

## AUTONOMOUS LEARNING AS A COPING MECHANISM FOR ACADEMIC BURNOUT IN PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS

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### ABSTRAK

Kelelahan akademik semakin menjadi perhatian serius di pendidikan tinggi, terutama di kalangan mahasiswa Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris yang berperan sebagai calon guru dengan tuntutan kemahiran bahasa dan persiapan profesional. Tinjauan literatur ini bertujuan untuk mensintesis temuan penelitian internasional terkait kelelahan akademik, strategi koping, dan pembelajaran otonom dalam konteks pendidikan bahasa. Metode yang digunakan adalah tinjauan tematik naratif dengan mengelompokkan hasil penelitian ke dalam tema konseptual untuk mengidentifikasi pola umum, perbedaan temuan, dan celah penelitian. Hasil sintesis menunjukkan bahwa kelelahan emosional, penurunan motivasi belajar, dan keterlibatan akademik yang rendah sering dipicu oleh beban akademik yang tinggi, kecemasan bahasa, dan tekanan profesional sebagai calon guru. Strategi koping adaptif seperti perencanaan belajar, refleksi diri, dan regulasi emosi telah terbukti membantu mahasiswa mengelola tekanan akademik secara lebih efektif. Selain itu, pembelajaran otonom memainkan peran penting sebagai mekanisme yang memperkuat kemampuan mahasiswa dalam mengelola tujuan, strategi, dan respons terhadap stres akademik. Temuan ini menegaskan bahwa memperkuat regulasi pembelajaran mandiri merupakan kunci untuk mengurangi dampak kelelahan akademik dan mendukung keberlanjutan pembelajaran di kalangan calon guru bahasa Inggris.

**Kata kunci:** academic burnout, coping strategies, autonomous learning, pre-service teachers, pendidikan bahasa Inggris

### ABSTRACT

*Academic burnout is becoming an increasing concern in higher education, particularly among English Education students who serve as pre-service teachers with demands for language proficiency and professional preparation. This literature review aims to synthesize international research findings related to academic burnout, coping strategies, and autonomous learning in the context of language education. The method used is a narrative thematic review by grouping research results into conceptual themes to identify common patterns, differences in findings, and research gaps. The synthesis results show that emotional exhaustion, decreased learning motivation, and low academic engagement are often triggered by high academic workload, language anxiety, and professional pressure as prospective teachers. Adaptive coping strategies such as learning planning, self-reflection, and emotion regulation have been proven to help students manage academic pressure more effectively. In addition, autonomous learning plays an important role as a mechanism that strengthens students' ability to manage goals, strategies, and responses to academic stress. These findings confirm that strengthening independent learning regulation is key to reducing the impact of academic burnout and supporting the sustainability of learning among pre-service English teachers.*

**Keyword:** academic burnout, coping strategies, autonomous learning, pre-service teachers, English education

## INTRODUCTION

Academic burnout is becoming an increasingly prominent issue in higher education because it is directly related to the quality of student engagement, study continuity, and psychological well-being. Continuous academic pressure can lead to emotional exhaustion, withdrawal from academic activities, and a decline in self-esteem, which ultimately hinders the continuous learning process. In various contexts, burnout is not only understood as an individual problem, but also as a consequence of complex academic demands and a learning environment that requires a high level of self-regulation from students (Asni et al., 2024; Castada et al., 2023). This vulnerability is even more apparent in students who are in the transition phase to early adulthood, when academic demands intersect with changes in social roles and personal responsibilities (Olson et al., 2025).

In the context of language education, English Education students face multidimensional academic pressures. In addition to being required to achieve adequate language proficiency, they are also prepared as prospective teachers who must develop pedagogical, reflective, and professional skills during their studies. The dual role as language learners and pre-service teachers creates a different academic dynamic, where performance demands, language anxiety, and professional expectations influence students' learning experiences. This condition contributes to the emergence of a distinctive pattern of academic burnout, which cannot always be explained through the general framework of student burnout (Pham Thi & Duong, 2024; Ramadhana et al., 2023).

In facing these pressures, students actively use various coping strategies to maintain their academic activities. Coping strategies

reflect students' efforts to manage academic demands through problem-solving and emotion regulation approaches. Adaptive strategies, such as planning, seeking support, and self-reflection, tend to be associated with more positive academic adjustment, while less adaptive strategies have the potential to reinforce experiences of fatigue and attitudes of disengagement from learning. However, the effectiveness of coping strategies is not always uniform, as it is greatly influenced by the academic context and students' capacity to manage their learning process (Khademian et al., 2021; Takács et al., 2021).

From a learning perspective, coping strategies can be understood as part of students' autonomous learning abilities. Autonomous learning places students as active agents who consciously manage their learning goals, strategies, time, and emotional responses to academic pressure. This ability allows students to not only react to stress, but also to interpret academic experiences as part of a continuous self-regulation process (Gaeta et al., 2021). Students with better autonomous learning skills tend to show flexibility in choosing coping strategies that are appropriate to the academic situations they face, so that coping functions as a learning management mechanism, not just a response to pressure (Ismail et al., 2023; Simón-Grábalos et al., 2025; Urbina et al., 2021).

Although studies on academic burnout, coping strategies, and autonomous learning continue to evolve, discussions that specifically integrate these three aspects in the context of English Education students are still relatively limited. Most previous studies view coping as a psychological response to stress without directly linking it to the learning regulation process, while the context of language teacher education requires a more holistic understanding of

the relationship between emotional experiences and learning management. This limitation highlights the need for a literature synthesis that can map the relationship between academic burnout, coping strategies, and autonomous learning in a more structured and contextual manner.

Based on these conditions, this literature review aims to synthesize the latest findings on academic burnout among English Education students, coping strategies used in dealing with academic pressure, and the role of autonomous learning in managing the independent learning process. Through a narrative thematic approach, this study seeks to identify key patterns, similarities in findings, and research gaps that have not been widely studied. This literature review is expected to provide a conceptual contribution to understanding academic burnout as a phenomenon that is inseparable from learning regulation, as well as a theoretical basis for further research on the well-being and sustainability of learning for prospective English teachers. Conceptually, this review is based on the assumption that students with better autonomous learning abilities tend to develop more adaptive coping strategies in dealing with academic burnout. Coping strategies integrated with self-regulation are expected to play an important role in reducing the negative effects of burnout and supporting the continuity of the learning process in language teacher education.

## **METHOD**

The method used in this review is a narrative thematic literature review, which is a literature review approach that integrates and synthesizes previous research by grouping findings into

conceptual themes, rather than discussing each study separately. This approach allows researchers to identify common patterns, similarities, differences, and research gaps in academic studies related to academic burnout, coping strategies, and autonomous learning in the context of higher education (Green et al., 2006; Snyder, 2019). Through this thematic synthesis, the literature is not only summarized but also critically interpreted to build a more comprehensive understanding of the relationships between the concepts studied.

The data sources for this study are reputable international journal articles that discuss academic burnout, student coping strategies, and self-directed learning management in higher education and language education. Articles were selected based on topic relevance, methodological clarity, and empirical contributions to understanding the phenomenon under study. The review process was conducted using a literature review matrix instrument developed by the researcher to record the research objectives, subject context, methods, and main findings of each study. Data analysis was conducted through thematic coding, grouping of main concepts, and synthesis of cross-study findings to identify research trends, conceptual gaps, and theoretical implications relevant to the context of English Education students.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

The synthesis of research findings shows that academic burnout in pre-service English teachers develops as a response to continuous academic pressure, especially when the demands of foreign language learning and professional preparation as prospective educators occur simultaneously. Emotional exhaustion

arises alongside a decline in learning motivation and academic engagement, which is reinforced by linguistic anxiety and academic performance pressure in the context of language education (Pham Thi & Duong, 2024; Ramadhana et al., 2023). Although both studies confirm that academic pressure plays a significant role in triggering burnout, the difference lies in the focus of the main stressors, where Ramadhana et al. emphasize the academic burden of teacher education programs, while Pham Thi & Duong highlight the role of language anxiety and low self-efficacy. This synthesis shows that burnout in pre-service teachers is not only triggered by task intensity but also by the psychological pressures inherent in the professional formation process.

The relationship between adaptive coping and self-regulation in learning shows a close connection with the characteristics of autonomous learning. Pre-service teachers who are able to set learning goals, reflect on academic difficulties, and regulate emotional responses to pressure show a tendency to use more constructive coping strategies (Khademian et al., 2021; Xu et al., 2022). This pattern reflects the essence of autonomous learning as the ability to independently control the learning process. However, not all pre-service teachers can develop this ability consistently, especially when academic anxiety and emotional exhaustion are at high levels (Pham Thi & Duong, 2024; Zenger et al., 2025). This difference indicates that autonomous learning does not stand as a neutral skill, but is greatly influenced by an individual's psychological condition.

Academic pressure on pre-service English teachers shows greater complexity than that experienced by students in general, because they are not only required to master language skills but also to develop a

professional identity as prospective teachers. This combination of academic demands and professional expectations accelerates the onset of burnout when the coping strategies used are not adaptive (Pham Thi & Duong, 2024; Ramadhana et al., 2023). While some pre-service teachers are able to respond to pressure through self-directed learning and effective emotional regulation, others show a tendency toward academic disengagement. This synthesis indicates that there are variations in burnout experiences influenced by the capacity for autonomous learning in coping with academic pressure.

Overall, this literature review shows that academic burnout in pre-service English teachers develops through the interaction between academic pressure, learning anxiety, and the effectiveness of coping strategies. Adaptive coping oriented towards problem solving and emotional regulation contributes to the strengthening of autonomous learning as a mechanism for managing academic stress, while avoidance coping exacerbates emotional exhaustion and reduces learning engagement (Khademian et al., 2021; Xu et al., 2022). However, most studies still discuss burnout, coping, and learning regulation separately without integrating them as intertwined processes in the experiences of pre-service teachers. This synthesis emphasizes the need for research that explicitly explores how autonomous learning functions as a coping strategy in dealing with academic burnout among prospective English teachers.

## CONCLUSION

This literature review shows that academic burnout among pre-service English teachers is a multidimensional phenomenon that arises from the interaction between academic demands, professional pressures as prospective

educators, and limitations in managing independent learning. A thematic synthesis of various studies reveals a consistent pattern that emotional exhaustion, decreased motivation, and disengagement from learning are often triggered by high workloads, language anxiety, and expectations of pedagogical performance. In facing these conditions, coping strategies become the main mechanism used by students to maintain their studies, but their effectiveness varies depending on the academic context and the self-regulation capacity of each individual.

Furthermore, this study confirms that autonomous learning acts as a connecting factor that strengthens the relationship between burnout and coping strategies. Students with higher levels of learning independence tend to adopt adaptive coping strategies such as academic planning, self-reflection, and seeking constructive support, which contribute to a decrease in the intensity of burnout. Conversely, limitations in autonomous learning are often correlated with the use of maladaptive coping that exacerbates academic fatigue. These findings expand theoretical understanding by positioning coping not merely as a psychological response, but as part of an active learning regulation process in the education of prospective English teachers.

### SUGGESTION

English Education students as pre-service English teachers are advised to consistently build autonomous learning through setting realistic learning goals, establishing flexible learning strategies, and self-evaluating academic progress in order to respond more adaptively to the pressures of college and prevent the development of academic burnout. On the other hand, further research can examine the relationship between autonomous learning

and coping strategies in a more diverse context, either through a more in-depth qualitative approach or a different research design, so that the contribution of independent learning to academic resilience and student welfare can be understood more comprehensively and sustainably.

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