

Psychological Dynamics and Strategies to Overcome Problems Among Generation Z Students Experiencing Academic Fatigue

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Posted: 02/06/2026

Revised: 15/06/2026

Accepted: 03/07/2026

Published: 09/08/2026

Abstract

Academic burnout is a psychological challenge experienced by many Generation Z students, especially in their final semester when they are faced with the pressures of writing a thesis, graduation goals, and interrelated academic and personal demands. This study aims to explore in depth the psychological dynamics and coping strategies used by Generation Z students in dealing with academic burnout. This study used a descriptive qualitative approach with four informants, final semester students from various study programs at Muhammadiyah University of Yogyakarta, selected through a purposive sampling technique. Data were collected through in-depth semi-structured interviews and analyzed using the Miles and Huberman interactive model. The results show that academic burnout in Generation Z students is multidimensional, triggered by the pressure of completing a thesis, social comparison with peers, academic role conflict, and accumulated personal and family demands. In dealing with it, informants use four forms of coping strategies: problem-focused coping, emotion-focused coping, avoidance coping, and religious-spiritual coping, which are used flexibly according to each individual's assessment of the situation at hand. In addition, social support from family and friends, as well as internal motivation, play a role in helping students cope with academic stress. This study makes a theoretical contribution by expanding the understanding of stress coping mechanisms beyond the Lazarus and Folkman framework by adding spiritual and cultural dimensions, as well as a practical contribution to the development of mental health support services in higher education settings.

Keywords

Academic Burnout, Coping Strategies, Generation Z, Final Semester Students, Mental Health.



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INTRODUCTION

Academic burnout is a mental health issue that is gaining increasing attention in higher education. This condition is characterized by emotional, mental, and physical exhaustion from prolonged academic demands, which affects students' motivation to learn, psychological well-being, and academic performance. Various studies show that the prevalence of academic burnout has continued to increase over the past decade (Psychology et al., n.d.) . A global study involving students from 21 countries also reported that one in three students experience mental health disorders, making mental health issues a major concern in higher education (Zahira et al., 2026) . This condition is increasingly prevalent among Generation Z students, especially in their final semesters, when they must complete their theses while facing academic demands and future uncertainty. The accumulation of these various pressures puts final-semester students at a higher risk of experiencing academic burnout (Lathifah et al., 2023) .

Various studies have identified that academic burnout in students is influenced by various interrelated factors, such as high academic load, pressure to complete final assignments, limited time management, and the demands of meeting graduation targets (Raharjo & Prahara, 2022) . In dealing with this pressure, students develop various coping strategies as a form of adaptation to academic stress. Research on the Transactional Model of Stress and Coping theory by Lazarus and Folkman shows that students tend to use problem-focused coping, emotion-focused coping, or avoidant coping, depending on the individual's assessment of the situation at hand (Ainun et al., 2022). Furthermore, other research also shows that students experiencing academic burnout develop various coping mechanisms to maintain psychological well-being during the academic process, although the effectiveness of each strategy varies from individual to individual (Sholekhah et al., 2026) .

Although various studies have made important contributions to understanding the factors that cause academic burnout and the coping strategies students use, most research still focuses on measuring burnout levels and identifying coping strategies through quantitative approaches. This approach provides an overview of the relationships between variables, but fails to fully explain how students interpret their experiences of academic burnout and the psychological processes underlying their choice of coping strategies. Furthermore, research specifically exploring the psychological dynamics of Generation Z students in their final semesters, as they face the pressures of completing their theses and transitioning to the workforce, remains relatively limited, particularly

within higher education institutions in Yogyakarta. This situation indicates a research gap that needs to be filled so that understanding academic burnout is not limited only to the measurement aspect, but also able to explain students' subjective experiences in dealing with academic pressure.

Based on these gaps, this study offers a different perspective from previous studies. This research not only identifies the factors causing academic burnout and categorizes the coping strategies used by students, but also explores in depth the psychological dynamics underlying the burnout experience among final-semester Generation Z students. Through a qualitative approach, this study seeks to understand how students interpret academic pressure, develop coping mechanisms, and adapt to the demands of completing their thesis and transitioning to life after graduation. Thus, this study is expected to provide a more comprehensive and contextual understanding of the academic burnout experience of Generation Z students, while also enriching the study of coping strategies in the context of higher education in Indonesia.

Based on these research gaps, this study aims to explore the psychological dynamics and coping strategies of final-semester Generation Z students facing academic burnout. This study seeks to understand how students interpret their burnout experiences, the underlying factors, and the coping strategies they use to adapt to the pressures of completing their thesis and other academic demands. The results are expected to contribute to the development of studies on academic burnout and coping strategies in college students, as well as serve as a basis for universities in designing more contextual mental health support services and mentoring for final-semester students.

METHOD

This study used a descriptive qualitative research approach. This approach was chosen because it aimed to describe in-depth the experiences, perceptions, and coping strategies of Generation Z students in dealing with academic burnout based on the participants' perspectives without intending to build new theories or test the relationships between variables. (Safarudin et al., 2023) . Descriptive qualitative research focuses on presenting a comprehensive description of a phenomenon while maintaining the researcher's closeness to the data and meanings conveyed by the participants, so that the research results represent the participants' experiences as they are (Ii & Pustaka, 2022) . This approach is considered appropriate for exploring the psychological dynamics of final-semester students because it allows researchers to gain a complete understanding of the experience of academic burnout and the coping strategies used in real-life contexts. This concept,

introduced by (Nenotaek & Sabat, 2025), remains the main foundation of descriptive qualitative research and is reinforced by various recent methodological studies that confirm that this approach is appropriate when the research goal is to produce rich, contextual, and close descriptions of the participants' experiences.

Informants in this study were selected using a *purposive sampling technique*, considering their suitability to the research objectives. The informant criteria included Generation Z students in their final semester, actively working on their thesis, and experiencing academic burnout during the final assignment process. To maintain confidentiality, each informant was assigned a letter code, preventing personal identification from being disclosed in this study. The informant characteristics are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Informant Characteristics

Information Code	Age	Gender	Study program	Semester	Thesis Compilation Status	Thesis Compilation Time
A	23 years	Woman	Communication Studies	10	Chapter IV and conclusion	1 year
F	22 years	Woman	Communication Studies	10	Research Analysis Data	1 year
S	21 years	Man	Electrical Engineering	8	Pig	2 months
P	22 years	Woman	Pharmacy	8	Chapter IV	4 months

To maintain the confidentiality of identity, all informants were given letter codes, namely Informant (A), Informant (F), Informant (S), and Informant (P). The use of this code aims to protect the privacy of informants in accordance with the ethical principles of qualitative research without reducing the meaning or substance of the data obtained during the semi-structured in-depth interview process which allows researchers to describe the respondents' experiences in detail and contextually, supplemented by respondents' reflective notes as supporting data. All data were then analyzed using the Miles and Huberman interactive model: starting from data reduction, presentation in descriptive-thematic narratives, to drawing conclusions that have been carefully verified.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

The results of the study showed that all four informants experienced academic burnout during the thesis completion process with varying characteristics. Although the experiences of each

informant differed, all reported emotional exhaustion, decreased motivation, anxiety, and difficulty maintaining consistency in completing their final assignments. These findings indicate that academic burnout among final-semester students is a multidimensional experience influenced by various academic and non-academic factors.

1. Factors of Academic Burnout

The results of the study indicate that the academic burnout experienced by the four informants was influenced by various factors during the thesis completion process. Although all informants were in the final semester phase, their burnout experiences were not entirely the same. The research findings revealed that factors that trigger burnout include pressure to quickly complete studies, the tendency to compare oneself with peers, the accumulation of academic and non-academic demands, and conflicts between the completion of the thesis and lecture obligations. These differences in background experience indicate that academic burnout in final semester students is a multidimensional phenomenon, where each individual has different sources of pressure according to the academic, personal, and social conditions they experience. These findings are described through the experiences of each informant as follows.

This is as expressed by Informant A as follows:

"...especially during the thesis writing phase because I felt stressed and always thinking about how to graduate quickly... I often felt tired, bored, and wanted everything to end quickly." (Interview with 'A' on October 15, 2025).

Informant A's statement indicated that academic burnout arose from the pressure felt during the thesis writing process. This pressure was reflected in the desire to complete studies quickly, feelings of fatigue, boredom, and anxiety about the graduation process. This condition indicates that completing the final assignment was a source of stress that affected the informant's emotional state during the final semester.

Informant F revealed that the academic pressure he felt did not come from demands from others, but from himself who felt he was lagging behind his classmates.

"Actually, the academic burden comes from myself, not from others. I feel academic burden because I feel left behind by my classmates. That's my academic burden, I feel left behind because I never felt pressure from anyone." (Interview with 'F' on October 12, 2025)

Informant F's statement indicates that academic burnout is influenced not only by environmental pressures but also by self-inflicted pressures. Feelings of being left behind compared to peers burdened the informant, even though he wasn't directly pressured by family or lecturers.

This suggests that perceptions of academic progress were a source of stress for the informant.

Meanwhile, Informant S said

"...feelings of fatigue and loss of enthusiasm are not only caused by the thesis, but also by personal problems, organizational activities, demands from parents, and other things that happen simultaneously..." (Interview with 'S' on October 11, 2025).

Informant S's statement indicates that academic burnout is influenced by multiple simultaneous demands. In addition to the thesis writing process, the informant also faces personal issues, organizational involvement, and parental demands. These various pressures led to fatigue and a loss of enthusiasm while completing her studies.

In contrast to the previous informant, Informant P interpreted academic fatigue as a condition that arises due to the accumulation of academic demands simultaneously.

Informant P revealed that:

"In my eighth semester of Pharmacy, I still had classes and labs, so my class schedule and research schedule often clashed. This left me feeling overwhelmed, which ultimately led to burnout." (Interview with 'P' on October 14, 2026).

Informant P's statement indicated that academic burnout arose from the overlapping academic demands that had to be met simultaneously. Difficulty managing time between lectures and thesis writing left the informant feeling overwhelmed during the final semester. This situation suggests that the concurrent academic load was a source of stress that impacted the study completion process.

Based on the results of interviews with four informants, it can be concluded that academic burnout in final-semester students is influenced by various pressures that arise during the thesis completion process. Although each informant had a different experience, all indicated emotional exhaustion, decreased motivation, anxiety, and difficulty maintaining consistency in completing the final assignment. These findings indicate that academic burnout in final-semester students is a diverse experience, but shares a common pattern of psychological pressure arising from both academic demands and the personal circumstances experienced by each informant.

2. Final Semester Students' Coping Strategies in Facing Academic Burnout

The results of the study indicate that each informant has a different way of dealing with academic burnout during the thesis completion process. Based on the interview results, the coping strategies demonstrated by the informants can be grouped into several forms, namely *problem-focused coping*, *emotion-focused coping*, *avoidant coping*, and religious or spiritual-based coping.

Although the strategies used differed, all informants attempted to reduce academic stress based on their experiences and the conditions they faced while completing their final assignments.

2.1 Problem Focus Coping

The research results show that one of the coping strategies used by informants to deal with academic burnout is problem-focused coping. This strategy was demonstrated by Informant A through efforts aimed at directly resolving the problem's source, such as setting priorities, managing time, and completing tasks in stages.

Informant A explains:

"Tackling problems head-on, prioritizing them, and tackling them one by one. Be disciplined, schedule time, take a half-hour break, and then continue. The key is to get everything done as quickly as possible, don't procrastinate." (Interview with 'A', October 15, 2025).

Informant A's statement indicates that when facing academic pressure, the informant chose to address the source of the problem directly by setting priorities, organizing time, and completing tasks in stages. These efforts were made to manage academic pressure and ensure the thesis completion process remained on track.

Based on the interview results, *problem-focused coping* was evident in Informant A, who chose to face academic pressure by setting priorities, managing time, and completing assignments in stages. This finding suggests that direct problem-solving is one method the informant uses to reduce stress during the thesis writing process.

2.2 Emotion Focus Coping

The research results showed that two informants used *emotion-focused coping strategies* to reduce psychological stress during the thesis completion process. This strategy involved taking time to rest, calming their minds, and managing their emotions before resuming academic activities.

One of these experiences was expressed by Informant F who said:

"When I'm tired or feeling exhausted, I usually don't force myself to work on my thesis. I give myself time to rest, calm my mind, and then when I'm calmer, I continue." (Interview with 'F', October 12, 2025).

Informant F's statement indicates that when experiencing academic stress, the informant chooses to rest and calm down before returning to work on his thesis. This approach helps the informant reduce emotional exhaustion and thus be better prepared to continue academic activities.

overcome problems that focus on emotions This is also evident in Informant S's experience. In dealing with academic fatigue, Informant S did not attempt to directly eliminate the source of stress, but chose to manage his emotional state so that he could continue to carry out academic

activities. Informant S revealed that:

"... Usually I need some time first, to calm my mind, for example sleeping or playing games, the point is I don't want to rush into making decisions when facing serious problems, afraid of taking the wrong step and harming me in the future, usually problems with friends, college problems, yes various things, I prefer to need some time alone first " (Interview with 'S' on October 11, 2025).

Informant S's statement indicates that he chose to give himself time to sleep, play games, and calm his mind before making decisions. This approach was used to reduce the pressure he felt so he could resume his academic activities.

2.3 Avoidant Copping

In addition to using strategies focused on problem-solving and emotion management, some informants also tended to use avoidance coping strategies. This strategy involves temporarily diverting attention from the source of stress to reduce the perceived psychological burden.

One of these experiences was expressed by Informant A as follows:

" If we are bored with lectures, we can distract ourselves with things we like, for example, taking a breath first, it doesn't have to be related to lectures because we also have other lives, for example, we can distract ourselves with hobbies." (Interview with 'A' on October 15, 2025).

Informant A's statement shows that when feeling bored, the informant chooses to divert attention to activities he likes as a way to reduce the academic pressure he feels.

Meanwhile, informant P revealed that

"I do it in my sleep, basically so I don't think about it, just sleep." (Interview with 'P' on October 14, 2025).

Informant P's statement indicates that sleep is used as a way to distract from the academic pressures they are facing. This helps them feel calmer before returning to work on their thesis.

2.4 Religious/Spiritual Copping in Facing Academic Burnout

In addition to using strategies oriented towards problem-solving, emotional management, and temporary avoidance of stressors, some informants also use the Religious/Spiritual-Religious Coping Approach as a way to overcome academic burnout. This strategy is carried out through increasing religious activities, prayer, and drawing closer to God as a form of seeking inner peace (Aly et al., 2025) . For informants, spiritual closeness not only provides a sense of calm but also helps build self-confidence that the academic pressures they face are part of a process that can be endured with patience and sincerity.

Informant F said that

"I usually pray, so usually after that I feel a little calmer." (Interview with 'F' on October 12, 2025).

Informant F's statement indicates that worship is one way to find peace when facing academic pressure. Through worship, the informant feels calmer and is able to continue the process of completing his thesis.

Overcoming problems in a religious-spiritual way in facing academic pressure accompanied by various demands of personal life, informants view closeness to God as a source of calm and strength to endure the process of completing their studies.

Informant S revealed that:

"...and also worship, so that the heart feels calmer." (Interview with 'S' on October 11, 2025).

Informant S's statement indicates that worship provides a source of calm amid academic pressures and personal challenges. This activity helps the informant maintain composure while completing his studies.

Based on the interview results, final-semester students employed various coping strategies to manage academic burnout during the thesis completion process. The strategies demonstrated by the informants included *problem-focused coping, emotion-focused coping, avoidant coping, and religion- or spirituality-based coping*. Each strategy was used according to the experiences and conditions faced by each informant. Informant A tended to cope with stress through direct problem-solving by setting priorities and managing time. Informant F and Informant S made greater efforts to manage emotional conditions by resting, calming down, and giving themselves time before resuming academic tasks. Meanwhile, avoidance strategies were seen in Informant A and Informant P through diverting attention to other activities or sleeping to temporarily relieve stress. In addition, Informant F and Informant S also utilized religious activities as a source of calm in dealing with academic stress. These findings indicate that students do not use a single form of coping strategy, but rather utilize various strategies according to the experiences and pressures they face during their studies.

3. The Role of Support in Dealing with Academic Burnout

The research results show that in addition to individual coping strategies, environmental support also plays a role in helping students cope with academic burnout during the thesis completion process. This support comes from various sources, such as parents, peers, partners, and significant others. Although the form and level of support received differed among informants, all participants demonstrated that the presence of environmental support influences students'

experiences in dealing with academic stress.

This was expressed by Informant F as follows:

"My friends are mostly just there to cheer me on and share stories with me. My parents are the most important, because I always tell them everything. So, I think my parents are my number one support system, they always tell me to enjoy the process and enjoy it." (Interview with 'F' on October 12, 2025).

Informant F's statement indicated that parents were a primary source of support during the thesis completion process. He felt more at ease when he could share stories and receive motivation from his parents. Furthermore, peers provided support through encouragement and opportunities to share experiences during periods of academic pressure.

Unlike Informant F, who relied more on family support, Informant S viewed personal abilities as playing a greater role in dealing with academic burnout. However, she acknowledged the support she received from her immediate environment during her studies.

This is reflected in the following statement from Informant S:

"When it comes to overcoming fatigue, I believe in myself more than anyone else. So, there may be some influence from others, but it's not significant because, again, I can only motivate myself to get back up." (Interview with 'S', October 11, 2025).

Informant S's statement indicates that intrinsic motivation is a key factor in dealing with academic burnout. The informant believes that the ability to self-motivate is more influential than support from others. Nevertheless, support from one's environment is still seen as a helpful form of attention during the thesis completion process.

Meanwhile, Informant P also acknowledged that support from his environment was beneficial during the thesis completion process. However, he viewed the support he received more as encouragement than a primary factor in reducing academic stress.

This is as expressed by Informant P as follows:

"In terms of how far I've come, I'd give it a maximum of 7 out of 10. They're there to cheer me on, just to keep me motivated." (Interview with 'P' on October 14, 2025).

Informant P's statement indicated that support from those around him motivated him to persist in completing his studies. While its influence didn't completely eliminate the academic pressure he felt, it helped him maintain his enthusiasm throughout the thesis writing process.

Based on the interview results, support from the environment is one factor that helps students cope with academic burnout during the thesis completion process. Forms of support received include motivation, opportunities to share stories, and emotional support from parents, peers, and

those closest to them. Although each informant viewed the role of support differently, the research findings indicate that such support positively influences students' ability to cope with academic pressure during their studies.

4. Psychological Impact of Academic Burnout

The research results show that academic burnout affects not only the thesis completion process but also students' psychological well-being and social lives. The impacts experienced by each informant varied, ranging from feelings of fatigue and anxiety to loss of motivation to reduced social interaction with their surroundings. These findings suggest that academic burnout affects various aspects of students' lives throughout their studies.

This finding is reflected in the following statement from Informant A:

"It's made me lose motivation, so I've lost enthusiasm for other things as well. Especially since I'm also working, sometimes I have to stop working for a while to think about my thesis. That's why I want this to end quickly so I can think about other things." (Interview with 'A' on October 15, 2025).

Informant A's statement indicates that academic burnout not only impacts the thesis completion process but also impacts other aspects of life. The informant experienced decreased motivation and a loss of enthusiasm for his work because his attention and thoughts were focused more on completing his thesis. This condition made it difficult for him to divide his focus between academic and work responsibilities.

The impact of academic burnout was also felt by Informant F. In contrast to Informant A who experienced a decrease in motivation, Informant F described more psychological pressure during the completion of his thesis.

Informant F revealed that:

"It really affects me because I think too much and feel overwhelmed. So when I feel exhausted, I usually do things that I enjoy, like eating sweets, watching anime—those are some of my favorite things to do when I'm exhausted." (Interview with 'F', October 12, 2025).

Informant F's statement indicates that academic burnout creates a psychological burden in the form of feelings of overthinking and being overwhelmed by the demands faced. This condition causes the informant to seek out comforting activities, such as watching anime or eating favorite foods, to reduce the pressure felt before resuming academic activities.

Meanwhile, Informant P shared a different experience. Despite experiencing the effects of academic burnout, he continued to strive to maintain his academic responsibilities.

Informant P stated that:

"Yes, sometimes, but I try to fight it. Basically, I deal with what's in front of me first, and I put aside any issues about myself." (Interview with 'P', October 14, 2025).

Informant P's statement indicates that academic burnout continues to impact his psychological well-being, but he strives to complete priority tasks first. He chooses to remain focused on completing his thesis despite still feeling pressure during the final assignment writing process.

Based on the interview results, academic burnout had a different impact on each informant. The most commonly felt impacts included decreased motivation, feelings of overwhelm, a tendency to overthink, and difficulty dividing attention between academic demands and other activities. Despite this, several informants continued to strive to fulfill their academic responsibilities while remaining focused on completing their thesis. These findings indicate that academic burnout not only affects students' psychological well-being but also impacts the activities and roles they undertake during the study process.

5. Recommended Coping Strategies for Dealing with Academic Burnout

The research results show that the informants offered a range of recommendations based on their experiences with academic burnout during the thesis completion process. These recommendations reflect methods they considered helpful in coping with academic stress. Although each informant had a different experience, all provided advice related to self-management, acceptance of the process, and the importance of support from their environment during the completion of their studies.

This finding is reflected in the following statement from Informant A:

"In terms of priorities, for example, if we are in the process of writing a thesis, we must have a self-discipline schedule, for example, in the morning, work for an hour or two and then take a half-hour break. Then, if possible, finish it as soon as possible, don't delay because if we delay, we will become lazier." (Interview with 'A' on October 15, 2025).

Informant A's statement indicates that time management and discipline are considered crucial in the thesis completion process. The informant emphasized the importance of prioritizing, dividing time between study and rest, and avoiding procrastination to prevent the academic burden from increasing.

In contrast to Informant A who emphasized time management, Informant F provided recommendations that focused on self-acceptance and managing psychological conditions while facing academic burnout.

Informant F revealed that:

"Do some self-reflection, like, it's okay, it's okay, everyone goes through this. Don't overthink it, heal yourself, give yourself space, don't look at other people's achievements. Because if you work when you're exhausted, you won't be at your best." (Interview with 'F' on October 12, 2025).

Informant F's statement indicated that accepting one's condition, allowing time to rest, and not comparing oneself to others' achievements were considered helpful when dealing with academic pressure. The informant viewed maintaining psychological well-being as a crucial part of resuming the thesis writing process.

Meanwhile, Informant S emphasized the importance of support from the environment as one way to deal with academic burnout.

Informant S stated that:

"You really need to make friends. We humans are social creatures, and we can't just rely on ourselves. Especially as final year students, we need to consult and communicate with others about what we're feeling, so we need to share." (Interview with 'S' on October 11, 2025).

Informant S's statement indicated that sharing stories and communicating with others were considered helpful when dealing with academic pressure. According to the informant, having friends to discuss and provide mutual support can help students complete their thesis.

In contrast to the previous informant, Informant P emphasized the importance of accepting the conditions being faced during the study completion process.

"Try to accept what you're going through, don't fight it, don't be like me, don't want to be like this, don't be like that. Just accept it, just go with the flow." (Interview with 'P' on October 14, 2025).

Informant P's statement indicated that accepting the ongoing process was considered a helpful way to deal with academic burnout. The informant suggested that students should not continually deny their current situation but instead try to gradually complete their thesis.

Based on the interview results, each informant provided different recommendations based on their experiences in dealing with academic burnout. These recommendations included the importance of disciplined time management, self-acceptance, avoiding comparisons with others, building communication with those around them, and gradually completing their thesis. These findings indicate that students have diverse perspectives on how to address academic burnout, but all recommendations are oriented toward maintaining the continuity of their studies.

DISCUSSION

This section discusses research findings regarding the psychological dynamics and coping strategies of Generation Z students in dealing with academic burnout during the completion of their thesis. The discussion is conducted by linking the research findings to relevant theories, previous research, and the psychological and social characteristics of Generation Z based on the latest literature. Furthermore, the discussion also explains how the Indonesian cultural context, religious values, and family support influence the experience of academic burnout and the choice of coping strategies in final-semester students.

1. *Factors of Academic Burnout in Final Semester Students*

The results of this study indicate that academic burnout in final-semester Generation Z students does not arise from a single factor, but rather is the result of an interaction between academic demands, psychological pressures, social conditions, and personal demands experienced during the thesis completion process. Students face various pressures such as graduation targets, the burden of writing a thesis, conflicts between completing the final assignment and other academic activities, the tendency to compare themselves with peers, and demands from the family environment and personal life. These findings indicate that the experience of academic burnout is complex and influenced by various interrelated aspects.

These findings align with the concept of academic burnout proposed by Kamila et al. (2023) who define burnout as a state of emotional, mental, and physical exhaustion resulting from continuous exposure to stress. In the context of final-semester students, prolonged academic pressure leads to decreased motivation, boredom, increased anxiety, and a decreased ability to maintain engagement in completing academic assignments. This condition is evident in the experiences of informants who indicated decreased enthusiasm, emotional exhaustion, and difficulty maintaining focus during the thesis writing process.

The findings of this study also demonstrate the distinctive characteristics of Generation Z students. Unlike previous generations, Generation Z grew up in an environment saturated with digital technology, rapid access to information, and high levels of social media interaction (Muafanah et al., 2026). These conditions encourage a tendency to engage in *social comparison*, namely comparing one's achievements with those of peers. In this study, this pressure was evident when several informants felt left behind by their friends who had completed their theses or graduated earlier. This social comparison amplifies psychological stress, thereby increasing the risk

of academic burnout. These findings support research (Lestari et al., 2021) which explains that the tendency to compare oneself is one of the psychological characteristics of Generation Z that contributes to increased academic stress and decreased mental well-being.

In addition to being influenced by individual characteristics, academic burnout in this study was also influenced by the social context faced by students. Several informants faced not only the demands of completing their thesis but also had to fulfill other roles as active students, workers, organizational administrators, and even children in families with specific expectations regarding their graduation. These conditions indicate that academic burnout develops through the accumulation of various demands occurring simultaneously. This finding aligns with research (Pendidikan et al., 2023) which states that final-semester students are a group that is highly vulnerable to burnout because they must simultaneously face various academic demands and the transition to the workforce.

In the Indonesian context, the experience of academic burnout is also inseparable from the social and cultural values that develop in society. Collectivistic cultures encourage students to fulfill family expectations and maintain an image of academic success in their social circles. (Ghifari et al., 2026) . The expectation of graduating quickly, finding a job, and meeting parental expectations are additional sources of pressure that exacerbate the experience of academic burnout. Thus, the pressure experienced by students stems not only from the academic demands of the institution but is also influenced by the social values inherent in family life and Indonesian society (Mayangsari et al., 2022) .

Based on these findings, this study shows that academic burnout in Generation Z students is a multidimensional phenomenon formed through the interaction between academic demands, the psychological characteristics of Generation Z, and the social and cultural context in which the students are located. This finding expands the results of previous studies that generally only view burnout as a consequence of academic burden, by showing that the experience of burnout in final semester students is also influenced by the process of social comparison, multi-role demands, and family expectations (Belajar, 2025) . Therefore, an understanding of academic burnout needs to consider psychological, social, and cultural factors in an integrated manner so that prevention and treatment efforts can be carried out more comprehensively (Nadia & Hidayati, 2025) .

5.2 Generation Z Students' Coping Strategies in Facing Academic Burnout

The results of the study indicate that Generation Z students do not use a single coping strategy to deal with academic burnout, but rather combine various strategies according to the source of pressure and the conditions they face. This study identified four forms of coping strategies used by final-semester students: problem-focused coping, emotion-focused coping, avoidant coping, and religious/spiritual coping. This variation indicates that coping is a dynamic process that changes according to how individuals interpret the situations they face.

These findings align with the coping theory proposed by Kamarullah (2022) , which explains that coping strategies are influenced by cognitive appraisal, the process by which individuals evaluate situations perceived as stressful. When students perceive that the source of stress is still manageable, they tend to use problem-focused coping by setting priorities, organizing their thesis work schedule, and completing assignments in stages. Conversely, when the stress is perceived as difficult to change quickly, students prefer emotion-focused coping by resting, calming down, or engaging in activities that help stabilize their emotional state before returning to completing academic assignments. (Sholekhah et al., 2026) .

These coping strategies reflect the psychological characteristics of Generation Z, who are known to be more open in recognizing their emotional states than previous generations (Ainun et al., 2022) . Generation Z has a relatively high awareness of the importance of maintaining mental health, making it easier to give themselves space to rest, engage in self-healing, or take a break when experiencing academic pressure. However, on the other hand, these characteristics also indicate that Generation Z students tend to be more sensitive to academic pressure and are more susceptible to emotional exhaustion if they lack adaptive coping strategies (Raharjo & Prahara, 2022) .

In addition to the two coping strategies described by Kamarullah (2022) , this study found that students also use avoidant coping as a temporary means of adjustment to academic pressure. Activities such as sleeping, playing games, pursuing hobbies, or diverting attention are not undertaken to permanently avoid academic responsibilities, but rather as an effort to achieve emotional recovery before facing the demands of completing a thesis. This suggests that avoidant coping, in the context of this study, functions more as a short-term psychological recovery mechanism than as a form of escape from academic problems (Lathifah et al., 2023) .

Another finding that is an important characteristic of this study is the emergence of religious/spiritual coping as one of the strategies used by students in dealing with academic burnout (Zahira et al., 2026) . Students use worship, prayer, and closeness to God as a source of calm, hope,

and psychological strength during the process of completing their thesis. This strategy shows that spirituality not only functions as a religious practice, but also as a source of resilience that helps students accept academic pressure more adaptively (Psychology et al., n.d.) . This finding shows that religious values still have a strong position in the coping process of students in Indonesia.

The Indonesian cultural context also influences the choice of coping strategies. As a collectivist and religious society, students rely not only on personal abilities to cope with academic pressure but also utilize religious values and social relationships as sources of psychological strength. (Vincenzo et al., 2024) . Therefore, coping in Indonesian students cannot be understood solely through an individual psychological approach, but also requires considering the influence of culture, family, and religious values that shape how individuals deal with stress.

The findings of this study reinforce the findings of research (Samuel & Novita, 2025) which showed that final-semester students use various forms of coping when facing academic pressure. However, this study provides a broader perspective by showing that the choice of coping strategies is not only influenced by the type of academic pressure, but also by the psychological dynamics of Generation Z students, such as the tendency to engage in social comparison, the pressure to complete studies on time, and the ability to self-regulate when facing pressure. Thus, this study provides a new contribution that coping strategies in Generation Z students are flexible, multidimensional, and influenced by the interaction of psychological, social, and cultural factors.

The implications of these findings suggest that developing mental health programs in higher education institutions should not focus solely on improving academic management skills. Universities also need to facilitate the strengthening of emotional regulation skills, the development of adaptive coping strategies, psychological counseling services, and the strengthening of spiritual values as part of efforts to prevent academic burnout in final-semester students.

2. The Role of Social Support in Helping Generation Z Students Deal with Academic Burnout

The research results show that social support is a crucial factor in helping Generation Z students cope with academic burnout during their thesis writing process. Although each informant had a different perception of the most influential source of support, all acknowledged that the presence of those closest to them contributed to their ability to withstand academic pressure. This support came from family, peers, partners, and supervisors who provided motivation, attention, and a space for students to share their experiences while facing various academic challenges.

These findings align with social support theory, which explains that emotional support,

informational support, instrumental support, and esteem support can improve an individual's ability to cope with stressful situations (Suyuhan et al., 2026) . The presence of those closest to them does not always eliminate the source of stress experienced by students, but it can increase a sense of security, reduce emotional burdens, and strengthen the belief that they are not facing these problems alone (Husna et al., 2025) . Thus, social support functions as a protective factor that helps students maintain psychological well-being when facing academic burnout.

Interestingly, this study shows that the form of support perceived as effective varies from student to student. Some informants identified family as their primary support system, providing acceptance, motivation, and emotional support during the thesis writing process. Conversely, others relied more on intrinsic motivation and viewed support from their environment as merely a complementary factor. These findings suggest that the effectiveness of social support is determined not only by the amount of support provided, but also by how individuals interpret and utilize that support to cope with academic stress (Karakter et al., 2022) .

These characteristics can be understood through the psychological perspective of Generation Z. As a generation that is more open to mental health issues and interpersonal communication, Generation Z students tend to have a need for emotional validation, a space to talk, and supportive relationships when facing pressure (Campbell et al., 2022) . Therefore, the presence of peers, family, and supervisors becomes a psychological resource that helps them reduce anxiety, gain new perspectives, and maintain motivation in completing their studies (Chaabane et al., 2021) .

In the context of Indonesian culture, these findings have broader significance. Indonesia is known as a collectivist society, where kinship, togetherness, and mutual assistance remain strong values (Of & Education, 2025) . These cultural values influence how students cope with academic burnout. Support from parents, family, and friends is seen not only as practical assistance but also as a form of emotional care that provides a sense of belonging and increases students' confidence in facing various academic challenges. (Amanda et al., 2025) . This shows that the coping process of Indonesian students is not only influenced by individual abilities, but also by the quality of their social relationships.

In addition to collectivist culture, religious values also strengthen the function of social support. For some informants, family support is expressed not only through motivation or mentoring, but also through advice, prayer, and spiritual strengthening (Marchella et al., 2023) . This condition indicates that in the context of Indonesian society, family support is often inseparable from

religious values, which are part of daily life. The integration of emotional support and spiritual values helps students build optimism, increase acceptance of their situations, and strengthen resilience in the face of academic burnout (Down et al., 2025) .

The findings of this study expand on previous research, which generally places social support as an external factor influencing students' mental health. This research demonstrates that social support not only serves as a supplement to coping strategies but also as an integral part of the coping process itself. Students utilize relationships with family, friends, and their social environment as a source of psychological strength to manage stress, maintain motivation, and build confidence that the thesis completion process can be successfully completed.

The implications of these findings suggest that efforts to prevent academic burnout cannot simply focus on developing individual skills. Universities also need to build a supportive academic environment by strengthening communication between supervisors and students, developing peer support groups, providing easily accessible counseling services, and involving families in providing moral support throughout the study process. This approach is expected to strengthen student resilience, thus better preparing them to face academic pressures in the final semester (Maharani, 2025) .

3. The Impact of Academic Burnout on the Psychological and Social Conditions of Generation Z Students

The research results show that academic burnout not only reduces learning motivation but also affects the psychological and social well-being of final-semester students. These impacts are evident through emotional exhaustion, a tendency to overthink, a loss of enthusiasm for daily activities, and difficulty balancing academic demands with personal life. Although the level of impact experienced by each informant varied, all participants indicated that academic burnout impacted psychological well-being during the thesis completion process.

These findings align with the concept of burnout proposed by Steare (2023) , who explains that burnout is a state of emotional, mental, and physical exhaustion resulting from prolonged exposure to stress. In the context of final-semester students, the pressure to complete their thesis, meet graduation targets, and face future uncertainty causes students to experience a decrease in psychological energy, impacting motivation, concentration, and the ability to carry out daily activities. This condition indicates that academic burnout is not only related to academic workload but also affects an individual's overall psychological functioning (Waterhouse et al., 2025) .

From a psychological perspective, these findings suggest that this generation is more susceptible to academic pressure due to their characteristics of growing up amidst the development of digital technology, the rapid flow of information, and the high intensity of interactions through social media. These conditions encourage a tendency to engage in social comparison, namely comparing one's achievements with those of others. As a result, students are more likely to feel left behind, anxious, and lose confidence when they see their peers successfully completing their studies ahead of them. These characteristics make academic pressure on Generation Z students stem not only from formal academic demands but also from psychological pressures formed through their social environment.

In addition to affecting psychological well-being, academic burnout also impacts students' social lives. Some students experience decreased enthusiasm for work, organization, and interaction with their surroundings because their psychological energy is focused more on completing academic demands (Aly et al., 2025) . This condition indicates that academic burnout can disrupt the balance of various roles students play, whether as students, family members, workers, or part of their social environment. The higher the perceived pressure, the greater the potential for disruption to students' social functioning in daily life (Angie et al., 2026) .

However, this study also shows that the impact of academic burnout does not always result in a permanent decline in academic functioning. Some informants were able to maintain productivity by utilizing various coping strategies, social support, and spiritual values as sources of psychological strength. These findings suggest that the impact of burnout is greatly influenced by an individual's ability to adapt to the pressures they face. Students with good self-regulation, adequate social support, and adaptive coping strategies tend to be better able to maintain psychological well-being despite facing high academic pressure.

The findings of this study extend previous research that generally places academic burnout as a consequence of high academic workloads. This study shows that academic burnout in Generation Z students is a multidimensional phenomenon influenced by the interaction between academic demands (Akhir, 2024) , the psychological characteristics of the generation, social pressures, and the cultural context in which the students live. Therefore, understanding academic burnout is not sufficient to view it solely from an academic perspective, but also requires considering the psychological, social, and cultural factors that influence the student experience (Chong & Foo, 2025) .

The implications of this research indicate that addressing academic burnout in higher education requires a more comprehensive approach. In addition to providing academic support through effective thesis guidance, universities also need to develop mental health promotion programs, emotional regulation training, psychological counseling services, and strengthening social support within the campus environment. This approach is expected to help Generation Z students cope with academic pressure more adaptively while improving their psychological well-being throughout their studies.

Overall, the research results indicate that academic burnout in Generation Z students is a complex phenomenon influenced by the interaction between academic demands, psychological conditions, the social environment, and the individual's cultural and religious values. Students not only experience pressure due to the process of completing their thesis, but also face various other demands such as graduation targets, comparisons with peers, and uncertainty about the future. In dealing with these conditions, students develop various dynamic coping strategies, ranging from *problem-focused coping*, *emotion-focused coping*, *avoidant coping*, to *religious/spiritual coping*. The effectiveness of these strategies is further strengthened by the support of family, peers, and a supportive social environment. These findings indicate that addressing academic burnout in final-semester students requires a comprehensive approach, not only focusing on academic aspects, but also paying attention to mental health, social support, and strengthening spiritual values as part of efforts to improve student well-being.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that academic burnout among final-semester Generation Z students is a complex phenomenon shaped by interrelated factors, including the demands of completing a thesis, graduation goals, peer comparisons, academic role conflict, and personal life pressures. These pressures lead to emotional exhaustion, decreased motivation, anxiety, overthinking, and difficulty in maintaining a balance between academic and personal life. Although each informant had a different experience, all indicate that academic burnout does not arise from a single factor but rather from the interaction among academic, psychological, and social factors.

In dealing with academic burnout, Generation Z students employ a variety of dynamic coping strategies tailored to their circumstances and their assessment of the source of stress. These strategies include *problem-focused coping*, *emotion-focused coping*, *avoidant coping*, and *religious/spiritual*

coping. This study also shows that the effectiveness of these coping strategies is influenced by the presence of social support from family, peers, partners, and supervisors. In the context of Indonesia's collectivist culture, social support and religious values serve as sources of psychological strength that help students build resilience, maintain motivation, and adapt to academic stress.

This study contributes by demonstrating that academic burnout in Generation Z students needs to be understood not only as a consequence of high academic demands but also as a multidimensional phenomenon influenced by the generation's psychological characteristics, social relationships, and cultural and spiritual values. Therefore, efforts to prevent and address academic burnout require a comprehensive approach, including strengthening mental health services, providing supportive academic mentoring, developing social support, and strengthening spiritual values, so that students are able to face the process of completing their studies more adaptively and sustainably.

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