

# Nursing Students & Stress Management

## HOW DO UNDERGRADUATE BSN STUDENTS PERCEIVE AND COPE WITH THEIR ACADEMIC STRESS DURING SEMESTER 1 COMPARED TO SEMESTER 5 OF THE PROGRAM?

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### Background

Our research question stems from our experiences as Douglas College BSN students, reflecting on the challenges of Semester 1 and anticipating Semester 5, known for its difficulty. As Semester 4 students, we're nearing Semester 5 and are intrigued about what to expect. Our connections with Semester 5 peers inform our understanding of their stressors and we question if our coping methods are suitable for Semester 5.

**Thus, our study seeks to explore how BSN students perceive and cope with academic stress in Semester 1 compared to Semester 5.**

### Hypothesis

Through the Valencia Eustress–Distress Appraisal (VEDAS) scale, **students will score higher for eustress (good stress) and lower for distress (bad stress) as they progress within the BSN program.**

### Research Method

- **Correlative quantitative research method**
  - Focused on recognizing trends and patterns in the data
    - Does not identify causes for patterns
    - Correlation ≠ causation
  - **Focused on determining the extent of the relationship between academic stress and the efficacy of nursing students to cope throughout the BSN program**

### Ethical Considerations

- Reviewed and completed CNA code of ethics and TCPS2 modules before conducting the research study.
- Formulated and presented a research proposal to the instructor, which underwent review and approval.
- Adhered to Research Ethics Board Guidelines throughout the study.
- Developed a consent form, emphasizing participant autonomy and voluntary participation, with the option to withdraw at any time.
- Stored collected data securely to maintain privacy and prevent alteration.
- Utilized a private platform for storing data and results of the VEDAS tool
- Collected names, signatures, and emails of participants to facilitate withdrawal from the study and notify them in case of a privacy breach, ensuring transparency and accountability.

### Limitations

- The surveys were given in a classroom setting causing results to potentially be skewed by others in the room
- Although a link was found between how long students are in the BSN program and how they handle stress, it does not prove that being in the program leads to changes in stress coping.
- We as a group are not trained in multi-factorial analysis
- small sample size: 46 participants
- Limited generalization as all students are from one institution and two classes
- Time constraints may lead to rushed results and lack of clarification for questions on the questionnaire

### Data Collection

#### PLAN

- Questionnaires were developed based on the VEDAS Scale and utilized the Likert Scale for rating.
- Eustress and Distress questions were randomized to ensure participants received a balanced mix, preventing bias in responses.
- Participants were instructed to rate statements on a scale from Fully Disagree to Fully Agree.
- Coping strategies were assessed on a scale of 0 (does not apply) to 10 for their effectiveness in managing academic stress.
- An "others" section allowed participants to specify and rate additional coping strategies not covered in the questionnaires, enhancing the breadth of the study's findings.

#### SAMPLING & RECRUITMENT

- Douglas college undergraduate BSN students
- Composed of 25 semester one students and 21 semester five students, totalling 46 participants from various backgrounds
- Class visits were arranged via email with BSN instructors

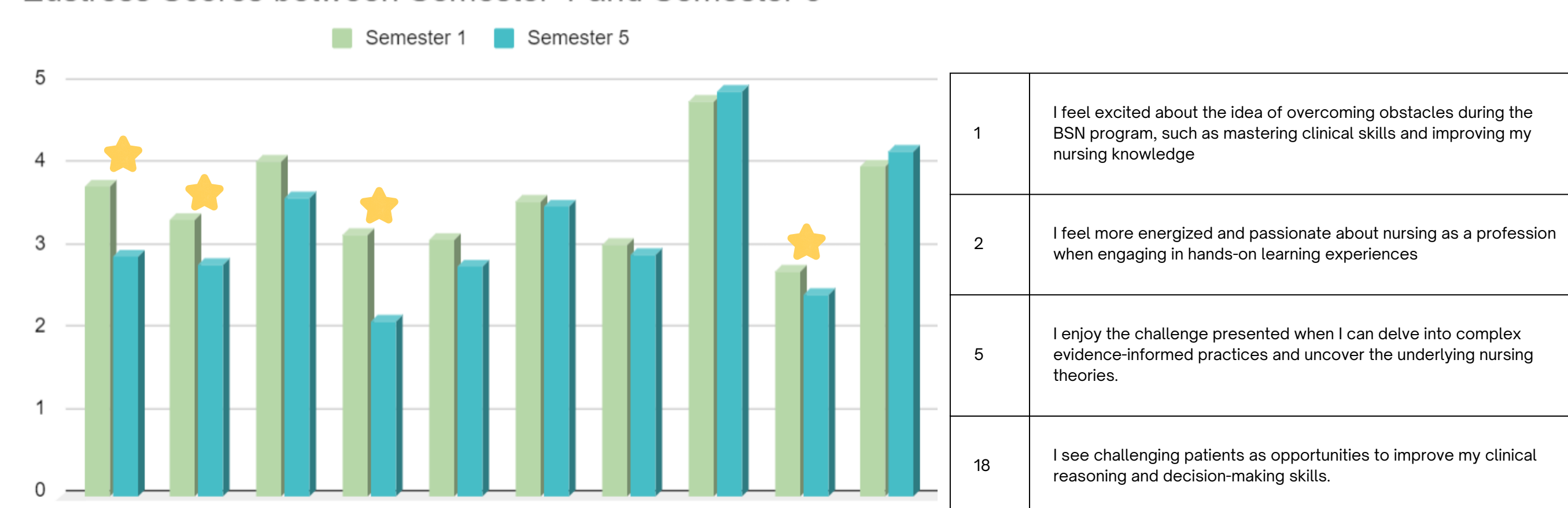
### Data Analysis

- Data was correlated in excel and statistical analyses was performed using t-tests to compare the groups
- Using a 95% Confidence interval, we determined significant differences between the scoring of the questionnaire between semesters

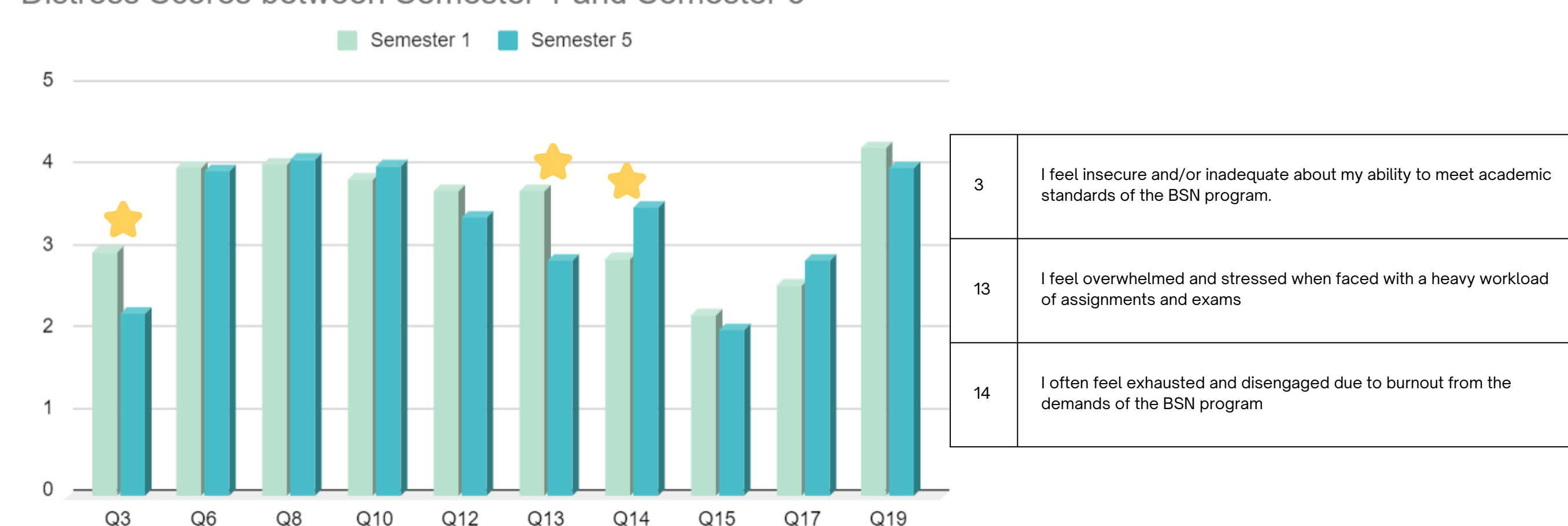
### Findings & Results

- **Our hypothesis could not be proven by our data**
  - Students in Semester 1 and 5 do not experience significantly different levels of distress
  - Students in Semester 1 experience significantly more eustress when compares to semester 5 students

Eustress Scores between Semester 1 and Semester 5



Distress Scores between Semester 1 and Semester 5



### Future Implications & Directions

- **Encouraging coping strategies**
- **Promote self-care services available and increase the availability of these services**
  - Examples:
    - Counselling
    - Hobby workshops
    - Dog Therapy
    - Peer Mentorship Program
- Asynchronous classes
- Promote guided open-lab time
- Clear and equal expectations on assignments and students
- Pre and post check-ins for clinical shifts
- Encourage group lunch within clinical shifts
- **Future Directions**
  - Collecting data per semester
    - Start and end of semester to recognize trends
  - Larger sample sizes
  - Incorporate questions regarding specific assignments (e.g. DMA)

### Conclusion

1. **Fear Levels:** Semester 1 students of the Douglas College BSN program exhibit more fear about the program compared to Semester 5 students.
2. **Coping Strategies:** By Semester 5, students' coping strategies become less effective, possibly contributing to increased burnout.
3. **Program Planning:** The results can assist program coordinators in planning Semester 1 student orientation, as well as workload and evaluation for both Semester 1 and Semester 5.
4. **Counseling Services:** The Douglas College Counseling department can use the findings to better promote their services and plan for possible in-services to support student well-being.
5. **Student Reflection:** Semester 5 students can utilize the finding that therapy is a more effective coping strategy for them compared to Semester 1 students, aiding in their preparation for higher stress levels.

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