



Challenges and Stress Coping Mechanisms Among Student Interns

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Abstract

Background and Aim: Stress is a critical factor influencing students' mental health, academic performance, and professional development, particularly among interns who must balance academic responsibilities with workplace demands. Despite the growing body of literature on student stress, limited studies have focused on provincial and faith-based institutions. This study aimed to identify the stress factors experienced by student interns, examine their coping mechanisms, and determine the relationship between these variables and selected socio-economic characteristics.

Materials and Methods: This study employed a quantitative descriptive-correlational research design involving 40 student interns ($n = 40$) from Christ the King College de Maranding during the first semester of the 2025–2026 academic year. Data were collected using a validated three-part questionnaire covering socio-economic profile, stress factors, and coping mechanisms. Descriptive statistics, including frequency, percentage, and weighted mean, were utilized, while Chi-square and Pearson correlation tests were applied to determine significant relationships among variables.

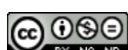
Results: Findings revealed that student interns experienced moderate to high levels of stress, particularly regarding parental pressure, academic workload, financial difficulties, and fear of failure. Commonly employed coping mechanisms included goal setting, accountability, acceptance of failure, and effective time management. Statistical analysis further indicated that socio-economic variables, stress factors, and coping mechanisms did not demonstrate significant relationships ($p > 0.05$).

Conclusion: Student interns experience considerable stress regardless of socio-economic background; however, they demonstrate adaptive coping strategies that support resilience and academic functioning. The findings highlight the importance of institutional support programs aimed at strengthening emotional resilience, stress management, and professional preparedness among interns. Moreover, the study contributes to the limited body of literature concerning student stress and coping within provincial and faith-based educational settings.

Keywords: Coping mechanisms, Stress challenges, Academic pressure, Time management, Healthy lifestyle, Parental pressure, Paperwork, Guided goals, Plan achievements

Introduction

Stress is a widespread psychological and physiological reaction that has a vast impact on the mental state, productivity, and well-being of people. Stress has been linked to several adverse effects among university students, including poor academic performance, emotional fluctuation, and low levels of life satisfaction. Recent research has shown that students are especially susceptible to mental health issues because of academic pressure, the changes to higher education, and more pressure to perform (Pascoe et al., 2020; Ochanda, 2024). The World Health Organization also stresses that stress-related disorders continue to be one of the major causes of mental health issues around the globe, particularly in young adults who are in academic and occupational transitions. Internship programs in higher education constitute a very important step where students get to be exposed to real-world professional situations without leaving out their academic duties. This ambidexterity tends to escalate the stress, since the students are expected to cope with workload issues, time pressure, and the role expectations. As empirical evidence indicates, student interns and pre-service professionals often face stress associated with clinical or workplace exposure, which requires the creation of effective coping strategies that would help maintain well-being and performance (Labrague, 2024; Hemmings and Hockley, 2021). In addition, the recent studies emphasize that coping strategies, including self-regulation, emotional intelligence, and adaptive behavior strategies, are significant to alleviate stress and increase the resiliency of students (Houghton et al., 2024; Gao et al., 2025). Although the literature is on the increase, the majority of the studies have been carried out in either urban or well-resourced academic institutions, and there is hence a huge gap in the literature regarding the stressors that student interns encounter in provincial institutions and faith-based institutions. Such contexts are noted to pose special problems, such as low access to institutional resources, financial shortages, and high socio-





cultural demands that may affect both degrees of stress and coping styles. In addition, there is an inadequate study on the interaction of socio-economic factors with stressors and coping processes in such underrepresented environments. To fill this gap, the current research explores the stressors and coping strategies of student interns in the Christ the King College de Maranding in the first semester of the School Year 20252026. In particular, it recognizes the major stressors, including academic workload, time management problems, financial problems, and interpersonal demands, and discusses the coping mechanisms used by interns. Also, the paper examines the connection between socio-economic factors, stressors, and coping styles. This study adds value to the literature on student stress and coping by offering an evidence-based study of the provincial and faith-based institutional context. The results should be used to implement specific institutional interventions contributing to resilience, emotional, and professional readiness in student interns, especially within underrepresented educational settings.

Objectives

This research paper tried to investigate the stressors and coping strategies of student interns at Christ the King College de Maranding in the first semester of the 2025-2026 school year. In particular, the research aimed to: 1.) Determine the socio-economic profile of the student interns, such as age, sex, family income, education level of the parents, exposure to the media, and overall academic performance using frequency and percentage analysis. 2.) Identify stressors encountered by interns, including academic load, time management problems, parental pressures, financial limitations, health issues, fear of failure, and group-related issues, which are to be identified by weighted mean analysis. 3.) Discuss the coping strategies, which are used by interns, such as setting goals, planning, managing time, leading a healthy lifestyle, accepting failures, and accountability in group work through weighted mean analysis. 4.) Establish the correlations between socio-economic variables, stressors, and coping styles through Chi-square and Pearson correlation. 5.) Present evidence-based suggestions to inform institutional interventions, facilitate resilience, and improve the professional readiness of the future educators. The present framework will allow for a comprehensive and quantitative evaluation of stress and coping in student interns and connect the results with evidence-based approaches toward academic and professional support.

Hypotheses

(H.0): The socio-economic profile of student interns (age, sex, family income, parents' educational attainment, media exposure, and overall academic performance) does not significantly relate to the stress factors that the students undergo during their internship.

(H.1): The relationship between stress factors that student interns face and the coping processes they use to handle such stressors does not significantly differ.

Literature review

Student stress has been an extensively studied multidimensional phenomenon that is affected by academic, psychological, and socio-economic issues. The current paper is based on the Transactional Theory of Stress and Coping by Lazarus and Folkman (1984), explaining stress as a result of the cognitive assessment of the demands of the environment and the perceived capacity of individuals to cope. This model insists that the result of stress is not predetermined by external factors, but by the way people perceive and react to these stressors. This point of view is supported by the recent literature that emphasizes the fact that adaptive coping strategies are a powerful mediator of the impact of stress on the academic outcomes and well-being of students (Pascoe et al., 2020; Houghton et al., 2024). Nonetheless, the majority of empirical research is based on urban or resource-endowed institutions, so there is little knowledge about how stress and coping processes work in provincial and faith-based colleges, where the contextual limitations can influence distinctive experiences. In this way, the review summarizes recent research on the stress factors and coping strategies, identifies the main gaps, and forms the conceptual basis for the study of their interconnection with socio-economic variables.





Stress Factors among Student Interns

Stresses that are academic-related have been identified as the biggest source of psychological strain and decreased academic performance among students through heavy paperwork loads and excessive academic demands. Cognitive overload occurs when academic tasks are not prioritized and when students have multiple assignments, which they neither delegate nor focus on, rather than being productive (Balduf, 2009). The conditions are consistent with the stress model of Selye, which suggests that physiological and psychological fatigue result from the persistent stimulation by demanding activities (Selye, 1976).

Academic Workload

Academic workload is considered to be one of the most important predictors of student stress. Research has continually demonstrated that overload of assignments, deadlines, and performance pressure are some of the factors that lead to cognitive overload, burnout, and low academic motivation (Pascoe et al., 2020; Yang et al., 2021). Moreover, Son et al. (2020) discovered that the academic load hurts anxiety and concentration. Although these results prove that workload is a significant stressor, the existing literature is more inclined to general student groups, and few studies address the issue of interns managing school and work issues, especially in the provincial context.

Poor Time Management

Problems with time management are closely linked with high levels of stress among students. Last-minute working and increased anxiety are the common results of ineffective scheduling, procrastination, and conflicting demands (Aeon & Aguinis, 2021; Rasheed et al., 2021). Recent results also show that a deficit in time management limits perceived control and is a contributing factor to emotional exhaustion (Misra & McKean, 2022). But a paucity of literature exists to explore the interaction between time management dilemmas and internship requirements, particularly in low institutional support settings.

Parental Pressure

Parental expectations have a great impact on the emotional state of students and the stress on their academic activities. The high expectations can cause anxiety, fear of failure, and lack of self-confidence (Wang et al., 2021; Leung & Shek, 2020). Also, Luthar et al. (2020) pointed out that the stress to accomplish can lead to perfectionism and chronic stress. Regardless of these results, few studies investigate the influence of cultural and socio-economic expectations in provincial Filipino settings on the stress experiences of the students.

Financial Difficulties

Lack of finances is always associated with stress, lack of concentration in school, and emotional burden on the students (Britt et al., 2021; Richardson et al., 2021). Low-income students are usually faced with other burdens like work and study, something that increases their level of stress even more (Lim et al., 2020). Still, it is not clear enough that there is any localized research on the interaction of financial stress and internship requirements in smaller institutions.

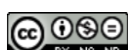
Health Problems

There are serious consequences of stress in terms of physical and mental health. Research indicates that chronic stress causes sleeping problems, exhaustion, low immunity, and emotional burnout (Ramón-Arbués et al., 2020; Liu et al., 2022). Although the connection between stress and health is well-founded, there is limited literature on how health-related stress is reflected in the case of student interns, specifically in limited-resource settings.

Group Relationships conflict

The interpersonal conflict in group work has been identified as a significant stressor. Inequality in the allocation of tasks, poor communication, and absence of collaboration are some of the factors that lead to frustration and low academic satisfaction (Fernandez-Castillo & Caurcel, 2020; Grøtan et al., 2021). Nevertheless, few studies have been done on the impact that group dynamics have on stress in internship-based learning, where teamwork is a mandatory requirement.

Fear of Failures





Anxiety, avoidance behavior, and decreased academic engagement are the psychological stressors related to fear of failure (Nepon et al., 2020; Zheng et al., 2022). More students tend to be more stressed and less motivated when they feel that failure is a threat. Although this is an important aspect, limited studies have explored the operation of the fear of failure in internship programs where high expectations of performance are involved.

Stress Coping Mechanisms

The stress mechanisms play a critical role in alleviating adverse experiences of stress. Lazarus and Folkman (1984) explain that coping strategies are either problem-oriented (help in dealing with stressors) or emotion-oriented (help in dealing with emotional responses). Recent literature emphasizes the fact that adaptive coping promotes resilience and academic achievement.

Time Management and Planning

It is a well-known fact that problem-oriented coping mechanisms lower stress levels through better organization and control; this is achieved by time management and planning (Aeon and Aguinis, 2021; Hafner et al., 2021). This is because, by planning, students can effectively cope with academic needs, and they will not be pressured at the last minute. Nevertheless, few studies examine the application of such strategies by interns who have two roles.

Goal Setting

Goal setting improves motivation, perseverance, and self-control. Studies indicate that students with a high achievement goal have reduced stress and increased academic activity (Moeller et al., 2020; Locke and Latham, 2020). However, the evidence on the specificity of goal-setting as a means of coping during internship situations is limited.

Positive Reframing (Turning Pressure into Motivation)

Positive cognitive reframing helps students to perceive stress as a challenge and not a threat, thus enhancing emotional control and performance (Jamieson et al., 2020; Yeager and Dweck, 2020). This approach is consistent with resilience-building strategies, yet its use among provincial student populations is an understudied issue.

Healthy Lifestyle

A healthy lifestyle, such as good sleep, nutrition, and physical activity, is an important factor in dealing with stress (Mikkelsen et al., 2021; Liu et al., 2022). Such actions help emotional stability and physiological recovery from stress. Nevertheless, certain external factors, like financial constraints, can influence the capacity of students to maintain these practices.

Social Support and Group Accountability

Peer collaboration as a form of social support can lessen the level of stress and improve coping ability (Boucher et al., 2021; Grøtan et al., 2021). Group responsibility encourages emotional support and responsibility. Nonetheless, studies have not exhaustively investigated the role of peer support in internships in smaller institutions.

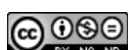
Acceptance of Failure

Acceptance-based coping mechanisms, such as self-compassion, assist students in coping with stress caused by failure and enhance emotional stability (Neff, 2023; Zheng et al., 2022). Although the adoption of failure has been endorsed, there is a lack of scholarship on the effects that acceptance of failure has on long-term coping among student interns.

Research Gap and Synthesis

The analyzed literature supports the fact that student stress is affected by various academic, psychological, and socio-economic factors, and coping mechanisms play an important role in reducing its impacts. Nonetheless, three large gaps are found: (1) Contextual Gap - A majority of the studies are concentrated on urban and well-endowed institutions, with a small amount of research done in provincial and faith-based colleges. (2) Population Gap- Student interns do not receive enough attention as they are undergoing both academic and professional stress. (3) Relational Gap: There are not many studies in which the interrelationship between socio-economic variables, stress factors, and coping mechanisms is studied.

Contribution to the Present Study



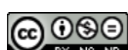


In order to fill these gaps, this study will focus on the stressors and coping strategies of student interns in Christ the King College de Maranding and assess the relationship between the stress factors and coping strategies and the socio-economic variables. In such a way, it offers context-specific evidence that helps to create a comprehensive conceptual framework and informs institutional intervention, which will work to enhance student resilience and professional readiness.

Conceptual Framework

The research is based on the Transactional Theory of Stress and Coping proposed by Lazarus and Folkman (1984), which presents stress as a dynamic process that is caused by the cognitive appraisal of stressors and coping reactions of individuals. The theory places emphasis on the fact that stress results are not merely based on external demands but also on the manner in which individuals understand and attend to such demands using adaptive or maladaptive coping mechanisms. Based on this framework, the current research paper hypothesizes that stressors (independent variables) among student interns are related to their coping skills (dependent variables). The stress factors are also seen as stressors that are experienced in the process of internship and academic involvement, such as academic workload (paper workload), ineffective time management, parental pressure, financial instability, health issues, conflict in group relationships, and fear of failure. The variables represent academic, psychosocial, financial, health-related, interpersonal, and performance-related aspects of stress. Student interns respond to these stressors by means of different coping mechanisms, which are adaptive strategies to deal with stress and stay well.

Among them are proper time management, academic task planning, goal formulation, positive reframing (replacing pressure with success), healthy lifestyle practices, group responsibility, and acceptance of failure. The given coping strategies are divided into problem-oriented and emotion-oriented ones, which should help to minimize stress and become more resilient. The framework presupposes the associational (non-causal) correlation between stress factors and coping mechanisms, which is in line with the descriptive-correlational design of the study. It also acknowledges that socio-demographic factors, including age, sex, year level, and internship experience, might have an impact on the strength or direction of such a relationship; hence, they are considered as control variables. Lastly, the framework indicates the practical implications of the study via the proposed Student Interns Stress Awareness and Management Program based on the determined relationships between stressors and coping strategies. Although it is not a measured variable, this program is an evidence-based intervention that will enhance resilience, emotional well-being, and professional preparedness among student interns. In general, such a conceptual framework gives a clear and systematic picture of the relationships between stressors and coping mechanisms in a given educational setting and directs the analysis and interpretation of the study.



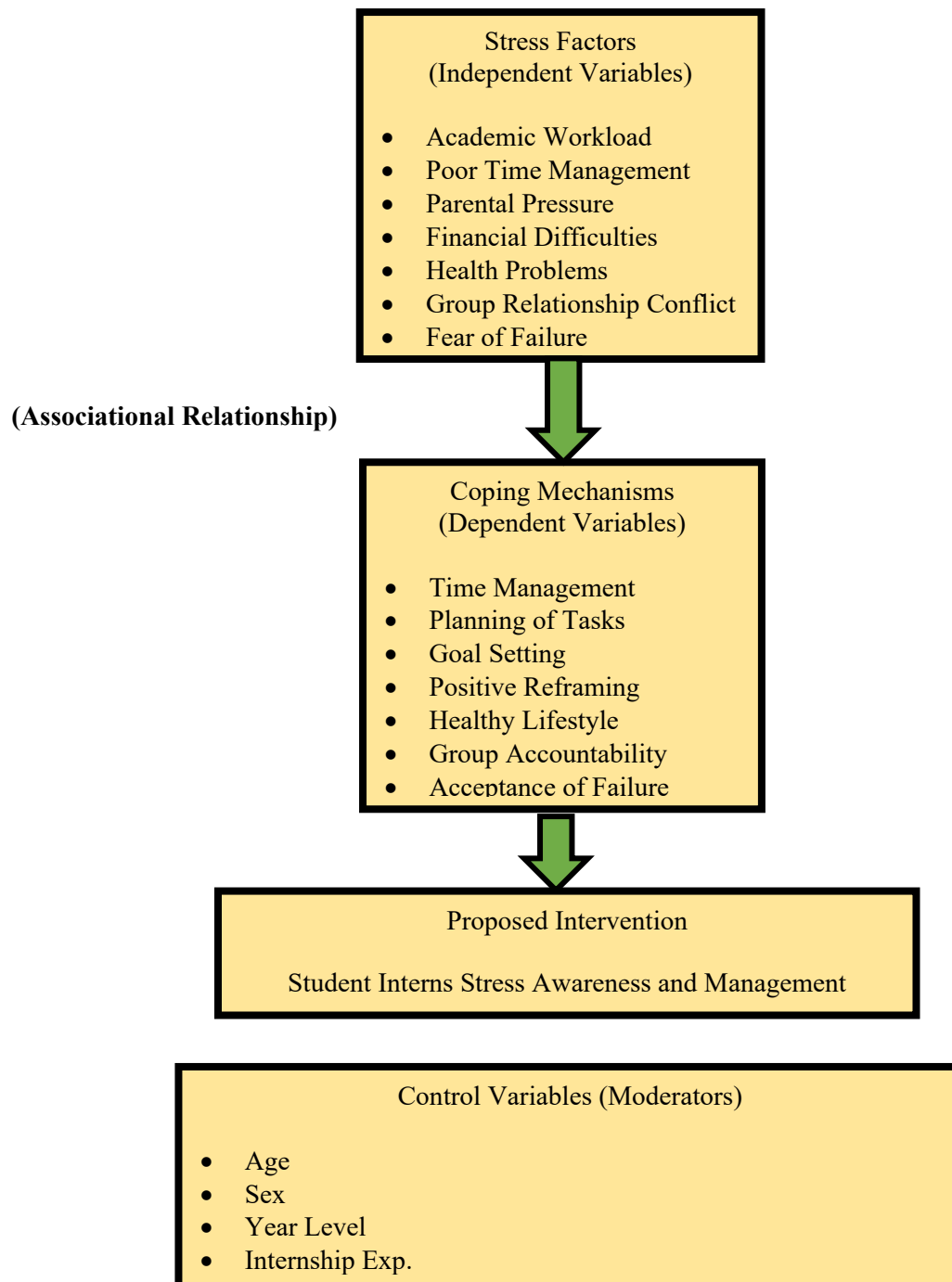


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Figure 1. The framework shows the dependence of stress factors (independent variables) such as academic workload, poor time management, parental pressure, financial problems, health problems, group relationship conflicts, and fear of failure on coping mechanisms (dependent variables), including time management, planning, goal setting, positive reframing, healthy lifestyle, group accountability, and acceptance of failure. Control variables that could affect these relationships are the socio-demographic factors (age, sex, year level, and internship experience). The model presupposes an associational relationship that is in agreement with a correlational design. The results are the foundation



of the proposed Student Interns Stress Awareness and Management Program, which is expected to promote resilience and professional preparedness.

Methodology

Research Design

The research design used in this study was a quantitative descriptive-correlational design of research that is applicable to the investigation of the magnitude and the direction of the relationships among variables in the study without manipulation and determining the cause and effect (Creswell, 2023). The selection of the design was to investigate the relationships between socio-economic traits, stressors, and coping mechanisms of student interns. The descriptive component outlined the level of stress in the areas of academic, psychosocial, financial, health, interpersonal, and performance aspects, as well as the coping strategies used, such as time management, planning, goal-setting, healthy lifestyle, accountability within the group context, and acceptance of failure. Descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, and weighted means) were used to respond. The correlational aspect tested the relationship between the socio-economic profile and stress factors and coping strategies in the form of a Pearson correlation test and Chi-square test, without suggesting causation, as it is in accordance with the Stress and Coping Theory of Lazarus and Folkman (1984). A total of 40 student interns ($n = 40$) were used to obtain the data by use of a proven three-part questionnaire. Participation was voluntary and confidential. The analysis described the main stressors and coping mechanisms and the interactions between them to give evidence that can be used to facilitate interventions to increase student resilience, emotional regulation, and professional readiness.

Population and Sample Size

The target population was a student internship group of Christ the King College in Maranding, Lala, Lanao del Norte, pursuing four programs: Education, Computer Science, Criminology, and Business Administration. The reason behind the selection of this population is that student interns are subjected to various academic, psychosocial, and professional demands that demand resiliency, adaptive coping, and reflective practices. The purposive sampling approach was used to represent all programs, and there were 10 student interns in each program, for a total of 40 participants ($n = 40$). The inclusion criteria were as follows: (a) being a student intern in one of the mentioned programs, (b) being engaged in academic or practical activities associated with internship activities, and (c) being willing to take part in the study voluntarily. Students who missed long leaves or who were not directly engaged in internship activities were not taken into consideration. Although it is rather small, it is adequate to conduct descriptive-correlational analysis and exploratory evaluation of the relations between socio-economic specifics, the factors of stress, and coping strategies.

Research Instrument

Data were gathered through a structured self-administered questionnaire that had three principal sections that were measured on a 4-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 4 = Strongly Agree). A forced-choice scale was used to ensure that there was less central tendency bias.

Part I: Socio-Economic Profile

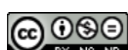
This part collected the demographic data and background details such as age, gender, program, year level, and experience as an intern. These were control or contextual variables that were analyzed.

Part II: Stress Factors

Operationalization of stress factors was done based on academic, psychosocial, financial, health-related, interpersonal, and performance-related demands, including: paper workload, poor time management, parental pressure, financial difficulties, health problems, conflicts in group relationships, and fear of failure. These were based on the existing stress inventories with consideration of their applicability to the internship of college students in the Philippines.

Part III: Coping Mechanisms

Measures were taken on coping strategies, and the adaptive responses were used as per the Stress and Coping Theory by Lazarus and Folkman (1984) in relation to proper time management, planning academic tasks, setting goals or objectives, transferring the pressure to achievement motivation,





practicing a healthy lifestyle, accountability in group work, and acceptance of failures. These were verified in terms of clarity, relevance, and theoretical consistency.

Pilot Testing and Reliability.

A pilot test was carried out on 5 student interns of a similar program, which was not part of the main study, to ensure clarity, appropriateness, and reliability of the questionnaire. Cronbach's alpha coefficients were used to measure internal consistency, and the results were very high, with high reliability of all subscales:

- Stress Factors: $\alpha = 0.85$
- Proper Time Management: $\alpha = 0.82$
- Planning Work: $\alpha = 0.83$
- Goal-Setting: $\alpha = 0.81$
- Diverting Pressure: $\alpha = 0.80$
- Healthy Lifestyle: $\alpha = 0.84$
- Accountability in Group Work: $\alpha = 0.83$
- Acceptance of Failures: $\alpha = 0.82$

These values show that the instrument was valid and appropriate in the measurement of the constructs in the central research.

Data Collection Procedure

The data were gathered in the period of March and April 2026. Questionnaires that were used were personally administered to the student interns by the researcher, who clarified the intended purpose of the research study and guaranteed confidentiality and anonymity. Respondents were free to participate, and no personal identifiers were asked for. Instructions were made clear to reduce errors and to achieve honest and correct answers. Questionnaires were filled out and sent back within a short period to ensure the integrity of the data.

Data Analysis

The responses have been summarized using descriptive statistics; frequencies, percentages, weighted mean, and standard deviation have been used to obtain a clear picture of stress factors and coping strategies among the respondents. Pearson correlation coefficients were applied to test the relationships between continuous variables, whereas Chi-square tests were applied to test the relationships between categorical variables. These analyses worked appropriately due to the exploratory and correlation characteristics of the research. The association analysis was based on the basis of an associative relationship and not causality, which was in line with the study design. The most common stressors, conventional coping mechanisms, and how these variables interrelate were determined, which provided an evidence-based basis for organizational programs that could be used to improve the resilience, emotional control, and professional preparedness of student interns. The study has some limitations: the use of a small sample, self-reported data, and a cross-sectional study design make it impossible to draw causal conclusions, but make it possible to draw valuable descriptive and correlational information.

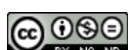
Results

Socio-Economic Profile

The socio-economic profile of 40 student interns indicates that there is equal representation based on departments, age, gender, family income, and the level of education of parents. An equal representation of Education, Computer Science, Criminology, and Business Administration will provide different academic perspectives. The age range of most interns is 21-23 years, with a minimal inclination towards females (57.5). Most of them belong to middle-income families, and most of the parents have received a high school education. This piece of writing gives a background for interpreting the differences in stress experiences and coping methods of student interns.

Objective: 1 Socio-Economic Profile of Student Interns.

The frequency and percentage distribution are used in presenting the socio-economic profile of the 40 student interns (Table 1). The respondents were also well balanced in the academic programs (25





percent Education, Computer Science, Criminology, and Business Administration), so that there was a representation of varied academic backgrounds. In terms of age, the majority of interns were within the 21–23 age group (45%), followed by 18–20 years (30%) and 24–26 years (25%). The number of female respondents was slightly higher than that of males (57.5% and 42.5%, respectively). In terms of family income, the majority of interns were middle-income (50%), 30% of the interns were of higher-income households, and 20% of the interns were of lower-income households. In the educational attainment of parents, 50% of the respondents had parents with college-level education, and 37.5 and 12.5 had parents with high school and elementary education, respectively. Altogether, it can be seen that the data suggest a rather equal demographic picture, which serves as an appropriate starting point to consider the differences in the stress levels and the coping strategies.

Table 1. Demographic Statistics of Respondents (n = 40)

Characteristic	Profile	Frequency	%
Department	Education	10	25.0
	Computer Science	10	25.0
	Criminology	10	25.0
	Business	10	25.0
	Administration		
Age	18–20	12	30.0
	21–23	18	45.0
	24–26	10	25.0
Sex	Male	17	42.5
	Female	23	57.5
Family Income	<10,000 PHP	8	20.0
	10,000–20,000 PHP	20	50.0
	>20,000 PHP	12	30.0
Parents' Educational Attainment	Elementary	5	12.5
	High School	15	37.5
	College	20	50.0

Interpretation and Scoring Procedure.

The scoring process makes the responses to stressors and coping styles more standardized. The weighted means were classified in such a way that they could be meaningfully qualified in terms of frequency and effectiveness: 4.20–5.00 = Always / Strongly Coped, 3.40–4.19 = Often / Coped, 2.60–3.39 = Sometimes / Partly Coped, 1.00–1.79 = Never / Strongly Not Coped.

Table 2. Scoring Procedure and Interpretation

Rating	Scoring Scale	Qualitative Description	Qualitative Interpretation
4	3.40–4.19	Usually / Coped	Moderate / Adaptive
3	2.60–3.39	Often / Partly Coped	Somewhat Adaptive
2	1.80–2.59	Sometimes / Partly Not Coped	Low Adaptation
1	1.00–1.79	Never / Strongly Not Coped	Not Adapted

Stress Factors

Objective 2: Stressors that Student Interns Face.

Weighted mean analysis was used to determine the level of stress among the student interns (Tables 3–9). Findings indicate that all of the identified stressors were moderately experienced in the group of interns, which means that stress is a unified state among interns. Parental pressure was the most





registered stressor (GWM = 3.94), which indicated that family expectations are a major contributor to stress among students. Academic workload (GWM = 3.63) and financial difficulties (GWM = 3.63) followed, meaning that academic stressors and financial issues are also significant sources of stress. The other stressors, like fear of failure (GWM = 3.53), health problems (GWM = 3.48), poor time management (GWM = 3.45), and group relationship conflicts (GWM = 3.44), were also rated as moderate, which are multifaceted in nature and are experienced by interns. These results indicate that academic, psychological, financial, and interpersonal stressors co-exist among student interns, which supports the necessity of integrating stress management interventions.

Table 3. Paper Workloads

Moderate stress is observed in paperwork (GWM = 3.63, “Usually) among interns, which is reported to be in prioritization, time management, and task completion. This underscores the importance of organized planning measures to minimize work stress.

Statements	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
I struggle with my paperwork on what to do first.	3.78	Usually
I had a problem doing my paperwork ahead of time.	3.55	Usually
I fail to utilize my time to do my paperwork effectively and sufficiently.	3.55	Usually
I sometimes forget to set aside unnecessary things to prioritize my paperwork.	3.63	Usually
General Weighted Mean	3.63	Usually

Table 4. Poor Time Management

Moderate stress is the result of a lack of time management (GWM = 3.45, “Usually), and the interns mentioned hardships of valuing and using their time wisely. This implies that there could be a time management and self-reflection skills intervention.

Statements	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
I do not value and utilize my time properly.	3.48	Usually
I do not manage my time wisely.	3.35	Usually
I do not spend a little time with myself.	3.50	Usually
I do not have time to figure out my problems before the day ends.	3.45	Usually
General Weighted Mean	3.45	Usually

Table 5. Parental Pressure

There is moderate parental pressure (GWM = 3.94, “Usually). The dimension of psychological pressure of family expectations is achieved, and parental approval can be achieved through the motivation of the intern.

Statements	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
I encourage myself to achieve more to impress my parents.	4.33	Always
I always want to make my work perfect to make my parents proud.	4.00	Usually





Statements	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
I always strive to be at the top to gain attention from my parents.	3.83	Usually
I like to compete to show my parents I am doing better than others.	3.58	Usually
General Weighted Mean	3.94	Usually

Table 6. Financial Difficulties

Interns are moderately impacted by financial issues (GWM = 3.63, “Usually”), and are concerned with allowances, tuition, and debt. Specific financial assistance interventions can be useful in reducing such stressors.

Statements	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
Lack of financial support and resources, which leads to loans or debt.	3.60	Usually
Delay of allowance causes late bill payments.	3.63	Usually
Worrying a lot about money problems.	3.85	Usually
Unable to pay regular tuition fees.	3.43	Usually
General Weighted Mean	3.63	Usually

Table 7. Health Problems

Poor sleep, improper dieting, muscle tension, and emotional variability are some of the health issues that can cause moderate stress (GWM = 3.48, “Usually”), which in turn implies that health and wellness programs are necessary.

Statements	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
Experiencing cramping, increased heartbeat, nervousness, sweating, and back pain.	3.48	Usually
Losing weight due to improper eating habits.	3.45	Usually
Lack of enough sleep and rest.	3.53	Usually
Changes in behavior, such as easily getting angry and becoming self-conscious.	3.45	Usually
General Weighted Mean	3.48	Usually

Table 8. Fear of Failures

The fear of failure has a moderate influence on interns (GWM = 3.53, “Usually”), as they are concerned with self-esteem and possible performance barriers, which do not completely disarm academic progress.

Statements	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
I’m scared of having failures because it bothers me a lot.	3.93	Usually
Sometimes my failures cause me to stop and do nothing.	3.48	Usually





Statements	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
I do not like to admit failures because it roots my low self-esteem.	3.28	Unusually
I do not like failures because I aim for perfection.	3.43	Usually
General Weighted Mean	3.53	Usually

Table 9. Group Relationships Conflict.

The moderate stressor is interpersonal conflict (GWM = 3.44, “Usually), which occurs as a result of an unbalanced workload and criticism during group activities. This brings out the significance of teamwork and conflict resolution training.

Statements	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
I experienced a threat while working with a group when expectations were high.	3.35	Usually
I felt bad when only I worked on paperwork.	3.53	Usually
I felt uncomfortable giving ideas due to criticisms.	3.38	Usually
I worried that others' delayed tasks would affect group work.	3.48	Usually
General Weighted Mean	3.44	Usually

Stress Coping Mechanisms

Objective 3: Strategies of Coping with Student Interns.

Weighted mean was also used to analyze the coping mechanisms (Tables 10-16). The findings suggest that the overall adaptive coping strategies are observed in student interns. Accountability in group work (GWM = 4.23, Strongly Coped) was the most applied coping strategy and indicated a high level of responsibility and collaboration among interns. It was then succeeded by the acceptance of failure (GWM = 4.01) and goal setting (GWM = 3.99), which indicated that students embrace positive psychological and motivational strategies. The other widely used coping strategies are positive reframing or channeling pressure towards achievement (GWM = 3.82), time management (GWM = 3.70), and planning (GWM = 3.58). On the other hand, the least used practices included healthy lifestyle practices (GWM = 3.41), which means that it is the area to be improved. On the whole, the results indicate that interns successfully employ cognitive and behavioral coping mechanisms, although there are loopholes in adopting regular health-related behaviors.

Table 10. Proper Time Management

The manner in which interns deal with stress is usually successful due to appropriate time management (GWM = 3.70, “Coped”), employing organization, evaluation, and work planning to mitigate the extent of stress.

Statements	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
I organize my work to track daily achievements.	3.68	Coped
I evaluate my work for quality.	3.78	Coped
I assess myself through a work plan.	3.60	Coped
I double the time my works to lessen time consumption.	3.75	Coped
General Weighted Mean	3.70	Coped





Table 11. Make a Plan for Works

Planning is a moderate level of coping mechanism (GWM = 3.58, Coped), yet the list preparation was not as regularly used (3.18, “Partly Coped”), which may indicate that some interns require the help of structured planning.

Statements	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
I prepare myself to avoid future hazards.	3.78	Coped
I make lists of daily work to reduce conflict.	3.18	Partly Coped
I initiate my plan immediately.	3.48	Coped
I continue my plan until success.	3.88	Coped
General Weighted Mean	3.58	Coped

Table 12. Set Objectives or Goals

Interns demonstrate excellent coping through goal-setting (GWM = 3.99, Coped), with a focus on clear and purposeful goals as the path to productive actions in their academic and personal lives.

Statements	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
I set my own goals as guides for my work.	4.05	Coped
I take actions toward my goals.	4.15	Coped
I ensure goals are clear and purposeful.	3.80	Coped
I live by my goals to perform comfortably.	3.95	Coped
General Weighted Mean	3.99	Coped

Table 13. Divert Pressure into the Interest of Achievement.

Moderately, interns are managing to cope by directing pressure into productive objectives (GWM = 3.82, Coped), and they are resilient in transforming stress.

Statements	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
I seek opportunities beyond pressure.	3.78	Coped
Pressure does not stop me from performing well.	3.88	Coped
I change my perception toward desired goals.	3.70	Coped
I pursue achievements through fun and worthwhile experiences.	3.90	Coped
General Weighted Mean	3.82	Coped

Table 14. Healthy Lifestyle

A part of the maintenance of a healthy lifestyle is used as a coping measure (GWM = 3.41, “Coped”), implying that interns have certain deficiencies in routine health activities.

Statements	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
I eat properly and on time.	3.35	Coped
I maintain proper hygiene.	3.90	Coped
I sometimes visit a doctor for check-ups.	2.65	Partly Coped
I choose a healthy lifestyle.	3.73	Coped
General Weighted Mean	3.41	Coped





Table 15. Acceptance of Failure

Interns possess high coping in terms of accepting failures (GWM = 4.01, Coped) as an opportunity to understand and develop skills.

Statements	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
I accept failures to notice progress.	3.70	Coped
I accept weaknesses and develop strengths.	4.05	Coped
I strive harder to learn lifelong skills.	4.13	Coped
I use failures to advance personal development.	4.15	Coped
General Weighted Mean	4.01	Coped

Table 16. Accountability in Groups

There is high coping among the interns in group responsibility (GWM = 4.23, Strongly Coped), which focused on responsibility and hard work in group work.

Statements	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
I make myself responsible enough.	4.05	Coped
I do my work with effort and worth.	4.85	Strongly Coped
I am concerned about my actions and decisions.	4.00	Coped
I am passionate about doing my work and tasks.	4.03	Coped
General Weighted Mean	4.23	Strongly Coped

Table 17. Correlation between Socio-Economic Profile and Stress Factors.

Objective 4: Correlation between Socio-Economic Variables, Stressors, and Coping Mechanisms. Chi-square and Pearson correlation tests were used to analyze the relationships between the variables (Tables 17-19). The findings showed that there is no significant correlation between socio-economic variables and stress factors ($p > 0.05$). In the same manner, there was no significant correlation between coping mechanisms and the socio-economic profile ($p > 0.05$). These results show that the experiences of stress and coping mechanisms are normally similar in various demographic groups. Moreover, there was a weak positive relationship between stress factors and coping mechanisms ($r = 0.205$), which was not significant ($p = 0.659$). This implies that an increased level of stress does not always lead to an enhanced level of coping mechanisms. These findings suggest that stress and coping are person-specific processes, and they are not strongly predetermined by socio-economic factors.

Table 17 shows that there is no significant correlation between socio-economic factors and stress factors ($p > 0.05$). This indicates that stress experience is not much dependent on the age, sex, family income, and education of the parents of the interns.

Variables	Chi-square	d.f	$p < 0.05$	Interpretation
Sex	3.45	4	0.50	Not Significant
Family Income	12.24	11	0.44	Not Significant
Parents' Educational Attainment	21.20	15	0.33	Not Significant
Exposure to Media	5.85	7	0.59	Not Significant





Variables	Chi-square	d.f	p < 0.05	Interpretation
General Average	9.32	8	0.46	Not Significant

Table 18. Correlation of Socio-Economic Profile and Stress Coping Mechanisms.

There is no significant association between socio-economic profile and coping mechanisms ($p > 0.05$), indicating that groups of people will use comparable coping strategies.

Variables	Chi-square	d.f	p < 0.05	Interpretation
Age	3.07	3	0.50	Not Significant
Sex	2.75	3	0.55	Not Significant
Family Income	11.11	10	0.45	Not Significant
Parents' Educational Attainment	11.74	13	0.58	Not Significant
Exposure to Media	5.47	7	0.58	Not Significant
General Average	6.83	7	0.53	Not Significant

Table 19. Correlation between Stress Factors and Coping Mechanisms.

Table 19 indicates that there is a weak positive correlation between stress factors and coping mechanisms ($r = 0.205$, $p = 0.659$), but it is not significant. This implies that the more stressful an individual is, the more he/she may not necessarily have better coping mechanisms; therefore, showing the fluctuations in stress adaptation between interns.

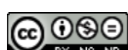
Stress Factors and Stress Coping Mechanisms	r	p < 0.05	Interpretation
	0.205	0.659	Slight Positive Relationship; Not Significant

Objective 5: Institutional Intervention Implications.

According to the results, a number of important implications can be drawn. To begin with, the fact that moderate stress is present in all areas indicates the necessity of institutional support systems. Second, though adaptive coping strategies are manifested by students, they need to be improved in particular spheres, including health management and structured planning. The lack of any meaningful correlations between socio-economic factors and stress or coping implies that interventions must be non-selective and applicable to all students, and not be selective based on demographic factors alone. The findings are useful in the creation of the Student Interns Stress Awareness and Management Program, which may entail: 1. *Planning and time management workshops*, 2. *Mental health and wellness interventions*, 3. *Financial literacy support*, 4. *Teamwork training and peer support*. These programs will be able to make student interns resilient, emotionally controlled, and professionally prepared.

Summary of Key Findings

The paper revealed that student interns report moderate rates of stress in various areas, with the most significant stressors being parental pressure and academic workload. Despite this, interns have generally adaptive coping styles, especially in group accountability, goal setting, and failure acceptance. They did not find any significant associations between socio-economic variables, stressors, and coping mechanisms, which suggests that stress and coping patterns are fairly consistent across demographic groups. Also, the correlation between stress and coping was positive; however, not significant, which indicates that people adapt differently. Altogether, the results indicate the necessity of institution-wide interventions to improve student resilience and professional development.





Discussion

This paper has discussed the interaction between stress variables and coping styles among student interns in Christ the King College de Maranding based on the Stress and Coping Theory by Lazarus and Folkman (1984). The results indicate the understanding of how interns perceive stress, how they use coping mechanisms, and how the processes influence socio-demographic characteristics.

Stress factors and coping mechanisms of Student Interns.

The findings show that student interns are moderately stressed in academic, psychosocial, financial, health, and interpersonal domains. The most significant stressors were found to be parental pressure and academic workload, which indicated the joint effect of psychosocial expectations and academic demands. This is in line with other studies providing evidence that family expectations and task overload are two crucial factors in influencing the level of stress among students (Shah et al., 2021; Wang & Zhao, 2022). Despite these stressors, the interns had shown effective coping styles, especially goal-setting, time management, group accountability, and failure acceptance, which are adaptive behaviors that are aligned with problem-focused coping in the framework of Lazarus and Folkman. The need to sustain a healthy lifestyle and systematic planning was noted as an area of improvement, and these could be the basis of their intervention. The self-reported coping effectiveness, on the other hand, is prone to social desirability bias, which has been mentioned as a limitation of stress research (Taylor et al., 2020).

Relationship Between Stress Factors and Coping Mechanisms

The correlation outcome found that there was a weak, non-significant positive correlation between stress factors and coping mechanisms ($r = 0.205$, $p = 0.659$). This implies that increased stress does not always result in improved coping, and supports the notion that coping is a factor of individual appraisal, emotion management, and past experiences as opposed to the level of stress. The same trends have been noted in the research on coping with stress in the context of undergraduate and it is important to note that individual variability of adaptation is a key point (Nguyen & Lee, 2021; Brown et al., 2023). This highlights the multidimensional nature of the stress-coping process, in which a variety of internal and external factors have an impact.

Socio-Economic Profile and Stress/Coping

The socio-economic factors (age, sex, family income, parental education, media exposure) did not show any significant associations with stress or coping mechanisms ($p > 0.05$). This shows that stress and coping mechanisms are not much dependent on demographics, probably because all interns have the same academic and internship requirements. These results align with those studies that indicate that situational and academic stressors tend to dominate the effect of demographic disparities on stress and coping in students (Ali & Shah, 2021; Kim et al., 2022). Small sample size is one of the limitations that may have lowered the sensitivity of the study to identify subtle associations, and thus, larger multivariate studies are required.

Student Intern Stress Management Program Implications.

The research offers a basis for creating a Student Intern Stress Awareness and Management Program, which aims at addressing the spheres of moderate stress and non-optimal coping. Suggested interventions include:

1. Time management and planning sessions to improve prioritization and accomplish tasks. Interventions involving instruction on proper prioritization and scheduling of tasks have been found to reduce perceived stress and enhance academic performance (Sirois et al., 2021).
2. Emotional regulation and stress training to cope with the pressure of parents, fear of failure, and interpersonal conflicts. Cognitive reappraisal and mindfulness are techniques that can be used to reduce anxiety caused by performance pressure and fear of failure (Jamieson et al., 2020; Creswell, 2021).
3. Health programs on healthy sleep, eating, and self-care. Promoting sleep hygiene, nutrition, and exercise is connected with the promotion of emotional stability and stress resilience (Mikkelsen et al., 2021; Lund et al., 2022).





4. Planning and goal setting to achieve, and proactive planning to enhance adaptive coping. Goal-setting programs involve instructional methods that promote persistence and academic activity, especially when under stress (Locke & Latham, 2020; Schippers & Ziegler, 2019).

5. Team building and communication interventions to alleviate group stress. This may help lessen interpersonal conflict and enhance peer support, which are critical predictors of adaptive coping (Fernandez-Castillo & Caurcel, 2020; Grøtan et al., 2021).

Knowledge Contribution

The proposed research has made various valuable contributions to the existing literature on the subject of student stress and coping by describing the correlation between stressors and coping mechanisms in student interns empirically, theoretically, contextually, and in practice. First, the research provides empirical data from a local and underrepresented setting of student interns at Christ the King College in Maranding, Lanao del Norte, that shows that interns tend to exhibit moderate levels of stress in academic, psychosocial, financial, and interpersonal spheres in general and tend to use adaptive coping mechanisms. Although Stress and coping are well studied in general educational contexts, this study fills the gap in both local and global research on pre-professional student experiences by specifically investigating the interaction of stress and coping in the internship setting.

Second, the findings can add to theoretical knowledge as they support major assumptions of the Stress and Coping Theory by Lazarus and Folkman. The findings confirm that it is not only the external demands that cause stress but also the highly cognitive appraisal and coping mechanisms of the individuals. The theoretical hypothesis that adaptive coping strategies may balance emotional reactions and maintain functioning with stress is supported by the fact that even with moderate levels of stress, a relatively effective set of coping strategies can be present. This result, along with the fact that the correlation between stress factors and coping mechanisms was weak and not significant, further points to the complexity of the stress-coping process, which indicates that coping depends on multifactorial variables of the person and the context instead of direct linear associations.

Third, the research makes contributions to the conceptual knowledge as it shows that age, sex, family income, and parents' educational level do not have any significant impact on stress level or coping style. This result questions some widely held beliefs that demographic background is a key predictor of stress experiences among students. Rather, the findings indicate that academic requirements and circumstances inherent within the internship programs could be more consistent and dominant stressors for variable student groups. This revelation clarifies the current views by making stress a more relatable experience among interns, thus shifting the intervention's importance to institutional and academic structures.

Fourth, the study offers contextual information as it places the stress and coping experiences of student interns in a particular Philippine education context. The study empowers the literature by providing evidence that is informed by cultures and emphasizing local realities through financial constraints, parental expectations, and academic workloads. Such a localized view highlights the significance of analyzing stress and coping in particular socio-cultural and institutional contexts, which would help to form a more subtle and cross-culturally applicable image regarding student well-being.

Finally, the research will benefit practice because one of the proposed evidence-based Stress Awareness and Management Programs is the Student Interns Stress Awareness and Management Program. In contrast to generalized stress management models, the proposed intervention is based on the real stressors and coping behaviors determined during the study. It focuses on specific interventions, including time management skills, wellness programs, and emotional control and teamwork skills. The research provides a solution to the gap between theory and practice by connecting the results of the research with practice, as a learning institution may use the evidence-based model to facilitate student resilience, emotional well-being, and professional preparedness.

All these contributions extend the knowledge of stress and coping in student interns through the synthesis of empirical evidence, theoretical substantiation, applicability, and relevance in context and innovation. The paper promotes the theory frameworks that were already present in the literature but





also develops them with the localized knowledge and practical consequences, which significantly adds to the overall discussion of student development and well-being.

Conclusion

The study concludes that Christ the King College de Maranding student interns are moderate in their sources of stress, which include academic workload, time management, parental pressure, financial issues, health problems, group conflicts, and fear of failure. Nevertheless, the interns have overall positive coping skills, especially in goal-setting, time management, accountability in group work, and acceptance of failures, which show that the interns can adjust to the challenges brought by academics and internship without losing well-being and performance. The outcomes revealed that stress factors had a weak, non-significant positive relationship with coping strategies, implying that coping mechanisms exist, though they are not directly related to stress levels. On the same note, socio-economic variables (age, sex, family income, parental education) did not show any significant associations with stress or coping, which suggests that differences in the levels of stress and coping between the groups of interns are not significant. These results emphasize the value of systematic and evidence-based programs, including the proposed Student Interns Stress Awareness and Management Program, in improving time management, healthy lifestyle practices, stress management, and teamwork skills. In general, the paper mentions that systematic support should be enhanced to empower adaptive coping and resilience to equip interns with future academic and professional challenges.

Recommendation

Based on the findings and conclusions presented in the current study and taking into consideration its localized focus and descriptive-correlational character, the following evidence-based and stakeholder-specific recommendations may be offered:

1. For Student Interns: Adaptive coping strategies in managing stress are also advocated among student interns to involve optimal time management, setting of objectives, planning of tasks, and accountability in the group activity, since they were reported to be widely used and positive in stress management. Considering that some of the areas were quite low, such as healthy lifestyle and planning, interns are to emphasize self-care practices, including how they get enough sleep, what they eat, and what practices build up stress, among others. It is also suggested to use reflective practices like self-assessment and journaling to make the interns more aware of what stresses them and improve coping responses.

2. For School Administrators: It is recommended that the administrators of the school put in place the institution-based support program, which will include consideration of stressor issues commonly encountered by the student interns, especially academic workload, time management problems, and interpersonal problems. Formal interventions like stress management programs, time management programs, peer support groups, and mentoring programs can be implemented. The Student Interns Stress Awareness and Management Program proposed could be implemented as a pilot project, with the objectives, monitoring, and evaluation indicators being outlined. The administrators are also expected to make sure that the academic requirements are not overwhelming and that they have support mechanisms, which can be accessed by every intern.

3. In the case of the Department of Education (DepEd), the results of this research can be used as an initial basis to develop student support programs in internship and pre-service education programs. The Department of Education might also want to involve itself in localized and situation-specific stress management interventions that foster the emotional state and resilience of students. Pilot testing and multi-site validation of programs of this nature should be suggested before large-scale implementation can be done, to ascertain the feasibility, relevance to the culture, and effectiveness of the programs in the various educational environments.

4. In Higher Education Institutions (HEIs): It is recommended that higher education institutions should strengthen their internship programs and student development programs with specific modules on stress management, emotional regulation, and adaptive coping skills. These can be time management workshops, wellness programs, and experiential learning, including simulations and reflections.



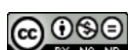


Integrating these elements into the curriculum can equip students with a greater understanding of academic and professional challenges, in line with the results of this study that coping mechanisms are important in dealing with stress.

5. For Future Researchers: It is suggested that future research should increase the extent of this study with larger and more varied samples of various institutions, disciplines, and geographic areas. Mixed methods are advised to acquire more information on how stress and coping are experienced by students in their lives. Moreover, longitudinal and experimental research designs could be used to conduct tests of causation and the processes of evaluation of the effectiveness of the recommended intervention programs, like the Stress Awareness and Management Program by the Student Interns. Such strategies will contribute to enhancing the generalizability and applicability of results in the area of student development and well-being.

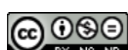
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