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Exploring the influence of financial stress on students' academic performance and mental health at a selected university in Lagos, Nigeria

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***Abstract*—** This study explores the influence of financial stress students' academic performance, mental health, coping methods, support systems, and social pressures at a selected university in Nigeria. This study used a qualitative approach and a constructivist research paradigm. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews. Fourteen participants (6 males, 8 females) heterogenously sourced from different faculties were recruited at a selected university in Lagos, Nigeria. The thematic results suggested that financial stress influences students' academic performance and mental health, which disrupts their academic work and causes emotional distress such as anxiety, depression, low self-esteem, and social withdrawal. The results showed that, notwithstanding these challenges, students used coping strategies, such as dependency on family and spiritual support. The findings challenge typical stress models by emphasising the importance of spiritual coping and family support in Nigeria. The study also connects these experiences to Nigeria's unstable economy, which includes high inflation and rising education costs, stressing the need for better support from institutions. This study shows that economic stress is complex, affecting not just finances but also thinking, emotions, and social life. It calls for policies that provide financial aid, mental health support, and social inclusion to help Nigerian university students succeed academically and maintain their well-being amid economic challenges. Such measures would steel students against economic challenges, thus enhancing their educational experiences and prospects.
Keywords: Academic performance, Financial stress, Mental health, Students

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I. INTRODUCTION

THE UNIVERSITY of Lagos (UNILAG), self-styled "University of First Choice" for its appeal, is a leading institution in Nigeria with over 35000 registered students (University of Lagos, 2025). The University was established in 1962 as one of the foremost post-independence federal universities, and it has since produced an exhaustive list of world-beaters that comprise its glittering alumni network. Before 2023, the University was run on government funding, and tuition was easily affordable for students from different socioeconomic backgrounds. Accommodation was similarly affordable to an extent, but the low room-to-student ratio filtered out some students, especially the indigents. In 2023, the newly elected administration cut government funding for tertiary institutions (Daniel, 2023). The problem of perennially low education budgets took a steeper downturn by passing the buck to universities, who in turn foisted the responsibility on students (Daniel, 2023). This move consigned the University of Lagos to seek funding for running costs internally and externally. This translated to approximately a fivefold increase in tuition fee (N19,000 to N100,750) for students without laboratory or studio requirements, a sevenfold increase for students with the requirements (N19,000 to N140,250), and a tenfold increase for medical students (N19,000 to N190,250) (Ekugo, 2023), a change that compounded the financial insecurity of students grappling with worsening economic conditions. Nigeria has been facing economic blows such as currency devaluation, hyperinflation, and the attendant effect of rising living costs (Ojabello, 2024). This has created a negative domino effect, affecting academic motivation, performance, mental health, and quality of life. The removal of fuel subsidies in May 2023 created a butterfly effect that sparked inflationary pressures, with headline inflation reaching 34.2% by June 2024, the highest in 28 years (The Nigerian Economic Summit Group, 2024). The effect of this inflation, largely driven by rising food costs, which reached 40.9% in June 2024, is worsened by an exchange rate that has doubled from N769/US$ in June 2023 to N1471/US$ in June (The Nigerian Economic Summit Group, 2024). The University of Lagos's decision to increase undergraduate tuition fees represents a dramatic escalation in educational costs against a backdrop of limited financial aid options and declining family incomes, creating a perfect storm of economic pressure for students.

Economic stress is instantiated in federal university students through various means. This includes the inability to afford academic necessities such as mobile data to access virtual classes, download study materials, and stay updated; improper nutrition from rationed meals (Fernandez et al., 2019), and dilution of academic focus from emergency jobs functioning as a palliative measure against poverty (Moore et al., 2021). Students' attitudes towards education have flipped from full-time study financially backed by parents to that of part-time business owners who attend classes and write exams. The constant preoccupation with financial survival diverts attention and energy from academic ends, potentially undermining the quality of education and prospects of these students, some of whom forsake their grades to pay bills (Ogunfeitimi, 2023).

Psychologically, expanded personal responsibilities implicated by financial burdens exert additional load on students, often leading to

perception anxiety, depression, high distractibility, and other mental health difficulties (Moore et al., 2021). Research shows that a significant number of Nigerian University students experience mild to moderate stress levels, with financial difficulties identified as a major factor (Ogbuagu et al., 2024). The emotional distress from socioeconomic status can lead to maladaptive behaviours and reduced productivity (Rahal et al., 2022), further compounding academic woes. This study aims to evaluate the impact of financial pressures on student receptivity to education and the psychological capital required to do so.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Financial stress's influence on students' academic performance

A complex tableau of challenges besets tertiary education in Nigeria, none more pressing than the pervasive influence of financial stress on student populations. According to research, financial stress consists of components beyond finances, including the attendant effects of psychological strain associated with financial uncertainty and the consistent worry about satisfying educational and survival demands (Moore et al., 2021).

Research reveals repeated links between the availability of financial resources and educational success. A 2013 time series study by Ikebude et al., investigating the effect of poverty on high school girls who had transitioned to tertiary institutions, revealed that poverty and unemployment are critical determinants of female success in school (Ikebude et al., 2023). Adeniji (2025) corroborates this finding, who similarly established a meaningful effect of poverty on academic outcomes. In Kaduna, one study sought to examine the impact of finance on students' academic performance. The study revealed a disparity in student satisfaction, with self-sponsored students enjoying more than their peers who relied on family support (Nnamani et al., 2014).

Financial stress impacts academic performance directly and indirectly. Direct effects include the inability to access necessary educational resources, such as textbooks, and missing out on trips that provide students with exposure (Moore et al., 2021). Indirect effects are tethered to the psychological burden of financial worry that impairs concentration and cognitive function. This manifests in the perception that other students wield more disposable cash and have a opposed college experience, where they participate in social events and keep the company of wealthier peers (Moore et al., 2021). Consequently, these perceived inadequacies lead to feelings of frustration and shame (Moore et al., 2021).

Another suite of research indicates that students preoccupied with financial concerns experience reduced working memory capacity and diminished ability to process complex academic material effectively. Financial stress has been linked to low academic motivation and low propensity to engage in prescribed school activities (Bøe et al., 2021). As a result, students have trouble integrating socially, further estranging them from their peers (Adams et al., 2016). Financial stress can also lead to stunted or protracted academic careers as students take absences sometimes or outrightly quit (Adams et al., 2016; Montalto et al., 2019).

The relationship between financial stress and mental health is negatively charged. Studies have revealed consistently increased rates of anxiety, depression, and stress-related disorders among financially distressed students (Tafadzwa, 2024; Smith et al., 2022). Constant perturbations associated with finance are implicated in a chronic stress response that creates both physical and psychological far-rippling effects. Economic stress can impact family relationships, as students may feel pressure to contribute to family income or experience guilt and performance anxiety about the financial burden their education places on their families (Tafadzwa, 2024). Considering that the period of university education represents a critical point of development where mental health patterns developed influence long-term habits, this interrelationship is concerning.

Research establishes that financial stress skews mental health through various means that include feelings of helplessness, lowered self-esteem, and social isolation due to feelings of disconnect from their peers, whose enriched experiences are not relatable to them. A study by Odulate-Ogunubi et al. (2024) on Nigerian undergraduates' perceived stress and coping mechanisms revealed that nearly 80.8% of students experience mild to moderate stress due to financial stress.

To resolve this, research lists two coping methods among financially stressed students: problem-focused and emotion-focused. Problem-focused methods attack the problem of lack directly and tangibly, attempting to turn the situation around through engagement in entrepreneurship, employment-seeking, planning, and applying for financial aid (Odulate-Ogunubi et al., 2924). Emotional methods attempt to help students feel better or at least less ruffled about low finances. These activities include cognitive restructuring, religious practices, and seeking social support (Odulate-Ogunubi et al., 2024). As found in the study by Odulate-Ogunubi and his co-researchers in the study of 145 undergraduates at the University of Lagos, students who adopted an emotion-focused approach reported better mental health outcomes than problem-focused individuals, even as the latter was the go-to option of most respondents (Odulate-Ogunubi et al., 2024).

In the Nigerian context, according to research done by X, students adopt problem-focused methods: using scales of reference, frugal spending, and alternative income-seeking behaviours (Eneogu et al., 2023).

III. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

This study explores the influence of financial stress students' academic performance, mental health, coping methods, support systems, and social pressures at a selected university in Nigeria.

IV. METHODS

Research approach

This study employed a qualitative research approach to explore the influence of financial stress on students' mental health. This approach fits because of its ability to reflect the intimate reality of concerned respondents, thus including emotions, beliefs, and other supplementary information that provide a well-rounded and person-centered description.

Research paradigm

This study employed a constructivist paradigm, focusing on understanding the subjective experiences of Nigerian university students dealing with financial stress. It is participant-led and involves the co-construction of knowledge. It gives expressive freedom to participants' thoughts and feelings, revealing the complexities of their social, emotional, and financial challenges.

Research design

This study utilised a qualitative method to investigate the variables under consideration using an open-ended technique where participants depicted the situation by detailing lived personal experiences that the researcher interpreted.

Data collection tools

This study utilised semi-structured interviews. This tool was important in this study as it allows researchers to create a space where participants feel comfortable sharing their stories in their own words (Ruslin et al., 2022). This tool provides for deep-cutting questions and follow-up, which can reveal critical information missing in structured surveys (Ruslin et al., 2022). Quantitative study's broad and abstract responses dissolve in the experience-centered approach of qualitative research with specific details that sometimes tweak first assessments (Tenny et al., 2022). Data were gleaned using a semi-structured interview that comprised 15 open-ended questions. This approach permitted respondents to answer directly and laterally, inserting useful additional information or context that strengthens answers to the original questions. The interviews took an average of 8 minutes and were held in-person in a comfortable environment.

Participants

Fourteen participants were purposively recruited from a selected University in Lagos, Nigeria. This study selected only students who encountered financial instability and experienced financial stress. Fourteen participants were recruited for the study, comprising six males and eight females. Six were from the Faculty of Social Sciences, two were from the Faculty of Engineering, three from the Faculty of Arts, one from the Faculty of Science, and two from the Faculty of Environmental Sciences. All participants were undergraduates in different levels (3 first-year students, one second-year student, seven third-year students, and three final-year students). All participants lived on campus and comprised various ethnicities, including Yoruba, Igbo, and Calabar.

Research site

This study was conducted on campus across the different faculties. Respondents were purposively selected based on their willingness to participate and personal resonance with the research topic. Respondents were briefed on the topic quickly before being interviewed. The researcher ensured that the research site was distraction-free to allow respondents to answer with full awareness and presence. Though the research site differed across the faculties, the researcher ensured that the bare minimum criteria were consistently observed.

Data analysis

This study employed thematic analysis from transcribed and verbatim interviews that categorise research data into different true-to-story patterns. Using Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step process, this research employed a theory-free inductive approach to synthesise information into a coherent understanding. The analysis began with an in-depth engagement with the data through multiple readings, which helped identify patterns and generate initial codes. These codes were combined into related themes and sub-themes, ultimately leading to general descriptions. Throughout the analysis, the researcher acknowledged their insider status as a student to account for potential biases. Five major themes were identified from the fifteen interviews. The study ensured trustworthiness by employing triangulation and integrating multiple data sources to capture diverse perspectives. The research was also bias-conscious. Selection bias was kept in mind, informing the heterogeneous mix of the respondents spread across different socioeconomic standings. Throughout the research, reflexivity was maintained.

Ethical considerations

Participants were provided clear information about the study's objectives, methodologies, and potential impacts, ensuring their voluntary involvement. Informed consent, documented through electronic agreements, explicitly stated their right to withdraw at any time without negative consequences, and with assurances that any data collected before withdrawal will be omitted. The study avoided unnecessary questions, minimising psychological harm.

Data collection was limited to essential financial and health-related information, with names excluded and placeholder names assigned. Participants were briefed on the research's importance and role in positive change. The researcher also ensured they maintained sensitivity throughout the interviews due to the vulnerable research topic. Participants were briefed about the study and verbalised their consent in the audio recording. Participants were assured of confidentiality and the freedom to withdraw from the research at anytime. Data gleaned from the participants was secured in a password-protected environment using an encrypted file. Access was limited to the researcher, who also singularly used the data.

V. RESULTS

Biographic results

Table 1: Biographic results

Participants	Gender	Faculty	Level
Participant 1	Male	Environmental Sciences	100
Participant 2	Female	Arts	100
Participant 3	Female	Social Sciences	100
Participant 4	Female	Arts	200
Participant 5	Female	Arts	300
Participant 6	Male	Social Sciences	300
Participant 7	Female	Social Sciences	300
Participant 8	Male	Social Sciences	300
Participant 9	Male	Social Sciences	300
Participant 10	Female	Social Sciences	300
Participant 11	Female	Environmental Sciences	300
Participant 12	Female	Sciences	400
Participant 13	Male	Engineering	500
Participant 14	Male	Engineering	500

Financial stress influences students' academic performance, emotional distress, coping mechanisms, reliance on support systems, and societal pressures.

Financial stress significantly affected students' academic performance. Many students articulated how the constant worry about finances detracted from their ability to concentrate on their studies, leading to a drop in grades for some. One participant recounted starting a new semester with limited funds, stating:

"*I felt like I was stepping into a new semester already in survival mode. That kind of uncertainty can be overwhelming because even the littlest of things now become the most difficult things to get*" (Participant 6).

Another lamented:

"*Right now, my studying motivation is just at a steady level, and my grades did not get affected that badly because I took my time to plan my budget and only purchase things when necessary*" (Participant 9).

In yet another case, a financially strained respondent reported just getting by academically when in the throes of raising tuition:

"*One of the biggest financial challenges I have faced as a student was the struggle to pay my school fees after I got admitted. It created a lot of tension and anxiety, especially when deadlines were approaching and I had no idea where the money would come from. That kind of pressure is mentally exhausting. While other students were focused on preparing for tests or assignments, I was busy stressing over how to settle my fees. It affected my daily routine because I could not concentrate fully. I would go to class, but my mind was always distracted. Despite all that, I still pushed through. I think what kept me going was the hope that the struggle would be temporary and that every small step forward, no matter how hard, was part of my bigger story*" (Participant 8).

These results show financial stress seriously disrupts students' academic performance and emotional well-being. This pressure distracts them from academic tasks, affecting their daily routines. Despite these challenges, many students remain hopeful and resilient, viewing their struggles as part of a larger journey.

Emotional distress

Another important theme was the emotional toll that financial challenges imposed on students' mental health. Respondents frequently described feelings of anxiety, depression, moodiness, lack of confidence, and high irritability stemming from their financial situations. One participant noted:

"*Financial stress has taken a toll on my mental health... It was not just about not having money; it affected everything else, my peace of mind, my confidence, even how I interacted with others*" (Participant 1).

Another student shared grimly:

"*Yes, it has caused anxiety, making me constantly worry about all things, and it has affected my self-confidence in approaching certain issues all around*" (Participant 10).

This was shared by a respondent for whom emotional distress persists from past to present:

"*I feel sad, I feel things are standing in the way of the real me, and also makes me feel handicapped, and I cannot feel progressive because of the things I have to go through financially*" (Participant 13).

"*It made me sad. It eventually led to my crying for an extended period. I was very down, and it spanned for weeks*" (Participant 12).

Coping mechanisms adopted

The results suggested that students employed various coping strategies to manage financial stress, such as budgeting, entrepreneurship, working part-time, reliance on God, and personal networks. Participants shared differing approaches, such as budgeting and seeking part-time work. One respondent stated:

"I try to shift my energy into doing something productive... my faith plays a huge role" (Participant 8).

Another student highlighted emergency entrepreneurship as a problem-focused solution they adopt, noting:

"I was not depressed at that period; there is something I told someone when you are broke, you have become an entrepreneur" (Participant 9).

On the other hand, some students choose to meticulously plan their expenditure, stripping down to the absolute essentials. This was captured by a student who claimed:

"Spend according to the budget and do not overwhelm myself" (Participant 4).

The emotional toll of financial challenges on students runs deep, leading to anxiety, depression, and irritability. Some respondents find strength in their faith, while others focus on essential spending to manage their stress effectively.

Reliance on support systems

The theme of support systems emerged prominently, as many respondents turned to family, friends, and God for assistance. One participant expressed gratitude for their siblings' emotional support, stating:

"They are my biggest support system... just knowing they understand and are emotionally present for me makes a big difference" (Participant 5).

In another case, the parents absorbed the extra economic shock on behalf of the respondent:

"My parents give me allowances, advice, and direction whenever needed" (Participant 2).

Another student echoed the same survival strategy, taking full advantage of their birth order. As he noted:

"I am not silent about it; I have elder siblings, being the last born, when I need to ask, and I also have value I give to people" (Participant 8).

"I know that people are always there for me, and I know I am not doing life alone" (Participant 8).

One student's whole emotion-focused approach to coping rested solely on God, which she claimed is "very powerful". According to her:

"I believe that your life is anchored on God's word and gives eternal rest. If I am expecting a particular amount of money and it does not come, I have an assurance that I am relying on the truth of God's word, and it stays forever" (Participant 9).

Another respondent similarly expressed a habitual recourse to God for coping, in addition to a small supportive circle:

"Two things have kept me going during financial stress: working harder and trusting God. I have learned that sitting in worry does not solve the problem, so I try to shift my energy into doing something productive, whether taking on small jobs, helping others, or looking for new opportunities to bring in income. Knowing I am actively trying makes me feel less helpless, even if the money is not much. At the same time, my faith plays a huge role. There have been moments when I had nothing figured out, but I still found peace by praying and trusting that somehow, things would work out. It was not always easy but reminding myself that I am not alone and that there is a bigger plan gives me hope. I also try to stay grounded by focusing on what I can control, managing my spending, being content with what I have, and not comparing myself to others. Surrounding myself with supportive people who understand my journey helps too. Sometimes, just talking about it lightens the load" (Participant 6).

This reliance on personal networks illustrates the importance of supportive relationships in alleviating financial stress. Participants expressed deep appreciation for emotional backing from siblings and parents, which provides a sense of security. Faith also plays a significant role, offering reassurance and strength during tough times.

Societal Pressures and Comparisons

This produced mixed results, and though some respondents expressed an absence of financial peer pressure due to their "conservative background" and friends, most students felt pushed

to meet expectations set by their peers, families, and social media. One participant reflected:

"*Societal pressures and comparisons with peers can be tough, especially when I try my best but still feel behind. In a world of social media, it is easy to compare your reality with someone else's. I have learnt not to let comparisons define my worth. I focus more now on progress, not pressure. It was not always easy but reminding myself that I am growing even in quiet, unseen ways helps me stay grounded"* (Participant 12).

Another student described the effect of such comparisons:

"It only affects my confidence in social events and self-confidence" (Participant 13).

A respondent viewed better financial status as a challenge and reported being unperturbed:

"They do not affect my feelings. I believe that life is not equal. These people give me motivation, and I see how hard working and comfortable they are as students, and that is always a motivation for me, that I can do all I set my mind to, and it will come out well for me" (Participant 6).

The impact of financial peer pressure among students produced mixed experiences. Some participants felt little pressure due to their conservative backgrounds, even as many struggle with societal expectations shaped by peers, families, and social media.

VI. DISCUSSION

The findings illuminate the multifaceted and interconnected nature of how financial stress permeates students' lives in a selected University of Nigeria, affecting their economic circumstances and fundamentally altering their academic trajectories, psychological well-being, and social experiences.

The participants' narratives describe financial stress as a cognitive disruptor that fundamentally alters students' ability to engage with academic responsibilities. The phenomenon described by one participant as entering "survival mode" reflects what the literature identifies as the cognitive load theory's manifestation in financial stress contexts (Aziz et al., 2025). According to the theory, students preoccupied with existential concerns with satisfying rudimentary living requirements have their working memory capacity compromised, leaving limited cognitive resources for complex academic tasks. In the worst cases, this leads to what researchers call "financial stress-induced academic interference", where protracted problems with concentration and memory consolidation rob the student of good academic performance. The time-based side of this academic impact may be extended if cognitive disruption is prolonged, dooming students to academic disadvantages post-crisis. The participant's reflection on being unable to "concentrate fully" while attending classes proves how financial stress divides attention and impoverishes the quality of learning experiences.

These findings revealed that financial stress could influence the students' emotional distress and the psychological architecture.

The list of symptoms reported anxiety, depression, diminished self-confidence, and chronic sadness reveals what the literature identifies as the classic presentation of financial stress-induced psychological distress (Tafadzwa et al., 2024; Mat et al., 2023). These findings (consistent with ABC) support research indicating that financial stress operates as a strong predictor of mental health challenges, with long-reaching effects that affect patterns of psychological functioning.

The participants' descriptions of feeling "handicapped" and unable to access their "real self" due to financial limitations speak to the identity-disrupting effects of economic stress. This phenomenon aligns with financial stress and self-concept research, which posits that low financial onslaught disturbs and dulls an individual's self-efficacy and agentic sense (Mat et al., 2023). Given the extended periods of emotional distress described by participants, including weeks-long episodes of depression, it is not remiss to point out that financial stress among UNILAG students operates not as acute, time-limited stressors but as chronic conditions that require sustained psychological resources to manage. Students' reports of reduced self-confidence in social situations are an example of what researchers' term "financial stress-induced social withdrawal," where individuals begin to avoid social contexts that might expose their economic limitations (Khan et al., 2025).

The findings indicated that students adapted strategies in resource-

constrained environments when experiencing financial stress.

The variety of coping strategies deployed by students reveals a creativity of resilience. The difference between problem-focused and emotion-focused coping strategies is obvious in participants' responses (Aziz et al., 2025). Students who opted for budgeting, entrepreneurial activities, and systematic expenditure planning maintained problem-focused approaches that directly address the source of financial stress. At the same time, those who relied primarily on religious faith and emotional regulation exemplified emotion-focused strategies aimed at managing psychological distress.

Students who described finding "eternal rest" through religious beliefs and maintaining hope through spiritual practices utilised what researchers' term "positive religious coping," a technique consistently associated with better psychological adjustment and stress management outcomes. As described by many participants, integrating active problem-solving with spiritual coping represents what the literature identifies as the most effective approach to managing chronic stressors.

The findings suggested that students turn to social capital, such as siblings, parents, and extended social networks, for financial and emotional support. This is consistent with research on social support systems and their softening effects against financial stress (McLean et al., 2022). The participant who described siblings as their "biggest support system" and stressed the importance of emotional presence distinguishes between instrumental and emotional support.

The strategic utilisation of birth order, described by the participant who leveraged being the "last born" to access support from elder siblings, demonstrates the sophisticated ways students navigate family resource systems during financial crises. This finding points to extensive research on family financial dynamics and the role of intergenerational support in managing economic hardship. The participant's acknowledgment of providing "value" for support indicates an understanding of a reciprocal relationship ethos that marks effective social support networks.

The religious community support systems described by participants represent what researchers' term "congregational social capital," where religious institutions provide spiritual resources and practical assistance during financial stress (Orekoya, 2025).

However, the variation in available support systems among participants also highlights the inequality of social capital distribution. Students who lack extensive family networks or community connections may find themselves disproportionately vulnerable to the effects of financial stress, suggesting the need for institutional support systems to address these disparities.

The participant's reflection on social media comparisons and the challenge of comparing "your reality with someone else's" directly aligns with research on social comparison theory and its effects on well-being (Fukunayashi & Fuji, 2021). The ease with which students can observe peers' apparent financial success through social media platforms creates what researchers' term "upward social comparisons" that can worsen feelings of financial inadequacy and personal failure.

Students who maintained that financial differences served as "motivation" rather than sources of distress demonstrated what researchers identify as "downward social comparison" or "inspiration-based upward comparison," where others' success serves as a model for personal achievement rather than a source of inadequacy.

The impact of societal pressures on self-confidence and social event participation described by participants reflects the social costs of financial stress that extend beyond immediate material hardships. Research indicates that these social restrictions can create long-term disadvantages in social capital development, networking opportunities, and overall social integration (Moore et al., 2021). The participant's acknowledgment that financial status "only affects my confidence in social events" understates the potential implications of reduced social participations for overall university experience and future career development.

VII. CONCLUSION

The findings of this study highlight the impact of economic stress on students at the University of Lagos. Financial hardship extends beyond economic constraints to disrupt academic performance, induce significant emotional distress, and shape students' social and psychological experiences. The coping mechanisms, ranging from budgeting and entrepreneurial efforts to reliance on faith and social support networks, highlight students' resilience and the limitations of their challenging circumstances. Also, societal pressures and social comparisons further complicate students' handling of financial difficulties, influencing their self-esteem and social engagement.

These insights emphasise the urgent need for holistic interventions addressing students' financial barriers and the psychological and social dimensions of economic stress. Strengthening institutional support systems, expanding access to financial aid, and fostering inclusive environments that reduce stigma around financial hardship are critical steps toward mitigating the adverse effects of economic stress. Ultimately, ensuring that students at the University of Lagos can pursue their academic goals without the debilitating burden of financial stress is essential for promoting educational equity, mental well-being, and the development of Nigeria's future leaders.

VIII. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

There are no conflicts of interest in this article.

IX. DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

Data are available upon request.

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