

Academic Task Overload and its Influence on the Productivity and Mental Health of Information Technology Students: A Basis for Curriculum Review

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ABSTRACT

Academic task overload has become a growing concern among university students, particularly in demanding programs such as Information Technology, due to its potential effects on students' productivity and mental health. This study aimed to determine the influence of academic task overload on the productivity and mental health of Information Technology students at Quezon City University and to provide a basis for curriculum review. Specifically, the study examined the respondents' demographic profile, the level of academic task overload, productivity, and mental health, as well as the significant relationships and differences among the identified variables. The study employed a quantitative correlational research design utilizing a structured survey questionnaire distributed to 400 Information Technology students from first year to fourth year levels. The gathered data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient, Independent Samples t-test, and One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). The findings revealed that the respondents experienced a high level of academic task overload, maintained a high level of academic productivity, and commonly experienced mental health concerns associated with academic demands. The study further revealed significant relationships between academic task overload and both productivity and mental health. In addition, significant differences were identified in selected variables when respondents were grouped according to gender, year level, and primary study habits. Overall, the study highlights the importance of managing academic workload and promoting strategies that support students' productivity and mental well-being within Information Technology education programs.

Keywords: academic productivity, academic task overload, mental health, quantitative correlational research, study habits

INTRODUCTION

As higher education prepares graduates for complex digital environments, unmanaged academic rigor frequently leads to task overload—a state defined by overwhelming projects, excessive workloads, and overlapping deadlines (Barbayannis et al., 2022; Cheng et al., 2026; Gusy et al., 2021; Majerová et al., 2025). This overload severely hampers student productivity, causing divided attention, reduced motivation, and lower output quality (Hysenbegasi et al., 2005; Olson et al., 2025; Qin et al., 2025). Furthermore, prolonged academic pressure triggers emotional exhaustion and psychological distress, significantly deteriorating overall life satisfaction (Chong et al., 2025; Pereira et al., 2025; World Health Organization, 2022). Even though healthier coping patterns exist, persistent, unmanaged pressure remains strongly linked to heightened anxiety and diminished well-being (Dresen et al., 2025; Hadi et al., 2025; Pérez-Jorge et al., 2025).

This strain is exceptionally demanding in Information Technology (IT) programs, where continuous logical reasoning and intensive technical tasks—such as coding and systems analysis—create a workload drastically different from other disciplines (Cheng et al., 2026; Hadi et al., 2025; Majerová et al., 2025; Olson et al., 2025). Despite broad research on general university stress (Ribeiro et al., 2018), a critical gap remains regarding how task overload simultaneously degrades both productivity and mental wellness specifically among IT students.

Most existing literature addresses isolated burnout or relies on foreign educational frameworks, necessitating localized evidence within Philippine higher education to prevent poorly sequenced tasks from ruining student engagement (Majerová et al., 2025; Olson et al., 2025; Qin et al., 2025).

To address this gap, this study investigates *Academic Task Overload and its Influence on the Productivity and Mental Health of Information Technology Students: A Basis for Curriculum Review*. Understanding these specific risk factors is vital for designing manageable academic systems without sacrificing rigorous standards (Pérez-Jorge et al., 2025; Sukanto, 2026). Ultimately, this research will foster balanced environments that improve student outcomes (Barbayannis et al., 2022), guide faculty in crafting meaningful requirements (Cheng et al., 2026), assist administrators in workload and curriculum planning (Olson et al., 2025), and expand the foundational literature on academic wellness for future researchers (Ribeiro et al., 2018).

Statement of the Problem

Academic task overload has emerged as a critical concern in higher education, particularly within rigorous programs such as Information Technology. Excessive academic demands have the potential to compromise students' productivity and deteriorate their mental health, which ultimately affects their overall well-being and academic performance. To foster a healthier learning environment and improve current educational structures, it is essential to investigate how this academic burden influences these key variables. Therefore, this study aims to examine the influence of academic task overload on the productivity and mental health of enrolled Information Technology students at Quezon City University AY:2025-2026 1st Semester, with the findings serving as an empirical basis for curriculum review.

Specifically, this study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What is the demographic profile of respondents in terms of:
 - a. Age
 - b. Gender
 - c. Year Level
 - d. General Weighted Average (AY: 2025-2026 1st Semester)
 - e. Primary Study Habits
2. What is the level of academic task overload experienced by Information Technology students in terms of:
 - a. Number of academic tasks
 - b. Time constraints
 - c. Task difficulty
3. What is the level of productivity among Information Technology students in terms of:
 - a. Time management
 - b. Academic performance
4. What is the level of mental health of Information Technology students in terms of:
 - a. Stress
 - b. Anxiety
 - c. Emotional well-being
5. Is there a significant relationship between academic task overload and the students?:
 - a. Productivity
 - b. Mental health

6. Is there a significant difference in the level of academic task overload, productivity, and mental health when respondents are grouped according to their:

- a. Year level
- b. Gender
- c. Primary study habits

Related Studies

Academic task overload—driven by curriculum overcrowding, poorly coordinated deadlines, and unrealistic expectations—consistently emerges as a primary detriment to student well-being and academic efficiency (Acosta-Enriquez et al., 2025; Eduwem & Ezeonwumelu, 2020; Mehta, 2023; Osei & Mensah, 2025; Williams et al., 2026). When academic demands exceed students' temporal and cognitive capacities, it leads to cognitive depletion, reduced motivation, and poor productivity (Akanpaadgi et al., 2023; Reyes-de-Cózar et al., 2023; Wang et al., 2025). Furthermore, prolonged exposure to this excessive workload triggers severe psychological consequences, including anxiety, burnout, emotional exhaustion, and insomnia, which collectively diminish overall learning effectiveness (Anne et al., 2025; Batucan et al., 2024; Kashif et al., 2024; Koch, 2025; Noviekayati et al., 2025; Petrache, 2019; Rreddy & Bachelor, 2022; Sukamto et al., 2026; Tayoto, 2025).

These negative impacts are notably magnified among Information Technology students due to the technical complexity of their coursework. The continuous cognitive load required for programming, debugging, and managing multiple system development projects simultaneously induces significant techno-overload, frustration, and psychological strain (Jiang et al., 2024; Pang et al., 2025; Takaoka & Sharma, 2024; Upadhyaya & Vrinda, 2021). While adaptive coping strategies, such as time management and social support, can partially mitigate these stressors (Dvořáková et al., 2019; Li et al., 2021; Pascoe et al., 2019; Rice et al., 2020; Salmela-Aro et al., 2022), the synthesized literature emphasizes that individual resilience is insufficient when institutional academic demands consistently surpass manageable limits.

DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative correlational research design to examine the naturally occurring relationships between academic task overload, productivity, and mental health among Information Technology students at Quezon City University (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Fraenkel et al., 2019; Putri et al., 2024). Data were collected through a structured, 5-point Likert scale questionnaire distributed via online and paper formats. This self-report instrument was utilized to effectively quantify students' subjective experiences, measuring specific constructs of task volume, productivity levels, and mental health indicators such as stress and anxiety (Boone & Boone, 2012; Cohen et al., 2018; Dörnyei, 2007; Robinson, 2014; Wright, 2005).

To analyze the collected data, the study utilized both descriptive and inferential statistics at a standard 0.05 level of significance (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Gravetter & Wallnau, 2014). The Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient (Pearson r) was applied to evaluate the strength and direction of the relationships between the primary variables (Schober et al., 2018). Additionally, independent sample t -tests and one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) were employed to assess significant differences across demographic groups, ensuring a systematic, evidence-based foundation for curriculum review recommendations (Field, 2018; Sutradhar et al., 2023).

Data Gathering

Primary data were gathered from a target sample of approximately 400 Bachelor of Science in Information Technology students at Quezon City University. Participants were selected using a convenience sampling technique, a non-probability method chosen for its practicality in recruiting readily available subjects through class group chats and scheduled room-to-room visits (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). To maximize response rates

and accommodate varying student accessibility, the researchers utilized a mixed-mode survey administration (Wright, 2005). Online surveys were deployed through Google Forms for their efficiency and automatic data recording capabilities (An et al., 2025; Pang et al., 2025), while printed questionnaires were distributed in person to ensure comprehensive participation. All responses were carefully consolidated into a single digital dataset for analysis.

The structured questionnaire utilized a 5-point Likert scale to quantify student perceptions (Boone & Boone, 2012; Robinson, 2014) and was adapted from validated measures tailored to the IT context. Academic task overload and productivity items were based on Upadhyaya and Vrinda (2021) and supported by Pang et al. (2025), while mental health indicators evaluating stress and emotional well-being were adapted from Takaoka and Sharma (2024). Additional programming-specific cognitive demands and technical stressors were informed by Jiang et al. (2024). Throughout the data collection process, strict ethical standards were maintained; all participants provided informed consent, participation remained entirely voluntary with the right to withdraw, and responses were kept strictly anonymous and confidential (An et al., 2025).

Statistical Treatment of Data

The data gathered in this study were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistical tools to address the research questions regarding academic task overload and its influence on the productivity and mental health of Information Technology students at Quezon City University. Frequency and percentage distribution were used to describe the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of gender, year level, and primary study habits.

Formula:

$$\text{Percentage} = (f / N) \times 100$$

Where:

f = frequency
N = total number of respondents

The mean and standard deviation were used to determine the average and variability of the respondents' age, General Weighted Average (GWA), academic task overload, academic productivity, and mental health.

Formula:

$$\bar{x} = \Sigma(f \cdot x) / N$$

Where:

$\bar{x}$ = weighted mean
f = frequency
x = scale value
N = total number of respondents

The following scale was used in interpreting the mean scores obtained from the five-point Likert scale:

Table 1. 5-Point Likert **Scale**

Range	Interpretation
4.21 – 5.00	Very High / Strongly Agree
3.41 – 4.20	High / Agree

2.61 – 3.40	Moderate / Neutral
1.81 – 2.60	Low / Disagree
1.00 – 1.80	Very Low / Strongly Disagree

The Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient (Pearson r) was used to determine whether there is a significant relationship between academic task overload and the students' academic productivity and mental health.

Formula:

$$r = \frac{\sum[(x - \bar{x})(y - \bar{y})]}{\sqrt{[\sum(x - \bar{x})^2 \sum(y - \bar{y})^2]}}$$

Where:

r = Pearson correlation coefficient
 x and y = variables being correlated
 $\bar{x}$ and $\bar{y}$ = mean values of the variables

The Independent Samples t-test was used to determine significant differences when respondents were grouped according to gender, while the One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to determine significant differences when respondents were grouped according to year level and primary study habits.

All statistical tests in this study were evaluated using a 0.05 level of significance. A p-value less than 0.05 indicates a statistically significant result, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis, while a p-value greater than 0.05 indicates that there is insufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis.

- If $p < 0.05 \rightarrow$ Reject the null hypothesis
- If $p > 0.05 \rightarrow$ Fail to reject the null hypothesis

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This section presents, analyzes, and interprets the findings gathered from the respondents regarding academic task overload and its influence on the productivity and mental health of Information Technology students at Quezon City University.

The presentation of results follows the sequence of the study's specific objectives, including the demographic profile of the respondents, the level of academic task overload, productivity, and mental health, as well as the significant relationships and differences among the identified variables. The findings are further discussed and supported using relevant theories and related studies to provide a clearer understanding of the results of the study.

A. Demographic Profile of Respondents

Table 2. Demographic Profile of Respondents in Terms of Age

Variable	Mean	Minimum	Maximum
Age	20.9	18	37

Table 2 presents the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of age. The respondents obtained a mean age of 20.9 years, with the youngest respondent being 18 years old and the oldest being 37 years old. The findings indicate that the respondents generally belong to the typical college-age range of Bachelor of Science in Information Technology students.

Table 3. Demographic Profile of Respondents in Terms of Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	256	64%
Female	144	36%
Total	400	100%

Table 3 presents the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of gender. Out of 400 respondents, 256 or 64% were male, while 144 or 36% were female. The findings indicate that the majority of the respondents were male, which may reflect the higher representation of male students in the Information Technology program.

Table 4. Demographic Profile of Respondents in Terms of Year Level

Year Level	Frequency	Percentage
1st Year	41	10.25%
2nd Year	58	14.5%
3rd Year	284	71%
4th Year	17	4.25%
Total	400	100%

Table 4 presents the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of year level. Among the 400 respondents, the majority were third-year students, comprising 284 or 71% of the total respondents. This was followed by second-year students with 58 respondents or 14.5%, first-year students with 41 respondents or 10.25%, and fourth-year students with 17 respondents or 4.25%. The findings indicate that most of the respondents came from the third-year level.

Table 5. Demographic Profile of Respondents in Terms of General Weighted Average (GWA)

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation
GWA	1.66	0.30

Table 5 presents the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of General Weighted Average (GWA). The respondents obtained a mean GWA of 1.66 with a standard deviation of 0.30. The minimum recorded GWA was 1.00, while the maximum recorded GWA was 3.25. The findings indicate that the respondents generally obtained satisfactory to above-average academic performance during the Academic Year 2025–2026 First Semester.

Table 6. Demographic Profile of Respondents in Terms of Primary Study Habits

Study Habit	Frequency	Percentage
Daily Studying	41	10.25%
Weekend Studying	109	27.25%
Cramming	178	44.50%
Output-Based Studying	72	18.00%
Total	400	100%

Table 6 presents the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of primary study habits. Among the identified study habits, cramming obtained the highest frequency with 178 respondents or 44.5%, followed by weekend studying with 109 respondents or 27.25%, consistent daily studying with 41 respondents or 10.25%, and output-based studying with 72 respondents or 18%. The findings suggest that a large portion of the respondents tend to complete academic tasks near deadlines rather than following a regular study routine.

B. Level of Academic Task Overload

Table 7. Level of Academic Task Overload Among Information Technology Students

Indicators	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Number of Academic Tasks	3.88	0.88	High
Time Constraints	3.87	0.96	High
Task Difficulty	3.92	0.88	High
Overall Mean	3.89	0.90	High

Table 7 presents the level of academic task overload among Information Technology students in terms of number of academic tasks, time constraints, and task difficulty. The respondents obtained an overall mean of 3.89 with a standard deviation of 0.90, interpreted as High. Among the indicators, task difficulty obtained the highest mean of 3.92, followed by number of academic tasks with a mean of 3.88, and time constraints with a mean of 3.87. The findings indicate that the respondents generally experience high levels of academic workload brought about by demanding academic requirements, limited time, and difficult technical tasks.

The findings support the study of Pang et al. (2025), which emphasized that excessive cognitive and academic demands contribute to fatigue, frustration, and academic strain among university students. The results also align with Cognitive Load Theory proposed by Sweller (2024), which explains that excessive academic demands may overwhelm students' cognitive capacity and negatively affect learning efficiency.

C. Level of Academic Productivity

Table 8. Level of Academic Productivity Among Information Technology Students

Indicators	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Time Management	3.74	0.97	High
Academic Performance	3.80	0.89	High
Overall Mean	3.77	0.93	High

Table 8 presents the level of academic productivity among Information Technology students in terms of time management and academic performance. The respondents obtained an overall mean of 3.77 with a standard deviation of 0.93, interpreted as High.

Among the indicators, academic performance obtained a higher mean of 3.80 compared to time management with a mean of 3.74. The findings indicate that the respondents generally maintain a relatively productive academic performance despite experiencing academic workload and time-related challenges.

The findings support the study of Upadhyaya and Vrinda (2021), which stated that academic demands and technological stress influence the productivity and performance of university students. The results suggest that students continue to accomplish academic responsibilities despite experiencing considerable academic pressures.

D. Level of Mental Health

Table 9. Level of Mental Health Among Information Technology Students

Indicators	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Stress	3.89	0.95	High
Anxiety	3.95	0.94	High

Emotional Well-being	3.83	0.97	High
Overall Mean	3.89	0.95	High

Table 9 presents the level of mental health among Information Technology students in terms of stress, anxiety, and emotional well-being. The respondents obtained an overall mean of 3.89 with a standard deviation of 0.95, interpreted as High. Among the indicators, anxiety obtained the highest mean of 3.95, followed by stress with a mean of 3.89, and emotional well-being with a mean of 3.83. The findings indicate that the respondents commonly experience mental health concerns associated with academic demands and workload.

The findings support the study of Takaoka and Sharma (2024), which identified stress, anxiety, and emotional exhaustion as common mental health concerns among students and professionals in computing-related fields. The results further suggest that academic task overload may contribute to increased psychological strain among Information Technology students.

E. Relationship Between Academic Task Overload, Productivity, and Mental Health

Table 10. Significant Relationship Between Academic Task Overload, Productivity, and Mental Health

Variables	r-value	Interpretation	p-value	Remarks
Academic Task Overload and Productivity	0.414	Moderate Positive Relationship	< 0.001	Significant
Academic Task Overload and Mental Health	0.647	Strong Positive Relationship	< 0.001	Significant

Table 10 presents the significant relationship between academic task overload, productivity, and mental health among Information Technology students. The findings revealed a significant moderate positive relationship between academic task overload and productivity ($r = 0.414$, $p < 0.001$). This indicates that changes in academic task overload are associated with changes in students' productivity. The results suggest that despite experiencing academic workload, students continue to adapt and maintain their academic performance and time management practices.

Furthermore, the findings revealed a significant strong positive relationship between academic task overload and mental health ($r = 0.647$, $p < 0.001$). This indicates that higher levels of academic task overload are associated with higher levels of stress, anxiety, and emotional strain among students. The findings support the study of Pang et al. (2025), which emphasized that excessive academic and cognitive demands contribute to fatigue and psychological strain among university students. The results also align with Cognitive Load Theory proposed by Sweller (2024), which explains that excessive academic demands may overwhelm students' cognitive capacity and negatively affect their well-being and academic functioning.

F. Significant Difference According to Gender

Table 11. Significant Difference in Academic Task Overload, Productivity, and Mental Health When Grouped According to Gender

Variables	p-value	Remarks
Academic Task Overload	0.007	Significant
Academic Productivity	0.489	Not Significant
Mental Health	< 0.001	Significant

Table 11 presents the significant difference in academic task overload, productivity, and mental health when respondents are grouped according to gender. The findings revealed a significant difference in academic task overload ($p = 0.007$) and mental health ($p < 0.001$) between male and female respondents. This indicates that gender may influence the level of academic workload experienced by students as well as their mental health conditions, particularly in terms of stress, anxiety, and emotional well-being.

On the other hand, no significant difference was found in academic productivity ($p = 0.489$) when respondents were grouped according to gender. This suggests that male and female students demonstrate relatively similar levels of productivity despite differences in academic workload and mental health experiences. The findings imply that students, regardless of gender, are generally capable of maintaining their academic responsibilities and performance under academic demands.

The findings are consistent with previous studies which suggest that academic stress and mental health experiences may vary across gender groups due to differences in coping mechanisms, emotional responses, and academic expectations (Akanpaadgi et al., 2023; Abdilah et al., 2025). However, the absence of significant differences in productivity may indicate that both male and female students employ similar strategies in managing academic requirements and maintaining academic performance.

G. Significant Difference According to Year Level

Table 12. Significant Difference in Academic Task Overload, Productivity, and Mental Health When Grouped According to Year Level

Variables	p-value	Remarks
Academic Task Overload	0.031	Significant
Academic Productivity	< 0.001	Significant
Mental Health	0.113	Not Significant

Table 12 presents the significant difference in academic task overload, productivity, and mental health when respondents are grouped according to year level. The findings revealed a significant difference in academic task overload ($p = 0.031$) and academic productivity ($p < 0.001$) among the respondents when grouped according to year level.

This indicates that students from different year levels experience varying levels of academic workload and productivity. The findings may suggest that academic requirements, technical demands, and workload expectations differ across year levels within the Information Technology program.

In contrast, no significant difference was found in mental health ($p = 0.113$) when respondents were grouped according to year level. This suggests that students across different year levels generally experience similar levels of stress, anxiety, and emotional well-being despite differences in academic workload and productivity. The findings imply that mental health concerns associated with academic demands are commonly experienced among Information Technology students regardless of year level.

The findings support the idea that academic workload and productivity demands tend to vary depending on the complexity of courses, programming requirements, and academic responsibilities encountered at different stages of the program (Pang et al., 2025; Jiang et al., 2024). However, the similarity in mental health experiences across year levels may indicate that academic stress remains a common concern among students throughout their academic journey.

H. Significant Difference According to Primary Study Habits

Table 13. Significant Difference in Academic Task Overload, Productivity, and Mental Health When Grouped According to Primary Study Habits

Variables	p-value	Remarks
Academic Task Overload	0.829	Not Significant
Academic Productivity	0.022	Significant
Mental Health	0.874	Not Significant

Table 13 presents the significant difference in academic task overload, productivity, and mental health when respondents are grouped according to primary study habits. The findings revealed no significant difference in academic task overload ($p = 0.829$) and mental health ($p = 0.874$) when respondents were grouped according to primary study habits. This suggests that students experience relatively similar levels of academic workload and mental health concerns regardless of their preferred study habits.

However, a significant difference was found in academic productivity ($p = 0.022$) when respondents were grouped according to primary study habits. This indicates that students' study habits may influence their productivity levels, particularly in terms of time management and academic performance. The findings imply that different approaches to studying may contribute to variations in how students accomplish academic tasks and maintain academic efficiency.

The findings support the idea that study habits play an important role in shaping students' academic productivity, consistent with the findings of Upadhyaya and Vrinda (2021). Students who follow more organized and consistent study practices may demonstrate better productivity compared to those who rely on cramming or irregular study routines. Despite these differences in productivity, the findings suggest that academic workload and mental health concerns remain commonly experienced among students regardless of their preferred study habits.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, it was established that Information Technology students at Quezon City University experience a high level of academic task overload in terms of number of academic tasks, time constraints, and task difficulty. Despite these academic demands, the respondents were found to maintain a relatively high level of academic productivity, particularly in terms of time management and academic performance. However, the findings also revealed that students commonly experience mental health concerns, particularly stress and anxiety, associated with academic workload and academic pressures.

The study further established that academic task overload has a significant relationship with both academic productivity and mental health among Information Technology students. This indicates that changes in academic workload are associated with corresponding changes in students' productivity and psychological well-being. In addition, significant differences were identified in certain variables when respondents were grouped according to gender, year level, and primary study habits, suggesting that students' academic experiences may vary depending on their demographic and academic characteristics.

Overall, the findings of the study highlight the importance of examining academic workload and its implications on students' productivity and mental health. The study provides empirical evidence that may serve as a basis for curriculum review and the development of academic strategies and support mechanisms that promote balanced workload distribution, improved academic productivity, and better mental well-being among Information Technology students.

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