Exploring the Lived Experiences of Seminarians: A Descriptive Exploratory Study on the Quintessential College Student Life

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Abstract
Seminary life offers dedicated opportunities for study, meditation, and spiritual growth for individuals pursuing ministry. New seminary students develop in four areas: human, spiritual, academic, and pastoral. The study focuses on the human and academic formation of seminarians. The typical student life at seminary follows the usual routine of attending classes and completing coursework over a semester. The study addressed a knowledge gap, as few studies have covered seminarians’ perceptions of college life. The study surveyed all thirty-one (31) college seminarians using total population sampling.

A descriptive phenomenological research design was employed, utilizing a validated researcher-made questionnaire to gather relevant information about the perceptions and experiences of the seminarians regarding typical student life. Data were sorted into categories and summarized using thematic analysis. The study revealed that external pressures, community expectations, and seminary traditions shape seminarians’ views on school activities. Seminarians viewed other students’ academic experiences differently because they chose a rigorous program. Moreover, their strict schedules and spiritual practices leave seminarians with less time to socialize. However, seminarians felt they had a similar social life to other students because they could still socialize and interact with peers. Additionally, seminarians managed their time for academic success and seminary life balance by prioritizing vital activities, setting limitations, and practicing self-care. By identifying and adopting these strategies, seminarians can make informed decisions and develop time management skills, resulting in a more fulfilling and productive seminary experience.

Keywords
college student, lived experience, quintessential student life, seminarians perceptions

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INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Seminary life is a unique and enriching experience that provides intense study, reflection, and spiritual growth for those pursuing a ministry or theological scholarship career. The community of scholars, mentors, and fellow learners creates a supportive environment for deepening one’s understanding of faith, theology, and ministry practice. While it demands religious commitment, academic rigor, and personal discipline, seminary life offers a sense of purpose, fulfillment, and service, shaping one’s worldview and guiding one’s vocation (Alijan, 2015).

The seminary environment, which combines study, prayer, and community, is ideal for continuing to discern God’s will. The development process that new seminary students undergo has four dimensions: human formation, spiritual formation, academic formation, and pastoral formation (Carroll, 2022). The quintessential student life is defined as the typical life of any student attending school and learning the course within a specified period during a semester (Basi, 1991).

The study focuses on the human and academic formation of seminarians, specifically their activities in school, social life, and academic life. Regarding student activities, seminarians appreciate activities that align with their religious views and practices and other institutional activities. They may have less time for extracurricular activities as they concentrate on academics and spirituality (Cannata, 2018). In terms of social life, seminarians may feel supported by their campus religious community but may feel disconnected from other students. Some seek friendships with like-minded peers, while others purposefully interact with those with different beliefs and backgrounds to broaden their perspectives (Gegajo, 2021).

Academically, seminarians prioritize their studies as preparation for future vocations, such as pastoral ministry, teaching, or other forms of service. Their strong sense of purpose and meaning in their academic work can be motivating and fulfilling (Burns, 2016).

The study operates on the premise that seminarians are committed to a religious or spiritual path, studying theology and related subjects. In contrast, typical students study various academic disciplines in college or university to acquire knowledge and skills for their future careers. Seminarians have a strong sense of religious vocation and are preparing for specific types of ministry, such as preaching, counseling, leadership, or community service. Conversely, typical students have diverse interests and goals, pursuing many fields of study to gain a broad education and develop analytical skills applicable to various areas of life. Seminarians often focus on spiritual and moral development, whereas typical students may focus more on their academic and personal growth (Chiroma, 2017; McKoon, 2023).

The study addressed a knowledge gap, as few studies have covered seminarians’ perceptions of college life. Since seminarians follow a routine different from that of typical students, the study offers rich information. It aimed to understand seminarians’ perceptions of a typical college student’s life, specifically regarding school activities, academic life, and social life, and the seminarians’ coping strategies for balancing the demands of seminary with their academic life and personal growth.

Statement of the Problem

The study explored the lived experiences of seminarians regarding quintessential student life during the Academic Year 2022-2023. Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What are the lived experiences of seminarians in terms of school activities, academic life, and social life in the context of quintessential college student life?
2. How do seminarians navigate the demands of religious life and their academic and personal growth?

METHODS

Research Design, Sample and Sampling Technique

The study utilized a descriptive, exploratory method (Creswell, 2013) to determine the lived experiences of seminarians regarding life outside the seminary, specifically the typical life of students. The study participants were the seminarians of Saint John the 23rd College Seminary, enrolled at San Isidro College (SIC), aged 19 and older, and pursuing a degree in Philosophy. The study employed total population sampling (Lavrakas, 2008) since only thirty-one (31) seminarians were available for interviews. Total population sampling is appropriate for gathering the needed information from the participants and provides a rich data source for interpretation.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Age Range</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First Year</td>
<td>19 – 22</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>35.48</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Year</td>
<td>20 – 27</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>41.94</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third Year</td>
<td>22 – 25</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6.45</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fourth Year</td>
<td>22 – 24</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16.13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Research Instrument

The researcher developed and administered a custom questionnaire to explore seminarians’ perceptions of the social and academic life of a typical student. The questionnaire was reviewed and approved by three (3) experts for construct and content validity. It contained four open-ended questions addressing the study’s concerns about the typical student’s experience in school activities, academic development, social life, and coping strategies. The survey questions were divided into four topic categories. The initial sections explored the opinions of seminarians on the school activities conducted by the institution, considering the seminary schedule. The second and third sections examined the insights of seminarians on the academic development and social lives of college students, considering their routines and life inside the seminary. The final section explored the seminarians’ coping strategies for academic requirements and personal development, considering their seminary formation.

Data Gathering Procedure

To collect the necessary data, the researchers employed an exploratory interview method to gauge the lived experiences of seminarians in their seminary life. The study explored seminarians’ perceptions of typical student life in college (Yin, 2014). The exploratory interview method (Gubrium, Holstein, Marvasti, & McKinney, 2012) was used to gather pertinent information regarding seminarians’ insights about typical college student life. Participants expressed their thoughts and experiences in response to the interview questions. Additionally, the study used a descriptive method (Best and Kahn, 1998) to gather students’ perceptions of school activities, academic and social life, and their coping experiences with academic demands and personal growth while considering their seminary formation. The interviews look between 22 and 37 minutes to complete.

Data Analysis

The data analysis procedure involved examining the perspectives and experiences of seminarians regarding their seminary life and typical student life. This qualitative approach aimed to understand the various themes that emerged from the seminarians’ responses. Initially, the researchers reviewed and familiarized themselves with the seminarians’ answers, allowing for immersion in the participants’ experiences and gaining a holistic perspective on their narratives.

After grasping the data, the researchers created preliminary codes by systematically assigning labels or categories to meaningful units within the responses. These codes helped organize the data and identify relevant patterns or themes. Subsequently, the researchers identified themes by grouping similar codes based on their underlying concepts or ideas, which brought out the salient aspects of the seminarians’ lived experiences.

The next step involved evaluating the themes, critically analyzing them to ensure they accurately represented the seminarians’ experiences and captured the essence of their narratives. The researchers assessed the coherence and consistency of each theme, ensuring congruence with the participants’ responses. Once thoroughly evaluated, the researchers named and defined each theme, generating clear and concise descriptions encapsulating the meaning and content of each theme. This process facilitated articulating the key findings and communicating the results more effectively.

Finally, the researchers synthesized the identified themes and presented them in an organized manner, weaving together the various themes to provide a comprehensive overview of the seminarians’ lived experiences and the patterns that emerged from their responses. Adopting Kiger and Varpio’s (2020) six-step methodology for thematic analysis ensured a systematic and rigorous approach to data analysis. This methodology enhanced the credibility of the study’s findings by ensuring comprehensive, accurate, and reliable analysis.

Ethical Considerations

The researchers obtained written consent from each participant to gather information. They checked with each participant to confirm satisfaction with their responses or to see if additional information was needed. Each participant reviewed the transcript and discussed any questions or concerns with the researchers. The transcript’s accuracy, from the participant’s point of view, was deemed satisfactory. The collected data was kept anonymous and confidential.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study explored the lived experiences of the college seminarians of San Isidro College regarding their perceptions of typical student life. It surveyed the students’ perceptions and experiences related to school activities, academic development, social life, and their coping strategies.

Lived Experiences of the Seminarians on the Quintessential Student Life

Seminarians Experience and Perception toward the School Activities

Figure 1 presents an overview of the thematic chart on the experiences and perceptions of the seminarians regarding the school activities at San Isidro College. Four major themes emerged: external influence for involvement (70%), feeling burdensed by the activity (60%), character development (20%), and internal influence for involvement (13.33%). Sub-themes were also recorded within these major themes.

Table 1 displays the qualitative themes of the experiences and perceptions of the seminarians regarding the school activities at San Isidro College, along with sample verbatim responses to support the themes and sub-themes.
Figure 1
Overview of the Thematic Chart on the Experience and Perception of the Seminarians Towards School Activities

Table 1
Summary of the Qualitative Themes on the Experiences and Perceptions of the Seminarians Towards the School Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Sub-Themes</th>
<th>Sample Statements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>External Influence for Involvement</td>
<td>Excitement towards the activity</td>
<td>&quot;...excited because it can give us seminarians a time to experience a night life.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>New Experience</td>
<td>&quot;...it opens new opportunity for a new experience.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Opportunity for Socialization</td>
<td>&quot;...chance and opportunity for me to socialize with my co-students.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burdened towards the Activity</td>
<td>Conflict with the Seminary Schedule</td>
<td>&quot;...felt sad for the reason that there is a possibility that I can't join...&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No Comfort in Joining</td>
<td>&quot;...I felt no comfort joining those activities for I am an introvert...&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pressured</td>
<td>&quot;I feel more pressure, because it can double my time in doing school activities...&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tiresome</td>
<td>&quot;...it's very tiresome to think....&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Character Development</td>
<td>Develops Social Discipline</td>
<td>&quot;...develop my discipline in the activities how to behave.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Builds Confidence</td>
<td>&quot;...it can boast our confidence in facing a lot of people...&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Discovers Talents and Abilities</td>
<td>&quot;...this activities are made for us students to discover our talents and abilities...&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Holistic Development</td>
<td>&quot;...school events helps me take holistic formation as a student and a person.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Improves Social Skills</td>
<td>&quot;...opportunity to build up my social skill...&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal Influence for Involvement</td>
<td>Freedom from Academic Demands</td>
<td>&quot;...opportunity to free myself from the demands of academics.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Form of Outlet</td>
<td>&quot;...take out all my boredom and other negative feelings.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Source of Energy</td>
<td>&quot;...it is one of my source of energy to be with other...&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Responses are copied verbatim.

Seminarians' perceptions of joining school activities can be influenced internally by their personal goals, interests, and values. Extroverted individuals may be motivated to join school activities and engage with other students. They may regard their participation in school events as an opportunity to enhance their social skills or make new acquaintances (Allen et al., 2018; Gegajo, 2021).
External factors, such as social pressure, community expectations, and seminary traditions, may also influence seminarians' perceptions of joining school activities. Seminarians may be required to participate in school activities to uphold their community's identity if the community is actively involved in the educational institution. Additionally, if their peers are heavily involved in extracurriculars, this might affect their outlook (Burns, 2016; Allen et al., 2018; Gegajo, 2021).

Seminarians' perceptions can also be positively influenced by character development. If they understand the value of character-building activities, they are more likely to join school activities. They may be encouraged to participate in group activities or community celebrations if they see the value in collaborating with others and taking on leadership roles (Allen et al., 2018; Gegajo, 2021; Carroll, 2022).

Conversely, the requirement to participate in school activities can also influence seminarians' perceptions negatively. They may not see the point in participating in extracurricular activities if they are preoccupied with schoolwork or religious commitments. They might view joining school activities as an added responsibility they are unwilling to take on (Burns, 2016; Allen et al., 2018).

**Seminarians Perception on the Academic Development of Other Students**

Figure 2 presents an overview of the thematic chart on the perceptions of the seminarians regarding the academic development of other students at San Isidro College. Eight themes emerged: different because of formation (40%), facing the same academic demands (23.33%), prone to distraction (20%), having plenty of time (13.33%), being competitive (10%), productive in their own way (10%), development depending on self-discipline (6.67%), and internet privileges (3.33%).

**Figure 2**
Overview of the Thematic Chart on the Perceptions of the Seminarians Towards the Academic Development of the Other Students

![Thematic Chart]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Sample Statements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Different Because of the Formation</td>
<td>&quot;...the students outside the seminary is different from the seminarians...&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faces the Same Academic Demands</td>
<td>&quot;Students outside the seminary there are also same to use seminarian. Also experience hardship in academic demand.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prone to Distraction</td>
<td>&quot;...students outside the seminary are have lots of distraction...&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plenty of Time</td>
<td>&quot;They have plenty of time to balance studies and recreation.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competitive</td>
<td>&quot;...competitive students in a sense that they have their own goals in life...&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Productive in their Way</td>
<td>&quot;They are productive in their own ways...&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development Depend on Self-Discipline</td>
<td>&quot;...academic development of the students depends on how they discipline themselves...&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet Privileges</td>
<td>&quot;...They can use internet and other social media to enhance their capacity in the academic field.&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note.** Responses are copied verbatim
Table 2 displays the qualitative themes of the perceptions of the seminarians regarding the academic development of other students at San Isidro College. Moreover, Table 2 presents sample verbatim responses to support these themes.

Some seminarians viewed the academic life of other students as different from their own because they had chosen a path of study that was often demanding and required more time and effort than other academic programs. Additionally, the specific requirements and expectations of seminary education differed from those of other academic programs, resulting in a perceived difference in the academic experience (Aligan, 2015; Chiroma, 2017; Cannata, 2018).

Additionally, some seminarians viewed the academic development of other students as having the same academic demands as theirs due to a lack of understanding or familiarity with the specific challenges of other academic programs. They may have assumed that other students had similar workloads and expectations without considering the unique demands of different areas of study (Basi, 1991; Burns, 2016; May & Elder, 2018).

Some seminarians perceived the academic development of other students as prone to distractions because they believed other students were easily distracted by their phones and social environments (May & Elder, 2018). However, some seminarians thought that other students had plenty of time to meet academic demands compared to them, perhaps because they felt the demands of their program required a higher level of commitment or because their time management skills could be improved. This perception could lead to the belief that other students were afforded more leniency or that their program was less demanding (Kaushar, 2013; Burns, 2016). Additionally, some seminarians thought that other students’ lives were more privileged because they had access to the Internet, which provided significant advantages in academic pursuits (Dontre, 2020).

Some seminarians viewed other students as competitive in academia due to societal emphasis on academic achievement and performance. Academic success is often associated with personal value and can lead to better opportunities and recognition. This emphasis on academic performance can create a competitive environment where students strive to outperform their peers. Some seminarians also viewed other students as productive in their own ways, recognizing the value of different forms of intelligence and learning styles. Traditional academic performance metrics such as grades and test scores do not always reflect a student’s intellectual capabilities or potential. Seminarians who value personal growth and self-discovery may understand that students have unique strengths and ways of contributing to the academic community (Torregosa, Ynalvez, & Morin, 2016; Carroll, 2022).

Some seminarians believed that the academic development of other students depended on their self-discipline because they recognized the need for personal responsibility and initiative in academic success. While external factors such as resources and support can undoubtedly aid a student's academic growth, ultimately, it is up to the individual to take charge of their learning and development (Torregosa, Ynalvez, & Morin, 2016).

**Seminarians Perception on the Social Life of Other Students**

Figure 3 presents an overview of the thematic chart on the perceptions of the seminarians regarding the social life of other students at San Isidro College. Seven themes were generated: freedom to do anything (47.33%), more opportunities to socialize (33.33%), complicated (23.33%), similar to the seminarians (16.67%), different from the seminarians (6.67%), always on social media (3.33%), and with their families (3.33%).

**Figure 3**
Overview of the Thematic Chart on the Perceptions of the Seminarians towards the Social Life of the Other Students
Table 3
Summary of the Qualitative Themes on the Perceptions of the Seminarians towards the Social Life of Other Students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Sample Statements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Freedom to do Anything</td>
<td>&quot;...they are very free, they can do what ever they want to do...&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More Opportunity to Socialize</td>
<td>&quot;...students who are outside the seminary have a lot of time in socializing since they have no limits in dealing with others...&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complicated</td>
<td>&quot;...social life of non-seminarians are more complicated depending on their social status because they have a wide range of social life...&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Similar to the Seminarians</td>
<td>&quot;...it is also similar to us making friends...&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Different from the Seminarians</td>
<td>&quot;...social life of the students outside the seminary is really different from us seminarians...&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Always on Social-Media</td>
<td>&quot;...students are more active in social media &amp; keep on facing their gadgets than socializing people face to face.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With their Families</td>
<td>&quot;...They are always with their family...&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Responses are copied verbatim

Table 3 displays the qualitative themes of the perceptions of the seminarians regarding the social life of other students at San Isidro College. Moreover, Table 3 presents sample verbatim responses to support these themes.

Seminarians may have an idealized or romanticized view of other students’ social lives, assuming they have more fun, freedom, or opportunities to explore than they do (Aligan, 2016; Gegajo, 2021). Seminarians often have a more structured life and a busy schedule with classes, spiritual practices, and other obligations, leaving them less free time to socialize or connect with people outside the seminary (Cannata, 2018). In contrast, other students may have more flexible schedules, fewer constraints, and more socializing opportunities (McKoon, 2023). Seminarians may feel part of a smaller and more exclusive social circle within the seminary. However, other students may have a broader social network comprising classmates, colleagues, friends, and family (Carroll, 2022). This scenario could make seminarians feel like they are missing out on social opportunities or interpersonal interactions that others enjoy (Oakley, 2017).

Some seminarians believed that the social lives of other students were more complicated because they perceived that non-seminarians had more opportunities to socialize outside of their academic commitments (McKoon, 2023). Seminarians may have different priorities and values compared to other students, which could influence their social choices and behaviors. For example, seminarians may prioritize solitude, prayer, and reflection over socializing or have more strict guidelines on appropriate social behavior or activities (Aligan, 2016; Cannata, 2018). Conversely, some seminarians may see themselves as different from other students, considering their life choices and vocation to be a form of spiritual calling that sets them apart from mainstream society (Chiorome, 2017; Carroll, 2022). Some seminarians may have similar social lives to other students because they are part of a community where they can interact with their peers and attend social events (Burns, 2016; Gegajo, 2021; McKoon, 2023).

Seminarians may perceive that other students spend excessive time on their phones or social media platforms, making them feel disconnected from others or left out of conversations and events. Some seminarians may also limit their technology use, leading to further feelings of isolation or disconnection from social life outside the seminary (May & Elder, 2018; Dontre, 2020).

Coping Strategies of the Seminarians in their Religious Life

Figure 4 presents an overview of the thematic chart on the coping strategies of the seminarians in their religious life, considering their academic development and personal growth. Three major themes were generated: resource management strategies (70%), internal strategies (60%), and external strategies (23.33%). On the other hand, Table 4 displays the qualitative themes of the coping strategies of the seminarians in their religious life, considering their academic development and personal growth. Moreover, Table 4 presents sample verbatim responses to support the themes and sub-themes.

Effective resource management is essential for seminarians to cope with the academic demands of their seminary formation while maintaining a healthy work-life balance (Pintrich, Smith, Garcia, & Mckeachie, 1991). Seminarians made to-do lists of their daily tasks, prioritized them according to urgency, and focused on the most critical tasks first. Some seminarians created schedules for their academic work, including assignments, class schedules, and study time, as well as personal commitments like prayer and leisure activities (Ramli, Muljono, & Alfendi, 2018). Furthermore, seminarians aimed to balance their academic demands and personal life.

Some seminarians implemented effective time management strategies, finding time to engage in personal activities such as exercise, hobbies, or leisure. Practical time management skills helped seminarians prioritize their academic demands and personal growth. Setting realistic goals and breaking them into achievable tasks helped them stay focused and productive (Garcia, Flakner, & Vivian, 2020). Some seminarians did not disregard their personal needs, such as physical and emotional self-care routines. They prioritized rest, relaxation, and sleep to maintain mental and emotional health (Gegajo, 2021). In conclusion, managing time and tasks effectively is essential for seminarians for academic success and maintaining a healthy work-life balance. By prioritizing essential tasks, setting boundaries, and focusing on self-care, seminarians can successfully navigate their seminary formation while maintaining a balanced lifestyle.

Some seminarians cultivated a sense of self-awareness by reflecting on their thoughts, emotions, and behaviors. Self-awareness helped them understand their strengths and limitations, as well as their triggers for stress and anxiety. Additionally, a growth mindset allowed the seminarians to view their academic demands and personal growth as opportunities for learning and development rather than as sources of pressure or failure.
Table 4
Summary of the Qualitative Themes on the Coping Strategies of the Seminarians

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Sub-Themes</th>
<th>Sample Statements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Resource Management</td>
<td>Task Management</td>
<td>“...to prioritize and schedule your activities accordingly...”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategies</td>
<td>Time Management</td>
<td>“...it is good to develop time management and time frame in order to make an action...”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Being Flexible</td>
<td>“...I remain flexible by being prepared to adjust my priorities and goals as needed...”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Detaching from the Demands</td>
<td>“...to detach myself from this academic and personal demands for an hour every day to relax...”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal Strategies</td>
<td>Prayer</td>
<td>“… and most of all pray in whatever concerns, trusting to the Lord all that is.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inspirations from Religious Life</td>
<td>“By making my religious life as my inspiration to grow inevitably...”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Personal Time</td>
<td>“By balancing my personal time to cope with this demand...”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Consolation of the Heart</td>
<td>“…my coping mechanism to have a consolation in my heart.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Being Responsible</td>
<td>“Be responsible,...”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Self-Discipline</td>
<td>“…By disciplining myself can help me to control and balance...”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Self-Examination</td>
<td>“…I practice to examine myself and to be aware of significant feelings...”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External Strategies</td>
<td>Listening to Music</td>
<td>“Most of the time I spend coping up on things through music...”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Following the Seminary Schedule</td>
<td>“…following our seminary schedules...”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Being Productive</td>
<td>“…be productive in every hour...”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Asking for Guidance</td>
<td>“By allowing myself to be guided by my spiritual director amidst the hectic schedules.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Staying in the Chapel</td>
<td>“… if I am in struggle, I stay in our chapel...”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Responses are copied verbatim.
Moreover, mindfulness meditation and prayer helped the seminarians reduce stress and improve focus and attention. Practicing mindfulness and prayer kept them grounded in the present moment and helped them manage their emotions better (Raml, Muljono, & Afendi, 2018; Zaccone & Pedrini, 2019; Gega, 2021).

Seminarians found support by connecting with peers and mentors. Sharing their experiences with others helped them feel understood and validated. A supportive social network inside and outside the seminary helped seminarians feel less isolated and stressed (Zaccone & Pedrini, 2019). Some seminarians chose to listen to music to relax and de-stress. They listened to uplifting or spiritual songs that helped them feel more connected to their faith or calming music that helped them focus on their studies. Seminarians also found solace in quiet places like chapels, libraries, or gardens. These places provided peaceful environments where they could reflect and recharge their energy (Raml, Muljono, & Afendi, 2018). Some seminarians often sought spiritual guidance from their mentors or spiritual directors. They used prayer or meditation to connect with their faith and better understand their formation (Gega, 2021; Carroll, 2022). These coping mechanisms provided much-needed stress relief, allowing them to stay focused on their studies and spiritual journey.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

The perceptions of seminarians toward school activities may be attributed to external factors, community expectations, and seminary traditions that shape their perspectives on such activities. The seminarians’ viewpoint may also affect their peers’ extracurricular involvement. Seminarians may also have varying views of school activities. They may not value extracurriculars if they are busy with school or their formation, and they may also consider school activities as an extra obligation. Character development can also improve seminarians’ views, as engaging in character-building activities makes them more likely to participate in school activities. Personal aspirations, interests, and ideals can affect a seminarian’s school participation, with some using school events to improve their social skills or meet new people.

The perceptions of seminarians toward academic development may regard other students’ academic lives as distinct from their own because they have chosen an exigent and intensive program. Due to a lack of knowledge of different academic programs, some seminarians may regard other students’ academic progress as having the same academic needs as theirs. Some seminarians may think other students’ progress in school is easily diverted by their phones and social lives. Because their program requires more dedication, some seminarians may believe that other students have more time to meet academic requirements than they do. Academic performance encourages students to perform better than their peers, and due to their appreciation of diverse intelligence and learning methods, some seminarians may consider other students productive. Because academic success requires personal responsibility and initiative, some seminarians believe that self-discipline is crucial to some students’ academic development. Internet access may lead some seminarians to believe that other students have an academic advantage, as internet connection and its vast resources can be helpful academically in such instances.

The perceptions of seminarians toward social life may paint other students’ social lives as idyllic, thinking they have greater enjoyment, independence, and freedom. Moreover, seminarians have less time to mingle and connect with people outside the seminary because of their strict schedules and spiritual practices. Seminarians may value different things than other students, affecting their social conduct. Additionally, seminarians may value solitude, meditation, and reflection over socializing. Because seminarians are part of a community where they can socialize and interact with peers, they may believe they have similar social lives to other students.

Seminarians have to manage their resources to balance academics and seminary life. Time management is crucial for academic performance and seminary life balance for a seminarian. Emphasizing key activities, creating limits, and emphasizing self-care while maintaining a healthy lifestyle can help seminarians succeed. Seminarians who reflect on their thoughts, emotions, and actions gain self-awareness, which can help them recognize their weaknesses and stressors. While mindfulness and prayer help them focus and manage their emotions, seminarians support each other by sharing their experiences, validating them and helping them feel less lonely and pressured within a supportive social network. Music helps some seminarians unwind, and chapels, libraries, and gardens can comfort seminarians. These stress-relieving techniques help them focus on their academic pursuits and spiritual journey.

Recommendations

Based on the study’s findings and considering its limitations, the following recommendations can be made to improve programs designed to prepare seminarians and students for college life. Educational programs must emphasize the distinctive challenges and opportunities that college students encounter in today’s world. The program could encompass addressing issues such as mental health, financial management, work-life balance, social dynamics, and career planning.

Colleges could prioritize the development of robust support systems to cater to the evolving needs of their students. The college could involve the availability of counseling services, mentorship programs, peer support networks, and academic assistance. Ensuring access to these resources can help students better cope with challenges they may face in their academic and personal lives. Future research could explore how college students perceive the life of seminarians, as well as the unique challenges they face. This exploration would allow for a more comprehensive and nuanced perspective on both viewpoints.
**References**


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**Author(s)**’ Statements on Ethics and Conflict of Interest

**Ethics Statement**

The author/s hereby declare that research/publication ethics and citing principles have been considered in all the stages of the study. The author/s take full responsibility for the content of the paper in case of dispute.

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