

Overview of Burnout Among Final Semester Students of the Bachelor of Nursing Study Program

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Abstract: Burnout is a psychological condition characterized by persistent negative feelings, often accompanied by decreased motivation, especially in the learning context. Final-year nursing students are at high risk of physical, emotional, and mental exhaustion due to academic pressure and thesis completion. This study aimed to describe the burnout level among final-semester Nursing students. A quantitative descriptive design was used. The sample consisted of 87 students selected by purposive sampling. Data was collected using the BAPER (Student Burnout in Thesis Completion) questionnaire. Univariate analysis was performed to obtain frequency distributions. Almost all respondents (74.7%, n=65) had moderate burnout, while 25.3% (n=22) had mild burnout. No student had severe burnout. Most respondents were aged 20–24 years (98.9%) and female (70.1%). Many final-year nursing students experienced burnout at a moderate level. Institutions are advised to provide structured academic and psychological support, time management training, and stress management programs to prevent burnout escalation.

Keywords: Academic stress, burnout, final-year students, nursing students

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Introduction

The final year of undergraduate education is a critical period for students, marked by the obligation to complete a thesis or final scientific work. According to Indonesian Government Regulation No. 60 of 1999, the bachelor's degree examination includes a thesis defense. While the thesis is designed to assess students' academic competence, it often becomes a significant source of psychological pressure. Students commonly experience tension, anxiety, boredom, lack of confidence, and loss of motivation during the thesis process (Khaekal et al., 2022). When these challenges persist over time, they can lead to a condition known as academic burnout.

Burnout is a psychological state characterized by emotional exhaustion, depersonalization (cynicism), and reduced personal accomplishment (Aini, 2024). In the academic context, burnout manifests as physical fatigue, emotional drain, loss of interest in studies, and a feeling of incompetence in meeting academic demands. Nursing students are particularly vulnerable because they face not only theoretical coursework but also clinical practice and thesis writing simultaneously (Nugroho, 2019).

The prevalence of academic burnout among final-year students is concerning. A study by Nugroho (2019) found that 48% of final-semester nursing students

experienced moderate burnout and 22% severe burnout. Similarly, Lestari (2021) reported that 42% of final-year students at a university in Central Java had moderate burnout, and 28% had high burnout, with thesis pressure being the main trigger. These findings highlight the urgent need to understand and address burnout in this population.

A preliminary study conducted at STIKes Karsa Husada Garut on April 24, 2025, involving 10 final-year nursing students, revealed that all reported stress and pressure during thesis writing. They complained of difficulty managing time, meeting academic expectations, and coping with supervisor demands and family hopes. Symptoms include sleep disturbances, excessive anxiety, emotional exhaustion, and loss of motivation. This indicates that burnout is a real problem requiring further investigation.

Therefore, this study aims to describe the burnout level among final-semester of Nursing students. The results are expected to provide a baseline for developing targeted interventions to support students' mental health and academic success.

Method

This was a quantitative descriptive study. The research was conducted at STIKes Karsa Husada Garut in June 2025.

The target population was all final-semester S1 Nursing students enrolled in the 2024–2025 academic year who were actively working on their thesis (N=111). The sample size was calculated using the Slovin formula with a 5% error margin, yielding 87 respondents. Purposive (quota) sampling was used, where the first 87 students who met the inclusion criteria and completed the questionnaire were included.

The inclusion criteria: active final-semester S1 Nursing students working on their thesis; registered for the 2024–2025 academic year; willing to participate. The exclusion criteria: students on academic leave and students who withdrew consent during data collection.

Data were collected using the BAPER questionnaire, a validated instrument measuring academic burnout in thesis-writing students. The questionnaire consists of 14 items using a 4-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = rarely, 3 = often, 4 = always). The total score categorizes burnout as: mild (0–21), moderate (22–27), or severe (>27). The instrument has been previously validated (r-values 0.446–0.789, r-table 0.325) and demonstrated good reliability (Cronbach's alpha = 0.886) (Ulya Karima, 2023; Saiba et al., 2020).

The questionnaire was distributed online via Google Forms. Students were informed about the study purpose, assured of confidentiality, and provided

informed consent before participation. Data collection took place from June 25 to June 30, 2025.

Data was analyzed using SPSS. Descriptive (univariate) analysis was performed to calculate frequencies and percentages for respondent characteristics (age, gender) and burnout levels.

Ethical approval was obtained from the institution. Participation was voluntary, and all data were anonymized.

Result and Discussion

A total of 87 students participated. Table 1 presents their demographic characteristics.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Characteristic	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Age	Early adult (20–24 yrs)	86	98.9
	Adult (25–40 yrs)	1	1.1
Gender	Male	26	29.9
	Female	61	70.1

Most respondents (98.9%) were aged 20–24 years, which corresponds to the typical early adulthood developmental stage. Female students comprised 70.1% of the sample, reflecting the gender distribution in nursing education.

Table 2. Burnout Levels Among Final-Semester Nursing Students

Burnout Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Mild (0–21)	22	25.3
Moderate (22–27)	65	74.7
Severe (>27)	0	0
Total	87	100

The results show that almost all respondents (74.7%) had moderate burnout, while 25.3% had mild burnout. No student fell into the severe category. The

mean total score was 24 (SD = 3), which falls within the moderate range.

The finding that 74.7% of final-year nursing students experienced moderate burnout is consistent with previous studies. Nugroho (2019) reported that 48% of nursing students had moderate burnout and 22% severe burnout. Lestari (2021) found 42% moderate and 28% high burnout. The higher proportion of moderate burnout in our study (74.7%) may be attributed to differences in measurement tools, sample characteristics, or the specific pressures of the thesis process at this institution.

The absence of severe burnout in our sample is encouraging. It suggests that while students are significantly stressed, they have not yet reached the most debilitating level. However, moderate burnout already impairs concentration, motivation, and academic performance (Alimah & Swasti, 2018). If left unaddressed, moderate burnout can progress to severe burnout, leading to prolonged completion time, mental health disorders, or even dropout.

Female students comprised 70.1% of the sample, which mirrors the general gender distribution in nursing education. Research suggests that female students may be more susceptible to emotional exhaustion because they often face higher social and family expectations regarding academic success (Damayanti et al., 2025). In this study, we did not compare burnout levels by gender, but the high proportion of females likely contributed to the overall burnout rate. Future research should examine gender-specific risk factors.

3.3.3 Age and Developmental Stage

Almost all respondents (98.9%) were aged 20–24 years, placing them in the early adulthood developmental stage (Madani et al., 2022). This period is characterized by identity exploration, increasing independence, and preparation for career entry. The additional pressure of completing a thesis while transitioning to professional life may exacerbate burnout. Young adults often lack mature coping strategies, making them more vulnerable to chronic stress.

Based on the literature and the preliminary study, several factors contributed to the high moderate burnout rate: academic workload – balancing thesis writing with remaining coursework, clinical practice, and sometimes part-time work; perfectionism – many nursing students set extremely high standards for themselves, fearing that any imperfection will reflect poorly on their future competence; low self-efficacy – doubting one's ability to complete the thesis independently can lead to helplessness and avoidance behaviours; insufficient social support – Lack of emotional or instrumental support from supervisors,

family, or peers increases burnout risk (Damayanti et al., 2025); poor time management – inability to structure work leads to last-minute rushes, sleep deprivation, and chronic fatigue.

Our results align with Suha et al. (2020), who found that 66.7% of nursing students had moderate burnout. However, our proportion (74.7%) is higher. Possible explanations include: (1) the exclusive focus on final-semester students (who face the added burden of thesis completion), whereas other studies included all academic years; (2) the use of a burnout-specific instrument (BAPER) that captures thesis-related exhaustion; (3) cultural and institutional factors, such as high family expectations and limited mental health services.

This study provides current, institution-specific data on burnout among final-year nursing students. The use of a validated instrument and adequate sample size strengthens internal validity.

Conclusion

These findings indicate that academic burnout is a significant issue among final-year nursing students, primarily related to thesis pressure. Immediate interventions are needed to prevent progression to severe burnout and to support students' mental health and academic success.

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Author Contributions

Conceptualization, M.H.K. and W.; methodology, M.H.K. and A.D.N.; formal analysis, M.H.K.; investigation, M.H.K.; data curation, M.H.K.; writing – original draft preparation, M.H.K.; writing – review and editing, W. and A.D.N.; supervision, W. and A.D.N. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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