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IT IS OKAY TO TAKE A STEP BACK AND FOCUS ON YOUR WELL-BEING! ACADEMIC BURNOUT AMONG UNDERGRADUATE NURSING STUDENT

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Abstract: Academic burnout is a severe hazard that can significantly impact the lives of nursing students. It has become a critical concern due to the emotional demands and rigorous curricula that they encounter. Nursing students should acquire the ability to manage and process fatigue in order to become future healthcare providers. This investigation aims to ascertain the extent of academic burnout among nursing students. This investigation was conducted with the voluntary participation of 107 nursing students. A questionnaire was extracted from the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI). The descriptive data analysis was implemented with an emphasis on the research objective. The research findings indicate that 66.8% of respondents are experiencing elevated levels of emotional exhaustion. Additionally, personal accomplishment was experienced by 70.5% of respondents, while 51.5% experienced depersonalization. The study also discovered that the respondents frequently used adaptive coping strategies, including relaxation and time management. However, a small proportion of them lacked effective coping mechanisms. The results underscore the importance of specific strategies in the treatment of fatigue. Additionally, it is prudent to provide nursing students with the capacity to manage their affairs by achieving an appropriate balance.

Keywords: Academic Burnout, Undergraduate Nursing Students

Abstrak: Kelelahan akademis adalah bahaya parah yang dapat berdampak signifikan terhadap kehidupan mahasiswa keperawatan. Hal ini telah menjadi perhatian penting karena tuntutan emosional dan kurikulum yang ketat yang mereka hadapi. Mahasiswa keperawatan harus memiliki kemampuan untuk mengelola dan memproses kelelahan untuk menjadi penyedia layanan kesehatan di masa depan. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui sejauh mana kelelahan akademis di kalangan mahasiswa keperawatan. Penelitian ini dilakukan dengan partisipasi sukarela dari 107 mahasiswa keperawatan. Kuesioner diambil dari Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI). Analisis data deskriptif dilaksanakan dengan penekanan pada tujuan penelitian. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa 66,8% responden mengalami tingkat kelelahan emosional yang tinggi. Selain itu, pencapaian pribadi dialami oleh 70,5% responden, sementara 51,5% mengalami depersonalisasi. Penelitian ini juga menemukan bahwa responden sering menggunakan strategi coping yang adaptif, termasuk relaksasi dan manajemen waktu. Namun, sebagian kecil dari mereka tidak memiliki mekanisme koping yang efektif. Hasil penelitian ini menggarisbawahi pentingnya strategi khusus dalam penanganan kelelahan. Selain itu, adalah bijaksana untuk membekali mahasiswa keperawatan dengan kapasitas untuk mengelola urusan mereka dengan mencapai keseimbangan yang tepat.

Kata kunci: Kelelahan Akademis, Mahasiswa Sarjana Keperawatan

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PENDAHULUAN

In recent years, academic burnout has emerged as a significant concern within higher education, particularly in demanding fields such as nursing. Defined as a state of physical, emotional, and mental exhaustion caused by prolonged and intense academic stress, burnout can severely impact students' academic performance, mental health, and overall well-being (Fariborz & Ali, 2019). Understanding the prevalence and implications of academic burnout among nursing students, who face rigorous curricula, clinical placements, and emotional demands, is crucial. Students experience varying degrees of burnout, its impact on their academic performance and mental health, and they utilize various coping strategies to handle these difficulties. By examining these dimensions, this study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of academic burnout among nursing students, which is crucial for developing effective interventions and support systems within education institutions,

Nursing students are particularly susceptible to stress due to the demanding nature of their responsibilities and the complexities inherent in their profession. Work-related stress is defined as a state of physical and emotional imbalance that occurs when there is a misalignment between an individual's abilities, resources, or needs and the demands of their work environment (Muchiri, 2022). This imbalance can lead to stress, especially when workloads are perceived as incompatible with the physical, psychological, or emotional capacity of the individual. Addressing stress in nurses is crucial, as it directly impacts the quality of care they provide. Stress-related symptoms, such as irritability, mood swings, restlessness, anxiety, and diminished motivation, can compromise a nurse's ability to perform their duties effectively (Manosso, et al, 2022). Consequently, when nurses experience high levels of stress, the quality of nursing services may decline, potentially resulting in patient dissatisfaction and complaints (Setiyanika et al., 2023). By examining these dimensions, this study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of academic burnout among nursing students, which is crucial for developing effective interventions and support systems within educational institutions.

Literature Review

Academic burnout is a condition of emotional, physical, and mental exhaustion caused by prolonged academic stress, and it has become a significant issue among university students, particularly in the nursing field. This literature review synthesizes findings from three studies that explore the prevalence, factors, and dimensions of academic burnout among undergraduate students, focusing on nursing and general student populations. A study by Sumarni et al., (2022) examined academic burnout among nursing students using the Maslach Burnout Inventory-Student Survey (MBI-SS). The study found that all 278 participants experienced some degree of burnout, with 74.1% reporting moderate burnout, 25.2% reporting mild burnout, and only 0.7% experiencing severe burnout. Emotional exhaustion was particularly high, affecting 83.8% of students. The findings underscore the significant physical and emotional strain nursing students face, leading to reduced professional efficacy and performance, highlighting the need for effective interventions to address stress and burnout in nursing education. Another Research, Rahmania El Barusi & Kurniawati, (2024) conducted a systematic review of academic burnout among undergraduate students in various fields, analyzing 20 articles

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from databases like Scopus and PubMed. The study found that both internal factors (e.g., personal motivation, resilience) and external factors (e.g., academic pressure, support systems) contribute to burnout. The consequences of burnout include reduced academic performance, declining mental health, and decreased overall well-being. The authors emphasized the need for preventive measures, such as mental health support and effective workload management, to mitigate the effects of burnout across all academic disciplines.

Moreover, Ghods et al., (2023) explored academic burnout among nursing students in Iran using a mixed-method approach, combining quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews. The survey of 91 students using the Maslach Burnout Inventory-Student Survey (MBI-SS) revealed that burnout scores increased as students advanced through semesters. The qualitative interviews with students, a nurse, and an instructor uncovered an additional burnout factor not measured by the MBI-SS: incompatible learning styles. This new dimension highlighted the mismatch between students' learning preferences and teaching methods, contributing to burnout. The study underscores how the educational environment and instructional approaches can exacerbate burnout in nursing students. This research is particularly relevant in light of existing studies that indicate increasing levels of academic burnout among students in various fields. However, there remains a gap in the literature concerning nursing students in Indonesia. By addressing this gap, the study will contribute to the broader conversation about student well-being in higher education and inform policy and practice within nursing education. This research focuses on undergraduate nursing students, aiming to shed light on the critical issue of academic burnout within this unique educational context.

Theoretical Framework

Burnout is a common issue across various professions, but healthcare workers, particularly nursing students, are especially vulnerable to its effects. The demands of higher education frequently introduce significant stress, which can contribute to academic burnout among students. As a result, medical students may experience fatigue or a sense of ineffectiveness in their studies, which can further exacerbate burnout symptoms (Ghods et al., 2023).

Burnout is a psychological syndrome that arises as a long-term response to chronic interpersonal stressors at work. Burnout is a syndrome characterized by increased emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced feelings of personal accomplishment. The three key dimensions of this response are overwhelming fatigue, a cynical and detached role from work, and a sense of ineffectiveness and lack of achievement. The significance of this three-dimensional model is that it places an individual's experience of stress in a social context and involves one's conception of self and others (Maslach & Leiter, 2016).

As students face intense academic pressure, many report struggling with low selfesteem, ineffective coping strategies, and poor concentration, all of which negatively affect their academic performance. Their perception of academic stress significantly impacts their overall well-being, influences career decisions, and causes sleep disturbances, psychosomatic symptoms, and concern for the future. Additionally, they often experience comorbid conditions such as anxiety and depression, alongside an inability to manage the course workload effectively (Anzures, 2023). Coping refers to the deliberate thoughts and actions used to handle stressful situations, both internal and

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external. Unlike defense mechanisms, which are subconscious or unconscious adaptive responses, coping involves conscious and voluntary efforts to manage or minimize stress. Both coping and defense mechanisms aim to reduce or tolerate stress, but they operate at different levels of awareness (Algorani & Gupta, 2023).

Based on Lazarus and Folkman (1984), the theories of adaptive and maladaptive coping strategies have evolved through recent research. Adaptive coping strategies involve constructive methods to reduce stress, such as problem-solving, seeking social support, and positive reframing. These strategies improve resilience and mental wellbeing. For example, Macías-Espinoza et al (2022) found that adaptive coping helps reduce academic stress and anxiety. On the other hand, maladaptive coping strategies, like avoidance, procrastination, and substance abuse, provide temporary relief but worsen stress in the long run. (Hagger et al., 2017) showed that maladaptive coping increases risks of anxiety, depression, and burnout, as these strategies fail to address the root causes of stress.

Research Question

The question occurs of this research is: (1) What are the levels of academic burnout among nursing students?; (2) What coping strategies are currently employed by students to manage academic burnout?

METHOD

This study used a quantitative approach with a descriptive survey design to measure the level of academic burnout among nursing students. The instrument used was the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI), a standardized tool for measuring burnout levels in educational and occupational contexts. The MBI measures three main dimensions of burnout: **emotional exhaustion**, **personal accomplishment**, and **depersonalization** (Ghods et al., 2023)

Participants

The study sample consisted of nursing students who were in their second to last year of study. The selection of participants was purposive, taking into account academic experience and exposure to the stresses associated with the nursing curriculum. This aimed to obtain more relevant and in-depth data on the burnout phenomenon among this group (Lopes & Nihei, 2020).

This survey involved 107 nursing students, with a predominant gender distribution of 85.98% female and 14.02% male. These respondents represented various stages of their nursing education, providing a broad perspective on the experiences of students across their academic journey. The largest group, accounting for 53.27%, were in their third year of study, suggesting that many respondents were likely preparing for or actively engaged in more advanced clinical training and professional experiences. First-and second-year students made up 20.56% and 23.36% of the sample, respectively, reflecting those still in the foundational or intermediate stages of their education. A small proportion (2.80%) were fourth-year students, who may have been nearing the completion of their studies.



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Table 1. Demographic Data

Age	18	19	20	21	22
	5.61%	28.04%	48.60%	14.02	3.74%
Gender	Male		Female		
	14.02%		85.98%		
Academic Stage	First Year	Second Year	Third Year	Fourth Year	
	20.56%	23.36%	53.27%	2.80%	

In terms of age, nearly half of the respondents (48.60%) were 20 years old, reflecting the typical age for nursing students who have progressed steadily through their education. Those aged 19 years constituted 28.04%, while 21-year-olds made up 14.02%. A smaller percentage (5.61%) were 18 years old, likely first-year students who had recently begun their nursing education. The remaining 3.74% were students outside these common age brackets. This diverse representation in terms of age and academic stage provides a comprehensive view of the nursing student population, capturing insights from students at varying levels of experience and knowledge within the field.

Data Collection

Data was collected through a survey distributed to nursing students at several higher education institutions. Respondents were asked to complete the MBI questionnaire which consisted of a number of statements reflecting their experiences with academic stress and burnout. This questionnaire uses a Likert scale to measure the extent to which respondents agree or disagree with each statement, providing a comprehensive picture of the level of burnout they experience (Ghods et al., 2023)

Data Analysis

The data obtained in the digital instruments were typed into an Excel spreadsheet by the researcher and double-checked by research collaborators. After data collection, the results from the MBI questionnaire were analyzed descriptively to describe the level of burnout experienced by university students. This analysis also considered demographic factors that might influence the results, such as age, gender, and year of study. The data collected will be coded to identify emerging patterns and themes, thus allowing the researcher to understand more about nursing students' experiences and perceptions of academic burnout (Lopes & Nihei, 2020).



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Table 2. Behavioral Percentage Range (data analysis)

NO	Value Range	Category
1	0 - 20%	Never
2	21 - 40%	Rarely
3	41 - 60%	Sometimes
4	61 - 80%	Frequently
5	81 - 100%	Always

The Percentage Range table can be used to categorize how frequently someone experiences burnout-related feelings or symptoms. It divides these feelings into five categories based on their occurrence: Never (0-20%), Rarely (21-40%), Sometimes (41-60%), Frequently (61-80%), and Always (81-100%). This allows researchers or practitioners to assess how often individuals feel burned out, from never experiencing symptoms to consistently feeling overwhelmed. By analyzing the frequency of burnout-related behaviors or feelings, such as exhaustion, lack of motivation, or difficulty concentrating, this table helps in identifying the severity and regularity of burnout in individuals. Through this qualitative approach, it is hoped that the research can provide greater insight into the causal factors and impact of academic burnout, as well as identify strategies that can be implemented to reduce this phenomenon in nursing education settings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The survey provides a detailed insight into the mental and emotional challenges faced by nursing students during their academic journey. The survey used three main sections—**emotional exhaustion**, **personal accomplishment**, and **depersonalization**—to assess different dimensions of burnout. First, **Emotional exhaustion**, reported by 66.87% of students, signifies a widespread feeling of being overwhelmed and drained by the constant academic pressure. This emotional fatigue can negatively affect students' motivation, mental health, and ability to perform in both academic and clinical settings. It indicates that a significant portion of nursing students may be struggling to cope with the demanding workload, long hours of study, and the emotional toll that comes with training for a high-stakes profession.



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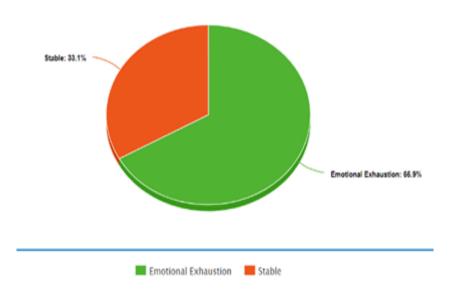


Figure 1 Emotional Exhaustion

According to Maslach & Leiter (2016) emotional exhaustion is characterized by feelings of excessive fatigue, loss of motivation, and reduced efficiency in work or study. In the context of nursing students, this state can arise due to the high academic load and the emotional demands posed by interactions with patients. The initial sign of burnout is emotional exhaustion, characterized by heightened fatigue and a decline in motivation and dedication to studying. The second symptom is cynicism, which involves a sense of detachment and withdrawal from academic activities and interactions with peers. Lastly, professional inefficacy refers to decreased productivity, lower academic performance, and an overall reduced ability to manage academic demands in response to stressful educational environments (Alghtany et al., 2024).

Emotional exhaustion is a reaction to chronic stress on campus, such as excessive task overload, which is constant over time and introduces a pressure component to people's daily lives, leading to emotional exhaustion. It is the lack of emotional energy, not the physical energy itself directly. Emotional exhaustion occurs when health professionals reach the limits of their capacity. As a result, there is a lack of emotional energy and a perception that emotional resources are depleted. For that reason, professionals are unable to respond on an emotional level (Parola et al., 2022).

Extended stress in nursing work leads to both emotional and physical exhaustion, often accompanied by physical symptoms like headaches, fatigue, and indigestion, as well as psychological issues such as anxiety and depression. This prolonged exhaustion is then followed by depersonalization, which is thought to serve as a defense mechanism to cope with exhaustion and feelings of disappointment (Hudiana et al., 2021).



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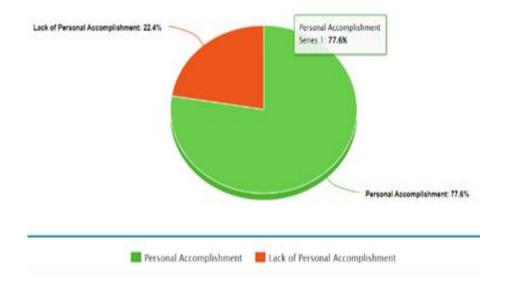


Figure 2 Personal Accomplishment

Second, personal accomplishment, experienced by 70.57% of students, shows that while many students are facing burnout, there is still a strong sense of achievement among them. Personal accomplishment reflects feelings of competence and success, meaning that even though students are under stress, a majority still find fulfillment and pride in their academic progress. This positive dimension of burnout can act as a buffer against emotional exhaustion, as it helps maintain motivation and purpose (Parola et al., 2022). Personal accomplishment (PA) is considered a significant factor in burnout. Individuals who experience low PA often develop negative views of themselves, feeling less competent professionally in comparison to their peers. This decline in self-esteem can result in disengagement from their work and a struggle to fulfill job expectations (Zafrul et al., 2021)

Personal accomplishment refers to the feeling of competence and success over academic and clinical tasks. A strong sense of personal accomplishment would protect against emotional exhaustion and depersonalization by way of promoting mastery and fulfillment. Success in coursework or clinical experiences of nursing students raises their self-confidence, resilience, and motivation. Whereas low personal accomplishment is associated with a higher degree of burnout, leading to disengagement and a decrease in academic performance (Dall'Ora et al., 2020).

A lack of personal accomplishment usually manifests as negative attitudes toward one's own competencies and achievements, and it is therefore related to a decrease in motivation and performance. The aspect is thought of as the self-evaluation part of burnout. For example, while it is expected that nurses are supposed to take care of other people, a nurse who is emotionally exhausted and cynical about the environment will perceive the work as unsatisfactory and feel a lack of accomplishment and lowered professional ability. This may be associated with feelings of inadequacy, which in turn may lead the burned-out nurse to despise the person he or she has become; such lack of confidence may risk low self-esteem (Parola et al., 2022).



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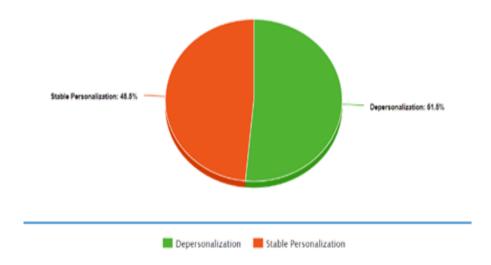


Figure 3 Depersonalization

Third, depersonalization, experienced by 51.51% of respondents, is a concerning sign of how burnout can affect students' emotional detachment. Depersonalization is characterized by students distancing themselves from their studies, patients, or peers, potentially leading to a loss of empathy and compassion, which are critical qualities for nurses. The fact that over half of the students reported depersonalization suggests that the intense demands of nursing education may be causing some students to become emotionally numb, which could negatively impact their ability to provide quality care in the future.

Depersonalization refers to a detached or indifferent attitude towards work, often caused by stress or pressure. It is characterized by negative, cynical, and impersonal behavior, including interactions with colleagues or patients. This may involve making unprofessional remarks to coworkers, blaming patients for their health issues, or showing a lack of empathy or grief when patients pass away. The constant stress nurses experience can intensify when they feel they lack sufficient time or resources to provide proper patient care. Unfortunately, healthcare professionals are among those most affected by burnout syndrome (Mealer et al., 2016).

Several studies indicate that college students are at risk of experiencing academic burnout, with recent research highlighting an increase in academic burnout issues among students (Ricardo et al., 2021). Research shows that college students are at risk of academic burnout, with recent studies revealing an increase in burnout-related difficulties. When stress is not effectively managed, it can lead to academic burnout, which is defined by a loss of motivation to study, fatigue, and a decline in academic achievement.

This survey examined the burnout experiences of nursing students, focusing on three key dimensions: emotional exhaustion, personal accomplishment, and depersonalization. Emotional exhaustion, which refers to feelings of being emotionally drained due to academic demands, was reported by 66.87% of respondents, indicating a high prevalence of burnout-related fatigue among the students. The sense of personal accomplishment, which reflects students' feelings of competence and success in their studies, was identified by 70.57% of respondents, suggesting that despite the challenges,



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many students still felt a degree of satisfaction in their achievements. However, depersonalization, or the development of an impersonal and detached attitude toward their work or patients, was present in 51.51% of students, highlighting concerns about their ability to maintain empathy and connection in their academic journey.

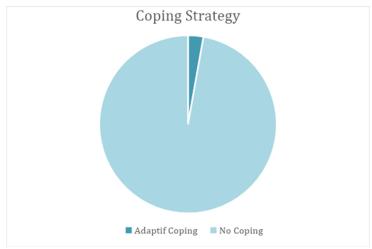


Figure 4 Coping Strategies

To cope with academic burnout, nursing students reported a range of strategies aimed at managing stress and maintaining balance. Common responses included sleeping, managing time, and energy, playing games focusing effectively, listening to music, watching movies, baking or cooking, eating, and rewarding themselves as forms of relaxation and self-care. Notably, 97.20% of the students employed adaptive coping strategies, while 2.80% reported having no coping mechanisms, reflecting a potential gap in stress management support that could leave them more vulnerable to burnout.

Adaptive coping refers to an individual's efforts to manage or cope with stressful situations in a healthy and effective manner. These strategies can include various approaches, such as problem-focused methods (like problem-solving and seeking information) and emotion-focused techniques (including social support, relaxation, and cognitive restructuring) (Yoneta Wamea & Nompo, 2024). The study's findings align with the theory that activities such as listening to music, cooking, baking, eating, and self-rewarding are forms of adaptive coping. When individuals can implement adaptive coping strategies in their daily lives, even in the face of complexity and stress, they are less likely to experience psychopathological outcomes, underscoring the significance of effective coping. Ultimately, those with stronger coping strategies tend to experience a higher quality of life and work.

On the other end maladaptive coping strategies, such as avoidance, procrastination, and substance abuse, provide temporary relief but exacerbate stress in the long run. (Hagger et al., 2017) showed that maladaptive coping increases the risk of anxiety, depression, and burnout, as these strategies fail to address the root causes of stress. This study may only bring up a small population who do not have adequate coping. Low development of coping resources contributes to the formation of passive maladaptive coping behaviors, social isolation, and disintegration of individuals in difficult, stressful, or extreme situations. The negative relationship of maladaptive coping is also indicated when maladaptive coping strategies decrease an individual's ability to cope with adversity

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(Melodia et al., 2020). The study also stated that there is a negative correlation between maladaptive coping and quality of work and life. Therefore, it is important to not only choose adaptive methods but also develop a flexible approach to applying them. When people cannot control the source of stress, such as during an outbreak, adaptive emotional coping will help better than problem-solving strategies.

CONCLUSION

This study addresses the issue of academic burnout among nursing students, with emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment as key dimensions. Emotional exhaustion was notably prevalent, with many students feeling mentally drained by the high demands of nursing education. However, burnout remains a critical concern, particularly regarding the emotional detachment reflected in depersonalization. This detachment could have long-term impacts on students' empathy, a vital trait for their future nursing careers. Moreover, while most students utilized adaptive coping strategies such as time management, relaxation techniques, and social support, there was still a small but significant group that lacked effective coping mechanisms, leaving them vulnerable to the long-term effects of burnout.

The limitations of this study include its small sample size and the geographical focus on nursing students from specific educational institutions, which may not represent the broader nursing student population. Furthermore, the study relied heavily on self-reported data, which could introduce bias or inaccuracies in reporting burnout levels.

For future research, a broader, more diverse sample of nursing students should be considered to ensure generalizability. Additionally, investigating interventions aimed at enhancing adaptive coping strategies and promoting resilience in nursing education would be beneficial. More qualitative research could also provide deeper insights into the lived experiences of nursing students facing burnout, particularly how they balance clinical demands with academic pressures. These findings could inform the development of more targeted support systems within nursing programs to better address the well-being of students, thus improving their academic success and professional readiness.

Mental health awareness and institutional support are crucial in addressing academic burnout among nursing students. When students have a clear understanding of their mental health needs and access to institutional resources, they are more likely to seek help and implement effective coping strategies. This approach not only reduces the risk of burnout but also enhances students' overall well-being and academic performance. Educational institutions play a key role in fostering an environment that prioritizes mental health, thereby minimizing the prevalence of burnout and promoting academic success.

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