

Navigating the Challenges and Mental Coping Strategies of Fourth-Year Nursing Students of Perpetual Help College of Manila

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Abstract

Nursing education is a transformative journey that shapes students into competent and compassionate healthcare professionals. However, this path is often accompanied by multiple challenges academic pressure, clinical responsibilities, time management struggles, and emotional stress. These experiences demand not only intellectual capacity but also strong mental coping strategies to maintain balance and well-being. Fourth-year nursing students, in particular, face increasing academic expectations and practical workloads as they prepare to transition into professional practice. Effective coping mechanisms such as time management, reflection, and self-care become essential tools in navigating these challenges. Despite growing awareness of mental health in nursing education, limited research focuses on the coping strategies employed by nursing students within the Philippine context, especially at Perpetual Help College of Manila. This study seeks to fill that gap by examining the challenges faced by fourth-year nursing students and identifying the coping mechanisms they utilize to maintain psychological resilience and academic performance.

Keywords: *Mental Health Challenges, Coping Strategies, Resilience, Academic Performance, Nursing Students*

1. Introduction

Nursing students embark on a meaningful and transformative academic journey that cultivates their knowledge, skills, and compassion. As they progress into their final year, they begin to take on more complex roles in clinical practice, integrating theoretical concepts with hands-on patient care. This critical stage allows them to apply their learning in real-life healthcare settings, building confidence and competence in preparation for professional nursing roles. It also encourages the development of time management, emotional intelligence, and problem-solving abilities. As these future nurses balance academic learning with clinical responsibilities, they encounter enriching challenges that contribute to both personal and professional growth. These include preparing for examinations, completing assignments, managing clinical schedules, and making ethical decisions in patient care. Such experiences promote self-discipline, resilience, and a deeper understanding of holistic care.

Globally, educational institutions and healthcare systems recognize the importance of supporting the mental well-being of students. Nursing, being both intellectually rigorous and emotionally fulfilling, places students in dynamic environments where they are encouraged to build strong coping strategies. Ethical dilemmas, emotional patient interactions, and clinical decision-making sharpen students' moral awareness and maturity, helping them become more empathetic and reflective practitioners. Fourth-year nursing students, in particular, are at a pivotal point in their journey. Their exposure to diverse clinical settings, patient conditions, and team collaborations equips them with valuable insights and professional behaviors. While this phase may present elevated expectations and responsibilities, it also provides a unique platform to enhance self-care strategies, develop time-efficient habits, and strengthen interpersonal relationships.

This research focuses on the ways fourth-year nursing students at Perpetual Help College of Manila manage academic and emotional challenges. It aims to highlight the mental coping strategies they apply, with the goal of offering insights and recommendations that can further support their growth and well-being. The insights gained will contribute to fostering a nurturing learning environment where nursing students are empowered to thrive academically, clinically, and emotionally as they prepare to become future healthcare professionals.

Statement of the Problem

This study aims to determine the challenges and mental coping strategies of Fourth-Year Nursing Students of Perpetual Help College of Manila. Specifically, it will answer the following questions:

Research Grand Question:

1. Which of the following challenges of 4th year nursing student are experiencing faced the following factors:
 - 1.1 Academic Pressure
 - 1.2 Clinical Duty Responsibility
 - 1.3 Time management
 - 1.4 Coping with Stress
2. What of the following mental coping strategies is being done during the academic pressure of a 4th-year nursing student in terms of:
 - 2.1 Prioritization and Goal Setting
 - 2.2 Avoiding Procrastination
 - 2.3 Establishing a Consistent Sleep Schedule
 - 3.4 Reflection and self-care in clinical duty responsibility
3. Is there a significant relationship between the challenges faced by fourth-year nursing students at Perpetual Help College of Manila and their mental coping strategies?

2. Methodology

2.1 Study Design

A quantitative type of research design was used in this study. In addition, a correlational research method was utilized to examine the relationships between variables within the population being studied with the use of Non-Probability Sampling. A survey questionnaire was the primary method of data collection in this study.

2.2 Participants and Settings

The research was conducted at Perpetual Help College of Manila, specifically within the College of Nursing Fourth-Year Students who was enrolled during the first and second semester of Academic Year 2024-2025. The sampling technique were Purposive Sampling Method in collecting and gathering the students' participants.

2.3 Data Collection

Data were collected through a survey questionnaire to collect data on navigating the challenges and mental strategies of the fourth-year student at Perpetual Help College of Manila formal letters requesting permission to conduct the study were first approved by the Dean's office of the College of Nursing and school administration.

The interview instrument consisted of sections:

- Demographic Profile (name, age, gender)
- Challenges (Academic Pressure, Clinical Duty Responsibility, Time Management)

- Coping Strategies (Prioritization and Goal Setting, coping with Stress, Avoid Procrastination, Reflection and Self Care in Clinical Duty Responsibility)

Questions were patterned after validated tools by an expert. All responses were securely stored. Ethical procedures such as informed consent, voluntary participation, and confidentiality were strictly observed.

2.4 Data Analysis

The data collected through the structured survey questionnaires were analyzed using quantitative statistical methods. After data collection, responses were checked for completeness, encoded, and organized using Microsoft Excel and the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics, including frequency counts, percentages, weighted mean, and standard deviation, were used to describe the respondents' perceptions of challenges encountered in terms of academic pressure, clinical duty responsibility, time management, and coping with stress. These statistical measures were also applied to determine the extent to which students utilized mental coping strategies such as prioritization and goal setting, avoiding procrastination, establishing a consistent sleep schedule, and reflection and self-care during clinical duties.

To determine the relationship between the challenges faced and the mental coping strategies employed by the respondents, Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient (Pearson's r) was used. This inferential statistical tool measured the strength and direction of the relationship between the identified variables. The level of significance was set to determine whether the relationship between challenges and coping strategies was statistically significant.

The results of the statistical analysis served as the basis for the interpretation, discussion, and conclusions of the study. Findings were presented in tables and interpreted in relation to the study objectives, theoretical framework, and relevant literature, providing a comprehensive understanding of how fourth-year nursing students manage academic and clinical challenges through mental coping strategies.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Results

This section presents the results as well as the discussion, analysis, and interpretations made out of it to help determine the solutions and formulate conclusions for the presented problem of the study.

Assessment on the Challenges Experience Faced Among Respondents

Table 1. Challenges Experience Faced Among Respondents in terms of Academic Pressure

Statement	Mean	Standard Deviation	Interpretation
Effectively balancing clinical duties and academic tasks provides an opportunity for growth.	2.98	0.91	Agree
I see academic pressure as a motivation to improve my study habits.	2.92	0.76	Agree
I believe that managing academic pressure prepares me for real-world nursing challenges.	3.09	0.77	Agree
Deadlines encourage me to stay organized with my academic responsibilities.	2.92	0.78	Agree
Total	2.98	0.80	Agree

Table 1 presents the challenges experienced by respondents in terms of academic pressure, as reflected by their mean scores and standard deviations. The overall mean score of 2.98 with a standard deviation of 0.80 indicates that the respondents generally agreed with the statements related to academic pressure. This suggests that while they recognize the demands associated with their academic and clinical responsibilities, they tend to view these pressures as manageable and even beneficial in some respects.

Specifically, the highest-rated item is "I believe that managing academic pressure prepares me for real-world nursing challenges" with a mean of 3.09. This shows that respondents

perceive academic pressure not merely as a burden but as a preparatory experience that equips them for the realities of the nursing profession. This perspective highlights a constructive attitude toward stress, where pressure is transformed into professional readiness.

Meanwhile, two items—"I see academic pressure as a motivation to improve my study habits" and "Deadlines encourage me to stay organized with my academic responsibilities"—both received a mean score of 2.92, reflecting that academic pressure is perceived as a motivator for discipline and better time management. These responses suggest that students are capable of adapting to pressure by fostering productivity-enhancing behaviors.

The item with the lowest mean score, although still in the "Agree" range, is "Effectively balancing clinical duties and academic tasks provides an opportunity for growth" with a mean of 2.98. This may imply that while students recognize the developmental benefits of balancing multiple responsibilities, they might still find it a challenging aspect of their academic life.

According to Pulido-Martos, Augusto-Landa, and Lopez-Zafra (2023), moderate levels of academic stress can act as a motivator, pushing students to develop better study habits, time management skills, and resilience. Their study found that nursing students who perceived academic stress as a challenge rather than a threat were more likely to engage in adaptive coping mechanisms, such as planning and positive reframing. In summary, the findings indicate that nursing students view academic pressure as a challenge that contributes positively to their personal and professional growth. Despite the inherent difficulties, they appear to develop resilience, organizational skills, and motivation from these academic demands.

Table 2. Challenges Experience Faced Among Respondents in terms of Clinical Duty Responsibility

Statement	Mean	Standard Deviation	Interpretation
I experience excitement during clinical duty when performing practical tasks.	3.11	0.67	Agree
I am continually growing in my clinical skills and knowledge by actively seeking feedback, reflecting on experiences, and applying what I learn in practice to provide better patient care.	3.17	0.70	Agree
I find great satisfaction in helping patients during my clinical shifts, especially when I see them recover, go home, and achieve the goals we planned in their nursing care plan.	3.15	0.72	Agree
I am well-prepared for my clinical responsibilities and confidently apply the knowledge and skills taught by my instructor to deliver safe, compassionate care.	3.11	0.67	Agree
I strive to make a meaningful impact on patient care during clinical duties by staying attentive, applying my	3.11	0.67	Agree

knowledge with confidence, and using reflection as a strategy to continuously improve.			
Total	3.13	0.69	Agree

Table 2 presents the challenges experienced by respondents in terms of clinical duty responsibility. With an overall mean score of 3.13 and a standard deviation of 0.69, the responses fall within the "Agree" category. This indicates that while clinical duties pose certain challenges, nursing students generally maintain a positive attitude toward their clinical experiences, viewing them as opportunities for growth, learning, and professional fulfillment.

The highest mean score (3.17) is associated with the statement: "I am continually growing in my clinical skills and knowledge by actively seeking feedback, reflecting on experiences, and applying what I learn in practice to provide better patient care." This suggests that students are highly engaged in the learning process and take initiative in enhancing their clinical competencies. Their willingness to seek feedback and reflect demonstrates a mature and proactive approach to clinical education, which is essential in the development of professional nursing skills. Another highly rated item is: "I find great satisfaction in helping patients during my clinical shifts..." with a mean of 3.15, showing that students find emotional and moral reward in patient interaction and outcomes. This positive reinforcement likely contributes to their motivation and commitment to patient care.

Several items received the same mean score of 3.11, including statements related to excitement in performing practical tasks, being well-prepared for clinical responsibilities, and striving to make a meaningful impact on patient care. These responses suggest that students generally feel competent and emotionally invested in their clinical duties. The consistency of these scores also indicates a strong alignment between their theoretical training and clinical application.

Chan (2002) emphasized that a positive clinical learning environment significantly enhances students' confidence, motivation, and performance. The study found that when students feel supported by instructors and staff, they become more engaged and take greater initiative in patient care tasks—mirroring the high mean scores in your findings regarding reflection, feedback, and motivation to improve care.

Overall, the findings suggest that nursing students acknowledge the challenges of clinical responsibilities but approach them with confidence, preparedness, and a desire to continuously improve. Their affirmative responses reflect a balanced integration of knowledge, skills, and professional values, reinforcing their readiness for real-world clinical environments.

Table 3. Challenges Experience Faced Among Respondents in terms of Time Management

Statement	Mean	Standard Deviation	Interpretation
I am learning to balance my academic and clinical commitments by prioritizing tasks and setting focused study and care time, helping me grow both personally and professionally.	2.98	0.64	Agree
I'm actively developing my ability to prioritize by managing the competing demands of coursework and clinical responsibilities.	3.08	0.65	Agree
I am continuously improving my time management skills to make the most of each day. By prioritizing tasks and staying	3.09	0.69	Agree

organized, I'm able to efficiently meet my responsibilities and achieve my goals.			
Total	3.05	0.66	Agree

Table 3 presents the challenges experienced by respondents in terms of time management. The overall mean score of 3.05 with a standard deviation of 0.66 falls within the “Agree” interpretation, suggesting that although time management is a common challenge among nursing students, they are actively addressing it through practical strategies and personal discipline.

The statement with the highest mean score (3.09) is: “I am continuously improving my time management skills to make the most of each day...” This reflects that respondents are consciously making efforts to stay organized, prioritize tasks, and allocate their time effectively. It implies proactive mindset in handling the multiple responsibilities that come with being a nursing student, particularly balancing academic workloads with clinical practice. Following closely is the statement: “I’m actively developing my ability to prioritize by managing the competing demands of coursework and clinical responsibilities,” with a mean of 3.08. This further reinforces the notion that respondents are not only aware of the need for effective time management but are also actively engaging in strategies to improve this skill.

It highlights their recognition of the importance of prioritization in managing dual academic and clinical roles.

The item with the lowest mean, though still within the "Agree" range, is: “I am learning to balance my academic and clinical commitments by prioritizing tasks and setting focused study and care time...” with a score of 2.98. This may indicate that while students are striving for balance, some are still in the learning phase of mastering this aspect, reflecting ongoing development rather than full proficiency. According to Adams and Stover (2020), nursing students who actively practice time management—such as task prioritization, scheduling, and self-discipline—experience reduced stress and improved academic performance. Their study emphasized that learning to manage time

effectively is a gradual process that evolves throughout a student’s academic journey, which aligns with your respondents’ responses that they are still developing this skill.

In summary, the responses suggest that nursing students are aware of the time-related demands of their program and are actively working on refining their time management skills. Although challenges exist, the generally positive scores imply that students are developing resilience and strategies to cope, contributing to both their personal and professional growth.

Table 4. Challenges Experience Faced Among Respondents in terms of Coping with Stress

Statement	Mean	Standard Deviation	Interpretation
Maintaining good lifestyle habits improves my ability to cope with academic demands.	3.13	0.76	Agree
Effective time management keeps me organized and minimizes academic stress. By planning ahead and breaking tasks into manageable steps.	3.11	0.78	Agree
Engaging in group activities (team building, Red Cross activities) enhances my coping skills.	3.06	0.72	Agree
I am happy when I finish my activity early than what I expected and it makes me to have a lot of time to do a lot of things	3.17	0.75	Agree
Sound imagery (like listening to calming music) helps me reduce stress during study	2.40	1.06	Disagree

breaks.			
Engaging in hobbies like singing or dancing relieves my academic stress effectively.	3.25	0.68	Strongly Agree
Journaling provides me with emotional relief during stressful times.	3.09	0.66	Agree
Total	3.03	0.77	Agree

Table 4 presents the challenges experienced by respondents in terms of coping with stress. With an overall mean score of 3.03 and a standard deviation of 0.77, the responses fall under the “Agree” category, indicating that nursing students recognize stress as a significant challenge but have developed various strategies to manage it effectively. This suggests a general awareness and application of coping mechanisms, though with some variation in preference and perceived effectiveness.

The highest-rated item is: “Engaging in hobbies like singing or dancing relieves my academic stress effectively” with a mean of 3.25, interpreted as “Strongly Agree.” This implies that students value creative outlets and recreational activities as powerful tools in managing stress. Such activities not only provide emotional release but also help students maintain mental balance amidst academic and clinical demands. The second-highest mean score (3.17) is attributed to the statement: “I am happy when I finish my activity earlier than expected...” This highlights that completing tasks ahead of schedule contributes to stress relief by providing more free time and reducing the pressure of deadlines. It also emphasizes the psychological benefit of time efficiency in stress management. Other statements such as “Maintaining good lifestyle habits improves my ability to cope...” (3.13), “Effective time management minimizes academic stress...” (3.11), and “Journaling provides emotional relief...” (3.09) also received high mean scores, reinforcing the idea that students adopt a combination of health-conscious behaviors, planning techniques, and expressive outlets to navigate stressful situations.

A unique insight is offered by the statement “Sound imagery (like listening to calming music) helps me reduce stress...”, which received the lowest mean score of 2.40, falling under the “Disagree” category. This indicates that this particular strategy is less commonly practiced or perceived as less effective among the respondents. The wide standard deviation (1.06) suggests mixed responses—some students may find it helpful, while others do not benefit from it significantly. Interestingly, engaging in group activities such as team building and Red Cross involvement was rated positively (3.06), suggesting that social interaction and peer support also contribute to students’ coping strategies, although not as strongly as individual hobbies. According to Gibbons (2010), nursing students frequently rely on emotion-focused coping strategies such as engaging in hobbies, maintaining a healthy lifestyle, journaling, and peer support to alleviate stress. These activities have been found to enhance resilience and promote psychological well-being—consistent with your respondents’ strong agreement on the effectiveness of hobbies and journaling.

In conclusion, the findings reflect that nursing students employ a range of coping strategies to manage stress, favoring physical and expressive outlets such as hobbies and journaling, alongside structured time management and healthy routines. However, preferences for coping mechanisms vary, underscoring the importance of providing diverse support systems to accommodate individual needs.

Assessment on the Mental Coping Strategies Among Respondents

Table 5. Mental Coping Strategies Among Respondents in terms of Prioritization Goal Setting

Statement	Mean	Standard Deviation	Interpretation
I prioritize my tasks by identifying what needs to be done first based on deadlines or importance.	3.17	0.64	Agree

I set clear, achievable goals for myself every day, week, month.	3.13	0.71	Agree
I review and adjust my goals regularly to ensure they are still aligned with my values and responsibilities.	3.15	0.63	Agree
I break large tasks into smaller, more manageable steps to avoid feeling overwhelmed.	3.17	0.64	Agree
I use a planner or digital tool to organize my academic priorities.	3.04	0.68	Agree
I consistently track my progress to stay aligned with my goals.	3.15	0.63	Agree
I prioritized self-care and balance while achieving my professional and personal goal.	3.15	0.60	Agree
I celebrate small wins along the way to stay motivated and on track toward my bigger goals.	3.23	0.64	Agree
Total	3.15	0.65	Agree

Table 5 presents the mental coping strategies among respondents in terms of prioritization and goal setting. With an overall mean of 3.15 and a standard deviation of 0.65, the responses fall

within the “Agree” category, indicating that nursing students are actively applying strategies to organize their tasks and set goals as a way to cope with their academic and clinical responsibilities. This suggests a well-developed sense of personal responsibility and self-management, which is crucial in navigating the complex demands of nursing education.

The highest-rated statement, “I celebrate small wins along the way to stay motivated and on track toward my bigger goals,” earned a mean of 3.23, showing that respondents find value in recognizing their progress. Celebrating small successes appears to serve as an important motivational tool, helping students maintain focus and emotional resilience throughout their journey. This emphasizes the importance of maintaining a positive mindset even amidst stress and pressure. Closely following are statements such as “I prioritize my tasks by identifying what needs to be done first based on deadlines or importance” and “I break large tasks into smaller, more manageable steps to avoid feeling overwhelmed,” both with a mean of 3.17. These responses reflect the practical approaches students employ to avoid academic burnout. By tackling tasks systematically, they reduce anxiety and improve efficiency, showing a thoughtful response to workload challenges. Statements like “I review and adjust my goals regularly,” “I consistently track my progress,” and “I prioritize self-care and balance while achieving my professional and personal goals” (all with a mean of 3.15) highlight the students’ awareness of the need to regularly evaluate their commitments and adjust their actions accordingly. This reflects adaptability and an understanding that priorities may shift, requiring regular reflection and adjustment to stay aligned with both academic demands and personal well-being.

Although still within the “Agree” range, the lowest-rated item was “I use a planner or digital tool to organize my academic priorities,” with a mean of 3.04. This may suggest that while students recognize the importance of planning tools, not all make consistent use of them, possibly due to personal preferences, time constraints, or unfamiliarity with organizational tools. According to a study published in the *West African Journal of Basic, Pure and Applied Sciences* (2024), nurses similarly exhibit a range of coping strategies that emphasize flexibility and emotional regulation. Many do not rely on formal tools or structured systems but instead turn to intuitive and informal techniques such as personal reflection, lifestyle adjustments, and non-clinical activities. This mirrors

the students' tendency to favor self-management and internal coping mechanisms over external organizational tools.

Overall, the findings indicate respondents are building effective coping skills like goal-setting and self-monitoring, promoting academic success, personal growth, resilience, and readiness for nursing careers.

Table 6. Mental Coping Strategies Among Respondents in terms of Avoid Procrastination

Statement	Mean	Standard Deviation	Interpretation
I stay mindful of my progress and take proactive steps to refocus, ensuring I remain productive and focused on my goals	3.15	0.69	Agree
I use specific strategies, such as setting a timer or breaking tasks into smaller chunks, to overcome procrastination.	3.13	0.65	Agree
I stay focused on important tasks by setting clear work times and creating a quiet, organized space to boost my productivity.	3.13	0.62	Agree
I celebrate small achievements to keep myself motivated and avoid putting things off.	3.13	0.59	Agree
Total	3.14	0.64	Agree

Table 6 presents the mental coping strategies among respondents in terms of avoiding procrastination. The overall mean score of 3.14 with a standard deviation of 0.64 falls under the

“Agree” category. This suggests that nursing students are actively implementing strategies to overcome procrastination, indicating a conscious effort to stay productive and committed to their academic and clinical goals.

The highest-rated statement is “I stay mindful of my progress and take proactive steps to refocus, ensuring I remain productive and focused on my goals,” with a mean of 3.15. This reflects the respondents’ awareness of their tendencies and their willingness to take corrective actions when distractions or delays arise. Such mindfulness and initiative are essential traits for managing the high-pressure environment typical in nursing education.

The remaining statements — “I use specific strategies, such as setting a timer or breaking tasks into smaller chunks,” “I stay focused on important tasks by setting clear work times and creating a quiet, organized space,” and “I celebrate small achievements to keep myself motivated and avoid putting things off” — all received similar mean scores of 3.13. These results show that students are making deliberate efforts to structure their work environments and use behavioral strategies to reduce the likelihood of procrastination. This uniformity across responses suggests that a consistent set of techniques is being used effectively by the majority of the respondents.

The strategies identified include goal setting, environmental control, time management techniques, and self-reinforcement through small rewards. The relatively low standard deviations across all items (ranging from 0.59 to 0.69) indicate a general agreement among the respondents, reflecting shared experiences and common practices in tackling procrastination. According to Zhang et al. (2024), nursing students who adopt structured behavioral strategies—such as time management and self-monitoring—are better equipped to handle academic stress and maintain consistent performance. Their study highlights that proactive coping behaviors, including avoiding procrastination, are linked to improved mental well-being and academic resilience, which reinforces the findings of the current study.

In summary, the findings from Table 6 demonstrate that nursing students are proactively managing procrastination through various cognitive and behavioral techniques. Their consistent use of goal-focused habits, time management tools, and self-motivation strategies reflects a growing

sense of discipline and accountability—critical traits for academic success and professional readiness in the field of nursing.

Table 7. Mental Coping Strategies Among Respondents in terms of Establishing a Consistent Sleep Schedule and Sleep Hygiene Practices

Statement	Mean	Standard Deviation	Interpretation
I promote restful sleep by giving myself time to relax before bed, helping me wake up feeling refreshed and energized.	3.08	0.68	Agree
I create a relaxing bedtime routine, such as reading or listening to calming music, to help me wind down.	3.15	0.74	Agree
I enhance my sleep quality by creating a relaxing pre-bedtime routine, including reading or practicing mindfulness.	3.00	0.68	Agree
I make sure my sleep environment is quiet, dark, and comfortable.	3.19	0.68	Agree
Maintaining good sleep hygiene strengthens my resilience, helping me thrive in nursing school.	3.17	0.64	Agree
I believe that sleep routine enables me to manage my time and role as a 4th-year	3.34	0.68	Strongly Agree

nursing student effectively.			
Learning new sleep strategies helps me enhance my sleep hygiene and develop healthier habits, such as following a consistent bedtime routine to support better rest.	3.17	0.64	Agree
Total	3.16	0.68	Agree

Table 7 presents the mental coping strategies among respondents in terms of establishing a consistent sleep schedule and practicing sleep hygiene. The overall mean of 3.16 with a standard deviation of 0.68 falls within the “Agree” range, indicating that the respondents recognize and apply healthy sleep habits as part of their coping mechanisms to manage the demands of nursing education. These results highlight the students’ understanding of the critical role sleep plays in sustaining both physical and mental well-being.

The highest-rated statement, “I believe that sleep routine enables me to manage my time and role as a 4th-year nursing student effectively,” received a mean score of 3.34, interpreted as “Strongly Agree.” This suggests that students highly value sleep routines as an essential foundation for balancing their academic, clinical, and personal responsibilities. For many, maintaining regular sleep appears to contribute directly to time management and role fulfillment, which are especially vital in the rigorous environment of nursing school. Following closely are statements such as “I make sure my sleep environment is quiet, dark, and comfortable” (mean = 3.19) and “Maintaining good sleep hygiene strengthens my resilience, helping me thrive in nursing school” (mean = 3.17), which further affirm that respondents are attentive to creating conditions conducive to quality rest. These responses demonstrate awareness of how environmental and behavioral factors influence the quality of sleep and, in turn, academic performance and stress levels.

Other strategies like creating relaxing bedtime routines (e.g., reading or mindfulness), learning new sleep hygiene practices, and allowing time to unwind before bed also received high agreement ratings, with means ranging from 3.00 to 3.17. This shows that most students actively adopt practical methods to improve their sleep quality, and they associate these practices with feeling more refreshed and energized. According to Zhang et al. (2024), consistent sleep patterns and deliberate rest practices are key components of psychological coping among healthcare students. Their study highlights that students who prioritize sleep hygiene demonstrate greater adaptability, reduced anxiety, and enhanced academic performance—findings that closely parallel the present results.

Overall, the results reveal that nursing students are mindful of their sleep habits and view them as integral to their mental coping strategies. By prioritizing consistent sleep schedules and engaging in relaxing routines, they are enhancing their capacity to handle academic pressures and clinical responsibilities more effectively. This commitment to sleep hygiene reflects a holistic approach to wellness, reinforcing the importance of rest in fostering resilience and performance in a demanding academic program.

Table 8. Mental Coping Strategies Among Respondents in terms of Reflection and Self-care in Clinical Duty Responsibility

Statement	Mean	Standard Deviation	Interpretation
I regularly reflect on my clinical duties to identify areas for personal growth and improvement.	3.17	0.67	Agree
I use white book to write my reflection about my clinical duty in order to know what I need to learn more and adjust in	3.17	0.67	Agree

order to perform well.			
I seek feedback from colleagues or mentors like my clinical instructor to improve my performance and self-awareness.	3.28	0.69	Strongly Agree
I maintain my energy and focus during long shifts by taking short, mindful breaks, which support my overall well-being and performance.	3.15	0.63	Agree
I manage my stress well during clinical responsibilities by practicing mindfulness or relaxation techniques.	3.21	0.66	Agree
Total	3.20	0.67	Agree

Table 8 presents the mental coping strategies among respondents in terms of reflection and self-care in clinical duty responsibility. The overall mean score of 3.20 with a standard deviation of 0.67 is interpreted as “Agree,” indicating that nursing students generally engage in reflective practices and self-care strategies during clinical duties to manage stress, enhance performance, and promote personal growth.

The highest-rated item, “I seek feedback from colleagues or mentors like my clinical instructor to improve my performance and self-awareness” (mean = 3.28), falls under the “Strongly Agree” category. This demonstrates that respondents highly value constructive feedback as a tool for professional development. Actively seeking guidance from mentors shows a proactive attitude toward growth and a willingness to improve based on experience and external insights. Two other statements — “I regularly reflect on my clinical duties to identify areas for personal growth and improvement” and “I use white book to write my reflection about my clinical duty in order to know

what I need to learn more and adjust in order to perform well” — both received a mean of 3.17. These responses highlight that reflection is a common practice among students. The use of tools like the white book shows that students are not only thinking critically about their performance but are also documenting their experiences to guide future learning.

Additionally, the respondents indicated agreement with the statement “I manage my stress well during clinical responsibilities by practicing mindfulness or relaxation techniques” (mean = 3.21) and “I maintain my energy and focus during long shifts by taking short, mindful breaks” (mean = 3.15). These results show that self-care through stress management and strategic breaks is recognized by students as essential to sustaining performance and protecting mental health during the physically and emotionally demanding nature of clinical work.

According to Gandela and Diego (2024), nursing students employ various coping strategies to manage stress in clinical settings. These strategies include time management, peer support, mentorship, self-care practices, cognitive coping strategies, and effective study habits. The study emphasizes the importance of mentorship and guidance, feedback and reflection, and adaptability and resilience in helping students cope with the challenges of clinical duties. However, the study also notes that self-care practices and cognitive coping strategies were among the least utilized, suggesting areas for further development in nursing education.

Overall, the findings from Table 8 emphasize that reflection and self-care are integral parts of how nursing students cope with the challenges of clinical duties. By combining reflective practices, feedback-seeking behavior, mindfulness, and wellness routines, students are building resilience and enhancing their capacity to provide quality patient care while continuing to develop their skills as future healthcare professionals.

Correlation Between the Challenges and Mental Coping Strategies Among Respondents

Table 9. Correlation Between the Challenges and Mental Coping Strategies Among Respondents in terms of Prioritization and Goal Setting

Challenges	Corr. (r)	Sig. (p)	Interpretation
Academic Pressure	0.492**	0.000	Significant
Clinical Duty	0.595**	0.000	Significant
Time management	0.584**	0.000	Significant
Sleep deprivation	0.608**	0.000	Significant

Table 9 presents the correlation between the challenges experienced and mental coping strategies employed by respondents in terms of prioritization and goal setting. The results show that all variables—academic pressure, clinical duty, time management, and sleep deprivation—have statistically significant positive correlations with prioritization and goal setting, as indicated by the correlation coefficients (r) and p-values (Sig.).

Among these, sleep deprivation showed the strongest correlation with prioritization and goal setting ($r = 0.608$, $p = 0.000$), indicating that respondents who are better at setting goals and prioritizing tasks are also more likely to cope effectively with the challenges related to sleep deprivation. This suggests that organizing tasks and planning ahead may help students reduce stress that could otherwise negatively affect their sleep patterns.

Similarly, clinical duty ($r = 0.595$, $p = 0.000$) and time management ($r = 0.584$, $p = 0.000$) also have strong positive correlations with prioritization and goal setting. These findings imply that students who actively use goal-setting and prioritization strategies are better equipped to handle the demands of their clinical responsibilities and manage their time more effectively. It reflects that

goal-oriented coping helps students balance the rigorous dual demands of academic and practical nursing work.

Lastly, the correlation between academic pressure and goal setting ($r = 0.492, p = 0.000$) is also significant, though slightly lower than the other challenges. This still reflects a meaningful relationship, indicating that students who prioritize and set achievable goals tend to experience less difficulty handling academic pressure. Their ability to stay focused and structure their academic efforts likely supports their resilience under pressure.

According to Buriro et al. (2024), academic stress is a common concern among nursing students, but those who apply structured coping strategies such as goal setting and prioritization are more likely to manage academic workloads effectively and maintain mental clarity under pressure.

In summary, the data in Table 9 reveal that effective prioritization and goal setting are significantly associated with better management of common challenges faced by nursing students. These strategies appear to be key mental coping mechanisms that enhance their ability to navigate academic, clinical, and personal stressors.

Table 10. Correlation Between the Challenges and Mental Coping Strategies Among Respondents in terms of Avoiding Procrastination

Challenges	Corr. (r)	Sig. (p)	Interpretation
Academic Pressure	0.467**	0.000	Significant
Clinical Duty	0.747**	0.000	Significant
Time management	0.671**	0.000	Significant
Sleep deprivation	0.684**	0.000	Significant

Table 10 presents the correlation between the challenges experienced and the mental coping strategies used by respondents specifically in terms of avoiding procrastination. All the challenges assessed—academic pressure, clinical duty, time management, and sleep deprivation—demonstrate statistically significant positive correlations with procrastination-avoidance strategies, as evidenced by their correlation coefficients (r) and p -values (Sig.).

The strongest correlation is found between clinical duty and avoiding procrastination, with a correlation coefficient of $r = 0.747$ and a p -value of 0.000. This high level of significance suggests that students who actively work to avoid procrastination are also more capable of managing the responsibilities and expectations of clinical duty. This could be attributed to the structured and time-sensitive nature of clinical work, where delaying tasks can negatively impact patient care and learning outcomes. Closely following are the challenges of sleep deprivation ($r = 0.684$, $p = 0.000$) and time management ($r = 0.671$, $p = 0.000$), both of which show strong and significant relationships with the coping strategy of avoiding procrastination. These findings imply that students who utilize time-blocking, structured routines, and other anti-procrastination techniques are less likely to suffer the adverse effects of poor time management and sleep-related issues. This highlights the practical value of these coping strategies in helping students maintain balance, rest, and productivity.

The correlation between academic pressure and avoiding procrastination, though slightly lower ($r = 0.467$, $p = 0.000$), remains significant. It indicates that students who consciously avoid procrastination are better able to cope with academic stress. By addressing tasks early and breaking them into manageable segments, students may reduce last-minute pressure and improve academic outcomes. According to Al-Mahmoud et al. (2022), effective coping strategies among nursing students are essential in managing academic stress and clinical workload. Their study found that students who actively engage in planning, time management, and stress reduction techniques reported lower levels of anxiety and better academic performance. This supports the observed correlation between academic pressure and avoiding procrastination ($r = 0.467$, $p = 0.000$) in this study, indicating that students who break tasks into manageable steps and tackle assignments proactively are better able to cope with academic demands and reduce stress.

In conclusion, the findings in Table 10 underscore that avoiding procrastination is a critical mental coping strategy that significantly contributes to students' ability to manage multiple academic and clinical demands. The strong correlations across various challenges reinforce the importance of time-conscious behaviors in reducing stress and maintaining well-being among nursing students.

Table 11. Correlation Between the Challenges and Mental Coping Strategies Among Respondents in terms of Establishing a Consistent Sleep Schedule

Challenges	Corr. (r)	Sig. (p)	Interpretation
Academic Pressure	0.548**	0.000	Significant
Clinical Duty	0.682**	0.000	Significant
Time management	0.564**	0.000	Significant
Sleep deprivation	0.591**	0.000	Significant

Table 11 presents the correlation between the challenges experienced by the respondents and their mental coping strategies in terms of establishing a consistent sleep schedule and practicing sleep hygiene. All variables—academic pressure, clinical duty, time management, and sleep deprivation—show statistically significant positive correlations with this coping strategy, as indicated by the correlation coefficients (r) and p-values (Sig.).

Among the four challenges, clinical duty shows the strongest positive correlation with establishing a consistent sleep schedule ($r = 0.682$, $p = 0.000$). This implies that students who maintain good sleep hygiene are better equipped to manage the physical and mental demands of clinical responsibilities. Consistent rest likely enhances alertness, concentration, and energy levels, which are essential in the clinical setting. Sleep deprivation also reveals a strong and significant correlation with sleep hygiene practices ($r = 0.591$, $p = 0.000$). This supports the idea that adopting

structured sleep routines and good sleep habits is effective in mitigating the negative impacts of insufficient rest. Respondents who commit to healthy sleep practices are more likely to avoid or reduce the effects of sleep deprivation.

Likewise, time management ($r = 0.564, p = 0.000$) and academic pressure ($r = 0.548, p = 0.000$) also have moderate to strong correlations with establishing a consistent sleep schedule. This suggests that students who manage their time effectively and cope well with academic pressures are more likely to maintain regular sleep routines. These individuals likely recognize that adequate rest contributes to their academic focus and resilience under pressure. According to Yazid et al. (2023), adequate and consistent sleep duration is strongly linked to better academic performance and reduced clinical stress among nursing students. Their study highlights that students who prioritize sleep hygiene report improved cognitive function, concentration, and emotional regulation, which in turn help them handle the dual pressures of academics and clinical duties more effectively. This supports the finding that clinical duty shows the strongest positive correlation with establishing a consistent sleep schedule ($r = 0.682, p = 0.000$), emphasizing that good sleep practices are critical for meeting the demands of clinical work.

In summary, the results in Table 11 indicate that establishing a consistent sleep schedule and practicing sleep hygiene are significantly associated with the ability to manage academic and clinical challenges. These practices serve not only as a preventive measure against burnout and fatigue but also as an important component of overall well-being and academic success for nursing students.

Table 12. Correlation Between the Challenges and Mental Coping Strategies Among Respondents in terms of Reflection and self-care in clinical duty responsibility

Challenges	Corr. (r)	Sig. (p)	Interpretation
Academic Pressure	0.526**	0.000	Significant

Clinical Duty	0.795**	0.000	Significant
Time management	0.648**	0.000	Significant
Sleep deprivation	0.681**	0.000	Significant

Table 12 presents the correlation between the challenges experienced by the respondents and their mental coping strategies in terms of reflection and self-care in clinical duty responsibility. The data reveals that all identified challenges—academic pressure, clinical duty, time management, and sleep deprivation—have statistically significant positive correlations with the practice of reflection and self-care, as denoted by the correlation coefficients (r) and p -values ($p = 0.000$).

The strongest correlation is observed between clinical duty and reflection/self-care, with a correlation coefficient of $r = 0.795$, indicating a very strong and highly significant relationship. This suggests that respondents who regularly engage in reflective practices and prioritize self-care are better able to handle the multifaceted responsibilities of clinical duty. Reflection likely helps them process their experiences, identify learning opportunities, and adjust, while self-care helps maintain emotional and physical resilience during demanding shifts. Sleep deprivation and time management also show strong positive correlations, with values of $r = 0.681$ and $r = 0.648$ respectively. These results imply that students who engage in reflection and self-care tend to experience fewer issues with sleep and are more efficient in managing their time. This aligns with research indicating that self-awareness and self-regulation, which are strengthened through reflection, contribute to healthier routines and better productivity.

Meanwhile, the correlation with academic pressure ($r = 0.526$) remains significant though slightly lower. This still indicates that students who reflect on their academic and clinical performance and take care of their well-being are better equipped to handle academic stress. Reflection helps them reframe pressure as a learning opportunity, while self-care reduces the emotional toll of high expectations. According to Baluyot and Ybañez (2023), reflective practice and self-care are foundational strategies in nursing education that foster resilience and professional



competence. Their chapter highlights how reflective journaling, mindfulness, and wellness routines enable nursing students to cope with academic and clinical stressors effectively. The significant correlation between academic pressure and reflection/self-care ($r = 0.526$) found in this study supports their findings, showing that these coping mechanisms help students reframe stress and maintain emotional well-being amid high demands.

In conclusion, the results in Table 12 emphasize that reflection and self-care are essential coping strategies that significantly support nursing students in managing academic and clinical challenges. The strong associations found across all areas highlight the importance of promoting reflective practices and personal well-being initiatives within nursing education to ensure student resilience and professional growth.

3.2 Discussion

Challenges Experienced by Nursing Students

Table 1. Academic Pressure: The mean of 2.98 (SD = 0.80) showed that students tend to "Agree" with academic pressure. Nevertheless, they exhibited a positive outlook in which they saw academic stress as an inspiration for enhanced study habits, superior time management, and preparedness for actual nursing situations.

Table 2. Clinical Duty Responsibility: Clinical responsibilities were also recognized as demanding and fulfilling with a higher mean score of 3.13 (SD = 0.69). Respondents expressed satisfaction and improvement in their clinical competence and skills, as they reflected a positive approach to feedback and patient care.

Table 3. Time Management: Students agreed (mean = 3.05, SD = 0.66) that time management remains a persistent challenge. Nevertheless, they indicated attempts to improve scheduling, prioritization, and organizational skills to effectively manage academic and clinical responsibility.

Table 4. Coping with Stress: The results had moderate agreement (mean = 3.03, SD = 0.77) on students' knowledge and use of different stress-coping methods. Although certain methods such as hobbies and journaling had favorable ratings, others such as the use of soothing music had a mixed effect.

Mental Coping Strategies

Table 5. Prioritization and Goal Setting: students had a mean value of 3.15 (SD = 0.65), indicating students set realistic goals, tracked their progress toward the goals, and developed a plan in a structured manner to alleviate feeling overwhelmed. It was particularly pointed out that students celebrated and took note of mention of small accomplishments as a key motivating component.

Table 6. Avoiding Procrastination: A mean of 3.14, (SD= 0.64), students understand the used of behavioral and cognitive strategies to avoid procrastination and be more focused; strategies like breaking it down into specific tasks to be accomplished, determining times to work on tasks, and enhance focus.

Table 7. Sleep Hygiene and Consistent Sleep Schedule: Students were aware of the importance of sleep in managing their academic and clinical stress. The mean score of 3.16 (SD = 0.68) indicated no problems maintaining consistent patterns, relaxing bedtime rituals, and various sleep hygiene habits, and understanding sleep is an important element of resilience.

Table 8. Reflection and Self-Care in Clinical Duty: This indicated a solid level of agreement (mean = 3.20, SD = 0.67), where students recognized that reflection, seeking feedback, being mindful during breaks, and employing mindful practice in reflective journaling ("white book") helped evaluate and develop their clinical practice.

Correlational Findings

Table 9. Prioritization and Goal Setting: Showed moderate-to-strong correlations with sleep deprivation ($r = 0.608$), clinical duty ($r = 0.595$), time management ($r = 0.584$), and academic pressure ($r = 0.492$). These strategies are evidenced to be an essential component in helping students balance academic and clinical expectations.

Table 10. Avoiding Procrastination: Showed a strong correlation with clinical duty ($r = 0.747$), followed by sleep deprivation ($r = 0.684$), and time management ($r = 0.671$), indicating that procrastination strategies were significant factors in meeting clinical expectations and minimizing stress.

Table 11. Sleep Hygiene: Showed the strongest correlation with clinical duty ($r = 0.682$), showing the importance of sufficient rest to perform well in a clinical capacity.

Table 12. Reflection and Self-Care: Showed the strongest correlation with clinical duty ($r = 0.795$) and sleep deprivation ($r = 0.681$), demonstrating that reflective and self-care practices may be important for dealing with stressful, practical experience.

Conclusion

In accordance with the findings of the study, fourth-year nursing students experienced moderate to high levels of academic and clinical challenges, particularly in relation to workload, time limitations, and emotional demands. The results revealed that students demonstrated maturity in managing these challenges by perceiving them as opportunities for growth and professional development. The study showed that students consistently utilized adaptive mental coping strategies such as prioritization, goal setting, avoidance of procrastination, reflective practice, and proper sleep hygiene, which significantly contributed to their academic resilience and personal well-being. The findings further indicated a positive relationship between the number of challenges encountered—most notably during clinical duties—and the use of coping strategies, suggesting that increased awareness of mental coping enhances students' ability to manage multiple responsibilities in nursing education. Thus, the study concluded that reflective practice and seeking feedback are among the most effective coping strategies, as they promote continuous improvement, self-awareness, and preparedness for future nursing practice.

Recommendation

The following are the recommendations based on the study's findings and conclusions:

1. *Universities and Institution* - Sustain and continue to provide activities like school intramurals

(palaro) and co-curricular activities that promote physical health, teamwork and a healthy balance between academic work and extracurricular activities.

2. ***Nursing Program-*** Continue the successful implementation of programs like Nursing Week, as it has effectively articulated students' passion for the profession while allowing for relaxation, bonding and enjoyment.
3. ***Educator and Clinical Instructor -*** Maintain and further develop the current extra-curricular and student activities, which enable and facilitate the students' personal development and facilitate positive peer relationships.
4. ***Future researcher-*** Future research should explore various coping mechanisms that could help students cope with stress and workload. Studies could also investigate how flexible clinical hours and mindfulness and peer support positively affect students' well-being.

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