

Navigating Academic Burnout: Lived Experiences Among College Interns

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ABSTRACT: This qualitative study examines the lived experiences of college interns as they navigate academic burnout, shedding light on the emotional, cognitive, and physical processes involved in balancing academic responsibilities and internship demands. Through in-depth interviews, interns shared narratives of feeling overwhelmed, emotionally exhausted, and at times disconnected from their academic and professional roles. Despite these challenges, their accounts also highlight the critical importance of mentorship and the positive impact of self-nurturing practices such as self-care routines, emotional regulation, and seeking social support as effective strategies for reducing burnout and fostering resilience. The findings underscore the pressing need for educational institutions to provide comprehensive resources and invest in supportive infrastructures that prioritize interns' mental health and overall well-being. Implementing targeted interventions, such as structured mentoring programs, mental health workshops, and time management training, can help create a healthier and more sustainable internship experience. Furthermore, this study offers actionable insights for educators, academic leaders, and internship coordinators, encouraging them to develop policies and programs that address the root causes of academic burnout. It also provides practical recommendations for interns, guiding them to build personal support systems and adopt coping strategies that promote both academic success and emotional well-being. Ultimately, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of academic burnout and emphasizes the collective responsibility of institutions, mentors, and interns in creating a supportive and thriving internship environment.

KEYWORDS: Academic Burnout, College Interns, lived experiences, coping mechanisms, support systems, well-being.

INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the background of the study, the theoretical framework, the statement of the problem, objectives of the study, the scope and limitations the significance of the study, and the definitions of terms.

Background of the Study

There are various studies that centers around the observations of why students are burnout with their Academic, especially college students. College is crucial stage of personal development with increasing procure to acquire knowledge and skills. In addition to academic demands, college students often experience burnout with their academics due to various challenges such as high workload, pressure to perform, lack of time management lack of support as well as financial support and distance from home and family act as stressors for students. Academic burnout has become an essential factor that affects college students' mental health.

Originally, the condition of burnout was noted particularly in service occupations, such as health care, teaching, social work, counseling, and law enforcement (Maslach & Schaufeli, 1996). These are intense and demanding fields, requiring close interaction with others and high degrees of empathy and competency. When faced with the limitations imposed by reality, some people can begin to feel discouraged and cynical. The expectations of those being served, and of society in general, have intensified over time, even while financial and societal support, have decreased (Schaufeli et al., 2009).

Furthermore, burnout can disrupt students' ability to effectively engage with their studies, leading to lower grades, decreased academic motivation, and increased risk of dropout. Addressing burnout through interventions such as stress management, self-care strategies, and fostering supportive academic environments is crucial for promoting students' well-being and academic success. Researchers often explore the consequences of burnout, including decreased academic achievement, increased dropout rates, and mental health issues. Understanding the underlying causes and impacts of academic burnout is crucial for developing effective interventions and support systems to promote student success and well-being in higher education settings. The inability to cope effectively with the challenges of the professional and academic life can have severe repercussions on a student's mental health and well-being (Youssef and Luthans, 2007), with depression and suicide attempts being the two reactions to stress that are of concern to the society (Oswalt and Riddock, 2007).

Navigating Academic Burnout: Lived Experiences Among College Interns

Although there is no universally accepted definition, scholars have identified common symptoms that characterize academic burnout. It shares many of the same symptoms as general burnout, such as physical and emotional exhaustion, demotivation towards studies, emotional disconnection from the academic environment, and a decrease in the sense of achievement and personal efficacy. However, academic burnout is specifically associated with factors in the academic environment, such as pressure to obtain good grades, intense workloads, lack of resources to meet educational demands, tight deadlines, an accelerated study pace, comparison with other students, and pressure to excel. Additionally, students may struggle to balance their studies with other activities. To address this issue, it is essential to identify the underlying causes and develop appropriate prevention and support strategies to promote the well-being of university students and ensure a healthy academic environment (Cuevas-Caravaca, 2024).

Lived Experiences among College Interns could involve exploring the unique intersection of academic pressure and internship responsibilities, which has received limited attention compared to the broader studies on academic burnout or internships alone. While academic burnout is a well-researched topic, the specific challenges faced by college interns, balancing academic work and internship demands, may not be adequately addressed. Research could investigate the coping mechanisms, mental health impacts, and the role of institutional support systems in mitigating burnout among interns. Additionally, the influence of various factors such as field of study, internship type, duration, and support networks could offer valuable insights into the diverse lived experiences of these students. Furthermore, exploring burnout at different stages of the internship and how it impacts academic performance, career development, and long-term well-being could uncover overlooked aspects of student life.

This study aims to provide insight into the varied realm of students' responses to challenging academic situations, recognizing that academic burnout can significantly hinder their capacity to excel and may exert enduring effects on both their academic and personal growth. By examining how students navigate and cope with diverse academic challenges, this research strives to shed light on effective strategies for mitigating burnout and fostering resilience in educational contexts.

Theoretical Framework

This study is theoretically supported by Maslach's Three-dimensional Theory of Burnout and Self-Determination Theory. The following is a detailed discussion of these theories.

Maslach's Three-dimensional Theory of Burnout (1981)

Maslach's Three-dimensional Theory of Burnout is a seminal framework in the field of psychology that comprehensively explains the experience of burnout in various contexts, including academia. Developed by Christina Maslach and Susan E. Jackson, this theory posits that burnout is a psychological syndrome characterized by three dimensions: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment. Each dimension plays a critical role in understanding the multifaceted nature of burnout and its impact on individuals' well-being and performance. Emotional exhaustion is the hallmark dimension of burnout, referring to feelings of being emotionally drained and depleted by one's academic responsibilities. This dimension encompasses physical fatigue, psychological fatigue, and a sense of overwhelming stress and weariness. Individuals experiencing emotional exhaustion may feel depleted of energy, find it challenging to cope with the demands of their academic workload, and may struggle to regulate their emotions effectively.

Depersonalization involves developing negative or cynical attitudes towards academic work and individuals involved, characterized by feelings of detachment, skepticism, and disengagement. This dimension reflects a sense of emotional detachment and a tendency to view academic tasks, colleagues, and students as objects rather than individuals. Individuals experiencing depersonalization may exhibit behaviors such as sarcasm, cynicism, or withdrawal, and may perceive interactions with others as impersonal or transactional. Depersonalization can lead to strained interpersonal relationships, decreased empathy, and a diminished sense of connection and fulfillment in one's academic role. Reduced personal accomplishment entails a decline in one's sense of competence and effectiveness in academic tasks, resulting in feelings of inadequacy, doubt, and diminished confidence in one's abilities. This dimension reflects a perceived lack of achievement or fulfillment in one's academic endeavors, despite efforts to succeed. Individuals experiencing reduced personal accomplishment may doubt their ability to meet academic expectations, experience feelings of failure or incompetence, and may question their career choice or academic path.

Maslach's Three-dimensional Theory of Burnout provides a comprehensive framework for understanding the complex interplay between emotional, cognitive, and behavioral factors in the experience of burnout. By examining the dimensions of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment, this theory offers valuable insights into the mechanisms underlying burnout and its impact on individuals' wellbeing and performance in academic. Additionally, other important aspects of burnout, such as the role of organizational factors, coping strategies, and individual differences, further enrich our understanding of this phenomenon. As a theoretical framework, Maslach's theory forms the basis of our research questions, guides our data collection methods, and shapes our analysis techniques that will lead to a deeper understanding of the complexities surrounding academic burnout and its implications for college intern students' performance.

Navigating Academic Burnout: Lived Experiences Among College Interns

Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000)

Self-Determination theory represents a broad framework for the study of human motivation and personality. SDT articulates a meta-theory for framing motivational studies, a formal theory that defines intrinsic and varied extrinsic sources of motivation, and a description of the respective roles of intrinsic and types of extrinsic motivation in cognitive and social development and in individual differences. Perhaps more importantly, SDT propositions also focus on how social and cultural factors facilitate or undermine people's sense of volition and initiative, in addition to their well-being and the quality of their performance.

SDT provides an insightful framework for studying academic burnout faced by college interns, most of whom work in challenging places with not much support. According to the theory, a person's core needs for autonomy, competence and belonging make them more motivated, healthier and ready to participate for a long time. When college interns are free to make their own decisions, feel capable and feel accepted, they tend to succeed and keep themselves motivated. If these needs are neglected—when interns have rigid supervision (not much autonomy), feel out of their depth with assigned assignments (not feeling ready for them) or feel disconnected and unsupported (no relatedness)—it puts them at great risk for emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and less feeling of success which are main aspects of academic burnout. Being under pressure from academic goals and practical job duties can cause interns to feel worn out, less involved and lose confidence in themselves. SDT explains the ways in which social and structural conditions at an internship can boost or restrict motivation and a good work climate. That's why it's important to notice and handle these psychological needs in the internship classroom, so students can avoid burnout and enjoy more meaningful engagements in education and work.

Statement of the Problem

This research paper seeks to explore by navigating academic burnout the lived experiences among college students in the Science, Math, and Values Education program of one of the universities in Tacloban City.

The research study will be understood by focusing on the following specific research questions:

1. What are the lived experiences on academic burnout of the college interns during internship program?
2. How do their experiences on academic burnout affect their learning?
3. What are their coping strategies used?

Objectives of the Study

1. Identify the key factors contributing to academic burnout among university intern students.
2. Determine the consequences of academic burnout on students' academic performance, mental health, and overall well-being.
3. Develop recommendations for universities and educators on interventions and support programs to mitigate academic burnout.

Scope and Limitations

The study will be on internship students currently involved in their respective intern programs at Leyte Normal University. It includes students of any discipline and any year of study. The [Specific Burnout Scale, that is, Maslach Burnout Inventory-Student Survey (MBI-SS)] will be used to measure in the academic burnout using such an instrument that is validated as emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment of academic pursuits. The instrument will be modified to answer, specifically, how intern students experience the curriculum.

This study will aim to produce generalizability on the extent of the specific context like, biases will be mitigated as much as possible by the careful design of data analysis techniques. The study may not capture all the relevant causative factors to academic burnout. The results of the study could be affected by factors not considered in the study such as financial distress, personal health issues. This study will be of value to inform the development of interventions to academic burnout for the benefit of intern students. Although, it should be noted that the limits of this study should be acknowledged, and the findings should be interpreted within their limits.

Significance of the Study

The study will benefit to the following:

Students. Understanding students' experiences of academic exhaustion helps identify early warning signs and develop effective coping strategies. Intervention methods focused on individual students help boost learning through burnout prevention and the identification of contributing elements which simultaneously enhance concentration and drive and student involvement.

Teachers. Educators play a crucial role in recognizing and addressing academic burnout among students. Allows teachers to develop student-centric strategies for delivering professional help and individual growth in conducive educational settings. The teacher professional development process becomes more efficient through these insights which leads to better methods of instruction while raising student resistance levels for enhanced academic achievement.

Navigating Academic Burnout: Lived Experiences Among College Interns

Administration. School administration benefits substantially from academic burnout research by receiving crucial information on student exhaustion factors which results in student success effects and institutional health development. Academic burnout research enables researchers to determine which stressors along with specific conditions cause burnout because of excessive workloads unrealistic expectations insufficient support and limited educational resources. Strategic administrative interventions can be designed through this approach to develop a supportive educational setting.

Guidance Personnel. Counselors completed higher levels of student services focused on improving academic success. Counselors have a positive impact on student success. The factors related to higher incidence of school counselors' direct student services could provide significant educational benefits to schools. Student problem-solving receives positive influence from school counseling which also improves behavior while building personal/social development and college readiness together with academic success.

Parents. This study provides benefits to student parents as it gives them understanding about student life experiences. This may help them to raise awareness about the impact of academic burnout on their children and encourage them to provide better guidance and supervision.

Future Researchers. By further investigating the phenomenon of academic burnout, new researchers entering the field will benefit from additional research into academic burnout because they can expand on existing findings. Researchers can help academic fields better understand burnout behavior and its effects on students by carrying out thorough studies about student lived experiences. This can source creative solutions for its management. Research links evidence-based practices to student learning by developing innovative interventions then evaluating their performance in developing students holistically.

Definition of Terms

Lived Experiences. Lived experience stands for individual experiences that lead to gained knowledge and promote qualitative investigation of culture and society and their linguistic and communication aspects. Human sciences oppose experiments that natural sciences utilize because they agree they draw their research from actual human experiences. This encompasses the thoughts, emotions, coping mechanisms, and meaning-making processes of college interns as they navigate the challenges of balancing coursework, internship responsibilities, performance expectations, and personal life.

Academic Burnout. A syndrome conceptualized as resulting from chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed. Defined as a psychological condition experienced by students undergoing internship programs while simultaneously fulfilling academic requirements. It is characterized by a chronic state of physical and emotional exhaustion, detachment or negative attitudes toward academic and internship tasks, and a decline in perceived personal effectiveness or accomplishment.

Study Burnout. The combination of heavy coursework with sleep deprivation and unhealthy eating habits leads medical students to the high chance of burnout which also results from their family responsibilities alongside their lack of exercise and poor time management skills together with their high aspirations and sustained academic pressure, particularly experienced during the internship period where academic tasks and real-world professional responsibilities intersect.

Stressors. As the internal and external demands, pressures, or challenges encountered by students during their internship period that exceed their perceived ability to cope effectively. These stressors may arise from both academic and professional environments and significantly impact their psychological well-being, academic performance, and internship experience.

Intervention. A structured set of strategies, programs, or support mechanisms implemented to address the academic, emotional, and professional challenges faced by students during their internship period. These interventions aim to reduce stress and burnout, enhance coping abilities, and improve performance and well-being in both academic and workplace setting

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter presents the relevant literature and studies that the researcher considered in strengthening the importance of the present study. It also presents the synthesis of the art to fully understand the research for better comprehensive of the study.

Academic Burnout in College Interns

Academic burnout can be defined as the burnout in students that temporary leading to a decline in academic performance and social interactions. Burnout does not only depend on individual predisposing factors, such as emotional expression or inadequate coping strategies for stress, but it is also associated with external factors such as the educational system. It may have adverse effects by increasing distress and decreasing academic engagement and it can be a good predictor of poor academic performance.

Burnout among college students is more prevalent than people think. According to the National College Health Assessment, 80% of college students reported feeling overwhelmed, and 40% reported it was difficult to function. Students who develop college burnout can be impacted in a number of negative ways. The best way to avoid this is for parents, guardians, and professors to know the warning signs of burnout, in addition to the students themselves. (Kosmin 2023). Academic burnout is

Navigating Academic Burnout: Lived Experiences Among College Interns

characterized by Stress and emotional exhaustion, which can affect not only students' physical and mental Health but also their behavior, mindset, and academic performance. (Marc Eric S Reyes et. Al 2016)

Causes of Academic Burnout Among College Interns

College is a crucial stage of personal development with increasing pressure to acquire knowledge and skills. In addition to academic demands, other challenges, such as peer pressure and competition, limited socioeconomic power, and distance from home and family, act as stressors for students. Academic burnout has become an essential factor that affects college students' mental health.

Academic burn-out is a common phenomenon among students. Because of the long-term academic pressure and burden, students feel exhausted, lose enthusiasm for their studies and activities, and hold a negative attitude towards learning. This study aimed to research academic burn-out and summarize the influencing factors of academic burn-out. The present study divides the influencing factors into external factors and internal factors. External Factors include school factors (learning pressure, teaching environment, interpersonal relationship), family factors (parenting style, parental support, family economic status). Internal factors include personality, self-esteem, and attribution style. This paper combs the relationship between these factors and academic burn-out as well as some influencing mechanisms. In the field of academic burn-out, there is a complex correlation between various factors, and few studies have taken comprehensive consideration of internal and external factors and explored the influence mechanism of these factors in-depth. In the future, studies in this field should be strengthened, and prevention and intervention methods should be worked out based on these influencing factors. (ICHESS 2021)

Academic burnout in students is influenced by various factors. These include gender, grade level, monthly living expenses, smoking habits, parents' education level, study and life pressures, and the current degree of professional knowledge interest. Age, study satisfaction, semester progression, and occupational liabilities also play a role in burnout symptoms. Other factors identified include anxiety, self-efficacy, the number of activities students participate in, campus environment, and support from others. These factors collectively contribute to the experience of academic burnout in students. (Gita Aulia Nurani 2022)

Manifestations of Burnout in College Interns

Unfortunately, stress is a common part of college life. Balancing a heavy course load, extracurricular activities, part-time jobs, social obligations, and other responsibilities can be challenging for students. It may also be hard for them to find the downtime to completely disconnect. It's normal for students to at times feel overwhelmed by the different moving parts that make up the college experience. However, if a student is feeling completely disengaged from their academic and social life, they may be experiencing student burnout.

Some of the common symptoms of burnout include a general feeling of being unable to keep up. You think you have too much to do, too many assignments, too many exams, too many lectures to catch up on. Burnout is not just an adult phenomenon. It's real, it's happening, and it's affecting children in schools nationwide. Perfectionism, overwhelming feelings, and over commitment are pushing students to their limits and, in some cases, beyond. Students today face a significant mental health crisis, and burnout is fueling that fire. According to an American Psychological Association (APA) survey, over half of high school students are regularly labeled as stressed or burnt out. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, over a quarter (29 percent) of high school students report suffering from poor mental health, and the rate at which children are diagnosed with anxiety and depression is steadily increasing. (Desthuis-Francis, 2024)

Burnout affects students across the spectrum, from general education students to special education students and gifted students, meaning the phenomenon can manifest in various ways. However, one thing is consistent: burnout can lead to severe, long-term consequences. It's often assumed that burnout in students is temporary, leading to a decline in academic performance and social interactions. However, research shows that the stressors students face today can create long-term mental health issues. Therefore, it's crucial for educators, parents, and school professionals to understand the signs and severity of burnout to take proactive measures to address this critical issue.

These students often face high expectations from themselves, their families, and their educators. As a result, they may push themselves to the limit, relentlessly pursuing perfection and setting unrealistic goals. This pressure can eventually lead to burnout, causing a decline in academic performance, an increased risk of dropping out of school, and the development of mental health disorders such as anxiety and depression. It is crucial for educators and parents to recognize the signs of burnout in gifted students and provide appropriate support and resources to help them cope with stress and maintain a balanced lifestyle. For example, teach students how to set achievable goals and manage expectations surrounding their performance, and let students know that it's okay to make mistakes and that learning from these mistakes is a crucial part of personal and academic growth. (Hunter Wesolowski 2024)

Interns experiencing burnout often exhibit decreased enthusiasm for learning and workplace engagement. Research suggests that detachment is a coping mechanism to manage overwhelming stress (Taris et al., 2020). Burnout negatively impacts cognitive functions, leading to decreased concentration, lower academic performance, and reduced internship efficiency (Shin et al., 2019).

Navigating Academic Burnout: Lived Experiences Among College Interns

Coping Mechanisms Employed by College Interns

College interns often face various challenges, such as workload pressure, time management struggles, performance anxiety, and balancing academics with work. To handle these stressors, they can employ different coping mechanisms, which can be categorized into emotional, behavioral, cognitive, and social strategies.

According to (Bolanio 2018) Stress is a state of mental tension and worry that causes strong feelings. To overcome stress, there is a need to employ some strategies to mitigate threatening and stressful situations. These strategies are known as coping mechanisms. The study aimed to determine the level of stress and the coping mechanisms used by the University of Bohol (UB) – Teachers College student interns.

The mental health of university students has been a growing concern In recent years (Milojevich and Lukowski, 2016). Various studies have demonstrated the high frequency of psychological symptoms associated with this stage of education (Blanco et al., 2008; Kim et al., 2015), with stress being one of the psychosocial problems that have become prevalent (Deasy et al., 2014; American College Health Association, 2018; Gustems-Carnicer et al., 2019). In their daily lives, university students have to face a wide variety of demands, both academic and non-academic, that could affect their well-being. Academic demands include adaptation to a new context, overwork, insufficient time to do their academic tasks, preparation for and doing of exams, and the pressure to perform (Beiter et al., 2015; Vizoso and Arias, 2016; Erschens et al., 2018; Webber et al., 2019). They are generally categorized into two broad types (for a complete categorization, see Zimmer-Gembeck and Skinner, 2016): approach (also called active) strategies and evasive (or disengagement) strategies.

Approach strategies involve cognitive and behavioral mechanisms aimed at making an active response to the stressor, directly changing the problem (primary control) or the negative emotions associated with it (secondary control). This category includes strategies such as planning, taking specific action, seeking support (instrumental and emotional), positive reappraisal of the situation, or acceptance. Evasive strategies are those which involve cognitive and behavioral mechanisms used to evade the stressful situation, such as distraction, denial, and wishful thinking. Based on this classification, there is a broad consensus that approach strategies are related to good academic, physical, and psychological adjustment (Clarke, 2006; Syed and Seiffge-Krenke, 2015; Gustems-Carnicer et al., 2019), whereas evasive strategies usually mean maladaptive consequences for the students (Tavolacci et al., 2013; Deasy et al., 2014; Skinner et al., 2016; Tran and Lumley, 2019).

Institutional Strategies for Preventing Burnout

Institutions can prevent burnout by fostering a supportive work culture, promoting work-life balance, and ensuring manageable workloads. Leadership should implement policies that encourage regular breaks, flexible work arrangements, and clear role expectations to reduce stress. Providing mental health resources, such as counseling and wellness programs, can help employees manage stress effectively. Encouraging open communication and feedback allows staff to voice concerns and seek support. Regular training on stress management and resilience-building strategies can empower employees to cope with workplace pressures. By prioritizing employee well-being and creating a positive work environment, institutions can mitigate burnout and enhance overall productivity.

Burnout is a widespread problem in health care. Factors that contribute to enhancing engagement and building resiliency are widely discussed, but the data supporting these practices are not well understood. Interventions aimed at increasing engagement and promoting resiliency are targeted toward individual practitioners, health care institutions, and national organizations. Knowledge of the data supporting various kinds of interventions is vital to implementing change meaningfully. Prevention of burnout should start early in training with appropriate modeling and input from mentors and should incorporate stress management strategies. The most compelling data for building resilience requires institutions, physicians, and their support staff to align their values to create a mutual culture of wellness and engagement. It is imperative that institutional and national reform allows us as physicians to preserve our relationships with patients and colleagues, while also prioritizing time to reflect and pursue outside interests that recharge and restore. (NN Mahmoud, D Rothenberger 2019)

Institutions can mitigate burnout by designing structured internship programs that balance academic and professional expectations (Goh & Lee, 2022). Providing clear guidelines, workload adjustments, and mentorship opportunities enhances intern well-being. Internship supervisors suggest enhancing communication strategies to better define roles and expectations, increasing support and training for supervisors, and establishing clearer, more collaborative frameworks for setting learning objectives with students. The supervisors' suggestions aim to ensure that internships are mutually beneficial, supporting both students' educational outcomes and the workplace needs. By focusing on the supervisor's perspective, we provide valuable insights into one aspect of implementing effective and rewarding internships (i.e., supervisor preparation), thereby suggesting pathways for future improvements in these high-impact educational practices. (JR Schneider2024) These conversations emphasize that students should develop the ability to apply their content knowledge in practical situations and effectively communicate with others in their field. This dialogue underscores the importance of integrating real-world applications, transferable knowledge, and other career training experiences into academic programs. (Gentile et al., 2017),

The related literature and studies "indicate that college student interns face various challenges in their academic journey, which can lead to burnout. One possible reason for this is the pressure they experience, particularly during their internship.

Navigating Academic Burnout: Lived Experiences Among College Interns

However, many studies explore strategies to help students cope with burnout. One of the most helpful institutions in this regard is the university, which can provide support to help students navigate these challenges.

As (Lucie-kay Desthuis -Fancis 2024) the good news is that student burnout can be prevented. The key to stopping burnout is to catch it as early on as possible or, even better, take preventative measures to stop its onset. This is why it is important for colleges to provide support to students in identifying the sources of their stress, setting up a stress management plan, and encouraging work-life balance. Awareness and stress management campaigns are key to avoiding student burnout. Guiding students to establish a healthy work-life balance from day one is extremely important.

METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the research methodology, research design, research local, research participants, sampling procedure, research instruments, data gathering procedure, ethical considerations of the study, the data analysis and research reflexivity. These components will be employed in the research study and outlines the process of the study.

Research Design

This study will utilize Qualitative Research as it aims to explore the lived experiences of college interns regarding academic burnout. Qualitative research involves collecting and analyzing non-numerical data (e.g., text, video, or audio) to understand concepts, opinions, or experiences. It can be used to gather in-depth insights into a problem or generate new ideas for research (Bhandari, 2020). Considering the importance of the participants perspective, the researchers will utilize this approach to gain an in-depth understanding of the participants to gather their perceptions, interpretations, and meanings of their experiences with academic burnout within the context of their internships

Specifically, it employs phenomenological design. Phenomenology is a research approach that seeks to understand individuals' lived experiences by exploring how they perceive and interpret specific phenomena (Moustakas, 1994). It aims to uncover deeper meanings through personal narratives and firsthand accounts (van Manen, 2016). Qualitative research is appropriate for this study as it enables an in-depth exploration of human experiences, allowing researchers to analyze subjective perspectives rather than numerical data (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Since phenomenological research focuses on lived experiences, the researcher will conduct in-depth interviews with participants to gain insights into their experiences during their internship. According to van Manen (2016), phenomenological research requires extensive engagement with participants to capture the essence of their experiences. The purpose of the study is to illuminate the lived experiences faced by college interns and identify key themes based on their internship experiences. By utilizing this approach, the researchers will be able to gather information and would delve into how the interns grapple with questions of meaning, purpose, freedom, responsibility, and anxiety in the context of their academic and internship experiences.

Research Local

The participants of this study are the selected college interns under the College of Education in one of the Universities in Tacloban City. The researchers will conduct the study at a local university in Tacloban, City, located at P. Paterno Street, Tacloban City, 6500, Philippines. This is a leading university of education and diverse disciplines attuned to local and global development needs. It is also a university that is a premiere teacher education institution in the Philippines exemplifying integrity, excellence, and service. This university offers program that are more engaged and specifically designed to address ethical, moral, as well as social issues. As they offer this kind of program it fosters an environment that is open, shows respect to everyone. The researchers choose this local to conduct the study to knows the lived experiences of college interns who experience academic burnout during their internship.

Research Participants

The participants of this study are the fourth-year college interns from English, Mathematics, and Values Education program who's currently enrolled during the first semester of the school year 2024-2025 at Leyte Normal University. They are chosen as the participants who experience academic burnout during their internship as they are likely to have a personal connection to the subject matter. The total participant of the study is 10 college interns. According to Boyd (2001) and Groenewald (2004), 2 to 10 participants are often enough in phenomenological studies to reach data saturation, where additional interviews no longer produce new insights.

The study selection criteria will include: a) Current Enrollment: Participants should be currently enrolled in the University; b) Internship Experience: Participants must have completed or currently engaged in internship; c) Age Range: Researchers may specify the age range (e.g., 18-30 years old) to ensure that the participants have a deep knowledge and understanding on the study.

The researchers will establish exclusion criteria to determine the eligibility of the participants. To those participants who did not meet the criteria will not considered for the selection; a) Previous Mental Health Issue: Individuals with a history of diagnosed mental health disorders might be excluded to minimize confounding variables that could affect the study and trigger their mental health; b) Non-Interns: Students who are not currently participating in an internship program may be excluded; c)

Navigating Academic Burnout: Lived Experiences Among College Interns

Incomplete Data: Participants who do not complete the necessary survey or interviews may be excluded to maintain the integrity of the data collected ; d) Withdrawal from Study: Any Participants who chooses to withdraw from the study at any time would be excluded from the final analysis; e) Person with Disability (PWD): Participants with disability will be excluded from the study to ensure and maintain a focused investigation of academic burnout among college interns, without the influenced of disability-related factors that may require distinct considerations.

By focusing on specific criteria, it ensures that the findings are relevant and applicable to the study. Researchers can better analyze the factors contributing to the academic burnout and develop targeted interventions.

Research Instruments

This study is a semi-structured interview guide that will undergo careful validation by experts and will be pilot-tested on Science, Filipino college interns of Leyte Normal University. The experts who will validate this could be graduates of secondary education majoring in Values Education. It is designed to gather in-depth qualitative data on the experiences, contributing factors, coping mechanisms, and reflections related to academic burnout among college interns. The participants must be enrolled in college, actively engaged in an internship program at the time of the study. These criteria ensure that the data gathered is relevant and aligned with the research focus on the lived experiences of college interns.

The interview guide is structured into five key sections. The first section, Background and Context, helps participants outline their academic and internship responsibilities by describing their routine schedules. The second section, Burnout Experiences, prompts participants to discuss specific instances of emotional exhaustion and mental or physical fatigue that resulted from their academic and internship duties, including the symptoms they experienced. The third section, Contributing Factors, explores how academic demands, internship pressures, family responsibilities, and financial concerns contribute to burnout. The fourth section, Coping Mechanisms and Support, examines how participants manage burnout, including any formal or informal support systems they utilize. The final section, Insights and Reflections, encourages participants to share what they've learned from their experiences and any advice they might offer to others facing similar challenges.

To ensure the reliability and validity of the interview guide, a three-stage validation procedure was followed. First, expert validation was conducted through a panel of three to five specialists in education and qualitative research. Next, the guide underwent pilot testing through interviews with two to five qualified student interns. These pilot interviews assessed the clarity, length, and participant comprehension of the questions. Feedback from both experts and participants highlighted areas of confusion and any technical issues, which were addressed through revisions. This iterative process of refinement led to the development of a clear, comprehensive, and well-structured interview guide suitable for the study's research framework.

Sampling Method

Purposive sampling technique will be used in the study since it employs a phenomenological method of research. All the college interns of Leyte Normal University who's enrolled for the first semester of school year 2024 will be part of the participants of the research study. Purposive sampling technique refers to a group of non-probability sampling techniques in which units are selected because they have characteristics that you need in your sample. The method relies on the researcher's judgment when identifying and selecting the individuals, cases, or events that can provide the best information to achieve the study's objectives (Nikolopoulou, 2022). Participants will be interviewed through online platforms such as Google Meet or Zoom, accommodating those who are geographically distant or unavailable for in-person interviews. The researchers will ensure the anonymity and privacy of participants, discussing ethical considerations with them prior to their participation.

Data Gathering Procedure

The data collection for this study on academic burnout among college interns was conducted at Leyte Normal University. The university selected based on their active internship programs and willingness to participate in the study.

Before data gathering began, the researcher secured approval from the Research Ethics Office (REO) and obtained permission formal letters from the deans and internship coordinators of each institution. Upon approval, a pre-survey will be administered to inform potential participants about the study's objectives and to obtain their agreement to participate. Participants were also provided with an informed consent form, emphasizing their voluntary participation and the confidentiality of their responses. The data gathering process will follow a structured and ethical approach to ensure clarity, confidentiality, and reliability. Specific attention was given to ensuring that interns who might be experiencing high stress or vulnerability were aware that they could withdraw from the study at any point.

First, the researchers will distribute a consent form outlining the study's purpose, the participants' roles, and the voluntary nature of their involvement. A structured questionnaire was distributed to interns in face-to-face sessions depending on the student intern availability and preference. The survey included standardized scales such as the Maslach Burnout Inventory–Student Survey (MBI-SS), and additional items to assess perceived vulnerability, support systems, and coping strategies. Each participant will be provided with a consent form detailing their voluntary involvement, consent to share personal information, and assurance of confidentiality throughout the data collection process. The consent form will also explain that their identities will remain anonymous unless they choose to disclose them, and any personal information will be kept strictly confidential.

Navigating Academic Burnout: Lived Experiences Among College Interns

Participants will be informed that they have the right to withdraw at any time without consequences. They will also be informed of any potential benefits of participation, such as contributing to valuable research findings or gaining awareness of the study's topic. The estimated duration of participation will be 20-30 minutes, ensuring that participants are aware of the time commitment before agreeing to take part. Depending on the chosen research method such as surveys, interviews, or observations, participants will receive clear instructions on how to proceed. A structured survey questionnaire will be distributed to collect targeted data. Additionally, open-ended interviews, guided by validated researcher-developed questions, will be conducted to gain insights in student teacher intern experiences during their internship.

Campus libraries and study halls during free periods (with administrative permission) Internship orientation rooms or seminar venues. Each session lasted approximately 20–30 minutes, with breaks allowed to reduce fatigue.

To gather deeper insights, focus group discussions (FGDs) were conducted with 5 intern students in 3 programs (English, Math, and Values Education) with the total of 15 student interns within the university. These discussions were held in a private meeting room on campus for participants. Topics revolved around real-life stressors during internships, perceived risk factors, and emotional well-being. Each FGD lasted about 10-25 minutes, moderated by the researcher with a mental health consultant on standby for emotional support, should any participant express distress.

A final follow-up was conducted through email and messaging platforms to clarify unclear responses and validate preliminary findings. Participants were also given an option to review their answers for accuracy and were provided with referral information in line with ethical considerations. Regardless of the alignment between their college specialization. Lastly, before finalizing the data collection, researchers will verify that participants fully understand all aspects of the study, ensuring transparency and adherence to ethical research standards.

Data Analysis and Interpretation Strategies

The data analysis for this study employs the thematic analysis method, a widely-used qualitative research method (Wambaleka, 2018). Thematic analysis involves systematically identifying, analyzing, and reporting repeated patterns within qualitative data sets (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This method prioritizes descriptive data interpretation, incorporating both deductive and inductive approaches to theme identification.

In the data organization phase, fixed interview data is transcribed verbatim, with participants validating transcripts. Understanding semi-structured questionnaire data is pivotal for subsequent analysis. Researchers then proceed to familiarize themselves with the entire dataset to identify relevant codes or themes. This involves reading and re-reading the responses to identify key themes and sub themes. The researchers will code the data systematically, groupings similar ideas together to establish meaningful patterns. Initial coding breaks down data into manageable units, guided by preliminary ideas from transcripts. Theme identification relies on recognizing recurring words or findings, with patterns informing theme generation. Researchers refine and define the themes that have been identified. Preliminary themes involve reviewing and refining the themes to ensure that they accurately capture the essence of the data with unnecessary themes excluded. The essence of each theme is defined to provide depth to the analysis.

Finally, the analyze data will be synthesized into a well-structured discussion, ensuring that the findings accurately represent the participants' experiences while maintaining ethical research standards. The use of triangulation will enhance the validity of the conclusions, reinforcing the study's contribution to understanding the experiences of academic burnout among college interns.

Ethical Considerations

Recognizing the need for the participants to share their perceptions regarding this sensitive topic, the researchers have implemented a set of ethical considerations to protect their identity and reputation. These ethical considerations are as follows:

Informed Consent

The researchers will provide a legitimate letter of consent and consent form to the participants, which will be approved by the research adviser. This will ensure the credibility of the study and secure informed consent from the participants. Participation is voluntary and they can withdraw at any time without repercussions.

Autonomy Respect

The participants will be approached respectfully, and the research purpose, participant's rights, data protection measures, and anonymization process will be explained to them. Researchers will avoid coercion or manipulation and ensure that participants have the freedom to make their own decisions regarding participation.

Risks

Participating in this study involves sharing personal experiences and perspectives, especially in studies dealing with mental health and personal experiences must be conducted with careful attention to ethical risks. One of the most significant ethical risks in this kind of study is the potential for psychological distress. Asking participants to reflect on and articulate experiences of academic burnout may trigger emotional discomfort or anxiety. Internships often involve intense workloads, challenging transitions from academic to professional settings, and high-performance expectations, all of which may be associated

Navigating Academic Burnout: Lived Experiences Among College Interns

with negative emotions or even trauma. If not handled sensitively, participation in the study could exacerbate feelings of stress or hopelessness.

To mitigate this risk, researchers must adopt a trauma-informed approach ensuring that interviews or surveys are conducted with empathy, participants are reminded they can withdraw at any time, and mental health resources are offered as part of the debriefing process. There is also a potential risk of perceived discrimination or judgment, especially if their views differ from institutional norms or expectations. Additionally, participation may involve a minor inconvenience in terms of time and effort, such as setting aside time for interviews or answering reflective questions. To minimize these risks, they are encouraged to share only what the participant are comfortable disclosing. They are free to skip any questions or withdraw from the study at any time, without any obligation to explain. All responses will be treated with strict confidentiality and anonymity to prevent identification and to safeguard participants from any possible negative consequences related to their participation.

Beneficence & non-maleficence

Researchers should maximize benefits and minimize potential harm to the participants. The names of the participants will be kept confidential and replaced with other names (e.g., Participant no. 1, 2, 3) in the publication of the study to protect their identity.

The language and terminology used in the questionnaires and consent forms will be carefully reviewed to ensure the dignity and credibility of the participants. Potential benefits are substantial. Their participation in this study is valuable as it will contribute to a deeper understanding of the lived experiences of college interns. The insights they share will help identify challenges and best practices. By participating, participants will help to raise awareness of the mental and emotional toll that academic burnout can impose. These lived experiences provide depth and nuance that statistical data alone cannot capture, allowing educators, administrators, and policymakers to better understand the realities that the students navigate during their internships.

While there is no financial compensation for participating in this study, each participant will receive a small token of appreciation in the form of snack consisting of a burger and a drink, after the interview. This gesture serves as a way to express gratitude for your time, effort, and willingness to share your experiences despite your busy schedule. Your participation is highly valued, and this token is a simple acknowledgment of your contribution to the research.

Use of Deception

Deception is avoided for the research and will ensure that not cause harm to the participants. Any information and data provided by participants will be used solely for the purposes of the study and will be kept confidential.

COI - Conflict of Interest

In this research, researchers will disclose any potential conflicts of interest that could compromise the integrity of the research or its outcomes. Trust and rapport will be established with the participants by acknowledging their perceptions and past experiences, ensuring safety and confidentiality throughout the data-gathering process.

Data Manipulation

Researchers will avoid data manipulation to uphold the accuracy and integrity of the research findings. Rigorous analysis and interpretation of the data will be conducted to prevent distortion or misrepresentation.

Intellectual Property

Intellectual property rights will be respected through proper citation and acknowledgment of existing work or ideas. Plans for publication or sharing of the research findings will adhere to ethical guidelines.

Cultural Sensitivity

Participants belonging to minority groups may be forthcoming due to their race, religion, relations, and background. Additionally, researchers will ensure cultural sensitivity, respecting the beliefs, values, and practices of the participants. The research will be conducted in a culturally appropriate and respectful manner.

Continuing Monitoring & Reflection

The research will be continuously monitored and reflected upon to identify and address any potential ethical concerns that may arise during the study, ensuring the well-being and rights of the participants.

Research Dissemination

The researcher's plan for disseminating the research findings will prioritize accuracy and responsibility, targeting appropriate audiences and utilizing suitable channels for sharing the results. This will be officially disseminated through both physical and digital platforms. A hardbound copy will be submitted to our Research Teacher at Leyte Normal University as part of our academic requirements. Additionally, the researcher's plan will be published online via the Journal Website to reach a wider audience. This will allow the researcher, students, and other interested individual to access and benefit from our study.

Research Reflexivity

As the researchers, we will conduct the study with no biases, examine our own assumptions, experiences and our own positionality as the researchers of the study. We understand the essential nature of researcher reflexivity when conducting the

Navigating Academic Burnout: Lived Experiences Among College Interns

study Navigating Academic: Lived Experiences among College Interns because it sustains qualitative research's precision and reliability. We understand as researchers that our individual backgrounds together with our academic histories and beliefs and life experiences generate inevitable effects on our engagement with research methods. We dedicate ourselves to permanent self-analysis alongside analytical evaluation of our evaluative positions which affect question constructs and data interpretations as well as participant storytelling representation. During our study we continually examine our preconceived notions and anticipated findings and possible subconscious biases because these steering elements affect both data collecting and research interpretations. We will handle our connections with research subjects while honoring academic norms in order to preserve raw participant voice transparency in our work. To maintain ethical standards while reporting research findings we use participant survey data only thereby preventing any form of manipulation or falsification.

We recognize the power dynamics that follow the research process so we prevent them from affecting our work by putting participant understanding before our own analysis. Throughout every phase of the study our reflexive stance helps us create valid and dependable knowledge that values the true experiences of college interns facing academic challenges. Acknowledging our own biases, to produce a trustworthy and reliable result by the end of our study. No manipulation of results shall be done and only based on the participant's survey results.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents, analyzes, and interprets the data gathered from the lived experiences of college interns who are experiencing or have experienced academic burnout during their internship program. Using thematic analysis, the narratives of participants were coded and categorized into themes that reflect the core challenges, symptoms, and coping mechanisms associated with academic burnout.

Profile of Participants

PARTICIPANTS	GENDER	COURSE	DURATION OF INTERNSHIP
College Intern A	Female	English	3 months
College Intern B	Male	English	3 months
College Intern C	Male	English	3 months
College Intern D	Male	Mathematics	3 months
College Intern E	Female	Mathematics	3 months
College Intern F	Female	Mathematics	3 months
College Intern G	Female	Values Education	3 months
College Intern H	Female	Values Education	3 months
College Intern I	Female	Values Education	3 months
College Intern J	Female	Values Education	3 months

A total of 10 college interns from various degree programs participated in the study. All participants were in their final year, undergoing internship placements in different schools with both male and female respondents represented.

Gathered Data

Research Problem 1. What are the lived experiences on academic burnout of the college interns during internship program?

Theme 1: Mixed experiences in academic burnout

1.1 High Expectations and Pressure

- Student interns experience overwhelming pressure. This pressure often stems from a combination of academic demands and personal expectations, leaving little time for rest, relaxation, and self-reflection. – *College Intern G*
- “Based on my own experience, burnout feels like losing motivation and energy for things I once enjoyed, even when I try to push something.” – *College Intern I*

1.2 Disrupted Self-Care

- College interns stated that putting equal weight to academic responsibilities and internship time part was often accomplished at the cost of self-care.
- Stressing is an urge for you to detach the self from the real world and take a break. – *College Intern*
- It is so draining for the body as it affects my functionality and productivity every day. – *College Intern F*
- Burnout feels more like losing the ability to function the same way you usually act upon. “I have experienced it firsthand when I was writing.” – *College Intern B*

Navigating Academic Burnout: Lived Experiences Among College Interns

1.3 Difficulty Balancing Roles

- It is noticed that numerous college interns had issues with juggling between being students and intern. Time stress, poor work and physical exhaustion as well as emotional tension were all results of having to juggle between the academic demands and the workplace criteria.
- "I would define burnout as a demotivated phase/feeling in someone's life. It is lack of drive and focus to do or focus on something." – *College Intern A*
- Burnout as a feeling of exhaustion both physically and mentally. "I also find myself feeling down or stressed, and I think it stems from my academics and personal experiences." – *College Intern E*

Theme 2: Daily life disruptions caused by academic burnout

2.1 Lack of Engagement

- Decline in the level of engagement. They lost composure in their work through work pressure or the feeling that they are underappreciated.
- This suggests a significant impairment in executive functioning and daily task management. – *College Intern I*
- Experiencing social isolation and a lack of motivation to complete tasks. This indicates a potential impact on social engagement and overall motivation levels. The intern's experience underscores the potential for the phenomenon to affect interpersonal relationships and daily functioning. – *College Intern E*

2.2 Reduced Creativity and Innovation

- Interns expressed that ongoing stress, pressure, and fatigue limited their ability to think creatively or offer new ideas.
- This manifested as reduced productivity and creativity, and significant interference with their academic work. Even when physically present in class, their mind wandered, resulting in slower work, increased errors, and a decline in the quality of their assignments. This suggests a substantial impairment in cognitive function and academic engagement. – *College Intern G*
- Experiencing burnout can make the self not functional because it had been a stressing feeling that may hinder the mental, physical, emotional and spiritual well-being. – *College Intern H*

2.3 Emotional Detachment

- College intern experience emotionally detached during their internship experience. As stress, exhaustion, and pressure built up, they began to disconnect from their tasks, environment, and even their goals.
- "It gives me too much anxiety." – *College Intern D*
- A lot of the interns shared that they felt overwhelmed during the times when their duties extended beyond their competency level. Some of them had problems juggling between their internship and schoolwork. Some interns have also mentioned being full of uncertainty and self-doubt either after being faced with tasks that were foreign to them or after getting feedback." – *College Intern B*

Theme 3: Emotional response to overwhelming internship demands

3.1 Emotional Stress

- They are suffering emotional pressure of bearing the weight of responsibilities, the exceeded expectations as well as the desire to be always ready to perform. Most of them were anxious, frustrated or emotionally depleted, particularly when attempting to balance between academic and internship requirements.
- Personal breakdowns in private moments showed emotional overload. – *College Intern C*
- Intern described an inability to mentally disengage, causing disrupted rest and emotional fatigue. – *College Intern G*
- Lived experience of enduring each day without a sense of fulfillment or progress. – *College Intern F*

3.2 Internal Pressure and Self-Doubt

- The high pressure on self-expectations. Irrespective of external pressure, they had a desire to prove themselves all the time, which resulted in self-doubt most of the time.
- "I felt tired both physically and mentally. I was disappointed since I have high expectations in myself and I was struggling to meet them." – *College Intern A*
- Some interns expressed carrying a silent frustration despite feeling capable. The accumulation of deadlines and responsibilities – *College Intern C*

Theme 4: Emotional vulnerability under academic pressure

4.1 Decreased Confidence

- Some of the things that the interns observed was that they lost confidence over time over their repeated challenge, criticism or failure of meeting their expectations. Activities that used to be perceived as achievable turned into their stressors, and a lot of people started losing their confidence.
- Academic stress can impact my emotional well-being by causing feelings of anxiety, self-doubt, and frustration, which can affect my overall motivation and sense of balance. – *College Intern I*

Navigating Academic Burnout: Lived Experiences Among College Interns

- “I felt less motivated.” – *College Intern E*
- Student interns seek validation from academic performance results. “I feel really disappointed and demotivated.” – *College Intern A*

4.2 Emotional Conflict

- Numerous college intern has defined the instances when they were eager to achieve success, yet were frozen with fear or uncertainty. Such contradictions rendered the enjoyment of achievements challenging and caused a continuous self-esteem battle of self-confidence verses the feeling of insecurity. This conflict in their minds interfered with their concentration, choices and emotional stability.
- “There were moments when I felt overwhelmed, like everything was closing in, like deadlines, requirements, expectations piling up; and yet, at the same time, I felt numb, as if my emotions had checked out before I could even process them.” – *College Intern B*
- It’s like carrying a weight no one else can see, and pretending it’s not there because you don’t want to slow anyone else down. – *College Intern C*

Theme 5: Role of self-worth in internship performance

5.1 Self-Worth as a motivator or barrier

- College interns saw self - worth as driving force which was either helping or hindering their performance. When they had a sense of their self-worth and abilities, they got along with tasks with certainty, courage, and enthusiasm.
- Self-worth greatly crucial in my performance as an intern student, as believing in my abilities boosts my confidence, motivation, and willingness to take initiative and learn from challenges. – *College Intern I*
- “To be honest being an intern is not a joke that's is why you to keep yourself active and alive, so that you can survive.” – *College Intern D*
- “Pressure doesn’t always come from others—it’s often a quiet battle within yourself. Self-worth, I’ve learned, doesn’t make you perfect; it just gives you enough steady ground to stand on when everything else feels like it is shifting.” – *College Intern B*

5.2 Self-doubt leads to hesitation

- Self-doubt had much influence on their action taking. They could understand what actions to take, but in most cases, they hesitated: they avoided making mistakes or being judged, or failing. This indecisiveness caused lost chances, time wastage and decreased involvement.
- I questioned my self-worth during internship. – *College Intern F*

5.3 Confidence encourages engagement and initiative

- According to college interns it felt good to have the confidence to know that they could easily take on their jobs and feel free to engage in the job more as compared to when they did not have conviction that they could execute. Strongly self-assured, they could talk more and engage in more conversations, volunteer, and become leaders at the time they would be needed.
- Self-worth is very important knowing that you should find meaning and love yourself and prioritize your holistic well-being so that the learning and teaching process can be effective. – *College Intern H*
- Self-worth plays a huge role in how I perform as an intern. It really shapes the way I approach my work and when I handle challenges, and how to perceive feedback. If you have a strong sense of self-worth, you're more likely to take on tasks with confidence and resilience, even when things don't go perfectly. – *College Intern G*
- I felt empowered and engaged in doing my tasks and interacting with my students and others. – *College Intern E*

Theme 6: Barriers in completing academic assignments during internship

6.1 Time Constraints and Conflicting Schedules

- There were conflicting schedules that did not enable attending classes and meeting deadlines or even taking on any role in full. Several of them found it stressing to make a choice between what to attend school and what to do in internship.
- Time management was one of the challenges faced by student intern in completing assignments and tasks. “As a SK Chairperson, there are a lot of things to do.” – *College Intern C*
- It’s always Time Management and Procrastination. “I struggle to prioritize things that are most urgent because sometimes, it feels like there’s too much to do and not enough time. With deadlines stacking up, figuring out how to manage time effectively can be tough. It feels like a constant battle between doing a deep dive into a topic and making sure everything gets done.” – *College Intern G*

6.2 Lack of Support or Guidance

- Poor support or mentorship by supervisors or academic coordinators was indicated by a greater number of college interns who said they had to struggle. Lacking instructions, feedbacks, and motivation, they used to feel lost, unsure, and hesitant about their performance. The lack of guidance provoked the feeling of self-doubt, loss of confidence, and emotional pressure, and they found it more difficult to develop and actively take part in the internship experience.

Navigating Academic Burnout: Lived Experiences Among College Interns

- Lack of guidance and demanding requirements. – *College Intern A*
- Mental, physical, and emotional exhaustion. – *College Intern E*

6.3 Adjustment to the Workplace Environment

- The college interns experience that at the beginning, it was not easy to adjust to the working environment. Most of them did not know what is expected of them or what to expect and were intimidated by the professional environment. In the course of time, some of them adapted with the assistance of friendly co-workers or by watching at the norms of the workplace, and some of them still did not cope with confidence and communication and how to fit in. It was associated with great impacts on their comfort, engagement, and performance in this adjustment.
- The challenges is lack of sleep and also the consistency of doing the work. – *College Intern D*
- One of the biggest challenges I faced when completing my assignments was the constant tug-of-war between wanting to do things excellently and just wanting to get them over with. There were nights when I stared at my laptop, fully aware of what I had to write, yet my mind felt blank—as if the words I used to easily form suddenly refused to come together. – *College Intern B*

6.4 Excessive Task Assignments

- The amounts of work and its levels were sometimes more than they could easily manage and this was even compounded by academic commitments. This resulted in stress, fatigue, and low performance. Others believed they were experiencing more in terms of treatment as full-time workers compared to learners.
- Time management, Excessive workloads. – *College Intern H*
- Student interns faced challenges like managing time wisely, staying focused despite distractions, and sometimes feeling overwhelmed when multiple deadlines come at once, but always strive to stay organized and committed. – *College Intern I*
- With teaching duties piling up alongside academic work, it felt like I was being pulled in different directions all at once. Planning lessons, preparing materials, writing reflections—it was like juggling too many things with hands that were already tired. And sometimes, even when I managed to finish something, I couldn't help but wonder if I really gave my best, or if I just managed to survive another task. It's that balance between quality and survival that made it all feel heavier than it should. – *College Intern C*
- Some of the constant and repetitive challenge I encountered is work overload and time restraints. As a working student, entering the internship program made things more challenging. – *College Intern J*

Research Problem 2. How do their experiences on academic burnout affect their learning?

Theme 1: Contributing Factors to Academic Burnout

1.1 Academic Pressure

- Some of the college Interns experience workload, tight deadlines, and high expectations during their internship that they feel exhaustions.
- For me one factor is Excessive workload. When I have an unmanageable workload, due to a lot of assignments, lesson plan to make/ppt or other responsibilities during my internship it's hard for me to keep up. Feeling like there's no time to take a break or catch my breath that often leads to exhaustion. – *College Intern G*
- The pressure in the environment and the expectation of the people around me. – *College Intern H*
- Too much paper works and my environment. – *College Intern E*

1.2 Time Management Struggles

- Some interns experience on how to balance their academic tasks with personal life or their internship responsibilities.
- I think burnout, for me, wasn't caused by just one thing—it was more like a slow buildup of many small weights I kept carrying without realizing how heavy they'd become. One of the main factors was the overlapping responsibilities. Juggling internship duties, academic deadlines, and personal expectations felt like walking on a tightrope every day, with barely any room to breathe. – *College Intern B*
- I am a working student so time management was challenging. – *College Intern A*

1.3 Internal Expectations

- College interns experience perfectionism, self-imposed standards, and fear of failure.
- I think some of the main factors that contributed to my burnout were constant pressure to meet expectations, lack of rest, trying to do everything perfectly, and not giving myself enough time to rest. – *College Intern I*

Theme 2: Triggering Events and Situations Leading to Academic Burnout

2.1 Academic Overload

- Periods of excessive assignments, exams, or project deadlines give a lot of struggles to the college interns that leads to burnout.
- There wasn't really a single moment that I could point to—it was more like a series of moments piling up, quietly, until it all felt too much. I remember one specific week during my internship when everything seemed to happen at once.

Navigating Academic Burnout: Lived Experiences Among College Interns

Lesson plans were due, demonstration teaching was scheduled, paperwork for school was piling up, and on top of that, I still had academic requirements waiting for me at home. It felt like no matter how much I tried to finish one task, three more would take its place. – *College Intern B*

- When doing your lesson plan and at the midnight then you have a class on 7:30 Am. It feels like you don't have the right to sleep normally. – *College Intern D*

- I experienced burnout when I had to study for multiple exams, complete several projects, and attend school activities all in the same week, leaving me exhausted and mentally drained. – *College Intern I*

- When I needed to meet a lot of deadlines. – *College Intern E*

- When my teaching demonstration was slowly coming to its schedule and a lot of workloads. – *College Intern C*

2.2 Internship-Related Stress

- College interns experience a lot of demanding tasks, unrealistic expectations, and the lack of preparation during their internship.

- For me, it's the struggle of managing a classroom full of students. During my internship, I was task to handle 7 classes a day with 40-50 students per section. Managing a classroom especially if there are disruptive behaviors or a lack of respect for authority, was the most stressful aspects of teaching. I feel so exhausted because as an intern I am still learning how to manage a classroom effectively. I don't know yet the strategies or confidence to handle disruptive behavior, leading to more stress. And I am still developing my teaching style and struggling to find the balance between being an authority figure and being approachable. – *College Intern G*

- I was handling 4 sections in grade 7 it was hard to manage student behavior every day. – *College Intern A*

- There are some instances during my practice teaching before wherein it takes time to plan and make instructional material to the extent that i deprive myself with sleep just to be prepared for the lessons every day and the teaching loads everyday makes it more stressing. – *College Intern H*

Theme 3: Influences of Academic Environment, Personal Life, and External Factors on Burnout

3.1 Personal Life Balance

-Family responsibilities, emotional well-being, and time constraints.

- These things were the reason why I felt burned out because some things won't always work like we want to. Environment can be torturing and personal life can be challenging. – *College Intern F*

- I think my academic environment's demanding workload, combined with my personal responsibilities and limited time for rest, directly contributed to my experience of burnout. – *College Intern I*

- It plays a significant rile since it affects me including my mood, thinking, and attitude. – *College Intern E*

- I think it was really a combination of everything happening all at once. The academic environment itself already carried this unspoken pressure to always be performing, always meeting deadlines, always producing something that proved I was learning. And while I understood that it was part of the process, it felt like there was barely any room to slow down or just breathe for a while. At the same time, my personal life wasn't exactly on pause. There were responsibilities outside school that demanded attention, and trying to balance both worlds felt like stretching myself too thin. – *College Intern B*

3.3 Social Support Systems

- Presence or absence of encouragement from peers, mentors, and loved ones make them feel that they can do better.

- I have always been an independent person who always tried to resolve my problems on my own so, when experiencing burn out I tried to navigate through it by understanding how I feel. – *College Intern C*

- I haven't experience burnout but I got tired from my internship. I just got tired of teaching and the task during internship but the good thing is I have my classmate and friends who make me feel better. – *College Intern J*

Theme 4: Behavioral and Lifestyle Adjustments in Response to Academic Burnout

4.1: Social Life Impact

- Some college interns experience withdrawal from friends, and reduced social interactions during their internship.

- I focused on myself and socialized or interacted with others when needed. – *College Intern E*

- It limits me from using social media accounts and decided to do the task to make the work done efficiently. – *College Intern H*

- Burnout made me pull back from a lot of the things I used to enjoy. I started saying no to invitations more often—not because I didn't want to be there, but because my mind was already too crowded with unfinished tasks. Even conversations with friends felt different; I was present physically, but mentally I was somewhere else, thinking about deadlines or the next thing I needed to accomplish. – *College Intern B*

- From someone who always love to go out after school and hanging out with friends, I've been distant and always inside my room sleeping or just staring at the wall. Sometimes I forget to do my homework and lack motivation to do things. It makes me feel that all the things I do has no sense. – *College Intern G*

Navigating Academic Burnout: Lived Experiences Among College Interns

4.2: Coping Mechanisms

- Adoption of stress-relief activities, such as rest, hobbies, or mindfulness.
- I tracked my schedule every now and then. I also make sure that I have enough time to rest. Health is wealth. – *College Intern F*
- I tried to set my priorities in task and in my health, health is very important. – *College Intern A*
- In response to academic burnout, I implemented structured study routines and allocated more time for rest and meaningful social interactions to maintain both productivity and overall well-being. – *College Intern I*
- Since so long, I have always tried to overwork myself whenever I am bombarded with tasks. But I also learned that taking a break from everything is essential and beneficial for me especially to my health. – *College Intern C*

Theme 5: Impact of Academic Burnout on the Academic Journey

5.1 Loss of Motivation

- College interns decreased interest in learning, lack of enthusiasm, and disengagement.
- As burnout sets in, my academic performance often takes a hit. The exhaustion, stress, and lack of motivation makes it harder to focus, retain information, or complete assignments my on time. I always struggled to meet deadlines or comprehend course material like once I did. – *College Intern G*
- Academic burnout negatively impacted my academic journey by decreasing my productivity, focus, and overall academic performance. – *College Intern I*

5.2 Emotional and Mental Strain

- Increased stress, anxiety, or feelings of hopelessness related to schoolwork.
- Academic burnout made me question myself in ways I didn't expect. There was a shift somewhere along the way where learning, which used to excite me, started to feel like a burden. It's hard to stay curious or passionate when you're constantly racing deadlines and measuring your worth by how productive you are. – *College Intern B*
- It was heavy but at the same time manageable if a proper mindset was set. – *College Intern H*
- Burden with more than just academic responsibilities, but personal, financial and even social interest it made me experiences exhaustions but, on another perspective, it made me reflect on myself. – *College Intern C*

Research Problem 3. What are the coping strategies used?

Theme 1: Emotional Coping

1.1 Engaging in Self-Reflection

- College interns shared that self-reflection was the essential component of growth during the internship. It assisted them in evaluating how they performed, identify where the improvement is necessary, and experience the events on an emotional level. The practice enabled them to adjust, gain confidence and proceed with more perspective and direction.
- Whenever everything felt too loud or too heavy, I would turn to writing-not even for school, just for myself. It didn't have to be perfect, sometimes it was just random thoughts or unfinished lines, but it gave me a space where I didn't have to perform or meet anyone's expectations. Music also helped, especially during long nights of paperwork. Playing songs that made me feel safe or understood somehow made the weight a little lighter. And on days when I really needed to step away, I'd take short walks or just sit somewhere alone-not to think about tasks, but just to exist without needing to explain why. These little moments didn't erase the demands of internship, but they reminded me that I was still a person beyond the deadlines. And in a season where everything felt like a constant requirement, having those spaces to breathe-even for a while-helped me keep going without completely losing myself in the process. – *College Intern B*
- Yes, activities such as taking short breaks, spending time with family, journaling, and practicing mindfulness or light exercise help me relax, recharge, and maintain my well-being during my internship. – *College Intern I*
- Steep is very essential to me. I made sure I was able to rest and get at least 6-7 hours of sleep. – *College Intern A*

1.2 Watching Comfort Media

- Many college interns reported using comfort media (favorite movies, series, or online videos) as the means of stress-relief and making short breaks and forgetting about an academic and internship burden.
- Yes, such as treating myself amidst of the busy schedule. – *College Intern H*
- I just always listen to music, watch movies (if I have time), and chitchats with my co-interns. – *College Intern G*
- By taking a pause like watching Kdrama or just scrolling through Facebook or TikTok for a while because it makes me relax. And after that, I will continue to do my tasks. – *College Intern J*

1.3 Spiritual or Faith-based Practices

- The spiritual or religious approaches are available to some college interns in order to relieve stress, calm their nerves, and become stronger during such tough situations. Saying prayer, going to religious services or even integrating with their faith, in any way, was all they needed because it kept them grounded and optimistic. These actions were comforting, emotionally supportive and a way of finding inner stability in the presence of struggles of internship and campus demands.

Navigating Academic Burnout: Lived Experiences Among College Interns

- Spending my time with God and family. – *College Intern F*

Theme 2: Social Support

2.1. Peer support

- Friendship also acted as a great reliever and motivator to most of the college interns. Discussing personal experiences with other interns reduced the feeling of isolation, brought emotional relief, and the feeling of belongingness. By talking and listening, dealing with the same crises, and understanding each other, the peers became one another support system getting through hardship, justifying emotions, and finding motivation.

- I think during my internship we always eat out after duty with my co-interns. We usually eat 2-3 times a week after our duty and we talk about the things we need to improve, ask how's the day of each other, chit-chat about the things that happens during class or anything we can just share everything with everyone. I guess this is our strategy that helps me to hold on and manage my stress even though I have a hectic class schedule. – *College Intern G*

2.2. Problem-Focused Coping

- To overcome stress, college interns assumed problem-oriented coping styles whereby they attempted to look into the causes of stress as a way of dealing with them. This involved task planning, priority, seeking assistance and making changes in their schedules. All these actions assisted them to take control, be efficient, and less helpless, especially when they are bombarded with workload or faced with new duties.

- I started breaking down my tasks into smaller, more manageable pieces, because looking at everything all at once just made me feel overwhelmed before I could even start. Listing them, crossing them out one by one—it gave me a sense of control, even if things were piling up. I also realized that resting isn't something you earn after finishing everything—it's something you have to weave into the process, or else you burn out before you even get close to the finish line. Taking breaks, even just short ones, helped me breathe and come back with a clearer head. And honestly, being honest with myself and with others played a huge part. I stopped pretending I could carry everything alone. Reaching out to friends, talking things out, asking for help when I needed it—these didn't make the workload disappear, but they reminded me that I wasn't carrying the weight alone. Little by little, I learned that managing stress isn't about avoiding it completely—it's about not letting it swallow you whole. – *College Intern B*

- I found that setting a realistic schedule, prioritizing tasks, taking regular breaks, staying organized, and seeking support from mentors or peers are effective strategies in managing academic stress and preventing burnout. – *College Intern I*

- Prioritizing tasks and time management are just some of the most effective ways that helped me through overload that way have led to burnout especially since the internship program was totally demanding because of it's nature of being a student and teacher at the same time, which was more tasky since I had to go through to the entire as an employee. – *College Intern C*

Theme 3: Interpersonal coping resource

1.1 Supportive family and friend

- The family and friends support were critical in assisting college interns to overcome both academic and internship pressure. It could be in form of words of encouragement and emotional support or practical assistance, this support made interns feel comfortable, reassured and inspired. It made them realize that they were not the only ones and assisted them in resisting the feeling of being under the pressure.

- To cope with academic burnout, I need a strong support system that includes understanding mentors, supportive peers, open communication with family, and access to mental health resources when needed. – *College Intern I*

- Sometimes, what helps the most isn't advice or solutions, but just having people who are willing to sit with you in the mess, no explanations required. Having friends who genuinely understand the weight of everything, even without me having to say much, made a huge difference. I also needed mentors who wouldn't just focus on output, but who could remind me that growth isn't always about being productive—it's also about learning how to take care of yourself along the way. And beyond people, I think I needed to give myself permission to be part of that support system, too. To stop expecting myself to be unbreakable all the time. It's not just about others showing up for me—it's also about learning how to show up for myself, especially when everything feels heavy. Having people to lean on is important, but reminding myself that I'm worth caring for—that's the kind of support I didn't know I was missing. – *College Intern B*

- The best support system all throughout my internship where journey the share situation that I had during the course composed of course of people who shared of frustration I was able to fully open up to my own and receive advice and fruitful conversations with my friends who shared the same boat as I did. – *College Intern C*

Navigating Academic Burnout: Lived Experiences Among College Interns

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents the study's summary, conclusions, and recommendations based on the lived experiences of college interns facing academic burnout. It integrates key themes from participant interviews and discusses their broader implications for students, academic institutions, and future researchers. The chapter highlights how burnout manifests among interns, the coping strategies they employ, and the vital role of support systems in helping them navigate the internship process.

Summary

This is an explorative qualitative study on how college interns can find their ways through the academic burnout during their internship programs. Data were collected applying thematic analysis that used ten participants distributed among disciplines in the field of education to address three key research questions:

1. What are the lived experiences of academic burnout among college interns during their internship?
2. How do these experiences affect their learning?
3. What coping strategies do they use to manage burnout?

The study results indicated that academic burnout possessed the characteristics of emotional, mental, and physical exhaustion which greatly influenced the functional capabilities of the interns to participate in their duties. Themes included: Ambivalence of academic burnout: The participants explained their burnout experience as a lack of motivation, the fact that their self-care was ruined, and that they struggled with the necessity to manage many roles at once.

Work every day: A manifestation of burnout as any disengagement, diminished creativity and lack of enthusiasm, and being cold. Affective reaction to the internship demands: Interns claimed to experience self-doubt, tension and burnout.

Self-worth and performance: Both self-worth and weakened self-worth had a major effect on confidence and engagement. Academic completion barriers: Time and lack of guidance, work adjustments, and work overload were some important barriers.

Effect on learning: Burnout reduced motivation, productivity and emotional well-being. Coping strategies: Other strategies that interns employed in dealing with burnout included emotional coping, social support, time usage, and spiritual activities.

Conclusion

Through the richness of stories and content analysis, we obtained the following conclusions:

1. Burnout is complex and formed by academic, personal, and institutional factors amongst interns. It is not one isolated event, but cumulative burden of stressors over time.
2. Burnout is all about emotional and mental stress. The efforts made by the interns make them feel useless and this affects their confidence and performance.
3. The responses to burnout of the interns are significantly determined by self-worth and internal expectations. People having a better self-worth adjusted better.
4. Burnout is enhanced by the academic environment and the lack of support systems in environments where there is less guidance or mentorship.
5. The strategies used to cope with burnout are diverse, including such domains as emotional management or communication with peers, which shows that burnout should not be handled as a one-dimensional issue but specific and individually oriented.

To conclude burnout impacts the interns' learning, performance, and overall well-being, often leading to reduced motivation, diminished productivity, and emotional strain. These effects not only hinder their ability to meet academic and professional expectations but may also compromise the development of essential skills required in their future careers. Strengthening institutional support through structured mentoring, clear guidance, and workload adjustments is critical to alleviate these challenges. Furthermore, implementing targeted coping interventions such as stress management programs, time management training, and access to mental health resources, can help the interns to develop resilience and maintain their engagement in both academic and practical tasks. By fostering a supportive learning environment and prioritizing the well-being of interns, educational institutions can mitigate the adverse effects of burnout and enhance the overall quality of the internship experience.

RECOMMENDATION

Resting on the findings and conclusions, the recommendation below is offered:

To institutions of Learning

Educational institutions should integrate comprehensive mental health programs that specifically address internship-related stress and burnout. These programs should include workshops, seminars, and counseling services that equip interns with practical skills for stress management and emotional resilience. It is also essential to establish a structured mentoring and supervision system to ensure that interns receive consistent guidance and support throughout their internship. Furthermore, institutions should promote reflective practices such as journaling, debriefing sessions, and facilitated group discussions to help interns process their experiences, develop self-awareness, and adopt positive coping mechanisms. The incorporate information

Navigating Academic Burnout: Lived Experiences Among College Interns

programs in mental health that are focused on internship stress and burnout. It will encourage a positive way of thinking such as using journals or debriefing sessions that allow the interns to reflect on their experiences.

To Internship Coordinators and mentors

Develop a culture that encourages them through frequent follow-ups and giving them positive feedback. Encourage feasible workload as any intern should have manageable and reasonable expectations and guidelines of what is expected of the intern. The coordinators and mentors play a vital role in mitigating burnout by fostering a supportive and constructive internship environment. They should conduct regular follow-ups with interns, provide timely and positive feedback, and offer clear instructions to reduce uncertainty and anxiety. Establishing realistic workload expectations and ensuring that tasks are both manageable and developmentally appropriate are crucial for preventing burnout. Additionally, creating an open and empathetic culture where interns feel comfortable discussing their challenges will contribute to a healthier internship experience.

In case of Students and Interns

Formulate self-awareness habits, e.g., check-in with the emotional state and managing time, to identify the initial symptoms of burnout better. Join peer support groups, so that shared experiences can be turned into something strong instead of being a point of isolation. To help emotional balance, seek any form of spiritual or personal grounding activities such as mindfulness, prayer, or self-care rituals. Both students and interns should be encouraged to develop habits of self-awareness, including regularly checking in with their emotional state and monitoring their workload to detect early signs of burnout. Effective time management strategies should be employed to balance academic and personal responsibilities. Joining peer support groups is highly recommended, as shared experiences can foster a sense of belonging and reduce feelings of isolation. Moreover, engaging in spiritual or personal grounding practices such as mindfulness, prayer, or self-care rituals can help maintain emotional balance and build resilience during challenging internship periods.

The Future Researchers

It is suggested to sample a bigger study group throughout various academic programs and institutions. It is recommended that future research involve larger and more diverse samples across different academic programs and institutions to improve the generalizability of findings. Further studies may explore gender-related differences in burnout, conduct longitudinal research to track the long-term effects of burnout post-internship, or examine the qualitative relationships between burnout levels and academic performance, such as grade point averages. These investigations can provide deeper insights and inform more targeted interventions for reducing burnout among interns.

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Navigating Academic Burnout: Lived Experiences Among College Interns

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