LAU identify as their sources of stress?

The second part of the questionnaire had a total of 38 stressors or experiences found to be stressful to first-year students and were divided into 5 groups. There were four response options with numerical values of 0, 1, 2, and 3. A “0” response meant that the item was not a problem. A “1” response meant only slightly problem. A “2” response indicated a clear problem and a “3” response meant a major problem. Scoring for the instrument can range from 0 to 3 for each item.

The results indicated that the experiences with the highest stress level for those students who responded to the questionnaire were: “Finding courses uninteresting” with the highest mean score (1.12) followed closely by “Important decisions about your future career” (1.08) and Finding your studies stressful” (1.02). “Relationship with roommate” had the lowest mean (0.17) of all the items. All in all the results indicate that the stress level is moderate to very low. When comparing the standard deviation to the mean, the standard deviation is equal or in some cases larger than the mean indicating that the majority of the students considered the stressors as not a problem or a slight problem. Table 4-2 gives an individual item response in rank order, mean and standard deviation with N being the number of students who responded to each stressor.

Table 4-2

Ranked Mean and Standard Deviation Scores of Each Stressor in a Descending Order (not on the bases of groups)

Stressor	N	Mean (0-3)	Standard Deviation
Finding courses uninteresting	235	1.12	1.03
Important decisions about your future career	235	1.08	1.05
Finding your studies stressful	235	1.02	0.89
Registration procedures	235	0.97	1.00
Ability at oral expression	235	0.90	0.84
Grade achievement	235	0.88	0.91
Ability at written expression	235	0.82	0.86
Financial matters	234	0.82	1.00
Too many academic and non- academic responsibilities	235	0.80	0.81
Choice of major or main course of study	235	0.76	0.94
Transportation	235	0.75	0.93
Too many rules and procedures	235	0.73	0.84
Meeting the academic standards set by others such as your parents/guardian	235	0.73	0.93
Course work demand	235	0.67	0.75
Ability to meet your obligations/deadlines	235	0.66	0.80
Effort to go ahead	235	0.64	0.80
Meeting your academic standards	235	0.64	0.91
Decisions about intimate relationship(s)	235	0.58	0.88
Judgment and acceptance by peers (Peer Pressure)	235	0.56	0.72
Social obligations	235	0.55	0.76
Homesickness	235	0.55	0.82
Relationship with boyfriend/girlfriend/spouse	235	0.52	0.88
Extracurricular activities (non-academic activities)	235	0.50	0.71
Relationship with friends	235	0.32	0.60
Social acceptance	235	0.32	0.63
Relationship with professor	235	0.31	0.62
Relationship with supervisor or boss	235	0.29	0.56
Relationship with roommate	235	0.17	0.51

Table 4-3 indicates the overall results by group. The highest level of stress related to “Developmental Challenges” with the highest group mean (0.81) was followed by “Time Pressure” (0.61), while “Social Problems ” had the lowest mean (0.41) of all the groups.

Table 4-3

Ranked Mean and Standard Deviation Scores of stressors by Groups in a Descending Order

Group	Group Mean (0-3)	Group Standard Deviation	Group Alpha
<i>Developmental Challenges</i>	0.81	0.435	0.6807
<i>Time Pressure</i>	0.61	0.469	0.6501
<i>Assorted Annoyances</i>	0.55	0.453	0.6166
<i>Social Problems</i>	0.41	0.334	0.7135
<i>*Sojourning Problems</i>	0.37	0.526	0.6371

* This item relates to sojourning students only.

Since the groups are not mutually exclusive and the same student may have different stressors in different categories, ANOVA cannot be run in this case. According to Math Options Inc. (2002) the ANOVA test is a statistical technique that separates the variation in an experiment into categories relating to the causes of the variation.

When interviewed, students’ reason to pursue a college education at LAU varied from the need for better business opportunities to social acceptance. 75% of the interviewees with a noticeable majority of males (11/12 males) stated that their choice of LAU is because of its good reputation as a reliable source for business recruitment and potential future business contact. Out of the nine interviewed females, four believed that pursuing a college education at LAU was more for social status than a stepping-stone for business success. Simply put by Ghada a female student whose education is financed by her parents, “my parents thought that my joining LAU was socially acceptable” (Interview Transcript, January 5, 2004). One student went even further to mention that joining LAU might give her an opportunity to meet her future husband. To elaborate Hania gave an example of a girl friend of hers who calls her every evening to consult with her about what to wear the next day to college (Interview Transcript, January 2, 2004). This might lead such students to approach their education less seriously.

Some interviewed students (8/12 males and 7/9 females) complained about the lack of time to do all the things they wanted or needed to do. They reported more distractions and expressed their inability to organize their schedule. Two female students complained about their inability to find enough time to study, socialize, and have enough time for leisure. A major issue that seemed to burden the majority of the females (6/9 females) is the demands of family social life. In a close-knit society this can be an added burden to the students who are already bombarded with many other responsibilities. To illustrate Ghada a female student said "I had no choice but to attend a family function the night before one of my exams and ended up not doing well"(Interview Transcript, January 5, 2004). On the other hand, the answers of the 5 working males when interviewed varied. 2 were more interested in working to get some work experience before graduating even though it gave them less time for other activities, and the other 3 did not seem to have a problem since they are on financial aid and working few hours on campus. However, the majority of students agreed (10/12 males and 7/9 females) that the high school curriculum was much more difficult than their first year at the university which allowed them more free time yet unable to put it to use.

Interestingly, a unique stressor mentioned by seven students (4/12 males and 3/9 females) who come from a French high school education, is the time needed to adjust to the American educational approach and to their communicational abilities in English. One student pointed out that she had to spend a lot of time looking up words in the dictionary in order to understand better the full text, and that it is taking her a while to get used to relying less on memorization and more on reading. Such a change could add a load to those students who are already burdened by the multitude of adjustments they have to make.

Sojourn Students

Table 4-4 gives an individual item response analysis in rank order, means, and standard deviations (items 47-49) exploring the stressors first-year students who lived outside Lebanon for the last three years or more experienced (see also table 4-5 for breakdown of responses by demographic variables).

The results indicated that students who lived outside Lebanon for the last three years or more found that experiences relating to “Cross – cultural adaptation” gave them the highest stress level.

Table 4-4

Means and standard deviations of stressors that are specifically related to the students who lived outside Lebanon only (see Appendix-A)

Stressors	N	Mean (0-3)	Standard Deviation
Cross – cultural adaptation	117	0.42	0.709
Language comprehension	117	0.37	0.664
Immigration Procedures (e.g., visas)	117	0.32	0.703

All interviewed sojourners (3 males and 1 female) agreed that it took them some time to adapt to the new culture. In Rola’s words, “I felt really lost and homesick at first but then I started making friends; as it turned out, people are very friendly here. Funny how they use more than one language in the same phrase such as: Hi, kifik (how are you in Arabic), çava (are you fine in French).” She also mentioned feeling more at ease communicating with her male peers due to the openness of the Lebanese culture in general and the attitude of the students at LAU in particular. Rola mentioned the example of a couple in her class who freely hold hands on campus. To her, this is a practically unacceptable scene in her country Kuwait (Interview Transcript, January 8, 2004). In contrast, these new experiences may cause some students to feel frustrated and unable to adjust easily to the new environment. This is how Ziad from Saudi Arabia who feels homesick expressed himself:

“This culture was really a shock for me. I miss Saudi Arabian food. Everything is so different. Many of the behaviours are unacceptable in my home country, such as the way some of the female students dress or the way males and females interact” (Interview Transcript, January 19, 2004).

On the other hand, Ahmad who comes from Abu Dabi, expressed his feelings as follows: “The relationship between friends is not so different in Lebanon, it is warm and people care about others the way they do at home. They make me feel welcome where ever I go”. He also mentioned that the weather was much better in Lebanon but that he felt more at ease when he wore the Abaya (the arab national dress) instead of western clothes. Ahmad went further to mention that the teachers in Lebanon cared very much about the students and often asked him if

he needed help. He stated that this made him feel more at ease (Interview Transcript, January 13, 2004).

Karim one of the interviewed students who came from Brazil but of Lebanese decent stated that, in the early weeks of his sojourning, he and other sojourners formed a separate group because they were not able to identify with what he called “a materialistic and show-off attitude” of his fellow Lebanese students. He found them “less natural”; however with time, the group started to feel closer to the local students and accepted more easily the differences (Interview Transcript, January 7, 2004).

Research Question Two

In order to detect the relationship between the demographic factors and the different groups of experiences found to be stressful for first-year students, the researcher used the chi-square test (see page 74 for definition).

The results indicated that males experienced more stress (54.3%) related to the items “meeting the academic standards set by others such as your parents/guardian” compared to (36.9%) females (significant p-value = 0.01) and “grade achievement” males (68.2%) compared to (45.2%) females (significant p-value = 0.001) (see Appendix-E).

When interviewed, the majority of males (9/12) seemed to be more worried about grades and proving themselves more than females. Hamid a first generation male student expressed the need to achieve high grades to please his family who is sacrificing a lot to send him to college (Interview Transcript, January 9, 2004). On the other hand, Fadi a male student who is still living at home indicated the need to prove to his father that he will succeed and is just as good if not better than his brother who did graduate a year before with high honours (Interview Transcript, January 16, 2004).

Students who did not decide on a course of study had more stress (71.8% compared to 45.5%) with respect to “choice of course of study” (significant p-value = 0.003) and “important

decisions about future career”¹ (significant p-value = 0.001) (87.2% and 58.7% respectively) (see Appendix-E).

Interviewed students who had not decide on a course of study yet (3/12 males, 2/9 females) generally emphasised the fact that they did not do so because they are not sure of what they want and what is better for their future career. They seemed to be more concerned about whether the course of study they choose will allow them to get a good job (socially and parentally acceptable) with good pay rather than what they really like. Sami a male student who has not declared a course of study yet said, “ I am looking for a major that will promote my future career, will be financially rewarding and will please my parents” (Interview Transcript, January 9, 2004). While Zena a female student wasn’t even sure of what she likes or what to choose but is already sensing her parent’s pressure to decide (Interview Transcript, January 15, 2004).

On the other hand, 7/12 of the males and 5/9 of the females who had decided on a course of study revealed that their parents influenced their choice of a course of study. Some mentioned their fathers wanted them to follow in their footsteps and others indicated their family though it was good for a future career. Rami a male student who was majoring in business because his father insisted said “I will get a degree in accounting just to please my father but I will take all my electives in art without him knowing” (Interview Transcript, January 12, 2004). Ghada a female student who is majoring in education because her parents thought it is a good major for a future married woman with children (Interview Transcript, January 5, 2004). Situations like this may make students feel more stressed, find their courses uninteresting and worried about their future career.

In addition, 38.3% of students who had religious affiliation and attended regularly religious activities (religious) had less stress (significant p-value = 0.012) in relation to “course work demand” as compared to 47.7% of students who either had affiliation or attended and 62.7% for students who neither had affiliation nor attended. The same trend seemed to be indicated for the item “efforts to get ahead” (significant p-value = 0.031). Students, who affiliated with religion and attended at the same time, had less stress (34%) compared to those who answered yes to either affiliation or attendance (46.5%) and to those who answered no to both questions. (56.9%) (see Appendix-E).

The majority of the interviewed students (7/12 males and 6/9 females) indicated affiliation with religion. However, those involved with religious activities (2 males and 3 females) indicated that they felt less stress. Whenever they faced a problem they turned to God and prayer for support. In the words of Mahmoud a male student "God has mapped our lives for us, all we have to do is go with the flow... when we have a problem our religious leader will direct us by explaining God's message and then there is no need for alarm" (Interview Transcript, January 12, 2004). Maha a female student explained that restrictions placed on females as opposed to males especially those in a Moslem home leaves the female no choice but to resort to religion for guidance in order to cope with the stress (Interview Transcript, January 15, 2004).

Students who never lived outside Lebanon had a higher level of stress than those who lived outside Lebanon for the last three years or less or all their life in relation to their "Grade achievement" (significant p-value = 0.02) and "financial matters" (significant p-value = 0.001) (never lived outside Lebanon 66.9%, 61.5%, lived outside Lebanon for the last three years or less 47.4%, 36.8% and lived outside Lebanon all their life 63.4%, 39% respectively) (see Appendix-E).

A general concern mentioned by some interviewees especially those who never lived outside Lebanon (6/12 males and 4/9 females) is the rising cost of education and the financial difficulties facing them. College tuition, Room and board and fees have soared. In 1990 the average annual tuition and fees at LAU (formerly BUC) was about LL 1,600,000 and LL 400,000 for room and board. In the 2003/04 academic year, the annual tuition and fees are approximately LL 12,000,000 add in another LL 2,600,000 for rooming, and some more for food and miscellaneous (the average exchange rate in January 2004 was around 2,690 LL to the Sterling pound). This adds a burden to students who are trying to find ways to finance their education. However, according to the LAU Financial Aid Office, the percentage of students on financial aid is 25%. This was an additional factor mentioned by the students as a reason for their choice of LAU. 33.34% of the students interviewed were on financial aid (4 females and 3 males).

"Homesickness" (significant p-value = 0.01) and "social acceptance" (significant p-value = 0.009) also showed significance to living outside Lebanon. Students who lived outside Lebanon

all their life had more stress (58.5%), compared to students who lived outside Lebanon for the last three years or less (36.8%), and to those who never lived outside Lebanon (32.2%) (see Appendix-E). As for social acceptance, students who lived outside Lebanon all their life had more stress (43.9%) compared to students who lived outside Lebanon for the last three years or less (22.4%), and to those who never lived outside Lebanon (20.3%)

64.1% of students who do not work had more stress with respect to the item “Too many academic and non-academic responsibilities” (significant p-value = 0.007) as opposed to 41.9% of working students. However, 51% of students who work (significant p-value = 0.047) had more stress with respect to “decisions about intimate relationships”, 56.1% with “transportation” (significant p-value = 0.013) and 76.6% with “financial matters” (significant p-value = 0.00) than students who do not work 35%, 44.3% and 43.5% respectively (see Appendix-E). Tarek a working male student said: “I broke up with my girlfriend because I had no time to go out or see her often.... if I am not working I am attending courses or studying and I can not quit either. I need the degree yet I need to work to help out with my tuition fees. It is just too much”(Interview Transcript, January 20, 2004). Randa a working female said: “I am going crazy. It is difficult to manage between work and school especially with so much traffic. I hardly make it to class on time. Sometimes I am late and get frowned at by the teacher” (Interview Transcript, January 7, 2004).

For first generation students several factors showed significant scores. These were, “ability at oral expression” (significant p-value = 0.032) “finding courses uninteresting” (significant p-value = 0.042) “relationship with staff” (significant p-value = 0.001) “decisions about intimate relationship” (significant p-value = 0.034) “relationship with boyfriend/girlfriend/spouse” (significant p-value = 0.031) and “homesickness” (significant p-value = 0.031). However, these results indicated that these students had less stress with respect to the items “ability at oral expression” (54.2%), “finding courses uninteresting” (56.9%), “decisions about intimate relationship” (27.8%) and “relationship with boyfriend/girlfriend/spouse” (23.6%) and “homesickness” (48.6%) compared to 68.7%, 70.6%, 42.3%, 38% and 33.7% respectively (see Appendix-E). When interviewed, Nathalie said “I am the first in my family to attend college and my parents feel proud” (Interview Transcript, January 9, 2004). On the hand, Mohamad said “financially my parents are sacrificing a lot to send me to college but they don’t mind for they

know that when I graduate I will be able to help my brothers through college” (Interview Transcript, January 12, 2004).

Interestingly, two local female students, who live in the dormitory, and two local male students who live off campus not with parents when interviewed, brought up a different sort of stress that is not mentioned in the literature yet seem to be common among them. These students revealed that even though they live away from home, their parents expect them to be home on the weekends and holidays. Though they do not have to worry about doing their laundry or cooking their meals like other students (they take the laundry home with them and bring back home cooked meals to last them most of the week) they still feel stressed. As Raghida a female who lives in the dormitory put it, “I did not mind going home for the weekend at first, but as the semester progressed I was asked by my friends to stay on campus to do some group work or for going out... but no, my parents would not hear of it” (Interview Transcript, January 20, 2004). The researcher referred to these students as “semi-residents”.

Commuting seemed to be a major problem indicated by the interviewees in general. Students who could afford a car complained about not finding a parking space and those who could not afford a car complained about traffic and public transportation. Traffic jams are common in Beirut with poor public transportation and the parking facilities around campus are limited. Students are under pressure to reach campus on time to attend classes and some parents do not allow their children to stay late on campus even if it is for classes or doing projects. Hadi, a first-generation working student emphasized this by saying: “Commuting is taking its toll on me. I can handle studying and working, it is not a problem, but most of my free time I spend on the road. I cannot afford to buy a car and pay for gasoline and parking and help with my tuition... my parents are doing their best to help me but I also have 3 younger sisters at home who need their support” (Interview Transcript, January 6, 2004).

No significant relation was found between the two demographic factors status and living arrangement and the different stressful experiences. Also no significant relation was found between the different demographic factors and the items relating to sojourning problems.

12 students answered yes to the open-ended question in the questionnaire regarding whether the university experience met their expectations or not. In general they seemed satisfied. One student remarked “it is exactly as I expected, I was told a lot about the university from my friends who started attending before me”. On the other hand, 13 students indicated that the university experience did not meet their expectations out of which 2 indicated their intention to transfer. As put by a female student “I thought the university would be much easier than high school but it turned out to be more complicated especially the registration procedure”. Another comment by a male student “each department seem to have its own procedures, the system is too bureaucratic”.

Research Question Three

The kind of institutional support services LAU students actively use that help in the reduction of stress are:

Based on the results indicated by the students who responded to the study, the most frequently used academic support services were “Faculty Interaction Inside Classroom” (60.5%) and “Academic Advising” (60.5%) equally. However, “Tutorial” ranked lowest (33.6%) (refer to Table 4- 5).

Among the Non-Academic Support Items, “Peer Interaction” (61.8%) and “Orientation”(49.1%) had the highest reported use and “Residence Hall Services” had the lowest (16.8%) (see table 4- 5). Interview responses will follow in the next question.

Research Question Four

The perceptions of students towards the effectiveness of the university–employed support services on their stress level based on the different demographic factors were as follows:

In relation to academic support services, out of 60.5% of the students who answered “yes” to the item “Faculty Interaction Inside Classroom”, the majority (57.1%) reported that it had no effect on their stress. However, 26.3% reported that it decreased their stress and 16.5% indicated that it actually increased their stress level. The item “Academic Advising” also had a 60.5% response

with 35.3% reporting that it had no effect, 43.6% said it decreased their stress and 20.9% said it actually increased it. (See to Table 4-5).

When interviewed 6/9 females and 7/12 males agreed that the faculty in general are very friendly and allow them to interact inside classrooms. However, the most frequent type of contact was for such things as asking questions, presenting topics or discussing cases. On the other hand, the results of the interaction with faculty outside classroom varied. One group 5 females and 6 males indicated that the interaction was more related to the course work such as clarifying class assignments, or discussing term papers/projects while others (3 females and 4 males) interacted to discuss career plans or to discuss personal problems.

With relation to non-academic support services, out of 61.8% of the students who answered “yes” to the item “Peer Interaction”, 39% reported that it decreased their stress level while 14% indicated that it increased their stress level and 47% said that it had no effect. However, 38% of those who answered “yes” to the item “Orientation” indicated that it decreased their stress while 15.7% indicated that it increased their stress, and 46.3% said that it had no effect (see Table 4-5). No significant variation was found between males and females and part timers and full timers with reference to the use of the service and/or effect on stress. See table 4-6 and table 4-7.

Peer interaction seemed to be an important issue that was brought up in 16 interviews. The interaction between students seemed to help them adjust to the new environment especially when befriending old students. According to Nathalie “after meeting and interacting with other students in class, I felt more relaxed since I was able to find out from old students about what to do and about things like what teacher to select next semester and about some rules and regulations” (Interview Transcript, January 9, 2004). Zaher a male student said: “after I made new friends, I felt more at ease and “in” and this helped me a lot to adjust (Interview Transcript, January 8, 2004).

When interviewed, the majority of students (8/12 males and 5/9 females) expressed the need to have a longer orientation period that extends at least few weeks into the first semester. Randa argued that although the orientation program helped her in relieving some of the anxiety she felt before joining the university, nevertheless, it did not fully prepare her for what’s ahead such as

the registration and payment procedures, and the bureaucratic and impersonal environment of the university (Interview Transcript, January 7, 2004). On the other hand, Ritta mentioned meeting some students during the orientation program and seeing them later on campus, which helped with her adjustment. To her, “recognizing people I met during orientation made me feel more at ease” (Interview Transcript, January 14, 2004). According to the head of the Guidance office, (an office that provides students with attention and assistance on their physical, social, emotional and academic growth needs by coordinating services such as academic support, health and career counselling, extra-curricular activities, and program organization) (LAU guidance office, Fall 2003) “students are given a lot of material during orientation that explains to them all the procedures however; students in Lebanon in general do not read but depend on others to tell them what to do” (Interview Transcript, February 2004).

It is important to point out that out of 235 students who responded to the questionnaire, 15 students (6.4%) did not answer the questions relating to academic and non-academic support services thus the percentages presented in table 8 are based on the responses of 220 students.

See Tables 4-6 page 102, and 4-7 page 103 for distribution by gender and student status.

Table 4-5

Ranked Order of the Used Academic and Non-academic Support Items and their Effect on Stress in a Descending Order

University- Employed Support Services	N	Students who answered "Yes"		Increased stress		Decreased stress		No Effect on stress	
		%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n
Academic									
Faculty interaction inside classroom	220	60.5%	133	16.5%	22	26.3%	35	57.1%	76
Academic advising	220	60.5%	133	22.6%	28	42.7%	53	34.7%	43
Library	220	56.4%	124	8.1%	10	29.8%	37	62.1%	77
Study group	220	50.9%	112	14.3%	16	37.5%	42	48.2%	54
Mentoring	220	43.2%	95	16.8%	16	36.8%	35	46.3%	44
Tutorial	220	33.6%	74	20.3%	15	39.2%	29	40.5%	30
Non-academic									
Peer interaction	220	61.8%	136	14.0%	19	39.0%	53	47.0%	64
Orientation	220	49.1%	108	15.7%	17	38.0%	41	46.3%	50
Extra curricular activities	220	45.5%	100	10.0%	10	46.0%	46	44.0%	44
Faculty interaction outside classroom	220	45.0%	99	21.2%	21	29.3%	29	49.5%	49
Non-academic advising	220	38.6%	85	21.2%	18	29.4%	25	49.4%	42
Career guiding services	220	34.5%	76	19.7%	15	42.1%	32	38.2%	29
Financial aid	220	32.7%	72	18.1%	13	36.1%	26	45.8%	33
Counselling service	220	30.9%	68	23.5%	16	30.9%	21	45.6%	31
University Health Service	220	24.5%	54	14.8%	8	25.9%	14	59.3%	32
Residence Hall Service	220	16.8%	37	16.2%	6	24.3%	9	59.5%	22

Cross tabulations (chi-square) were carried out to see if significant relationships exist between the academic and non-academic support services and the different demographic variables. Results indicated that no significant difference was found between any of the variables and non-academic support services.

With respect to academic support services, the analysis showed significance between gender, student status with academic advising, first generation with faculty interaction, and mentoring

with religion only (see Appendix-F and tables 4-6 and 4-7 for breakdown by gender and status respectively).

The effect of academic advising was found to be significant with gender (significant p-value= 0.01) and student status (significant p-value= 0.012). Although there was no difference between males and females who responded to the answer no effect (M: 36.7%, F: 31.3%) and (part: 36.4%, Full: 34.3%), a higher percentage of females and part timers declared that it decreased stress (M: 34.5%, F: 59.2%) (Part: 63.6%, Full: 38.2%) (see Appendix-F).

When interviewed, students expressed concern about the registration procedure (8/12 males and 5/9 females). They complained about the lack of time and attention given to them by their assigned advisors. To them, the complicated registration procedure was devastating. Hania a female who is majoring in Biology said, “ I almost dropped out before I started; I broke down and cried after waiting two whole days for my turn to register and then I could not get in the courses of my choice” (Interview Transcript, January 6, 2004). On the other hand, 2 females indicated that if was not for their advisors they would have had a difficult time adjusting. When interviewed, the head of the guidance office said: “We have had many problems with registration in the past. However, we hope that with the new system (online) things will improve. We are also training advisors on how to use the system and we have assigned advisors not only by major for all students in that major but also alphabetically. Each group of students according to their last names are assigned specific advisors. Although students are not required to see an advisor when they register online, the university has made the program in such a way that students with less than 30 credits cannot register without their advisors to assure that newly admitted students are on the right track. Nevertheless, we can not control advisors but we always try to have an open communication with the different advisors for the benefit of the students” (Interview Transcript, February 2004).

A significant relation was found between Faculty interaction inside classroom and 1st generation students (significant p-value=0.043) (see Appendix-F). 43.3% of first generation students found that faculty interaction decreased their stress compared to 20.6% who were not first generation students, while 46.7% of them found that it had no effect compared to 61.9% (refer to table 4-5).

According to Fadi a first generation male student, “teachers are very helpful. I thought things would be more difficult at the university and that it is not so easy to talk to your professors or ask questions. On the contrary, we ask as many questions as we want, sometimes we have debates, they explain to us in details what is required, and how to do projects. This made me feel more at ease” (Interview Transcript, January 16, 2004).

Although no formal mentoring exists at LAU, still mentoring was also found to be significant with religion (significant p-value=0.013) (see Appendix-F). 51.45% of those who are considered not religious (neither affiliate nor attend) said it had no effect compared to 33.3% who affiliate and attend. Those students who answered yes to one of the questions regular attendance or affiliation showed similar results to non-religious (neither affiliate nor attend) 51.5%. However, 61.9% of those who attend and affiliate said it decreased stress compared to only 20% of those who did not attend or affiliate and 36.4% of those that answered yes to one question only (refer to table 4-5).

Ritta a religious female said: “at first I was lost and not doing too well but then one of my teachers helped me a lot. I go to her office at least twice a week and we talk about many things like what is bothering me or about the courses or about life in general. She has been like my guardian angel. If it were not for her things would have been more difficult for me these last few months” (Interview Transcript, January 14, 2004)

Responding to the open-ended questions in the questionnaire asking students to list any obstacles that prevented them from taking advantage of the available support services, 12 students indicated that they needed help with time management such as “I don’t know how others do it, I wish somebody can tell me how they find enough time to do all that is required”. When asked about what other services students would recommend, answers varied. 4 recommended more sport facilities, 3 indicated dissatisfaction with the physical facilities such as classroom chairs and toilets, 8 students who were on financial aid suggested working less hours in order to have more free time to study and do other activities, and 10 indicated that they needed more time with their advisors during registration. One student wrote, “When I went to see my advisor during registration, I had to wait a long time for my turn and then felt guilty taking up too much time with her because others are waiting for their turn”.

The following chapter discusses the findings of the study in relation to previous literature.

Frequency Distribution by Gender of Students Who Used the Academic and Non-Academic Support Items and their Effect on Stress

Social Support Items	Students who answered "Yes"				Increased stress				Decreased stress				No Effect on stress			
	M		F		M		F		M		F		M		F	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Academic																
Faculty interaction inside classroom	84	64.6	43	61.4	11	13.1	9	20.9	22	26.2	11	25.6	51	60.7	23	53.5
Academic advising	79	60.8	45	64.3	23	29.1	5	11.1	27	34.2	26	57.8	29	36.7	14	31.1
Library	75	57.7	37	52.9	9	12.0	1	2.7	22	29.3	10	27.0	44	58.7	26	70.3
Study group	64	49.2	34	48.6	10	15.6	3	8.8	24	37.5	13	38.2	30	46.9	18	52.9
Mentoring	62	47.7	27	38.6	11	17.7	4	14.8	18	29.0	14	51.9	33	53.2	9	33.3
Tutorial	48	36.9	19	27.1	10	20.8	3	15.8	15	31.3	11	57.9	23	47.9	5	26.3
Non-academic																
Peer interaction	75	57.7	48	68.6	11	14.7	6	12.5	26	34.7	20	41.7	38	50.7	22	45.8
Orientation	65	50.0	37	52.9	12	18.5	5	13.5	24	36.9	14	37.8	29	44.6	18	48.6
Extra curricular activities	65	50.0	25	35.7	7	10.8	3	12.0	28	43.1	11	44.0	30	46.2	11	44.0
Faculty interaction outside classroom	61	46.9	32	45.7	13	21.3	6	18.8	20	32.8	7	21.9	28	45.9	19	59.4
Non-academic advising	52	40.0	24	34.3	12	23.1	4	16.7	14	26.9	8	33.3	26	50.0	12	50.0
Career guiding	53	40.8	19	27.1	11	20.8	3	15.8	22	41.5	8	42.1	20	37.7	8	42.1
Financial aid	50	38.5	17	24.3	10	20.0	1	5.9	16	32.0	9	52.9	24	48.0	7	41.2
Counselling service	47	36.2	13	18.6	10	21.3	4	30.8	12	25.5	5	38.5	25	53.2	4	30.8
University Health Service	33	25.4	14	20.0	5	15.2	3	21.4	9	27.3	5	35.7	19	57.6	6	42.9
Residence Hall Service	30	23.1	7	40.0	4	13.3	2	28.6	8	26.7	1	14.3	18	60.0	4	57.1

Frequency Distribution by Status of Students who Used the Academic and Non-Academic Support Items and their Effect on Stress

Social Support Items	Students who answered "Yes"				Increased stress				Decreased stress				No Effect on stress			
	Part-Time		Full-time		Part-Time		Full-time		Part-Time		Full-Time		Part-Time		Full-Time	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Academic																
Faculty interaction inside classroom	30	73.2	97	61.0	4	13.3	16	16.5	9	30.0	24	24.7	17	56.7	57	58.8
Academic advising	22	53.7	102	64.2	0	0.0	28	27.5	14	63.6	39	38.2	8	36.4	35	34.3
Library	18	43.9	94	59.1	1	5.6	9	9.6	2	11.1	30	31.9	15	83.3	55	58.5
Study group	16	39.0	82	51.6	0	0.0	13	16.0	8	47.1	29	35.8	9	52.9	39	48.1
Mentoring	16	39.0	73	45.9	1	6.3	14	19.2	6	37.5	26	35.6	9	56.3	33	45.2
Tutorial	6	14.6	61	38.4	0	0.0	13	21.3	2	33.3	24	39.3	4	66.7	24	39.3
Non-academic																
Peer interaction	24	58.5	99	62.3	0	0.0	17	17.2	10	41.7	36	36.4	14	58.3	46	46.5
Orientation	15	36.6	87	54.7	2	13.3	15	17.2	4	26.7	34	39.1	9	60.0	38	43.7
Extra curricular activities	11	26.8	79	49.7	1	9.1	9	11.4	3	27.3	36	45.6	7	63.6	34	43.0
Faculty interaction outside classroom	15	36.6	78	49.1	3	20.0	16	20.5	4	26.7	23	29.5	8	53.3	39	50.0
Non-academic advising	12	29.3	64	40.3	2	16.7	14	21.9	3	25.0	19	29.7	7	58.3	31	48.4
Career guiding	12	29.3	60	37.0	0	0.0	14	23.3	4	33.3	26	43.3	8	66.7	20	33.3
Financial aid	9	22.0	58	36.5	0	0.0	11	19.0	3	33.3	22	37.9	6	66.7	25	43.1
Counselling service	5	12.2	55	34.6	0	0.0	14	25.5	1	20.0	16	29.1	4	80.0	25	45.5
University Health Service	7	17.1	40	25.2	0	0.0	8	20.0	1	14.3	13	32.5	6	85.7	19	47.5
Residence Hall Service	4	9.8	33	20.8	0	0.0	6	18.2	0	0.0	9	27.3	4	100.0	18	54.5

Chapter Five

Discussion of the Findings

Results of the data analysis in this study were used to form a profile of first-year students with respect to stress levels and a baseline for frequency of stressors in the lives of these students. The results were also used to find out the general trend in the utilization of the institutional support services by the first-year students participating in this study, and whether they perceive these services as reducing their stress level or not.

The majority of the respondents in both the questionnaire samples and the interview are traditional students mostly males between the ages of 17 and 20, living with their parents, are not first-generation students and are not regular practitioners of religious activities. Most are full timers, with a declared course of study and never lived outside Lebanon. All are single except for one respondent in the questionnaire, with the vast majority not working (see chapter four for details).

Interestingly, 60.1 % of the respondents who took part in the study did not answer the question concerning their religious sect. The researcher believes that this could be a result of the 15 years sectarian civil war, deemed as a sensitive issue by most respondents.

Stressors at the University

The results of the data analysis to identify the sources of stress for first-year students at LAU and their frequency indicated that the intensity of the most occurring group of stressors was in the area of "Developmental Challenges" with the list of first-year student stressors revealing that the primary sources of stress among these college students were (1) Finding courses uninteresting, (2) important decisions about your future career and (3) finding your studies stressful (refer to Tables 4-2 page 86 and 4-3 page 87). This compared with other studies that found different results. Olpin, 1996 assessed stress among 559 college students attending Southern Illinois University in the US and found that the primary sources of stress for these students were having

a lot of responsibility, struggling to meet your own academic standards, too many things to do at once and important decisions about your future career. Forrest (1997) found that the top stressors in his study conducted at Grand Valley State University in the US on 420 students were sitting through a boring class, followed by thoughts about the future and working while in college. Differences in these findings exist due to variations in the instruments used. Nevertheless, the most occurring stressors in all these studies seemed to relate to the academic environment.

The interview in this study revealed that parental pressure seemed to play a major role in the students' choice of college, course of study, and grade achievement, which could have contributed to the above results. According to Caredeo (2003) when students feel overwhelmed by external pressure they try to motivate themselves, because they worry failing those who matter most to them such as their parents.

The second most occurring group of stressors was "Time Pressure" with the majority of interviewees indicating that the study load at the university was much less than that in high school. Coming out of a tough program (like the Lebanese Baccalaureate or French Baccalaureate) and entering the university where the number of courses taken are less and time is more flexible, may have caused students to neglect day to day work and to leave studying for exams and finalizing term-papers to the last minute which caused them stress. As mentioned by Schafer (2000), students feel like jugglers in a three-ring circus when they are shifting between family life, homework, classes, and work. Students need to learn time management skills, because when they manage their time effectively this increases their performance academically (Campbell & Svenson, 1992). Macan et al. (1990) reported that students that were in more control of their time tend to evaluate their performance better, feel more satisfied about work and life, have more clarity regarding their role, and have less worries about future jobs.

Overall, it appears that first-year students are a moderately stressed population and that the academic environment provides numerous stressors. However, their stressors differ considerably by age, gender, declaration of course of study, place of living, work status, student status, sojourn status, first generation student and religiosity.

Age

No correlation existed between age and the different groups of stressors. This could be attributed to the absence of variation in the age of students who took part in this study since most ages ranged between 17 and 22 years old (see table 4-1). The majority of students are traditional students (see definition page 18).

Gender

The result of the study indicated that more males than females attended the university and the participants in both the questionnaire and the semi-structured interview agreed that males had significantly more frequent occurrences of stressors than females in items related to “Developmental Challenges” (refer to Appendix-E). A possible reason to explain this is the cultural pressure exerted on males to secure their future careers. In the Middle Eastern culture, the male is required to help support his parents and unmarried sisters, even after his marriage. Soon after graduation, he is expected to get married and pay for the expenses of the pre-wedding preparation and wedding ceremony. After marriage, the wife can choose not to work and stay at home to raise her kids. All in all, these customs exert great pressure on the young male university students to graduate and start fulfilling his duties. This is in agreement with Forrest (1997) who found that males reported more frequency of stress than females in a study conducted at Grand Valley State University in the US on 420 students. However, earlier research and literature on gender differences and stress indicated that females reported more frequent stressors than males (Misra and McKean 2000; Cushway, 1992). Abouserie (1994) concluded that female students score significantly higher than their male counterparts on both academic and life stress. Also Erickson et al. (1994), Fraiser and Schauben (1994), and Toews et al. (1993) reported that women experience more perceived stress than men do.

Course of Study

Students who did not have a declared course of study (mostly males) reported significantly more frequency of stress than those students who had a declared course of study (refer to Appendix-E). This is not surprising considering how stressful it is for students to select a course of study.

According to Titley and Titley (1980), declaring a course of study early in the college experience bring a degree of focus, stability, and decreased anxiety to students. Thus it was not unexpected to find that the most statistically significant frequency items on the questionnaire for students without a declared course of study were such items as “Choice of major or main course of study” and “Important decisions about your future career”. A possible reason is that the family in the Lebanese community expects their son or daughter to follow in their footsteps in whatever the families believe is appropriate. This was clearly indicated in the interview by some students who were still undecided on a course of study. These students were more concerned about choosing a course of study that will allow them to get a good job with good pay and parentally and/or socially acceptable. Overall, the findings in this study are consistent with the findings of previous studies.

Student Status

Although more males than females were full time students probably as a result of cultural values, no significant relationship was found between the different stressors and being a full-time or a part-time student. Past research concerning stress and student status have produced inconsistent results. However, some researchers believe that part-time students, who generally combine several roles, experience greater stress due to the multiple roles and social isolation, and frequently perform more poorly than full-time students (Macan, 1990; Lusk and Miller, 1985; Cruthirds and Strong 1984).

Work status

Whether males or females, working students' stress came from various areas such as time constraints, personal issues, transportation and financial concerns (refer to Appendix-E). A possible explanation as to why they had stress related to these areas is that working students have less time to focus on their personal affairs; commuting between college and work is a difficult task in a country like Lebanon known for traffic jams and bad public transportation; and students are working to help with their tuition especially with the rising cost of education (see page 92). This result is somewhat expected. Attending college and working at the same time is a difficult endeavour especially if you are full time students.

While students, who did not work, reported more frequency of stress with regard to too many responsibilities, which was later, confirmed by the interviewees who indicated that family social pressures added a burden to the students who are already weighed down with many responsibilities.

Parents' Level of Education

First generation students experienced less stress in the areas of “Developmental Challenges” and “Social Problems” than those who were not first generation (refer to Appendix-E). Interviewed first-generation students agreed that their parents were proud of them just for attending a university and exerted no pressure on them to perform. This is contrary to past research by Zalaquette (1999) who found that first generation students attending four year college may experience more stress for they are less prepared for college, may carry false expectations and lack the amount of support from parents than do children who are not first generation students. Also, Van (2002) conducted a research on first generation freshmen students at four universities and reported that they felt the pressure to dedicate more time for studying, feared that they might fail college, and worried about financial aid. However, a four year research programme following the progress of more than 200 first-year students at in Lancashire at the Edge Hill College of Higher Education, found that first generation students had less difficulty with transition to college and that students with close relatives who had completed a degree were more likely to experience anxiety, stress and depression than students with families with no higher-education experience for they were expected to do better than a brother, cousin or parent (Bee, 2003).

Religiosity

Religiosity tends to be significantly related to some “Developmental Challenges” items (refer to Appendix-E). Students who affiliate with religion and attend had less stress than those who did not attend or affiliate. This may be due to being influenced by a religious environment and believing in a Higher Power whom you can always solicit in times of trouble. This is in accordance with Wallson et al., (1983) who on the bases of social- support theory indicated that

religious involvement result in supportive ties, and so religiousness might be expected to lessen stress.

It is not surprising that the majority of respondents indicated religious affiliation for religion in Lebanon is a fact that often determines social and political identification (McDaniel, 2004). What was surprising is that females are more religious than males (affiliate and attend) as a result of cultural pressure on females to conform to the “accepted standards” of behaviour (Ghazi, 1997) and so as indicated in the interview they resort to religion as an indirect coping strategy.

Place of living

Living with parents or not did not have any statistical significance to any of the stressors. This is not surprising for the majority of individuals in Lebanon whether males or females are expected to remain with their families until they marry. Nevertheless, the few interviewees who live in the dormitory or off campus but not with parents and whose parents are living in Lebanon, suggested that “semi-residents”, experience a different type of stressor related mainly to social problems (for more details refer to pages 94 and 117). Further research is needed to explore this particular area.

Sojourn Students

Stressors relating to cultural difficulties (cross-cultural adaptation, Language difficulties, and difficulties with immigration) were not significantly correlated with any demographic variables. Nevertheless, students who lived outside Lebanon all their life felt homesick and needed more time to “fit in” than those who lived outside Lebanon for the last three years or never (refer to Appendix-E). This is not surprising for they are away from their home and environment for the first time, coupled with unlimited freedom, and adjustment issue. In addition, they have added daily responsibilities such as doing their own laundry, cooking and cleaning. Being in a different environment can cause students a great deal of stress, because these students move away from home for the first time, and thus are away from friends and family who provide social support for them (Pancer et al., 2000).

On the other hand, these students had less stress in relation to grade achievement and financial matters. This could be as a result of less direct parental influence and considering that LAU is an expensive university (relative to other universities in the area) those coming from abroad to study can probably afford it. According to Church (1982) the most important problems for foreign students appear to be homesickness, language difficulties, adjusting to a new educational system and social customs and norms, financial problems, and for some students, racial discrimination.

Also when interviewed, students who lived outside Lebanon all their life felt homesick and needed some time to adjust to the new culture. However, many indicated that they were enjoying the experience and already feel at home which was in agreement with the questionnaire results. The attitude of the Lebanese people in general proved to be a very important element in reducing stress and in helping the sojourner to adjust. The more receptive the environment is to the international student, the more likely he/she has a successful adaptation. According to Zimmerman (1995) the ability to communicate with fellow students is essential to trans-cultural adaptation in an academic setting. The level of acceptance and openness toward newcomers by members of the dominant group affects the immigrants' degree of host country identification and possibility of integration (Nesdale and Max, 2000).

Academic and Non-academic Services

A descriptive analysis revolved around the question what academic and non-academic services do first-year students use to reduce their stress revealed that several students did not benefit from the services available to them. These differences suggest that the students may not be aware of or interested in the different services available or offered by the university. Nevertheless for those students who indicated that they have used the services, the following results can be drawn:

Academic Services

Although the academic services did not show a reduction in stress for all participants, still, the students in this study when interviewed or when responding to the questionnaire, stressed the importance of interacting with faculty and advisors in reducing their stress with a significant relation to first generation students (refer to table 4-5 and Appendix-F). This is in accordance

with the study by Woodside et al. (1999) entitled “The Effect of Student-Faculty Interaction on College Students’ Academic Achievement and Self Concept” which studies a sample of 106 females and 77 males in a midsize university in southern California. The study reported that in-class verbal and non-verbal communication influence the students’ feelings of competence and academic achievement level in college. Whitman et al. (1987) also asserts that positive teacher-student relation inside and outside the classroom affects students’ satisfaction with college, because when students feel they belong to an academic community they tend to feel less stressed as well as cope better with stress.

On the other hand, 43.6% of the students who responded to the questionnaire indicated that they used “academic advising” (see table 4-5). These students agreed with the majority of interviewees that academic advising tended to reduce their stress level. Also academic advising was found to be significant with gender and student status (refer to Appendix-F). More females and part time students agreed that it decreased stress. This suggests that the students feel the need to interact with those individuals directly related with their academic environment, to manage their stress that as pointed earlier, mostly comes from the academic environment. Part time students probably need help from advisors since they spend less time on campus and thus interact less with others. Females on the other hand are known to seek counselling more than males (Fraiser and Schauben, 1994) and probably seek the advice of their advisors more than males in order to find the answers to questions that might be causing them stress. According to Cuseo (2003, p. 5) “college students clearly need support from effective academic advisors to negotiate the challenging and sometimes confusing process of educational planning and decision making.”

Although mentoring is not formally offered at LAU and was not one of the services that was among the top frequently used academic services by the students (43.2% used the service), still it was found to be significant with religion (refer to Appendix-F). 33.3% of those who affiliated with religion and attended indicated that it decreased their stress. This could lead one to conclude that students need to affiliate with someone to guide them just as they do when they turn to God for guidance.

Non-academic services

Peer interaction was the main non-academic service used by students who responded to the questionnaire in this study (61.8%) though it did not reduce the stress for all students equally. For some students it actually increased stress (39.0%) (see table 4-5). Also when interviewed, many agreed that “peer support” helped them adjust while others indicated that it brought about more cultural pressure. A survey using 863 undergraduates from three universities located in the southeast United States found that freshmen reported negative events happening to them more than upper classes and that affiliation opportunities were a source of stress among these students. However, part of the healing process included social support from peers (Jackson, 2001). This is also in agreement with Endres (1992) who found that one of the methods of coping with stress as reported used the most by the students in his study included “talking with friends”. Nevertheless, it can be stressful for some students to try and find someone they can share things with for the support they used to have. However, it is worth mentioning that (Dill and Henley, 1998) have suggested that events such as social outings and activities may increase stress rather than reduce it. In addition, Greenberg (2004) found that “giving up or changing old friendships and developing new ones is often a stressful activity associated with college life” (p.304). He suggested that friendships are coping mechanisms that can be negatively affected during the students’ first year in college.

Although first-year students at LAU are provided with an orientation program that familiarizes them with basic information about the university at the beginning of the year, nevertheless, when interviewed, students felt that they needed more than a two days for orientation to help them adjust.

Students also indicated the need for counselling knowing that no official centre at LAU exists. When interviewed, students indicated resorting to occasionally talking to friends, faculty and/or staff about their problems. Consulting a trusted friend or a counsellor has a considerable advantage in bringing thoughts and feelings into the open, which have been found to be beneficial (Fisher, 1994). However, according to Haidar (2004), the issue of counselling in Lebanon is still a taboo, students want to visit a counsellor but do not do so thinking that people would stigmatise them as mad.

Although there is a University Health Service at LAU, still the university does not have a health promoting program such as that found at other universities like the University of Lancashire, Duke University Health System among others (see pages 47-49 for details)..

Sources of Stress and their Consequences for First-Year Students

Looking back at the Model derived from the literature in chapter two page 56, the results indicate that the sources of stress for first-year students at LAU are similar to those mentioned in the literature although they might vary in relation to demographic factors. The great majority of students at LAU are traditional students straight out of high school, full timers, not married, many still live with parents, not regular practitioners of religious activities, and some are first generation students while others are sojourners. The results indicated that the stress level for the students who took part in the study was moderate, with the highest stress level in the area of “developmental challenges” and the least for “social problems”. According to the model, low-moderate stress should yield favourable outcomes. Nevertheless, stress is an individualistic phenomenon. An event may be stressful for one person and not stressful for another, and what might cause you stress today may not necessarily be a stress producer tomorrow (Greenberg, 2004; Schafer, 2000).

The academic and non-academic support services used by LAU first-year students did indicate that some services reduced stress for some students while others increased or had no effect on stress. Faculty interaction inside classroom, academic advising, peer interaction, and orientation seemed to be the services most used by the students for support. While other services, which are not formally offered at LAU, such as counselling and mentoring, were also indicated as important to some groups of students (refer to results pages 94-96). LAU administration stresses on having a friendly atmosphere and appoints advisors for students based on their course of study. Newly admitted students are asked to meet with their advisor prior to registration. The problem is that advising starts with the beginning of classes causing stress for the students and the advisors. The orientation program at LAU is a two-day program two weeks before the beginning of the fall semester. Only around 50% of the students took part in this program. With the open admission policy and a number of sojourners who normally arrive few days before the

beginning of the semester, this is not a good strategy. Some students will not have the chance to participate in such a program.

It is difficult to measure the favourable or unfavourable outcomes in the model at this stage. The effect on the GPA cannot be determined since the research took place before the end of the students' first semester. The university had no statistics available on persistence in college, which can be measured by the drop out rate. Satisfaction with the university was discussed in the interviews and the open-ended question. The answers varied; 10 students did indicate satisfaction with the university while 5 students indicated some dissatisfaction and 3 students complete dissatisfaction, which could lead sometimes to low GPA, academic probation, or leaving the university. However, according to the registrar's office, it is difficult to know the percentage of first-year first term students on probation by the end of the first semester for students are not placed on probation before they complete at least 20 credits. As for attrition, only 4 mentioned missing many classes. Further research is needed to explore these areas.

The following chapter presents the conclusion based on the findings of the study and includes the answers to the key questions, the importance of the findings, limitations, recommendations, and recommendations for future research, and a conclusion.

Chapter Six

Conclusion

This study sought to answer questions relating to the primary sources of stress for first-year students at LAU and whether they vary among selected demographic variables. Another purpose was to determine the academic and non-academic support services used by these students in order to reduce stress and whether they differ by demographic variables and are perceived as reducers of stress.

The key questions were explored through questionnaires and interviews.

- Question one: What do first-year students at LAU identify as their sources of stress?
- Question two: Do these stressors vary among the sample group of first-year students at LAU based on: gender, age, marital status, declaration of course of study, place of living, work status, student status, sojourning status, first generation student and religiosity?
- Question three: What kind of institutional support services do LAU students actively use that help in the reduction of stress?
- Question four: What is the awareness of the students to the effectiveness of the university –employed support services on their stress level? Do these stressors vary among the sample group of first-year students at LAU based on: gender, age, marital status, declaration of course of study, place of living, work status, student status, sojourning status, first generation student and religiosity?

The overall results showed that in this particular sample of students, the majority are traditional students and have experienced similar stressors as those mentioned in the different literature. However, there were several particular findings that might be related to the culture and/or to the student's background and social influence.

Key question one: What do first-year students at LAU identify as their sources of stress?

The overall results of this study have shown that the young students embarking on their first year at college report moderate levels of stress. Nevertheless, they are astounded by the many responsibilities facing them. They spend much of their energy trying to adapt to the new environment and social scene, as well as trying to make independent decisions. Thus, in conclusion, stressors corresponding to academic factors, decision-making and time pressure issues constitute the main sources of stress for first-year students at LAU.

Key question two: Do these stressors vary among the sample group of first-year students at LAU based on: gender, age, marital status, declaration of course of study, place of living, work status, student status, sojourning status, first generation student and religiosity?

The results indicated that males had significantly more frequent occurrences of stress than females in the area of developmental challenges, and although more males than females were full time students, no differences exist in the levels of perceived stress between full-time students and part-time students.

First generation students experienced less stress in the areas of “Developmental Challenges” and “Social Problems” than did those who were not first generation students, and students who did not have a declared course of study (mostly males) had more stress than those students who had a declared course of study.

Working students’ stress came from various areas such as time constraints, personal issues, transportation and financial concerns. On the other hand, non-working students appear to have more social stress than working students.

The majority of students are religiously affiliated. Yet, the majority of students who affiliate with religion and attend were females and had less stress than did those students who did not affiliate with religion or attend.

Although more females than males live with their parents, no differences in the levels of perceived stress were indicated for living with parents or not. However, semi-residents (live on or off campus but are required to go home on weekends and holidays) did indicate stress relating mainly to social problem. Also students who lived outside Lebanon all their life had more stress in relation to cultural adjustment issues than those students who lived outside Lebanon for the last three years or never. On the other hand, these students had less stress in relation to parental pressure and financial matters (refer to Appendix-E).

Key question three: What support services do LAU students actively use in order to reduce stress?

The study showed that the most frequently used academic support services by LAU students were, “Faculty Interaction Inside Classroom” and “Academic Advising” for males and females, and full-time and part-time students alike. On the other hand, the most frequently used non-academic support services were “Peer Interaction” and “Orientation” However, the orientation service was more used by Full-time students.

Key question four: What are the students’ perceptions of the effectiveness of the university – employed support services on their stress level? Do these stressors vary among the sample group of first-year students at LAU based on: gender, age, marital status, declaration of course of study, place of living, work status, student status, sojourning status, first generation student and religiosity?

The support services employed by first-year students at LAU to help manage stress were not always perceived as effectively reducing their stress level. Academic advising was found to reduce stress for females and part time students, faculty interaction inside classroom for first generation students, and mentoring for students who affiliated with religion and attended religious activities at the same time students (refer to Appendix-F).

On the other hand, many students reported not using many of the different support services. Thus, by simply offering such programs to help students better cope with their stress, does not

mean that students will take advantage of them. More effort is then needed in investigating the reasons why students do not use such services.

Importance of Study Findings

This study has stressed the need for a better understanding of the sources of stress for first-year students and their perception of the support services that helps them to reduce the stress they feel. No prior studies appear to have been carried out on such a subject at LAU or any other higher educational institution in Lebanon.

This thesis has identified the sources of stress for first-year students in a Lebanese university and their perception of the university support services available to help them reduce their stress. Prior knowledge of the situations that are stress- producing and the students' perception of the support services can assist students and university administrators alike.

The benefits accruing to the students are the result of:

- Identification of the sources of stress for first-year students can help such group of students better deal with these stressors.
- Awareness of the available support services.
- Benefits derived from the use of the different services.
- More satisfaction with college leading to persistence

The benefits accruing to the university are:

- Identification of the sources of student stress can be utilized in many important ways: through institutional action that will adjust various services such as; academic advising, policies and procedures on orientation programs, teaching and learning process, learning assistance programs, student activities, and counselling to provide a less stressful atmosphere and the nurturance necessary for academic achievement.
- Lower drop out rate as a result of increased satisfaction with the university, which could lead to a better financial standing for the university.

Limitations

The following limitations exist in this study: First, this research is based on a sample from one campus, the results of which should be considered in context, and should not be generalized to all LAU first-year students and to the Lebanese first- year college population in general without further investigation. Second, only 1 female sojourner who lives in the dormitory responded to the interview. Third, the first-year first semester students who took part in the study were all considered as one group and were not divided on the bases of those enrolled as freshmen (just after high school) and those enrolled as sophomores (sat for the Lebanese Baccalaureate II government exam). Finally, a warning should be given when interpreting the results; it could be that other measures of stress factors and supportive services would produce different results. For example, the researcher measured only stress at the university not individual stress factors.

Recommendations

The success of first-year students is related to academic and non-academic services and programs. Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are suggested for practice at the university:

Faculty, staff and college administration need to know who the first-year students are as individuals, as well as understand that these students are divided into many subgroups (e.g. gender, status, etc.) (refer to table 4-1, page 86). Thus, institutions of higher education should have available well-trained staff and competent advisers that are aware of the special needs and problems of freshmen students, on order to reduce the risk of their dropping out.

Faculty and advisers should develop a better relationship with their students to help them better cope (refer to page 99 for results). Assisting them in, managing their time wisely, developing better study habits, encouraging them to join a student group such as a club, and/or recommend counselling when necessary. On the other hand, academic advising can be more effective when the advisers are better trained and evaluated as well as providing a user-friendly registration system.

Orientation programs should aim at progressively integrating the students into university life rather than abruptly moving from high school into college. There are many ways that can help students integrate in a smoother manner at college. First, there should be programs that follow first-year students' progress. Second, students should be able to meet with various people responsible at the university in order to communicate their needs and frustrations. Finally, learning skills' workshops should be a fundamental part to any orientation program, in which students are taught study skills and time management skills in order to better cope with balancing their schedules between study, work, and leisure. The sources of stress reported most common for first-year students (refer to Table 4-2 page 86 for results) could be discussed with incoming students, and effective coping strategies suggested. The researcher believes that students should be informed of and encouraged to use the campus resources that are available to help them address these stressors. Furthermore, it is recommended that the university engage in promoting public and private health through adopting a health promoting program.

Provide incoming students with mentors from upper classes (such as juniors and seniors) for a period of at least three months to help with adjustment (see page 100 for results).

Additional support should be provided for sojourning students to help them better adjust to the new environment such as the creation of a special service office to help with the formalities and the social integration of these students. Visa assistance, degree equivalence, the introduction of students to the local community and costumes, and activities that assist with the integration of those students with the locals are examples of such activities that should be handled by such an office (see page 89 for results).

The establishment of a career planning and counselling centre may help students on how to go about selecting a course of study and facilitate guidance towards a more positive emotional experience for the first-year students who are under stress.

These recommendations might serve as a useful first step in the design of institutional studies to formulate appropriate measures to deal with first-year student stress.

Recommendations for Future Research

The study has come out with meaningful findings, which could be used by academicians in their research work and university policy makers when developing strategies that will aid first-year students in getting better adjusted to university life. Most importantly the findings will also direct the design of a more in-depth nationwide research effort across all universities in order to create a conducive environment for implementing better adjustment strategies.

Many studies have been done on sojourners moving from underdeveloped to developed countries (Sarkodie-Mensah, 1998; Kibbi, 1995). It is recommended that further studies should explore the opposite paths to shed light on other pertinent factors that are stress producing to foreign students.

It is recommended to carry out research on the subjects of attrition, probation, suspension, and drop out to determine the different stressors' impact on them.

Further research is also needed to explore the new term "semi-residents" and to see whether this peculiar finding applies in another culture.

Finally, studies are needed in other universities of Lebanon and among students of other types of campuses (e.g. French universities) to evaluate the generality of these findings.

Conclusions

As a freshmen student, I had to travel far to study in another country because of the war in Lebanon. The experience at the time brought me a lot of anxiety without knowing why. Conducting this research has helped me answer many of the questions I never had the answer to and probably is the reason why I included the sojourning factor in this study. Also the awareness I gained from this research made me feel greater responsibility towards first-year students as an advisor, a teacher and a member of the financial aid counsel. However, it is always good to reflect on ones work and ask yourself, what would you have done differently?

If I had to do this work over again in depth, I would probably give more weight to the qualitative part of the study and probably interview a wider sample of students and I would also conduct “focus group” interviews to produce information in greater depth in the hope that some students might be encouraged to talk about stressors they suffer from more openly if they feel that others share similar experiences. It might also bring out important insights that I may have overlooked and are relevant to the study.

My discussion with the person in charge of the guidance office at LAU (see definition page 97) prompted great interest in my topic and a copy of the complete thesis was requested to be used as a stepping stone towards improving those areas that the study identifies and to help with updating the policies and procedures at LAU. I was also asked to assist in preparing and conducting the orientation program at the university.

References

- Abouserie, R. (1994). Perceived Academic Stress, Gender and Subject of Study in University Students. *Welsh Journal of Education*, 4(1), 40-44.
- Adler, P. S. (1975). The Transitional Experience: An Alternative View of Culture Shock. *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, 15, 13-23.
- Allen, B. A. (1994). The Student in Higher Education: Non-traditional Student Retention. *Catalyst*, 23(3), 1-7.
- Allen, S., & Hiebert, B. (1991). Stress and Coping in Adolescents. *Canadian Journal of Counseling*, 25(1), 19-32.
- Alisat, S. (2000, Jan). Cognitive Complexity of Expectations and adjustment to University in the first Year. *Journal of Adolescent Research*, 15(1), 38-57.
- Altmaier, E. M. (1983). *Helping Students Manage Stress*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Inc.
- Amirkham, J. H. (1998). Attributions as Predictors of Coping and Distress. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 24, 1006-1018.
- Arab Net. (2002). *Lebanon*. Retrieved June 14, 2004, from http://www.arab.net/lebanon/ln_education.htm
- Archer, J., & Lamnin, A. (1985). An Investigation of Personal and Academic Stressors on College Campuses. *Journal of College Student Personnel*, 26(3), 210-215.
- Arizona Leadership 2000 & Beyond. (1999). *The AZL2000 & Beyond Mentoring Guide*. Retrieved June 26, 2001, from www.igc.org/azl2000/alumni/guide.htm
- Aspinwall, L. G., & Taylor, S. E. (1992). Modeling Cognitive Adaptation: A Longitudinal Investigation of the Impact of Individual Differences and Coping on College Adjustment and Performance. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 63, 989-1003.
- Astin, A. W. (1975). *Preventing Students from Dropping Out*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Astin, A. W. (1984). Student Involvement: A Developmental Theory for Higher Education. *Journal of College Students Personnel*, 25, 298-307.
- Astin, A. W. (1993). *The American Freshman: National Norms for fall 1993*. California: U. C. L. A. Higher Education Research Institute.

- Astin, A.W. (1997). *What Matters in College? Four Critical Years Revisited*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Astin, A.W. (1999, Sep/Oct). Student Involvement: A Developmental Theory for Higher education. *Journal of College Student development*, Retrieved April 27, 2006 from http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qa3752/is_199909/ai_n8859160/print
- Axelrod, J., Erhard, T., Freedman, M. B., & Mayhew, L. B. (1968). *Stress and Campus Response*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass.
- Babbie, E. A. (1991). *Survey Research Methods* (2nd ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
- Baker, R. W., & Nidorf, L. J. (1964). Pattern of Occurrence of Psychological Disturbances in College Students as a Function of Year Level. *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 20, 530-531.
- Barakat, H. (1993). *The Arab World: Society, Culture, and State*. California: University of California Press.
- Baron, R. A., & Greenberg, J. (1990). *Behavior in Organizations* (3 ed.). Massachusetts: Allyn and Bacon, a Division of Simon and Schuster.
- Bassey, M. (1998). Fuzzy Generalization and Professional Discourse. *Research Intelligence*, 63, 20-24.
- Bassey, M (1999). *Case Study Research in Educational Settings*. United Kingdom: Open University Press.
- Bassey, M. (2000). Case Study Research in Educational Settings. In C. Coleman & A.R.J. Briggs (Eds.), *Research Methods in Educational Leadership and Management* (pp. 108-121). London: Paul Chapman Publishing.
- Baum, A., Singer, J., & Baum, C. (1981). Stress and the Environment. *Journal of Social Issues*, 37(1), 4-35.
- Beard, S., Elmore, R., & Lange, S. (1982). Assessment of Student Needs: Areas of Stress in the Campus Environment. *Journal of College Student Personnel*, 23, 348-350.
- Beck, R., Taylor, C., & Robbins, M. (2002). Missing Home: Sociotropy and Autonomy and Their Relationship to Psychological Distress and Homesickness in College Freshmen. *Anxiety, Stress and Coping*, 16(2), 155-166.
- Bee, P. (2003, November 26). *Staying the Course*. Retrieved January 18, 2005, from Timesonline Web Site: <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/article/0,,3561-909296,00.html>
- Bell, J. (1993). *Doing Your Research*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

- Benjamin, L. (1987). Understanding and Managing Stress in the Academic World. Retrieved March 22, 2003, from ERIC Clearinghouse on Counseling and Personnel Services Web Site: http://www.ericfacility.net/databases/ERIC_Digests/ed291017.html
- Benjamin, L., & Walz, G. R. (1987). Counseling Students and Faculty for Stress Management. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 279 917).
- Benson, H. (1994). Dr. Herbert Benson Tells What Wellness is all About. *Health Confidential*. In Olpin, (1996). Perceived Stress Levels and sources of stress Among College Students: Methods, Frequency, and effectiveness of Mapping Stress by College Students. *Dissertation Abstracts International*, UMI Number: 9708771.
- Benson, H., & Stuart, E. I. (1993). *The Wellness Book: The Comprehensive Guide to Maintaining Health and Treating Stress-related Illness*. New York: Carol Publishing Group.
- Bentman, H. (2000, September 12). *School's in Session, so is the Stress*. Retrieved February 25, 2003, from McGill Tribune Web Site: http://tribune.mcgill.ca/current_volume/issue2/features/f5.php3
- Bierema, L. L. (1996, Summer). How Executive Women Learn Corporate Culture. *Human Resource Development Quarterly*, 7 (2), 145-146.
- Billson, J. M., & Terry, M. B. (1982). In Search of the Silken Purse: Factors in Attrition Among First-generation Students. *College and University*, 58, 57-75.
- Blascovich, J., & Mendes, W. B. (2001). Challenge and Threat Appraisals: The Role of Affective Cues. In J. Forgas (Ed.), *Feeling and Thinking: The Role of Affect in Social Cognition* (pp. 59-82). New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Blonna, R. (2004). *Coping with Stress in a Changing World* (3rd ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill Inc.
- Bochner, S. (1972). Problems in Cultural Learning. In S. Bochner & P. Wicks (Eds.), (1982). *Overseas Students in Australia* (pp. 65-81). Randwick, New South Wales: New South Wales' University Press.
- Brawer, F. B. (1996). Retention-Attrition in the Nineties. Retrieved March 11, 2003, from ERIC Clearing House for Community Colleges Web Site: http://www.ericfacility.net/databases/ERIC_Digests/ed393510.html
- Brewin, C. R., Furnham, A., & Howes, M. (1989). Demographic and Psychological Determinants of Homesickness and Confiding among Students. *British Journal of Psychology*, 80, 467-477.
- Brody, C. M. (1976). *The Peer Group*. New Jersey: General Learning Press.

- Brubacher, J. S., & Rudy, W. (1997). *Higher Education in Transition: History of American Colleges and Universities* (4th ed.). USA: Brodart Company.
- Bryde, J. F., & Milburn, C. M. (1990). Helping to Make the Transition from High School to College. In R. L. Emans (Ed.), *Understanding Undergraduate Education* (pp. 203-213). Vermillion, SD: University of South Dakota Press.
- Bryman, A. (2001). *Social Research Methods*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Burns, R. B. (2000). *Introduction to Research Methods* (4th ed.). London: Sage Publication Ltd.
- Burt, C. D. B. (1993). Concentration and Academic Ability Following Transition to University: An Investigation of the Effects of Homesickness. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 13, 333-342.
- Bush, T., & Middlewood, D. (1997). *Managing People in Education*. London: Paul Chapman Publishing.
- Cameron, K. S., & Ettington, D. R. (1988). The Conceptual Foundations of Organizational Culture. In J.C.Smart (Ed.), *Higher Education: Handbook of Theory and Research IV* (pp. 356-396). New York: Agathon Press Inc.
- Campbell, D. E., & Campbell, T. A. (2000). The Mentoring Relationship: Differing Perceptions of Benefits. *College Student Journal*, 34(4), 516-523.
- Campbell, R. L., & Svenson, L. W. (1992). Perceived Level of Stress among University Undergraduate Students in Edmonton, Canada. *Perceptual and Motor Skills*, 75(2), 552-554.
- Cannell, C. F., & Kahn, R. L. (1968). Interviewing. In G. Lindzey, & E. Aronson, (Eds.), *The Handbook of Social Psychology*, vol. 2, *Research Methods*. New York: Addison-Wesley. Quoted in L. Cohen, L. Manion, & K. Morrison, (2000). *Research Methods in Education* (5th ed.). London: Routledge.
- Cannon, W. (1932). *The Wisdom of the Body*. New York: W. W. Norton.
- Caredeo, N. (2003). *The Effects of Generation Status and Parental Pressure on College Adjustment and Achievement Motivation*. Retrieved January 18, 2005, from Saint Anselm College Web Site: <http://www.anselm.edu/internet/psych/sr2003/caredeo/caredeo.htm>
- Chaskes, J. (1996). The First-year Student as Immigrant. *Journal of the Freshman Year Experience & Students in Transition*, 8(1), 79-91.
- Chell, E. (2001). *Entrepreneurship: Globalization, Innovation and Developments*. London: Thomson Learning.
- Church, A. T. (1982). Sojourner Adjustment. *Psychological Bulletin*, 91(3), 540-572.

- Clark, B. R. (1970). *The Distinctive College: Antioch, Reed and Swarthmore*. Chicago: Aldine.
- Clemens, J. K. (1986). A Lesson From 431 B.C.: The Idea that Corporate Culture Can Help You Win Dates Back to Ancient Greece. *Fortune*, 114, 116-118.
- Clements, E. (n.d.). Creating a Campus Climate in Which Diversity is Truly Valued. Cited in K. Szelenyi, (2001). *Minority Student Retention and Academic Achievement in Community Colleges*. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 451 859).
- Cobb, S. (1976). Social Support as a Moderator of Life Stress. *Psychosomatic Medicine*, 38, 300-314.
- Cohen, L. (1988). Measurement of Life Events. In L. Cohen (Ed.), *Life Events and Psychological Functioning* (pp. 11-30). Newburg Park, CA: Sage Publications.
- Cohen, L., Manion, L. & Morrison, K. (2000). *Research Methods in Education* (5th ed.). London: Routledge.
- Cohen, S., & Wills, T. (1985). Stress, Social Support, and the Buffering Hypothesis. *Psychological Bulletin*, 98, 310-357.
- Coll, K. M. and VonSeggern, D. Community College Student Retention: Some Procedural and Programmatic Suggestions. Paper Presented at the Wyoming Higher Education Student Affairs Conference. Powell, Wyoming. Cited in B. Brawer, (1996). *Retention-Attrition in the Nineties*. Retrieved October 15, 2004, from ERIC Clearinghouse for Community Colleges Web Site: http://www.ed.gov/database/ERIC_Digest/ed393510.html
- Colosi, L. (1997). Reliability and Validity: What's the Difference? *The Layman's Guide to Social Research Methods*. Retrieved June 28, 2005, from Web Site: <http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/tutorial/Colosi/lcolosi2.htm>
- Converse, J. M., & Presser, S. (1986). *Survey Questions: Handcrafting the Standardized Questionnaire*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Coolican, H. (2003). *Introduction to Research Methods in Statistics and Psychology* (2nd ed.). London: Hodder and Stoughton.
- Covington, M.V. (1993). A Motivational Analysis of Academic Life in College. In J. Smart (Ed.), *Higher Education: Handbook of Theory and Research*, vol. 9, (pp. 50-93). New York: Agathon Press.
- Cox, J., Daniel, N., & Boston, B. O. (1985). *Educating Able Learners: Programs and Promoting Practices*. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.
- Cox, T., & Mackay, C. J. (1976). A Psychological Model of Occupational Stress. Cited in T. Cox, (1978). *Stress*. Basing Stoke-U.K.: Macmillan.

- Coxon, k. (2001, May 8). The Stress of Exams Can Precipitate Student Mental Health Problem. *The Gaurdian*. Retrieved May 9, 2003 from <http://0-proquest.umi.com.novacat.nova.edu/pqdweb?TS=1052471979&RQT=309&CC=2...>
- Crawford, M. (1997). Managing Stress in Education. In T. Bush & D. Middlewood (Eds.), *Managing People in Education* (pp. 113-122). London: Paul Chapman Publishing Ltd.
- Cruthirds, T., & Strong, M. P. (1984). Comparative Performance on the Foundation Examination: A Measure of the Learning Outcomes of Part-time Versus Full-time Master's Program Students. *Journal of Continuing Social Work Education*, 3, 4-11.
- Cuseo, J. (2003, February 13). *Academic Advisement and Student Retention: Empirical Connections and Systemic Interventions*. Retrieved January 27, 2005, from Policy Center on the First Year of College, Brevard College Web Site: <http://www.brevard.edu/fyc/listserv/remarks/cuseorientation.htm>
- Cuseo, J.B. (1997). *Freshman –Orientation Seminar at the Community College: A Research-Based Rationale for its Value, Content, and Delivery*. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 411 005).
- Cushway, D. (1992). Stress in Clinical Psychology Trainees. *British Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 31, 169-179.
- Day, Arla L; Livingstone, Holly A. (2003). Gender differences in perceptions of stressors and utilization of social support among university students. *Canadian Journal of Behavioural Science*, Vol. 35, No. 2, page 73-83.
- Dalton, J. (2003). The Negative Influences of Some College Student Peer Groups. In *Ethical Issues on Campus*. Retrieved October 15, 2004, from Journal of College and Character Web Site: <http://www.collegevalues.org/ethics.cfm?id=611&a=1>
- Davis, K., & Newstrom, J. W. (1989). *Human Behavior at Work* (8 ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company.
- Deacon, D., Bryman, A., & Fenton, N. (1998). Collision or Collusion? A Discussion of the Unplanned Triangulation of Quantitative and Qualitative Research Methods. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 1, 47-63.
- Deal, T. E., & Kennedy, A. A. (1982). *Corporate Cultures: The Rites and Rituals of Corporate Life*. Reading, Mass: Addison-Wesley Pub Co.
- Denzin, N. K. (1970). *The Research Act in Sociology*. Chicago: Aldine.
- Denzin, N. K. (1978). *Sociological Methods*. New York: McGraw Hill.

- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2005). *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (3rd ed.). California: Sage Publications.
- Deroos, R.L. (1977). Environmental Health and Safety in the Academic Setting. *American Journal of Public Health*, 67, 851-854.
- Dill, P. L., & Henley, T. B. (1998). Stressors of College: A Comparison of Traditional and Non-traditional Students. *Journal of Psychology*, 132(1), 25-32.
- Dobson, C. B., & Metcalfe, R. J. (1983). Reliability and Validity of the Student Stress Inventory (sixth form version). *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 53, 121-125.
- Dohrenwend, B., & Shrout, P. (1985). "Hassles" in the Conceptualization and Measurement of Life Stress Variables. *American Psychologist*, 40(7), 780-785.
- Dooris, M. (May 2001). Health Promoting Universities: Policy and Practice-A UK Perspective. Paper Prepared for Discussion at Community-Campus partnerships for Health's 5th Annual Conference. *Community-Campus Partnerships for Health*. Retrieved June 02, 2006, from http://depts.washington.edu/ccph/pdf_files/p-dooris.pdf
- Drever, E. (1995). *Using Semi-Structured Interviews in Small-Scale Research: A Teacher's Guide*. Edinburgh: SCRE publication 129.
- Dunkel-Schetter, C., & Lobel, M. (1990). Stress Among Students. *New Directions for Student Services*, 49, 17-34.
- Duranti A. (1997). *Linguistic Anthropology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- D'Zurilla, T. J., & Sheedy, C. F. (1991). Relation Between Social Problem-solving Ability and Subsequent Level of Psychological Stress in College Students. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 61(5), 841-846.
- Eaton, N. W. (1978). Life Events, Social Support, and Psychiatric Symptoms: A Reanalysis of the New Haven Data. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 19, 230-234.
- Endres, F. F. (1992). Stress in Professional Classes: Causes, Manifestation, Coping. *Journalism Educator*, 47(1), 16-30.
- Ensel, W. M., & Nan, L. (1991). The life Stress Paradigm and Psychological Distress. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 32, 321-341.
- Erickson, B. L., & Strommer, D. W. (1991). *Teaching College Freshman*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Evan, C.H. and Mrazik, R. (Eds.). (Fall 2005). CDC Recognizes Advances in Care. *Health Searchlight: The American Network of Health Promoting Universities*. Retrieved June 01, 2006, from www.ahcnet.org/pdf/searchlight_fall_2005.pdf

- Eysenck, H. J. (1996). Personality and Cancer. In C. L. Cooper (Ed.), *Handbook of Stress, Medicine and Health* (pp. 193-215). Boca Raton FL.: CRC Press.
- Feldman, D. (1980). A Socialization Process that Helps New Recruits Succeed. *Personnel*, 57, 11-23.
- Ferris, G. R., Bergin, T. G., & Wayne, J. (1988). Personal Characteristics, Job Performance, and Absenteeism of Public School Teachers. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 18, 552-563.
- Findley, M. J., & Cooper, H. M. (1983). Locus of Control and Academic Achievement: A Literature Review. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 44(2), 419-427.
- Fink, A., & Kosecoff, J. B. (2005). *How to Conduct Surveys: A Step-by-Step Guide* (3rd ed.). London: Sage Publications.
- Firestone, W.A. (1993). Alternative Arguments for Generalizing From Data as Applied to Qualitative Research. *Educational Researcher*. 22(4), 16-23.
- Fisher, S. (1989). *Homesickness, Cognition, and Health*. London: Erlbaum.
- Fisher, S. (1994). *Stress in Academic Life*. New York: Open University Press.
- Fogelman, K. (2002). Surveys and Sampling. In M. Coleman & A. R.J. Briggs (Eds.), *Research Methods in Educational Leadership and Management* (pp. 93-107). London: Paul Chapman Publishing.
- Folkman, S., Schaefer, C., & Lazarus, R. S. (1979). Cognitive Process as Mediator of Stress and Coping . In V. Hamilton and D. Warburton (Ed.), *Human Stress and Cognition* (p. 268). Chichester, England: Wiley.
- Fontana, A., & Frey, J. H. (2000). Interviewing-the Art of Science. In N.K.Denzin & J.H.Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of Quantitative Research* (pp. 361-376). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publication Inc.
- Foote, B. (1980). Determined and Undetermined College students: How Different Are They? *Journal of College Student Personnel*, 21, 29-34.
- Forrest, L. (1997). A Comparative Study of Stressors Among Undergraduate Students at Grand Valley State University. *Dissertation Abstracts International*, UMI Number: 9804051.
- Frazier, P. A., & Schauben, L. J. (1994). Stressful Life Events and Psychological Adjustment Among Female College Students. *Measurement and Evaluation in Counseling and Development*, 72, 280-292.

- Frechtling, Sharp Westat, J. L (Ed.). (1997). *User-Friendly Handbook for Mixed Method Evaluations*. National Science Foundation.
- Friedman, M., & Rosenman, R. H. (1974). *Type A Behavior and Your Heart*. Greenwich, CT.: Fawcett.
- Friedman, M., & Ulmer, D. (1985). *Treating Type A Behavior and Your Heart*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.
- Frost, S. (1993). Strategies to Help Freshmen Succeed. *Planning for Higher Education*, 21(Summer), 21-26.
- Frost, S. H. (2003). *Academic Advising for Student Success: A System of Shared Responsibility*. Retrieved April 23, 2003, from ERIC Clearinghouse on Higher Education Web Site: http://www.ed.gov/databases/ERIC_Digests/ed340274.html
- Furnham, A., & Bochner, S. (1994). *Culture Shock: Psychological Reactions to Unfamiliar Environments*. New York: Rutledge.
- Fushfield, J. (2002, December 6). *Study Finds Perceptions of Stress May Weaken Immune System*. Retrieved November 27, 04, from The Diamondback Web Site: www.inform.umd.edu/News/Diamondback/archives/2002/12/06/news7.html
- Gardner, J. N. (1986). The Freshmen Year Experience. *College and University*, 61, 261-274.
- Gardner, J. N. (1996). Helping America's First-generation College Students: A Bottom-line List of Institutions of Higher Learning Must Do. *About Campus*, Nov-Dec, 31-31.
- Gardner, J. N., & Jewler, A. J. (1985). *College is Only the Beginning: a Student Guide to Higher Education*. Belmont, California: Wadsworth Com.
- Garvey, B. (1997). Let the Actions Match the Words. In D. Clutterbuck and D. Megginson (Ed.), *Mentoring in Action: A Practical Guide for Managers* (pp. 111-123). London: Kogan Page.
- Gay, B. (1994). What is Mentoring? *Education and Training*, 36(5), 4-7.
- Gay, L. R., & Diehl, P. L. (1992). *Research Methods for Business Management*. New York: Macmillan Publishing Company.
- Geertz, C. (1973). *The Interpretations of Culture: Selected Essays*. London: Fontana Press.
- Gerdes, H., & Mallinckrodt, B. (1994). Emotional, Social, and Academic Adjustment of College Students: A Longitudinal Study of Retention. *Journal of Counseling and Development*, 72, 281-288.

- Gerring, J. (2001). *Social Science Methodology. A critical Framework*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ghazi, A. (1997, September 30). *Lebanon's Culture*. Retrieved October 26, 2004, from <http://www.ghazi.de/society.html>
- Gillham, B. (2000). *The Research Interview*. London: Continuum.
- Goffman, E. (1999). *The presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. USA: Peter Smith Publisher.
- Gordon, V. N. (1995). *The Undecided College Student: An Academic and Career Advising Challenge* (2nd ed.). Springfield, Ill: Thomas.
- Graham, S., Furr, S., Flowers, C., & Burke, M. T. (2001). Religion and Spirituality in Coping with Stress. *Counseling and Values*, 46, 2-11.
- Gray, W., & Gray, M. (1985). Synthesis of Research on Mentoring Beginning Teacher. *Educational Leadership*, 43(3), 37-43.
- Greenberg, J. (2004). *Comprehensive Stress Management* (7th ed.). Boston: McGraw-Hill Companies.
- Gruijters, I. (1992). Heimwee en Situatietekenen (Homesickness and Situation Characteristics). Unpublished M.Sc. Thesis. Tilburg University, Tilburg, The Netherlands. In M.A.L. Van Tilburg, A. J. Vingerhoets, & G. L. Van Hech, (1996). Homesickness: a Review of the Literature. *Psychological Medicine*, 26, 899-912.
- Guinagh, B. (1992). Homesickness in the Freshman Year. *Journal of the Freshman Year Experience*, 4(1), 111-120.
- Gunderson, E. K., & Rahe, R. H. (1974). *Life Stress and Illness*. Springfield: Charles C. Thomas.
- Gunn, E. (1995). Mentoring: The Democratic Version. *Training*, 32(8), 64-67.
- Hagberg, R., & Heifetz, J. (2000). *Corporate Culture/Organizational Culture: Understanding and Assessment*. Retrieved January 10, 2003, from <http://www.hcgnet.com/html/articles/understanding-culture.html>
- Haidar, R. (2004). Counseling at the University. *Campus*, 1, 26-27.
- Hamilton, S., & Fagot, B.I. (1988). Chronic stress and coping styles: A comparison of male and female undergraduates. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 55, 819-823.
- Hathaway, W. L., & Pargament, K. I. (1992). The Religious Dimensions of Coping: Implications for Prevention and Promotion. In K.I. Pargament, K.I. Maton, & R.E. Hess (Eds.), *Religion and Prevention in Mental Health: Research, Vision, and Action* (pp. 129-154). New York: Haworth Press.

- Hebden, J. E. (1986). Adopting an Organization's Culture: The Socialization of Graduate Trainees. *Organizational Dynamics*, (Summer), 54-72.
- Hettler, B. (1980). Wellness Promotion on a University Campus. *Family and Community Health*, 3, 77-95.
- Hill, M. D., & Sedlacek, W. E. (1995). Freshmen Counselling Interests. *Journal of the Freshman Year Experience*, 7(1), 27-38.
- Hirsch, S. J., & Keniston, K. (1970). Psychological Issues and Talented College Dropouts. *Psychiatry*, 33, 1-20.
- Hirsh, J. K., & Ellis, J. B. (1996). Differences in Life Stress and Reasons for Living Among College Suicide Ideators and Non-Ideators. *College Student Journal*, 30, 377-384.
- Hitchcock, G., & Hughes, D. (1989). *Research and the Teacher: A Qualitative Introduction to School-based Research*. Routledge: London.
- Hobfoll, S. E. (1988). *The Ecology of Stress*. New York: Hemisphere Publishing Corporation.
- Hoepfl, M. C. (1997). Choosing Qualitative Research: A Primer for Technology Education Researchers. *Journal of Technology Education*, 9(1), 47-63.
- Hoepfl, M. C. (1997). Choosing Qualitative Research: A Primer for Technology Education Researchers. *Journal of Technology Education*, 9(1), 47-63.
- Hoff, M. P. (1996). The First Five Years of Freshman Seminar at Dalton College: Student Success and Retention. *Journal of the Freshman Year Experience and Students in Transition*, 8, 33-42.
- Hofstede, G. (2003). *Culture's Consequences: Comparing Value, Behaviors, Institutions and Organizations* (2nd ed.). Newbury Park, California: Sage Publications.
- Hofstede, G. (2002). *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind* (4th ed.). London: McGraw-Hill Book Company.
- Horowitz, I. L., & Friedland, W. (1972). *The Knowledge Factory*. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press.
- House, J. S. (1981). *Work, Stress and Social Support*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.
- Hsiao, K.P. (1992). *First-Generation College Students*. Retrieved May 5, 2003, from ERIC Clearinghouse for Junior Colleges Los Angeles CA Web Site: http://www.ericfacility.net/databases/ERIC_Digests/ed351079

- Hudd, S. S., Dumlao, J., Erdmann-Sager, D., Murray, D., Phan, E., Soukas, N., & Yokozuka, N. (2000). Stress at College: Effects on Health Habits, Health Status and Self-Esteem. *College Student Journal*, 34(2), 217-228.
- Hudson, J., & Latham, A. M. (1995). Physical Education and Dance Students' Perception of Mentoring under the Partnership Scheme. *Mentoring and Training in Partnership in Teaching*, 3(1), 23-30.
- Isaac, S., & Michael, W. B. (1995). *Handbook in Research and Evaluation for Education and the Behavioral Sciences* (3rd ed.). San Diego, CA: Edits Publisher.
- Ivancevich, J. M., & Matteson, M. T. (1993). *Organizational Behavior and Management* (3rd ed.). Irwin: Burr Ridge, Ill.
- Jackson, L. M., Pancer, S. M., Pratt, A. W., & Hunsberger, B. E. (2000). Great Expectations: The Relation Between Expectancies and Adjustment During the Transition to University. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 30(10), 2100.
- Jackson, P. (2001, October). *College Students and Stress: New Survey Explores Effects of Negative Life Events*. Retrieved November 27, 04, from www.homepages.indiana.edu/101201/text/stress.html
- Jacobi, M. (1991). Mentoring Undergraduates Academic Success: a Literature Review. *Review of Educational Research*, 61(4), 505-532.
- Johnson, E. E. (1978). *Student-Identified Stresses That Relate to College Life*. Canada. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 170 630).
- Kalsner, L. (1991). Issues in College Student Retention. *Higher Education Extension Service Review*, 3(1), 1-10.
- Kanoy, K. W., & Bruhn, J. W. (1996). Effects of a First-Year Living and Learning Residence Hall on Retention and Academic Performance. *Journal of the Freshman Year Experience and Students in Transition*, 8(1), 7-23.
- Kaplan, B. (1981). *Patterns of Students Stress: A Profile of Teacher Education Students in Their First Year of Territory Studies*. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 208 283).
- Karp, D., & Yoels, W. (1991). The College Classroom: Some Observations on the Meanings of Student Participation. In H. Robby & C. Clark (Eds.), *Social Interaction* (p.194-208). New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Katz, J. (1969). *No Time for Youth: Growth and Constrained in College Students*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

- Keenan, K., & Gabovitch, R. (1995). *Evaluating the Impact of Freshman Seminar Program on Student Development and Retention*. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 395 614).
- Kelly, M., Beck, T., & Thomas, J. (1992). Mentoring as a Staff Development Activity. In M. Wilkin (Ed.) *Mentors in Schools*. London: Kogan Page. (As cited in M. Coleman (1997) *Managing Induction and Mentoring*. In T. Bush and D. Middlewood (Eds.) *Managing People in Education*. London: Paul Chapman Publishing, Ltd., (pp. 155-168).
- Kessler, R. C., & Mcleod, J. (1985). Social Support and Mental Health in Community Samples. In S. Cohen & L. Syme (Eds.), *Social Support and Health* (p. 219-240). New York: Academic Press.
- Kibbi, I. (1995). Lebanese and American educational Differences: A Comparison. *Education*, 115(3), 441-445.
- King, N. S., & Wooten, B. M. (2003). Building Community on a Commuter Campus. In T.L. Skipper and R. Argo (Ed.), *Involvement in Campus Activities and the Retention of First-Year College Students* (pp. 51-62). Colombia, SC: University of South Carolina.
- Klineberg, O., & Hull, W. F. (1979). *At a Foreign University: An International Study of Adaptation and Coping*. New York: Prager Publishers.
- Kluckholtn, F., & Strodtbeck, F. L. (1961). *Variations in Value Orientation*. Evanston IL.: Row Peterson.
- Kohn, P. M., Lafreniere, K., & Gurevich, M. (1991). Hassles, Health, and Personality. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 61(3), 478-482.
- Kuh, G. D., & Gonyea, R. M. (2003). The Role of the Academic Library in Promoting Student Engagement in Learning. *College and Research Libraries*, 64(4), 256-282.
- Kuh, G. D., Schub, J. H., Whitt, E. J. & Associates (1991). *Involving Colleges: Successful Approaches to Fostering Student Learning and Development outside the Classroom*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass.
- Kutash, I. L., Schlesinger, L. B., & Associates. (1980). *Handbook on Stress and Anxiety*. California: Jossey-Bass.
- Lapidus, J., Green, S. K., & Baruth, E. (1985). Factors Related to Roommate Compatibility in the Residence Hall- A Review. *Journal of College Student Personnel*, 26, 420-434.
- Larson, L. M., Heppner, P. P., Ham, T., & Dugan, K. (1988). Investigating Multiple Subtypes of Career Indecision Through Cluster Analysis. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 35, 439-446.

- Lazarus, R., & Cohen, J. (1978). Environmental Stress. In I. Altman & J. F. Wohlwill (Eds.), *Human Behavior and Environment* (pp. 231-239). New York: Plenum Press.
- Lazarus, R. S. (1966). *Psychological Stress and the Coping Process*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Lazarus, R. S. (1984). On the Primacy of Cognition. *American Psychologist*, 39, 124-129.
- Lazarus, R., & DeLongis, A. (1983). Psychological Stress and Coping in Aging. *American Psychologist*, 38, 245-254.
- Lazarus, R., & Folkman, S. (1984). *Stress, Appraisal, and Coping*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Leedy, P., & Ormord, J.E. (2004). *Practical Research: Planning and design* (8th ed.). New York: Prentice Hall.
- Lefcourt, H. M. (1982). *Locus of Control: Current Trends in Theory and Research* (2nd ed.). London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates
- Levinson, D. (1986). *The Seasons of Man's Life*. New York: Ballantine Books
- Levitz, R., & Noel, L. (1989). Connecting Students to Institutions: Keys to Retention and Success. In M.L. Upcraft, J.N. Gardner, & Associates (Eds.), *The Freshman Year Experience: Helping Students Survive and Succeed in College*. (pp. 65-81). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Lewallen, W. C. (1993). The Impact of Being "Undecided" on College Student Persistence. *Journal of College Student Development*, 34, 103-112.
- Light, R. J., Singer, J. D., & Willet, J. B. (1990). *By Design: Planning Research on Higher Education*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic Inquiries*. Beverly Hills: Sage.
- Lofland, J., & Lofland, L. H. (1984). *Analyzing Social Settings*. Belmont, Cal: Wadsworth Publishing Company.
- Lokitz, B., & Sprandel, H. (1976). The First Year: A Look at the Freshman Experience. *Journal of College Student Personnel*, 17(4), 274-279.
- London, H. B. (1989). Breaking Away: A Study of First-Generation College Students And Their Families. *American Journal Of Education*, 97, 144-170.
- London, H. B. (1992). Transformation: Cultural Challenges Faced by First-Generation Students. In L.S. Zwerling & H.B. London (Eds.), *First-Generation Students: Confronting the Cultural Issues* (pp. 5-12). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

- London, H. B. (1996). How College Affects First-Generation Students. *About Campus*, 1(5), 9-13, 23.
- Long, B. C. (1995) Stress in the Work Place. Retrieved February 20, 2003, from Eric Clearinghouse on Counseling and Student Services. Web Site: <file:///A1/ed414521.html>
- Lorenzen, M. (2004). *How Minority Students Finance their Education*. Retrieved from Eric Clearinghouse on Teaching and Teacher Education. Retrieved June 27, 2005, from <http://eric-digest.blogspot.com/2004/10/how-minority-students-finance-their.html>
- Lounsbury, J. W., & DeNuie, D. (1995). Psychological Sense of Community on Campus. *College Student Journal*, 11(2), 270-277.
- Low, C. A., & Handal, P. J. (1995). The Relationship Between Religion and Adjustment to College. *Journal of College Student Development*, 36(5), 406-412.
- Lunneborg, P. A. (1976). Vocational Indecision in College Graduates. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 23, 402-404.
- Lusk, M. W., & Miller, D. A. (1985). A Study of Traditional and Nontraditional Graduate Students of Social Work for Values and Cognitive Development. *Journal of Continuing Social Work Education*, 3, 22-28.
- Luthans, F. (2002). *Organization Behavior* (9th ed.). Australia: McGraw-Hill Inc.
- Lysgaard, A. (1955). Adjustment in a Foreign Society: Norwegian Fulbright Grantees Visiting the United States. *International Social Science Bulletin*, 7, 45-51.
- Macan, T. H., Shahani, C., Dipboye, R. L., & Phillips, A. P. (1990). College Students' Time Management: Correlation with Academic Performance and Stress. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 82, 760-768. .
- Mallette, B. I., & Cabrera, A. F. (1991). Determinants of Withdrawal Behavior: An Exploratory Study. *Research in Higher Education*, 32(2), 179-194.
- Martin, D. & Arendale, D. (1993). *Supplemental Instruction: Improving First-year student Success in High-risk Courses*. National Resource Centre for the Freshmen Year Experience and Students in Transition. Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina.
- Massey, M. S. (1998). *Promoting Stress Management: The Role of Comprehensive School Health Programs*. Retrieved from Eric Clearinghouse on Teaching and Teacher Education Retrieved January 18, 2001, from web site: http://www.ericfacility.net/databases/ERIC_Digests/ed421480.html

- Math Options Inc. (2002). *Teaching Practical, Efficient Experimentation to Chemists, Engineers, and Scientists*. Retrieved November 29, 2004, from <http://www.mathoptions.com/doi2.htm>
- Maton, K. I. (1989). The Stress-buffering role of Spiritual Support: Cross-sectional and Prospective Investigations. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 28 (3), 310-323.
- Marshall, J. and Cooper, C. L. (1979). *Executive Under Pressure*. London: Macmillan.
- Maurer, R. (undated). In *The Cycle of Change* (). Retrieved January 18, 2001, from http://www.lessons4giving.com/cycle_of_change.htm
- McCarthy, M. E., Pretty, G. M. H., & Catano, V. (1990). Psychological Sense of Community and Student Burnout. *Journal of College Student Development*, 31(2), 211-216.
- McDaniel, J. (2004). *Lebanon: Modern Middle East Nations and their strategic place in the world*. Philadelphia: Mason Crest Publishers.
- McDermott, R. J., & Sarvela, P. D. (2000). *Health Education Evaluation and Measurement: A Practitioner's Perspective* (2nd ed.). USA: McGraw Hill Higher Education.
- Mechanic, D., & Greenley, J. (1976). The Prevalence of Psychological Distress and Helpseeking in a College Student Population. *Social Psychiatry*, 11, 1-14.
- Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. B. (1994). *Qualitative Data Analysis: An Expanded Source Book* (2nd ed.). London: Sage Publications.
- Miller, K. (2002). *Organizational Communication: Approaches and Processes* (3rd ed.). New York: Wadsworth Publishing Company.
- Miller, S. (1990). *A Little Relaxation*. Point Roberts, WA: Hartley and Marks.
- Misra, R., & Mckean, M. (Winter 2000). *College Students' Academic Stress and its Relation to their Anxiety, Time Management, and Leisure Satisfaction*. Retrieved July 23, 2003, from http://web3.infotrac.galegroup.c.../purl-rc1_EIM_0_A65640245&dyn=10!ar_fmt?sw_aep=la
- Mitchell, K. (1997). *Making the Grade: Help and Hope for The First-Generation College Student*. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 413 886).
- Mondy, R. W., Noe, R. M., & Gowan, M. (2004). *Human Resource Management* (9th ed.). New York: Prentice-Hall Inc.
- Moon, A. M., Mullee, M.A., Rogers, L., Thompson, R. L., Speller, V. and Roderick, P. (1999) *Health-related Research and Evaluation in Schools*. *Health Education*, 1, 27-34.

- Moorhead, G., & Griffin, R. W. (2003). *Organizational Behavior: Managing People and Organizations* (7th ed.). Boston, Mass: Houghton Mifflin Company.
- Morgan, W.P. (1997). *Physical Activity and Mental Health*. Taylor and Francis, USA.
- Morgan (Ed.). (1988). *Focus Groups as Qualitative Research*. Newbury Park, California: Sage Publication.
- Morris, E. A., Brooks, P. R., & May, J. L. (2003). *The Relationship Between achievement Goal Orientation and Coping Style: Traditional Vs. Non-traditional College Students*. College Students Journal Retrieved July 7, 2005 from Gale Group Web site:
[Http://WWW.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0FCR/is_1_37/ai_99816473](http://WWW.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0FCR/is_1_37/ai_99816473)
- Murer, R. (n.d.). *The Cycle of Change*. Retrieved January 18, 2001, from
http://www.lessons4living.com/cycle_of_change.htm
- Murphy, M. C., & Archer, J. (1996). Stress on College Campus: A Comparison of 1985-1993. *Journal of College Student Development*, 37(1), 20-28.
- Nadler, D. A. (1987). The Effective Management of Organizational Change. In J. W. Lorsch (Ed.), *Handbook of Organizational Behavior* (pp. 358-369). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Naidoo, J., & Wilk, J. (1994). *Health Promotion: Foundations for Practice*. London: Baillière Tindall.
- Neave, P. (1995). *Women in Emergencies: A Transforming Society*. Retrieved October 29, 2004, from OCHA Web Site:
http://www.reliefweb.int/ocha_ol/pub/dhanews/issue22/transfrm.html
- Nelson, N. G., Dell' Oliver, C., Koch, C., & Buckler, R. (2001). Stress, coping, and success among graduate students in clinical psychology. *Psychological Report*, 88, 759-767.
- Nesdale, D., & MaK, A. (2000). Immigration Acculturation Attitudes and Host Country Identification. *Journal of Community and Applied Social Psychology*, 10, 483-495.
- Noe, R. A. (1988). Women and Mentoring: A Review of Research Agenda. *Academy of Management Review*, 13(1), 65-78.
- Noel, L., Levitz, R., & Saluri, D. (1985). *Increasing Student Retention*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Nora, A., & Cabrera, A. F. (1996, March-April). The Role of Perceptions in Prejudice and Discrimination and the Adjustment of Minority Students to College. *Journal of Higher Education*, 67(2), 119-148.

- O'Hare, M. M., & Tamburri, E. (1986). Coping as a Moderator as the Relation Between Anxiety and Career Decision Making. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 33, 255-262.
- Okum, M. A., Taub, J. B., & Tamburri, E. (1986). Age and Sex Differences in Negative Life Events and Student Services Usage. *Journal of College Student Personnel*, 27, 160-165.
- Olpin, M. N. (1996). Perceived Stress Levels and sources of stress Among College Students: Methods, Frequency, and effectiveness of Mapping Stress by College Students. *Dissertation Abstracts International*, UMI Number: 9708771.
- Pace, T. (1970). Roommate Dissatisfaction in Residence Halls. *Journal of College Student Personnel*, 11, 144-147.
- Pancer, S. M., Hunsberger, B., Pratt, M. W., & Alisat, S. (2000). Cognitive Complexity of Expectations and Adjustment to University in the First Year. *Journal of Adolescent Research*, 15, 38-57.
- Pantage, T. J., & Creedon, C. F. (1978). Studies of College Attrition: 1950-1975. *Review of Educational Research*, 48(1), 49-101.
- Pascarella, E. T. (1980). Student Faculty Informal Contact and College Outcomes. *Review of Educational Research*, 50, 545-595.
- Pascarella, E. T., & Terenzini, P. T. (1991). *How College Affects Students: Findings and Insights from Twenty Years Of Research*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Pascarella, E. T., Terenzini, P. T., & Wolfle, L. M. (1986). Orientations to College and Freshman Year Persistence/Withdrawal Decisions. *Journal of Higher Education*, 57(2), 156-175.
- Pascarella, E., Bohr, L., Nora, A., Zusmnar, B., Inman, P., & Desler, M. (1993). Cognitive Impacts of Living on Campus versus Commuting to College. *Journal of College Student Development*, 34, 216-220.
- Patton, M Q. (2002). *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publication.
- Peleikis, A. (2003). *Lebanese in Motion: Gender and the Making of a Translocal Village*. Bielefeld: Transcript.
- Perigo, D. J., & Upcraft, M. L. (1989). Orientation Programs. In M. L. Upcraft & J. N. Gardner, and Associates (Eds.), *The Freshman Year Experience: Helping Students Survive and Succeed in College* (pp. 82-94). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Phares, E. J. (1976). *Locus of Control in Personality*. Morristown, N.J.: General Learning Press.
- Phillip-Jones, L. (1982). *Mentors and Proteges*. New York: Arbor House.

- Pistole, M. C. (1995). College Students' Ended Love Relationships: Attachment Style and Emotion. *Journal of College Student Development*, 36, 53-60.
- Presser, N. R., Miller, T. B., & Rapin, L. S. (1984). Peer Consultants: A New Role for Student Paraprofessionals. *Journal of College Student Personnel*, 25, 321-326.
- Ramsden, P. (1981). A Study of the Relationship Between Student Learning and its Academic Context. As cited in J.T.E. Richardson, M.W. Eysenck and D. Warren Piper (Ed.), *Student Learning: Research in Educational and Cognitive Psychology* (p. 16) USA: Open University Press.
- Rayman, R., & Garis, W. (1989). Counseling. In M. L. Upcraft, J. N. Gardner & Associates (Eds.), *The Freshman Year Experience* (pp. 129-141). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Reisberg, L. (2000). Student Stress is Rising, Especially Among Women. *Chronicle of Higher Education*, 46, A 49-50.
- Richards, Jr., James M. (Winter, 1966). The School Review. *University of Chicago Press*, 74(4), 380-392.
- Richardson, R. C., Jr., & Skinner, E. F. (1992). Helping First-Generation Minority Students Achieve Degrees. In L.S.Zwerling & H.B.London (Eds.), *First-Generation Students: Confronting the Cultural Issues* (pp. 29-43). San Francisco: Jossey Bass.
- Riley, H., & Eckenrode, J. (1986). Social ties: Subgroup Differences in Costs and Benefits. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 51, 770-778.
- Robbins, S. B., Lese, K. P., & Herrick, S. M. (1993). Interaction Between Goal Instability and Social Support on College Freshman Adjustment. *Journal of Counseling and Development*, 71, 343-348.
- Robbins, S. P. (2003). *Organizational Behavior* (10th ed.). New Jersey: Prentice Hall.
- Robson, C. (2002). *Real World Research: A Resource for Social Scientists and Practitioner-Researcher* (2nd ed.). Oxford: Blackwell.
- Romano, J. L. (1992). Psych-Educational Interventions for Stress Management and Wellbeing. *Journal of Counseling and Development*, 71, 199-202.
- Ross, S. E., Niebling, B. C., & Heckert, T. M. (1999). Sources of Stress Among College Students. *College Student Journal*, 33, 312-317.
- Rosenthal, G.T., Folse, E. J., Allenman, N. W., Boudreaux, D., Soper, B., & Von Bergen, C. (2000). The One-to-One Survey: Traditional Versus Non-traditional Student Satisfaction with Professors During One-to-one Contacts, *College Students Journal*, 34(2), 315-320.

- Rubin, H. I., & Rubin, I. S. (1995). *Qualitative Interviewing: The Art of Hearing Data*. USA: Sage Publication.
- Sarason, B. R., Sarason, I. G., & Pierce, G. R. (1990). *Social Support: An International View*. New York: Wiley.
- Sarkodie-Mensah, K. (1998). International students in the U.S.: Trends, Cultural Adjustments, and Solutions for a Better Experience. *International Library Education*, 39(3), 214-222.
- Schafer, W. (2000). *Stress Management for Wellness* (4th ed.). London: Harcourt Brace College Publishers.
- Schafer, W. E., & King, M. (1990). Religiousness and Stress Among College Students: A Survey Report. *Journal of College Student Development*, 31, 336-341.
- Schein, E. H. (1986). What You Need to Know About Organizational Culture. *Training and Development*, (January), 30-33.
- Schein, E. H. (2004). *Organizational Culture and Leadership*. USA: John Wiley & Sons.
- Schroeder, C. C., & Mable, P. (Eds.). (1995). *Realizing the Educational Potential of Residence Halls*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Schutt, R. K., Tatjana, M., & Jill, R. (1994). Distress, Suicidal Thoughts and Social Support Among Homeless Adults. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 35(2), 134-142.
- Schuler, R. S. (1984). Organizational stress and coping: a model and overview. In A. S. Sethi & R. S. Schuler (Eds.), *Handbook of organizational stress coping strategies*, (pp. 35-67). Cambridge, MA: Ballinger Publishing Co
- Seamans, N. H. (2002). Students Perceptions of Information Literacy: Insights for Librarians. *References Services Review*, 30(2), 112-123.
- Seidman, I. (1998). *Interviewing as Qualitative Research: a Guide for Researchers in Education and the Social Sciences* (2nd ed.). New York: Teachers College Press.
- Seltzer, V. (1990-91). Look Who's Coming to College? *Planning for Higher Education*, 19(2), 11-17.
- Selye, H. (1978). *The Stress of Life* (2nd ed.). New York: McGraw Hill Book Company.
- Selye, H. (1983). The Stress Concept: Past, Present and Future. In C.L. Cooper (Ed.). *Stress Research*. (pp. 1-19). New York: John Wiley & Sons.
- Selye, H. (1996). *Stress Without Distress* (3rd ed.). New York: Signet.

- Shaw, R. (1992). *Teaching Training in Secondary Schools*. London: Kogan Page.
- Sheaham, S. L., & Latimer, M. (1995). Correlates of Smoking, Stress, and Depression Among Women. *Health Values*, 19(1), 29-35.
- Shimizu, K., Vondracek, F. W., Schulenberg, J. E., & Hostetler, M. (1990). The Factor Structure of Career Decision Scale: Similarities Across Selected Studies. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 32, 213-225.
- Simonson, M. R., Maurer, M., Montag-Torardi, M., & Whitaker, M. (1987). Development of a Standardized Test of Computer Literacy and Computer Anxiety Index. *Journal of Educational Computing Research*, 3(2), 231-247.
- Slowinski, P. T., & Hammock, W. K. (2003). *Undecided/Open Students*. Retrieved January 27, 2005, from NACADA Clearinghouse of Academic Advising Resources Web Site: http://www.nacada.Ksu.edu/Clearinghouse/AdvisingIssues/adv_undecided.htm
- Spector, P. E. (1982). Behavior in Organizations as a Function of Employee's Locus of Control. *Psychological Bulletin*, 91(3), 482-497.
- Spilka, B., Shaver, P., & Kirkpatrick, L. (1985). A General Attribution Theory for the Psychology of Religion. *Journal for the Scientific Study of religion*, 24, 1-20.
- Spitzberg, I. J., & Thorndike, V. V. (1992). *Creating Community on College Campuses*. Albany, NY: Sunny Press.
- Stake, R. E. (1978). The Case Study Method in Social Inquiry. *Educational Researcher*, 7(2), 5-8.
- Stevens, R. (1973). Law School and Law Students. *Virginia Law Review*, 59, 551-707.
- Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1990). *Basics of Qualitative Research: Grounded Theory Procedures and Techniques*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publication, Inc.
- Strawbridge, W. J., Shema, S. J., Cohen, R. C., & Kaplan, G. A. (2001). Religious Attendance Increases Survival by Improving and Maintaining Good Health Behaviors, Mental Health, and Social Relationships. *Society of Behavioral Medicine*, 23, 68-74.
- Student Mental Health Organization. (2000-2002). *Student Mental Health: Planning Guidance and Training*. Retrieved March 23, 2004, from Lancaster University Web Site: <http://www.studentmentalhealth.org.uk>
- Swick, K. J. (1987). *Student Stress: A Classroom Management System*. Washington, DC: National Education Association.
- Szelenyi, k. (2001). *Minority Student Retention and Academic Achievement in Community Colleges*. Los Angeles. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 451 859)

- Temoshok, L., & Dreher, H. (1992). *Type C Behavior and Cancer*. New York: Randon House.
- Terenzini, P. T., Springer, L., Yaeger, P. M., Pascarella, E. T., & Nora, P. M. (1996). First-Generation College Students: Characteristics, Experiences, and Cognitive Development. *Research in Higher Education*, 37(1), 1-22.
- The Sword of the Spirit. (2000). *A Taste of Lebanese Life & Hospitality*. Retrieved February 25, 2004, from www.re.net/sos/lebanon8.htm
- Thoits, P. A. (1982). Conceptual, Methodological, and Theoretical Problems in Studying Social Support as a Buffer Against Life Stress. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 23, 143-159.
- Thoits, P. A. (1995). Stress, Coping and Social Processes: Where are we? What Next. (Extra Issue: Forty Years of Medical Sociology- The State of the Art and Directions for the Future). *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 36 (nSPEISS), 53-80.
- Thomas, R. M. (1998). *Conducting Educational Research: A Comparative View*. London: Bergin & Garvey.
- Tierney, W. G., & Rhoads, R. A. (1988). Organizational Culture in Higher Education. *Journal of Higher Education*, 59(1), 2-21.
- Tinto, V. (1982). Defining Dropout: A Matter of Perspective. In E. T. Pascarella (Ed.), *Studying Student Attrition* (pp. 3-16). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Tinto, V. (1988). Stages of Student Departure: Reflections on the Longitudinal Character of Student Leaving. *Journal of Higher Education*, 59(4), 438-455.
- Tinto, V. (1993). *Leaving College: Rethinking Causes and Cures of Student Attrition* (2nd ed.). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Titely, B. S. (1985). Orientation Programs. In L. Noel, R. Levitz, & D. Saluri (Eds.), *Increasing Student Retention: Effective Programs and Practices for Reducing the Dropout Rate* (pp. 221-243). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Titely, R. W., & Titely, B. S. (1980). Initial Choice of College Major: Are Only the "Undecided" Undecided? *Journal of College Student Personnel*, 21, 293-298.
- Toews, J. A., Lockyer, J.M., Dobson, D.J.& Bronwell, A.K. (1993). Stress Among Residents, Medical Students and Graduate Science (MSc/PhD) Students. *Academic Medicine*, 68(10), S46-S48
- Torbiorn, I. (1982). *Living Abroad: Personal Adjustment and Personal Policy in the Overseas Setting*. New Delhi: Thomas Press (India) Limited.

- Towbes, L. C., & Cohen, L. H. (1996). Reported Personal Stress Sources and adjustment of Entering Freshmen. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 14, 371-373.
- Trockel, M. T., Barnes, M. D., & Egget, D. L. (2000). Health-Related Variables and Academic Performance Among First-Year College Students: Implications for Sleep and Other Behaviors. *Journal of American College Health*, 49, 125-132.
- Uclan (n.d.). Health Promoting University: To Staying Well for University Students and Staff. Uclan. April 27, 2006. <<http://www.uclan.ac.uk/facs/health/hpu/>>
- Upcraft, M. L., Gardner, J. N. and Associates (1989). A Comprehensive approach to Enhancing Freshmen Success. In M. Lee Upcraft and J. N. Gardner (Ed.), *The Freshmen Year Experience: Helping Students Survive and Succeed in College* (pp. 1-12). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Van Mannen, J., & Schein, E. H. (1977). Career Development. In J. R. Hackman and J. L. Suttle (Ed.), *Improving Life at Work* (pp. 58-62). Santa Monica California: Goodyear.
- Van Tilburg, M. A., Vingerhoets, A. J., & Van Hech, G. L. (1996). Homesickness: a Review of the Literature. *Psychological Medicine*, 26, 899-912.
- Van, T. Bui, Khanh (2002, March). First Generation College Students at a Four-Year University: Background Characteristics, Reasons for Pursuing Higher Education, and First-Year Experience. *College Student Journal*, 36(1), 3-23.
- Vecchio, R. P. (2005). *Organizational Behavior* (6th ed.). England: South Western College.
- Vockell, E. L., & Asher, J. W. (1995). *Educational Research* (2nd ed.). Columbus, OH: Merrill.
- Von Ah, D., Ebert, S, Ngamvitroj, A., Park, N., & Kang, D. (2004). Predictors of Health Behaviours in College Students. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 48(5), 463-474.
- Waldo , M. (1984). Roommate Communication as Related to Students' Personal and Social Adjustment. *Journal of College Student Personnel*, 25, 39-44.
- Waldo, M. (1989). Primary Prevention in University Residence Halls: Paraprofessional-led Relationship Enhancement Groups for College Roommates. *Journal for Counseling and Development*, 67, 465-471.
- Wallace, D., & Abel, R. (1997). *Clearing a Path for Success: Deconstructing Borders in Higher Education Through Undergraduate Mentoring*. Louisiana. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 415812).
- Wallston,B.S., Alagra, S W., DeVellis, B.M.,&DeVellis,R.F.(1983). Social Support and Physical Health. *Health Psychology*, 2, 357-391

- Waltz, G. R., & Benjamim, L. (1987). *Counseling Students and Faculty for Stress Management*. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 279 917).
- Washington State Higher education Board. (1990). *Student Financial Aid in Washington State: An Overview*. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 365230).
- Weinberger, M., Hiner, S. L., & Tierney, W. M. (1987). In Support of Hassels as a Measure of Stress in Predicting Health Outcomes. *Journal of Biological Medicine*, 10, 19-31.
- Weis, L. (1992). Discordant Voices in the Urban Community College. In L.S. Zwerling & H.B. London (Eds.), *First-Generation Students: Confronting the Cultural Issues* (pp. 13-28). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Werts, C.E., & Watley, D.J. (1968, Nov.). American Educational Research Journal. *American Educational research Association*, 5(4), 585-598.
- West-Burnham, J. (1992), Managing Quality in Schools, Harlow, Longman, as quoted in T. Bush, (1995). Mentoring for Principles: Pre-service and In-service Models. *Singapore Journal of Education*, 15(1), 1-13.
- Whitman, N. A. & others. (1987). *Reducing Stress among Students*. Retrieved February 5, 2002, from ERIC Clearinghouse on Higher Education Web Site:
http://ericfacility.net/databases/ERIC_Digests/ed284526.html
- Whitman, N., Spendlove, D., & Clark, C. (1985). *Student Stress: Effects and Solutions*. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 284 514).
- WHO (1986). *The Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion*. WHO, Copenhagen.
- Whyte, W. F. (1993). *Street Corner Society: Social Structure of an Italian Slum* (4th ed.). Chicago: University Of Chicago Press.
- Wilkie, C., & Jones, M. (1994). Academic Benefits of On-campus Employment to First-year Developmental Education Students. *Journal of the Freshmen Year Experience*, 6(2), 37-56.
- Woodside, B. M., Wong, E. H., & Wiest, D. J. (Summer 1999). The Effect of Student-Faculty Interaction on College Students' Academic Achievement and Self Concept. *Gale Group*, 119(4), 730. Retrieved January 22, 01 from Expanded Academic ASAP Int'l Ed.
- Woulff, N. (1975). Homesickness in College Freshmen. *Dissertation Abstracts International*, UMI Number: AAT 7607446.
- Wragg, T. (2002). Interviewing. In M. Coleman & A.J. Briggs (Eds.), *Research Methods in Educational Leadership and Management* (pp. 143-158). London: Paul Chapman Publishing.

- Xiangyang, T., Lan, Z., Xueping, M., Tao, Z., Yuzhen, S., & Jagusztyn, M. (June 2003). Beijing Health Promoting Universities: Practice and Evaluation. *Health Promotion International*, 18 (2), 107-113. Retrieved May 31, 2006, from <http://heapro.oxfordjournals.org/cgi/content/full/18/2/107>
- Yin, R. K. (2003). *Application of Case Study Research* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks: Sage publications.
- Yin, R. K. (2003). *Case Study Research: Design and Methods* (3rd ed.). London: Sage Publications.
- York-Anderson, D. C., & Bowman, S. L. (1991). Assessing the College Knowledge of First-Generation and Second-Generation College Students. *Journal of College Student Development*, 32(2), 116-122.
- Young, Y. K. (1988). *Communication and Cross-Cultural Adaptation: An Interdisciplinary Theory*. UK: Multilingual Matters Limited.
- Zalaquette, C. (1999). Do Students of Noncollege-educated Parents Achieve Less Academically Than Students of College Educated Parents? *Psychological Reports*, 85(2), 417-421.
- Zern, D. S. (1987). The Relationship of Religious Involvement to a Variety of Indicators of Cognitive Ability and Achievement in College Students. *Adolescence*, 22(88), 883-895.
- Zikmund, W. G. (2002). *Business Research Methods* (7th ed.). New York: South Western Publications.
- Zimmerman, S. (1995). Perceptions of Intercultural Communication Competence and International Student Adaptation to an American campus. *Communication Education*, 44(4), 321-335.
- Zitzow, D. (1992). Assessing Student Stress: School Adjustment Rating by Self-report. *The School Counselor*, 40(1), 20-23.
- Zurin, L. M., & Rubin, R. T. (1967). Paranoid Psychotic Reactions in Foreign Students from Non-Western Countries. *Journal of the American College Health Association*, (15), 220-226.

Appendix A

Questionnaire After Piloting

Dear Participant:

Thank you very much for your cooperation in an educational study focusing on stress among freshmen students. The purpose of this research is to obtain data for Leila Messarra's doctoral thesis in partial fulfilment for an EdD program at Leicester University. The intention of this survey is to determine diverse information with respect to stress as it occurs in your life and what the university (LAU) can do to help you reduce this stress.

The information that you provide will serve as an essential resource in developing programs which will help students to better handle stress on our campuses.

Participation in this study is voluntary. All information is confidential and your name is not required. If you choose to participate, please complete the survey as truthfully and completely as you can. Your assistance is greatly appreciated.

You may direct all questions concerning this research to Leila Messarra, School of Business, Nicole Hall, Room 214; Extension 1198.

Demographic Section

1. Gender:
☐ Male ☐ Female
2. Age:
☐ 17-18 ☐ 21-22
☐ 19-20 ☐ 23 and above
3. Marital Status
☐ Single ☐ Divorced or separated
☐ Married ☐ Widowed
4. Living status
☐ On Campus ☐ With parent
☐ Off Campus/without parents
5. Were you living outside Lebanon?
☐ For the last 3 years or less ☐ All your life
☐ For more than 3 years but not all your life ☐ Never
6. Do you have a declared Major or course of study?
☐ Yes ☐ No (did not decide yet)
7. Student Status
☐ Full-time ☐ Part-Time
8. While attending university do you work?
☐ Yes ☐ No
9. Do any of your parents have a college degree?
☐ Yes ☐ No
10. Do you think you have a strong religious affiliation?
☐ Yes ☐ No
11. Do you attend religious activities regularly?
☐ Yes ☐ No
- Please indicate your religion _____

Please go to the next page

The following is a list of experiences which many students have experienced some time or other since they started college. Please indicate for each experience how much it has been a problem in your life over the past month.

Developmental Challenges

12. Meeting your academic standards
13. Meeting the academic standards set by others such as your parents/guardian
14. Choice of major or main course of study
15. Important decisions about your future career
16. Grade achievement
17. Course work demand
18. Effort to get ahead
19. Ability at written expression
20. Ability at oral expression
21. Finding your studies stressful
22. Finding course(s) uninteresting

Time Pressure

23. Time for leisure
24. Too many academic and non-academic responsibilities
25. Ability to meet your obligations/deadlines
26. Extracurricular activities (non-academic activities)
27. Too many rules and procedures
28. Managing between work and school

Social Problems

29. Relationship with professor
30. Relationship with staff
31. Relationship with supervisor or boss
32. Parental relationship and expectations
33. Relationship with roommate
34. Decisions about intimate relationship(s)

[illegible]

Please go to the next page

35. Relationship with boyfriend/girlfriend/spouse
36. Relationship with friends
37. Judgment and acceptance by peers (Peer Pressure)
38. Homesickness
39. Social acceptance
40. Making new friends
41. Social Obligations

42. Living arrangements
43. Transportation
44. Physical illness
45. Registration procedures
46. Financial matters

- * 47. Immigration procedures (e.g., visas)
- * 48. Cross-cultural adaptation
- * 49. Language comprehension

* Please answer these questions only if you have lived outside Lebanon for the last 3 years or more.

-Did the university experience meet your expectations with regards to what you thought a university experience is like? If not please explain.

Please go to the next page

Academic Services

- ### Non-Academic Services

56. Counselling service
57. University Health Service
58. Career guidance services
59. Orientation
60. Faculty interaction outside classroom
61. Non-academic advising
62. Peer interaction (e.g., students with same major, upper classmen with same major, students from other majors)
63. Extra curricular activities (e.g., clubs, parties, sports activities, etc.)
64. Financial aid
65. Residence Hall Services

[illegible]

-List any obstacles that prevented you from taking advantage of the available support services?

Appendix B

Interview Schedule for the Semi-Structured Interview

After Piloting

Thank you for your willingness to take a part in this interview. I assure you that the details of this interview will remain confidential and will not be passed on to a third party.

1. Gender: ☐ Male
☐ Female
2. Are you currently enrolled as a freshmen student at LAU?
If yes take details of –
 - a. Major (course of study) _____
 - b. Full time _____
 - c. Part time _____
3. Why did you choose to pursue your college education?

4. Do any of your parents have a college degree?
Probe to see if the student is a first generation student and how was the student affected and in what manner and about conflicts with parents and community.
5. Have you received a career advice before joining LAU?
 - a. ☐ School
 - b. ☐ Local career service
 - a. ☐ Parents
 - b. ☐ Others
6. How are you financing your education?
☐ Financial aid
☐ Loan
☐ Grants
☐ Scholarship
☐ Parents
☐ Employment
☐ Others _____

If employed, ask about the number of hours per week and if it is interfering with college demands. Also probe to see if the student is worried about financing his/her education in the future.
7. Do you feel that you have too heavy a workload, one that you cannot finish during the required time?

-Probing to see how does it relate to High school and/or their attitudes towards studying, grades, examinations, time management, etc....

8. Do you have study demands, which conflicts with personal activities?

-Probe to see if the student has other responsibilities.

9. Were you living outside Lebanon before you joined LAU?

If yes, probe to see if the student is of Lebanese descent and if he/she is able to adjust to the culture.

10. Place of Residence:

_____ Dormitory

_____ Parents

_____ Off campus without parents

- probe to see if the students is experiencing any conflicts with roommate, parents, etc.. and about issues dealing with commuting, homesickness, and living accommodations in general.

11. Did you attend the orientation program at the beginning of the year?

Looking to see if it helped the student adjust or not.

12. Have you made new friends or joined any clubs since you joined LAU?

If no take details of-

- If student is shy.
- Is not aware of the existence of clubs.
- Does not have enough time.
- Others such as intimate relations.

13. Are you missing many classes? Yes _____ No _____

Ask about

- Relation with teacher/staff
- Health condition.
- Relation with advisor.

14. Do you like being at the university in general?

_ Probe to see if the student had a problem adjusting to the new culture, peer pressure and relationships and if the student has used any form of counselling and for what reason.

15. Do you feel that the support services were helpful in reducing some of the stress associated with the university experience?

- If the answer is yes, probe to see which academic and/or non-academic support services were most helpful and how in reducing the student's stress. Also probe to see if religious support was a factor.

-If the answer is no, probe to see if the student was aware of the existence of the various support services and his/her opinion regarding the quality of those services.

16. Thank you very much for helping me and giving up your time.
 - What are your recommendations as to what LAU can do to relieve first-year students of the stress they experience after joining the university.

Appendix C
Questionnaire before Piloting

Dear Participant:

Thank you very much for your cooperation in an educational study focusing on stress among freshmen students. The purpose of this research is to obtain data for Leila Messarra's doctoral thesis in partial fulfilment for an EdD program at Leicester University. The intention of this survey is to determine diverse information with respect to stress as it occurs in your life and what the university (LAU) can do to help you reduce this stress.

The information that you provide will serve as an essential resource in developing programs which will help students to better handle stress on our campuses.

Participation in this study is voluntary. All information is confidential and your name is not required. If you choose to participate, please complete the survey as truthfully and completely as you can. Your assistance is greatly appreciated.

You may direct all questions concerning this research to Leila Messarra, School of Business, Nicole Hall, Room 214; Extension 1198.

Demographic Section

1. Gender:
 - ☐ Male
 - ☐ Female
2. Age:
 - ☐ 17-18
 - ☐ 21-22
 - ☐ 19-20
 - ☐ 23 and above
4. Marital Status
 - ☐ Single
 - ☐ Divorced or separated
 - ☐ Married
 - ☐ Widowed
4. Living status
 - ☐ On Campus
 - ☐ With parent
 - ☐ Off Campus/without parents
5. Were you living outside Lebanon?
 - ☐ For the last 3 years or less
 - ☐ All your life
 - ☐ For more than 3 years but not all your life
 - ☐ Never
6. Do you have a declared Major or course of study? (Check one)
 - ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No (did not decide yet)
7. Student Status
 - ☐ Full-time
 - ☐ Part-Time
8. While attending university do you work?
 - ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No
9. Do you think you have a strong religious affiliation?
 - ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No
10. Do you attend religious activities regularly?
 - ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No
 - Please indicate your religion _____

The following is a list of experiences which many students have experienced some time or other since they started college. Please indicate for each experience how much it has been a problem in your life over the past month.

Developmental Challenges

11. Meeting your academic standards
12. Meeting the academic standards set by others such as your parents/guardian
13. Choice of major or main course of study
14. Important decisions about your future career
15. Grade achievement
16. Course work demand
17. Effort to get ahead
18. Ability at written expression
19. Ability at oral expression
20. Finding your studies stressful
21. Finding course(s) uninteresting

Time Pressure

22. Time for leisure
23. Too many academic and non-academic responsibilities
24. Ability to meet your obligations/deadlines
25. Extracurricular activities (non-academic activities)
26. Too many rules and procedures
27. Managing between work and school

Social Problems

28. Relationship with professor
29. Relationship with staff
30. Relationship with supervisor or boss
31. Parental relationship and expectations
32. Relationship with roommate
33. Decisions about intimate relationship(s)

[illegible]

34. Relationship with boyfriend/girlfriend/spouse
35. Relationship with friends
36. Judgment and acceptance by peers (Peer Pressure)
37. Homesickness
38. Social acceptance
39. Making new friends
40. Social Obligations

41. Living arrangements
42. Transportation
43. Physical illness
44. Registration procedures
45. Financial matters

- * 46. Immigration procedures (e.g., visas)
- * 47. Cross-cultural adaptation
- * 48. Language comprehension

[illegible]

*** Please answer these questions only if you have lived outside Lebanon for the last 3 years or more.**

-Did the university experience meet your expectations with regards to what you thought a university experience is like? If not please explain.

The following is a list of support services, which you may have used since you joined LAU. Please indicate for each service whether you have used it or not. When you answer **yes**, please proceed to marking whether the service has contributed to reducing you stress, increased your stress, or had no effect.

	Yes	No	Increased	Decreased	No effect
49. Tutorial					
50. Academic advising					
51. Faculty interaction inside classroom					
52. Mentoring					
53. Study group					
54. Library					
55. Counselling service					
56. University Health Service					
57. Career services					
58. Orientation					
59. Faculty interaction outside classroom					
60. Non-academic advising					
61. Peer interaction (e.g., students with same major, upper class men with same major, students from other majors)					
62. Extra curricular activities (e.g., clubs, parties, sports activities, etc.)					
63. Financial aid					
65. Residence Hall Service					

- What other services would have been helpful in reducing stress?

-List any obstacles that prevented you from taking advantage of the available support services?

Appendix D

Interview Schedule for the Semi-Structured Interview

Before Piloting

Thank you for your willingness to take a part in this interview. I assure you that the details of this interview will remain confidential and will not be passed on to a third party.

1. Gender: ☐ Male
☐ Female
2. Are you currently enrolled as a freshmen student at LAU?
If yes take details of –
 - a. Major ☐
 - b. Full time ☐
 - c. Part time ☐
3. Why did you choose to pursue your college education at LAU?

4. Are you the first in your family to attend college?
Probe to see if the student is a first generation student and how was the student affected and in what manner and about conflicts with parents and community.
5. Have you received a career advice before joining LAU?
 - a. ☐ School
 - b. ☐ Local career service
 - a. ☐ Parents
 - b. ☐ Others
6. How are you financing your education? (You can tick more than one)
☐ Financial aid
☐ Loan
☐ Grants
☐ Scholarship
☐ Parents
☐ Employment
☐ Others ☐

If employed, ask if it is interfering with college demands. Also probe to see if the student is worried about financing his/her education in the future.

7. Do you feel that you have too heavy a workload, one that you cannot finish during the required time?
 -Probing to see how does it relate to High school and/or their attitudes towards studying, grades, examinations, time management, etc....
8. Do you have study demands, which conflicts with personal activities?
 -Probe to see if the student has other responsibilities.
9. Did you attend the orientation program at the beginning of the year?
 Looking to see if it helped the student adjust or not.
10. Place of Residence:
 ____ Dormitory
 ____ Parents
 ____ Private room or apartment
 ____ Room with friends or others
 ____ Others
 - probe to see if the students is experiencing any conflicts with roommate, parents, etc.. and about issues dealing with commuting, homesickness, and living accommodations in general.
11. Have you made new friends or joined any clubs since you joined LAU?
 If no take details of-
 a. If student is shy.
 b. Is not aware of the existence of clubs.
 c. Does not have enough time.
 d. Others such as intimate relations.
12. Are you missing many classes? Yes_____ No_____
 Ask about
 a. Relation with teacher/staff
 b. Health condition.
 c. Relation with advisor.
 d. Type of counselling needed or sought.
13. Do you like being at the university in general?
 _ Probe to see if the student had a problem adjusting to the new culture, peer pressure and relationships and if the student has used any form of counselling and for what reason.
14. Do you feel that the support services whether general or institutional were helpful in reducing some of the stress associated with the university experience?
 - If the answer is yes, probe to see which academic and/or non-academic support services were most helpful and how in reducing the student's stress.

-If the answer is no, probe to see if the student was aware of the existence of the various support services and his/her opinion regarding the quality of those services.

15. Thank you very much for helping me and giving up your time.
 - What are your recommendations as to what LAU can do to relieve freshmen students of the stress they experience after joining the university.

Appendix-E -

Research Question: Do these stressors vary among the sample group of first-year students at LAU based on: gender, age, marital status, declaration of course of study, place of living, work status, student status, sojourning status, first generation student and religiosity?

The following tables are related to the items that showed significance only.

Gender

Meeting academic standards set by others	Gender		Total
	Male	Female	
Not Stressful	69	53	122
	45.7%	63.1%	51.9%
Stressful	82	31	113
	54.3%	36.9%	48.1%
Total	151	84	235
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

P-Value 0.01

Grade Achievement	Gender		Total
	Male	Female	
Not Stressful	48	46	94
	31.8%	54.8%	40.0%
Stressful	103	38	141
	68.2%	45.2%	60.0%
Total	151	84	235
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

P-Value= 0.001

Do you have a declared major?

Choice of Major	Do you have a Declared Major		Total
	No	Yes	Total
Not Stressful	11	107	118
	28.2%	54.6%	50.2%
Stressful	28	89	117
	71.8%	45.4%	49.8%
Total	151	84	235
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

P-value=0.003

Important Decisions about future career	Do you have a Declared Major		Total
	No	Yes	Total
Not Stressful	5	81	86
	12.8%	41.3%	36.6%
Stressful	34	115	149
	87.2%	58.7%	63.4%
Total	151	84	235
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

p-value=0.001

Religiosity

Course Work Demand	Religiosity			Total
	No affiliation, attendance	Affiliation or attendance	Affiliation & attendance	
Not Stressful	38	45	29	112
	37.3%	52.3%	61.7%	47.7%
Stressful	64	41	18	123
	62.7%	47.7%	38.3%	52.3%
Total	102	86	47	235
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

P-Value =0.012

Effort to go Ahead	Religiosity			Total
	No affiliation, attendance	Affiliation or attendance	Affiliation & attendance	
Not Stressful	44	46	31	121
	43.1%	53.5%	66.0%	51.5%
Stressful	58	40	16	114
	56.9%	46.5%	34.0%	48.5%
Total	102	86	47	235
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

P-value =0.031

Living outside Lebanon

Grade Achievement	Living Outside Lebanon			Total
	Part of your life	All your Life	Never	
Not Stressful	40	15	39	94
	52.6%	36.6%	33.1%	40.0%
Stressful	36	26	79	141
	47.4%	63.4%	66.9%	60.0%
Total	76	41	118	235
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

P-Value =0.022

Homesickness	Living Outside Lebanon			Total
	Part of your life	All your Life	Never	
Not Stressful	48	17	80	145
	63.2%	41.5%	67.8%	61.7%
Stressful	28	24	38	90
	36.8%	58.5%	32.2%	38.3%
Total	76	41	118	235
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

P-Value =0.011

Social Acceptance	Living Outside Lebanon			Total
	Part of your life	All your Life	Never	
Not Stressful	59	23	94	176
	77.6%	56.1%	79.7%	74.9%
Stressful	17	18	24	59
	22.4%	43.9%	20.3%	25.1%
Total	76	41	118	235
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

P-Value=0.009

While Attending University do you work?

Too many academic & Non academic responsibilities	Do you Work?		Total
	No	Yes	
Not Stressful	69	25	94
	35.9%	58.1%	40.0%
Stressful	123	18	141
	64.1%	41.9%	60.0%
Total	192	43	235
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

P-Value = 007

Decisions About intimate relationships	Do you Work?		Total
	No	Yes	
Not Stressful	125	21	146
	65.1%	48.8%	62.1%
Stressful	67	22	89
	34.9%	51.2%	37.9%
Total	192	43	235
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

P-Value = 0.047

Transportation	Do you Work?		Total
	No	Yes	Total
Not Stressful	107	15	122
	55.7%	34.9%	51.9%
Stressful	85	28	113
	44.3%	65.1%	48.1%
Total	192	43	235
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

P-Value = 0.013

Financial Matters	Do you Work?		Total
	No	Yes	Total
Not Stressful	109	10	118
	56.7	23.3%	50.4%
Stressful	83	33	116
	43.3%	76.7%	49.6%
Total	192	43	235
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

P-Value = 0.000

First Generation Students

Decisions about intimate relationships	First Generation Students		Total
	No	Yes	Total
Not Stressful	94	52	146
	57.7%	72.2%	62.1%
Stressful	69	20	89
	42.3%	27.8%	37.9%
Total	163	72	235
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

P-Value = 0.034

Relationship with Girlfriend/ Boyfriend / Spouse	First Generation Students		Total
	No	Yes	Total
Not Stressful	101	55	156
	62.0%	76.4%	66.4%
Stressful	62	17	79
	38.0%	23.6%	33.6%
Total	163	72	235
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

P- Value= 0.031

Homesickness	First Generation Students		Total
	No	Yes	Total
Not Stressful	108	37	145
	66.3%	51.4%	61.7%
Stressful	55	35	90
	33.7%	48.6%	38.3%
Total	163	72	235
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

P-Value=0.031

Ability at Oral Expression	First Generation Students		Total
	No	Yes	Total
Not Stressful	51	33	84
	31.3%	45.8%	35.7%
Stressful	112	39	151
	68.7%	54.2%	64.3%
Total	163	72	235
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

P-Value= 0.032

Finding Courses Uninteresting	First Generation Students		Total
	No	Yes	Total
Not Stressful	48	31	79
	29.4%	43.1%	33.6%
Stressful	115	41	156
	70.6%	56.9%	66.4%
Total	163	72	235
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

P-Value = 0.042

Relationship with Staff	First Generation		Total
	No	Yes	Total
Not Stressful	121	42	163
	74.2%	58.3%	69.4%
Stressful	42	30	72
	25.8%	41.7%	30.6%
Total	163	72	235
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

P-Value = 0.001

Appendix-F -

Research Question: What are the students' perceptions of the effectiveness of the university-employed support services on their stress level? Do these stressors vary among the sample group of first-year students at LAU based on: gender, age, marital status, declaration of course of study, place of living, work status, student status, sojourning status, first generation student and religiosity?

The following tables are related to the items that showed significance only.

Effect of Academic Advising

VS. Gender

Effect	Gender		Total
	Male	Female	
No effect	29 36.7%	14 31.1%	43 34.7%
Increased	23 29.1%	5 11.1%	28 22.6%
Decreased	27 34.2%	26 57.8%	53 42.7%
Total	79 100.0%	45 100.0%	124 100.0%

Value=0.017

Vs. Student Status

Effect	Student Status		Total
	part-time	full-time	
No effect	8 36.4%	35 34.3%	43 34.7%
Increased	0 .0%	28 27.5%	28 22.6%
Decreased	14 63.6%	39 38.2%	53 42.7%
Total	22 100.0%	102 100.0%	124 100.0%

P-Value = 0.012

Effect of Faculty interaction inside the classroom

Vs. First Generation Students

Effect	First Students	Generation	Total
	Yes	No	
No effect	14	60	74
	46.7%	61.9%	58.3%
Increased	3	17	20
	10.0%	17.5%	15.7%
Decreased	13	20	33
	43.3%	20.6%	26.0%
Total	30	97	127
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

P-Value = 0.043

Effect of Mentoring

VS. Religiosity

Effect	RELIGIOUS			Total
	Low	Medium	High	
No effect	18	17	7	42
	51.4%	51.5%	33.3%	47.2%
Increased	10	4	1	15
	28.6%	12.1%	4.8%	16.9%
Decreased	7	12	13	32
	20.0%	36.4%	61.9%	36.0%
Total	35	33	21	89
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

P-Value = 0.013

Appendix-G-

Socio-demographic Profiles of Interviewees

Variables	Males	Females
Sojourn students	3/12	1/9
Still living with parents	7/12	6/9
Not living with parents (local students, Semi-residents)	2/12	3/9 (dormitory)
First generation	3/12	4/9
Did not declare a course of study	3/12	2/9
Considered themselves religious (attended and affiliated)	2/12	3/9
working	5/12	3/9
Work study Financial Aid	3/12	4/9

*All interviewees are full timers and Single

Appendix-H-

Matrix Sample Summary. Comparing the data gathered from the interviews.

When asked about Course of study

Declared a Course of Study	Did not Declare a Course of Study
Seven out of twelve males, five out of nine females, revealed that their parents influenced their choice of a course of study	Three out of twelve males and two out of nine females indicated that they are not sure of what they want to major in yet.

When asked about faculty interaction

Inside Classrooms	Outside Classrooms
When interviewed 6/9 females and 7/12 males agreed that the faculty in general are very friendly and allow them to interact inside classrooms. However, the most frequent type of contact was for such things as asking questions, presenting topics or discussing cases.	5/9 and 6/12 males indicated that the interaction was more related to the course work such as clarifying class assignments, or discussing term papers/projects while 3/9 females and 4/12 males interacted to discuss career plans or to discuss personal problems