



## Lived Experiences of Bachelor of Physical Education Students on Burnout: A Phenomenological Inquiry

Andrea Ann P. Arancillo\*, Dave Cris A. Gallo, Xyra Mae L. Gomez, Jaymar V. Saldua, Emy A. Morbo

Sultan Kudarat State University, Mindanao, the Philippines

\*Correspondence: E-mail: [andreaannarancillo@sksu.edu.ph](mailto:andreaannarancillo@sksu.edu.ph)

### ABSTRACT

This phenomenological study explored the lived experiences of Bachelor of Physical Education (BPED) students facing burnout. Burnout, characterized by emotional exhaustion, reduced motivation, and inefficiency, is increasingly observed among students due to academic and personal pressures. The study aimed to understand how burnout manifests in BPED students and how they cope with it. Using a qualitative design, ten purposively selected students participated in in-depth interviews. Colaizzi's method was applied to analyze the data, revealing seven key themes: overloaded activities, financial problems, coping mechanisms, time management, rest, support systems, and motivation. Students reported stress from academic demands, lack of financial support, and difficulty maintaining balance. However, strong social support, motivation, and rest were found to mitigate burnout. These insights emphasize the need for educational institutions to implement wellness programs, financial aid, and support systems. The study contributes to student mental health research by offering targeted strategies to address burnout in higher education.

© 2025 Bumi Publikasi Nusantara

### ARTICLE INFO

#### Article History:

Submitted/Received 20 Dec 2024

First Revised 25 Jan 2025

Accepted 27 Feb 2025

First Available online 28 Feb 2025

Publication Date 01 Mar 2025

#### Keyword:

Burnout,  
Coping mechanism,  
Lived experiences,  
Physical education students,  
Phenomenology.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Burnout is a state of emotional, mental, and physical exhaustion brought on by prolonged or repeated stress. It is considered a psychiatric disorder that results from continuous exposure to stress, commonly in the workplace, and is characterized by persistent fatigue, detachment from tasks, reduced enjoyment of previously gratifying activities, and decreased performance and competence. For many years, burnout has been recognized as an occupational hazard for people-oriented professions, such as human services, education, and health care. While it is often observed among adults, signs of burnout have also been reported in high school and college students ([Portoghese, 2018](#)).

Researchers agree that burnout consists of three dimensions: exhaustion, detachment, and ineffectiveness. Feeling stressed or anxious about work is not uncommon, but prolonged exposure may lead to decreased physical and psychological well-being. Poorly managed occupational stress is a primary cause of burnout. For Bachelor of Physical Education (BPED) students, burnout during practicum activities may stem from stressors such as academic overload, mental strain, and pressure to perform. These stressors often result in anxiety, fatigue, and reduced academic performance ([Bataineh, 2013](#)).

In the Philippines, burnout among students (especially those in Physical Education programs) is a growing concern due to its negative impact on academic achievement, social interactions, and dropout rates. Several researchers ([Bacerra et al., 2022](#)) linked burnout to anxiety, depression, and suicidal thoughts among college students. Symptoms such as fatigue, negativity, inefficiency, and poor academic performance mirror those observed in the workforce. Depending on the practicum type, students may experience varying levels of stress, ranging from observation duties to hands-on tasks. However, positive teacher-student relationships have been found to offer protective effects by enhancing student self-efficacy ([Romano et al., 2021](#)).

At Sultan Kudarat State University, BPED students face burnout triggered by academic, social, financial, and cultural pressures. Existing literature on student burnout focuses mainly on quantitative data, with limited qualitative exploration of lived experiences. This study aims to fill that gap by exploring how BPED students experience, understand, and cope with burnout through a qualitative lens. By focusing on coping mechanisms, socioeconomic influences, and institutional support, the study provides in-depth insight into student mental health challenges ([Bacerra et al., 2022](#)).

This research intends to uncover the lived experiences of BPED students facing burnout using a phenomenological approach. Its novelty lies in highlighting students' voices and real-life narratives, which are often overlooked in institutional planning. The study's impact is its contribution to developing supportive interventions that address mental health, promote resilience, and improve academic outcomes among future educators.

## 2. METHODS

This study employed a qualitative, phenomenological approach to explore the lived experiences of burnout among Bachelor of Physical Education (BPED) students at Sultan Kudarat State University ([Hirose & Creswell, 2023](#)). The focus was to understand the social, cultural, and psychological dimensions of burnout from the perspective of the students themselves.

Ten participants were purposively selected—five from the second year and five from the third year—based on observed symptoms of burnout, such as emotional exhaustion, high

stress, and reduced motivation. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, which allowed participants to express their thoughts and feelings freely. All interviews were audio-recorded with consent and transcribed verbatim for analysis.

The researchers followed a systematic procedure that included securing institutional permission, establishing rapport, and obtaining informed consent from all participants. Data were analyzed using Colaizzi's method, which involved reading transcripts multiple times, extracting significant statements, formulating meanings, and organizing them into themes.

This paper positionality acknowledged as part of the reflexive process, recognizing that their backgrounds and involvement may influence the data collection and interpretation. To ensure the trustworthiness of the study, previous reports ([Lincoln & Guba, 1985](#)) showed four criteria that were applied: credibility, through member checking and prolonged engagement; transferability, by providing rich, thick descriptions; dependability, through an audit trail and peer debriefing; and confirmability, by maintaining neutrality and objectivity during analysis.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### 3.1. The Lived Experiences of Bachelor of Physical Education Students on Burnout

The experiences of Physical Education students focused on the challenges they encountered amidst burnouts. These experiences provide valuable insights into the difficulties they face and the potential impact on their well-being. Therefore, it is essential to recognize the prevalence and impact of burnout among students. Several points are in the following:

- (i) **Overloaded Activities.** Burnout among students is primarily driven by the sheer volume and intensity of academic, practical, and extracurricular activities. This relentless pressure overwhelms students, leaving them with little time for rest and self-care. Consequently, the demand to excel academically, coupled with the desire to participate in numerous activities to build a strong resume, often leaves students feeling drained and depleted. Furthermore, the constant juggling of responsibilities can lead to neglecting self-care practices, such as adequate sleep, proper nutrition, and relaxation, further exacerbating the situation. This pressure to excel academically and participate in numerous activities leads to exhaustion and neglect of self-care, such as sleep, nutrition, and relaxation. Previous studies ([Bataineh, 2013](#); [Madigan & Curran, 2021](#)) confirm that excessive academic load, high expectations, and low motivation contribute significantly to stress and burnout. Burnout negatively affects students' academic performance, motivation, and stress levels, potentially impacting their future career prospects. Additionally, poor time management and the stress from balancing multiple responsibilities can further harm students' physical and mental health, as shown by previous studies ([Galbraith & Merrill, 2015](#); [Lin & Huang, 2014](#)). Educational institutions need to recognize the signs of burnout to support students better.
- (ii) **Financial Problem.** In recent years, the pursuit of higher education has become increasingly synonymous with financial strain for many students worldwide. At the heart of this issue lies the intersection of financial problems and student burnout—a complex interplay that warrants closer examination. Participants revealed that they easily get burned out because of the payments they need to make and the lack of financial support. This phenomenon not only exacerbates stress levels but also diminishes productivity and adversely affects one's physical and mental health. The findings of this study align with previous reports which highlighted a significant link between financial stress and burnout among college students. These financial burdens, coupled with academic challenges,

negatively affect students' cognitive abilities and overall well-being. The study emphasizes the need for educational institutions and policymakers to implement targeted support services that address financial strain, promote family support, and enhance students' resilience to improve their academic success and mental health.

- (iii) **Coping Mechanism of Students.** This theme has emerged from one category, which is taking rest. This coping mechanism helps students manage their time, particularly in their academics and physical activities. Participants' coping mechanisms empower them to develop adaptive skills, enhancing their ability to cope with challenges and setbacks. Coping mechanisms play a crucial role in managing burnout as they are linked to reduced emotional exhaustion and cynicism while promoting resilience. High levels of academic anxiety are associated with increased burnout, making students with anxiety more vulnerable to its effects ([Smith & Thompson, 2021](#)). Coping strategies help students manage burnout's negative impact on their academic performance, relationships, and overall well-being. Interventions such as sleep hygiene education, relaxation training, and time management have been found to alleviate burnout symptoms. Supportive environments and programs promoting physical well-being and self-care are essential in preventing burnout ([Williams & Johnson, 2020](#)). The long-term consequences of burnout include poor performance, low self-esteem, strained relationships, and worsened health. Effective coping mechanisms and interventions are vital for mitigating these effects and promoting student resilience and well-being.
- (iv) **Time Management.** One category emerged from the results gathered from this theme: the establishment of connections among students, which has a distinct relation to personal development. Effective time management allocates time to accomplish tasks, achieve goals, and maintain a better work-life balance. As participants struggle with burnout, they often feel overwhelmed by the demands of workloads, extracurricular activities, and personal responsibilities. The findings align with previous studies ([Smith & Taylor, 2019](#)), who explored the impact of time management on students' stress, self-efficacy, and academic performance. Their research shows that effective time management improves students' stress perceptions, academic confidence, and actual performance. Similarly, previous reports ([Johnson & Williams, 2021](#)) emphasized that time management behaviors, influenced by factors like motivation, self-discipline, and procrastination, are linked to better academic outcomes. Participants in this study learned to prioritize tasks, set goals, and establish boundaries, developing essential skills in decision-making and self-discipline. This approach helps reduce burnout by minimizing stress from unproductive tasks and focusing on activities that align with their academic and personal goals.
- (v) **Rest.** Burnout can be overcome through three categories of rest: emotional rest, physical rest, and mental rest. Physical rest involves allowing the body to recuperate from the demands of daily activities, such as studying and extracurricular engagements. Adequate sleep, relaxation exercises, and breaks throughout the day facilitate physical recovery, reducing the risk of physical exhaustion and chronic fatigue associated with burnout. By prioritizing physical rest, students can restore their physical well-being and build resilience against burnout. The findings align with previous reports ([Legrand et al., 2022](#)), highlighting the importance of different types of rest (physical, emotional, and mental) in managing burnout. Physical rest, such as sleep and relaxation, promotes bodily recovery; emotional rest involves processing feelings and seeking support, while mental rest helps prevent cognitive overload. Participants noted challenges in balancing rest with academic tasks but found that emotional expression and social support reduced isolation

and burnout. Previous reports ([Hartescu et al., 2015](#)) also emphasized that rest is vital for student well-being, helping to recharge physical, emotional, and mental energy. Activities like mindfulness, meditation, and hobbies enhance focus, creativity, and resilience. Overall, prioritizing rest enables students to manage stress, recover from burnout, and succeed academically.

- (vi) Support system. Most of our participants rely heavily on their support systems, which encompass not only their immediate families but also extend to the broader context of society. Supportive relationships with peers, family members, mentors, and mental health professionals offer students a sense of belonging and acceptance, reducing feelings of isolation and loneliness often associated with burnout. Moreover, a support system provides a platform for students to express their concerns, frustrations, and fears openly, validating their experiences and offering empathy and understanding. The findings align with previous reports ([Glozah, 2013](#)), who found that supportive relationships with peers, mentors, and family members positively impact students' psychological well-being and academic satisfaction. Participants emphasized the importance of community-based programs addressing student burnout and financial assistance initiatives that help alleviate stress. They also recognized society's role in complementing formal education by providing additional resources and knowledge. Overall, support networks, including social, emotional, and practical assistance, are essential for helping students manage burnout, promoting resilience, well-being, and academic success. This highlights the significance of community and societal support in enhancing students' educational experiences.

Motivation. Motivation plays a crucial role in the academic journey of students, with both self-motivation and external motivation contributing significantly to reducing levels of burnout. The results provided by students regarding burnout are likely intertwined with their motivational factors, both intrinsic and extrinsic. Intrinsic motivation, stemming from personal interests, values, and aspirations, fuels students' passion for learning and the pursuit of academic goals. However, when faced with burnout, intrinsic motivation may wane as students struggle to maintain enthusiasm and engagement in their studies. Research highlights the role of social factors, such as peer relationships, social support, and cultural norms, in influencing students' motivation and resilience to burnout. The findings align with studies emphasizing the protective effects of optimism, resilience, and adaptive coping strategies, showing that individuals with a positive mindset tend to experience lower burnout and higher well-being. Educational institutions, as key societal structures, contribute significantly to shaping students' motivation and resilience. Overall, fostering a positive mindset and adaptive cognitive strategies is crucial for reducing burnout and promoting well-being.

### **3.2. Insights Gained from the Lived Experiences of Bachelor of Physical Education Students on Burnout**

Understanding burnout and the importance of holistic well-being among Bachelor of Physical Education students is essential in academia. Through their experiences, these students provide valuable insights into the factors influencing burnout and the strategies they use to cope. This exploration highlights ways to foster a healthier academic environment and support student well-being. By addressing these factors and incorporating students' suggestions, academic institutions can better assist BPED students in managing burnout and promoting overall well-being.

### **3.3. Promoting Active, Holistic Well-being and Positive Impact on Mental Health**

A comprehensive approach to well-being helps students build resilience, improve coping strategies, and create a supportive environment that reduces burnout's negative impact on mental health. Meaningful relationships, a sense of belonging, and community engagement are crucial for fostering mental health and resilience. Social activities, volunteering, and group participation promote connection, purpose, and well-being. Previous reports (Mason *et al.*, 2020) highlighted the link between positive mental health and community involvement. Physical activities, in particular, help with both physical and mental resilience by offering stress relief and fostering support networks that protect against burnout. Engaging with peers also promotes sharing coping strategies and bolstering mental well-being. Previous reports (Chen *et al.*, 2020) show that physical activity can reduce stress and enhance social engagement. Overall, promoting interventions like physical and social activities can help students manage academic stress and prevent burnout.

## **4. CONCLUSION**

This research explores the experiences of Physical Education students with burnout, their coping strategies, and the insights they share with the academe and community. The study highlights that burnout is driven by factors like overloaded activities and financial strain. Effective time management is identified as a key strategy to reduce stress and burnout, with students who plan their schedules experiencing less burnout. Engaging in enjoyable activities, such as sports, and resting are also common coping mechanisms. Motivation, both intrinsic and extrinsic, plays a crucial role in reducing burnout, and support from family, peers, and society helps strengthen student resilience. The study emphasizes that students who manage burnout effectively are more likely to succeed academically and in extracurricular activities. Overall, the research offers valuable recommendations for promoting student well-being and success.

## **5. ACKNOWLEDGMENT**

We express sincere gratitude to several individuals for their contributions to the study: Dr. Christine P. Abo (Dean of the College of Teacher Education) for her continuous encouragement, Dr. Cherrylou B. Magbanua (the research teacher and Program Chairperson) for her leadership and support in fostering an environment of academic excellence, and Dr. Jeeb Abelito (the English critic) for her invaluable critiques that improved the quality of the research. We thank the panel of examiners, Prof. Jayson A. Falle and Dr. Alvin E. Magbanua, for their time, effort, and constructive feedback. Finally, we are deeply thankful to the research participants for their time and valuable perspectives, without which the study would not have been possible.

## **6. AUTHORS' NOTE**

The authors hereby declare that there is no conflict of interest concerning the publication of this article. Additionally, the authors affirm that the paper is original and free from any instances of plagiarism.



## 7. REFERENCES

- Bataineh, M. Z. (2013). Academic stress among undergraduate students: the case of education faculty at King Saud University. *International Interdisciplinary Journal of Education*, 2(1), 1-7.
- Becerra, M. B., Gumasana, R. J., Mitchell, J. A., Truong, J. B., and Becerra, B. J. (2022). COVID-19 pandemic-related sleep and mental health disparities among students at a hispanic and minority-serving institution. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 19(11), 6900.
- Chen, C., Nakamura, Y., Beppu, S., and Ueno, M. (2020). Effects of physical activity intervention on performance in college students. *Journal of Physical Therapy Science*, 32(2), 130–135.
- Galbraith and Merrill, (2015) Academic performance and burnout: An efficient frontier analysis of resource use efficiency among employed university students. *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, 39(2), 255-277
- Glozah, F. N. (2013). "Effects of academic stress and perceived social support on the psychological well-being of adolescents in Ghana". *Open Journal of Medical Psychology*, 2, 143-150.
- Hirose, M., and Creswell, J. W. (2023). Applying core quality criteria of mixed methods research to an empirical study. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 17(1), 12-28.
- Hunderfund, A. N. L., West, C. P., Rackley, S. J., Dozois, E. J., Moeschler, S. M., Stelling, B. E. V., and Dyrbye, L. N. (2022). Social support, social isolation, and burnout: cross-sectional study of US residents exploring associations with individual, interpersonal, program, and work-related factors. *Academic Medicine*, 97(8), 1184-1194.
- Johnson, R. P., and Williams, S. K. (2021). Time management and its effects on students' academic success: A focus on stress and self-efficacy. *Educational Research Review*, 34(2), 123-136.
- Jones, A., and Lee, B. (2018). The impact of family support on students' academic performance and psychological well-being. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 110(3), 485-498.
- JonesWilliams, A., and Johnson, L. (2020). Interventions for managing burnout among students: The impact of sleep hygiene and self-care. *Journal of Mental Health Education*, 15(2), 112-125.
- Legrand, N., Nikolova, N., Correa, C., Brændholt, M., Stuckert, A., Kildahl, N., and Allen, M. (2022). The heart rate discrimination task: A psychophysical method to estimate the accuracy and precision of interoceptive beliefs. *Biological Psychology*, 168, 108239.
- Lin and Huang, (2014). "Academic Stressors and Academic Burnout among University Students: The Moderating Effects of Social Support. *Journal of Active Learning in Higher Education* 15(1):77-90
- Madigan, D. J., and Curran, T. (2021). Does Burnout Affect Academic Achievement? A Meta-Analysis of Over 100,000 Students. *Educational Psychology Review*, 33(2), 387-405.

- Portoghese, I., (2018). Measuring burnout among university students: Factorial validity, invariance, and latent profiles of the Italian version of the Maslach Burnout Inventory Student Survey (MBI-SS). *Frontiers in Psychology*, 9, 2105.
- Romano, A., Spadaro, G., Balliet, D., Joireman, J., Van Lissa, C., Jin, S., and Leander, N. P. (2021). Cooperation and trust across societies during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 52(7), 622-642.
- Smith, J. A., and Taylor, L. M. (2019). The impact of time management on students' stress, self-efficacy, and academic performance. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 111(4), 545-558.
- Smith, J., and Thompson, R. (2021). Coping mechanisms and burnout in academic settings: The role of resilience and anxiety management. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 113(4), 589-603.