

Lived Experiences of Radiologic Technology Interns During Clinical Duty

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Abstract

Radiologic Technology internship represents a critical transition from academic preparation to clinical practice; however, this transition remains insufficiently examined in relation to interns' lived experiences. This study explored the lived experiences of Radiologic Technology interns during clinical duty in hospital settings. A qualitative descriptive phenomenological design was employed, utilizing in-depth semi-structured interviews with selected participants until data saturation was achieved. The analysis generated three major themes: Caseload Exposure Gradient, Temporal Exposure Flux, Resonance Calibration. Findings revealed a gap between theoretical instruction and clinical application, as interns encountered difficulties in managing workload demands, adapting to clinical environments, and handling diverse patient interactions, resulting in emotional strain and pressure in task performance. Professional values such as empathy, patience, and accountability were developed through actual clinical exposure rather than prior academic preparation. Furthermore, confidence and readiness emerged progressively through repeated task performance and experiential learning. These findings highlight the need to strengthen academic preparation, enhance clinical support, and integrate experiential and emotional readiness in internship programs. Keywords: coping strategies, lived experiences, overall well-being, radiologic technology interns, time pressure, workload

Keywords: *lived experiences, elderly people, hemodialysis treatment, coping strategies*

1. Introduction

In an environment that is physically and mentally demanding, Radiologic Technology combines theoretical learning with practical application through clinical duties (Cranage, 2024). These experiences bridge academic knowledge and real hospital practice but also expose students to physically and emotionally challenging situations. As a result, heavy workloads and time constraints often negatively affect interns' performance, motivation, and well-being.

Clinical internship programs help students develop professional skills in hospital settings through diagnostic and therapeutic procedures (Jainal et al., 2024). However, students' emotional well-being during clinical exposure is often overlooked despite its importance in professional development (Jeyandrabalan, 2022). Radiologic Technology students commonly experience stress due to demanding clinical placements, accelerated academic programs, and the need to quickly adapt to advancing technology and clinical responsibilities (Cruz et al., 2024).

Radiographic skills require the practical application of theoretical knowledge, such as operating imaging equipment, positioning patients, and solving procedural problems (Wasserman et al., 2025). The integration of knowledge and technical skills is essential for accurate diagnoses and patient safety. Without sufficient clinical exposure, students may struggle to apply theoretical concepts effectively in actual practice.

The growing academic demands in Radiologic Technology require effective time management to balance coursework, clinical responsibilities, and personal well-being (Hassan & Sison, 2025). Institutions are encouraged to provide stress management programs, counseling, and workload adjustments to support students. Anxiety during initial clinical exposure is also influenced by unfamiliar environments, lack of experience, patient interactions, and fear of making mistakes (Masoumi, 2025).

New responsibilities, tight deadlines, and pressure to perform often create psychological stress among interns (Internhub, 2025). In the Philippines, Radiologic Technology interns face challenges such as pediatric patient handling, heavy workloads, and gaps between theory and practice during their 11-month internship. Despite these difficulties, interns develop competencies through time management, peer support, communication, mentorship, and strong academic preparation (Cañete et al., 2025).

Clinical duties and hospital settings also contribute to fatigue, sleep disturbances, anxiety, and burnout among students (Ramirez et al., 2023). Exposure to emergency cases and demanding night shifts may increase procedural errors caused by fatigue. These stressors can negatively affect both students' emotional well-being and long-term health.

International studies similarly report challenges in clinical adaptation and skill acquisition among radiology students. Students in countries such as New Zealand, Qatar, and the United States experienced difficulties adapting to technology, managing mental health, and coping with long working hours and traumatic cases (Campbell, 2021; Al-Nadji et al., 2024; Desert Valley Radiology, 2025). These findings highlight the importance of institutional support systems.

Challenges in clinical training include inadequate equipment, overcrowded duty rooms, and gaps between theory and practice (Shafuda et al., 2025). Despite these concerns, many students still perceive their clinical environments as supportive of learning and professional growth. Positive feedback and supportive learning environments also

improve student motivation and confidence (Thompson et al., 2022).

Balancing academic and clinical responsibilities often increases stress among Radiologic Technology interns. Effective time management has been associated with improved academic performance and reduced stress levels. Educational institutions are therefore encouraged to implement time management training, counseling services, and flexible learning programs to support interns' well-being (Hassan & Sison, 2025).

Emotional well-being refers to the ability to maintain emotional balance, cope with stress, and regulate emotions effectively. In healthcare education, stressors such as heavy workloads, fear of errors, patient conditions, and interactions with clinical staff may negatively affect students' confidence, emotional health, and readiness for professional practice (Jeyandrabalan, 2025).

Promoting emotional well-being and resilience among Radiologic Technology students is essential for long-term professional sustainability. Educational institutions play a significant role in preparing students academically, clinically, and emotionally through coping strategies and supportive learning environments. Positive interactions with instructors and staff can improve learning experiences, while negative encounters may increase anxiety and emotional strain (Jeyandrabalan, 2025).

Although many studies focus on clinical competencies and performance, limited research examines how time pressure, workloads, and stressors affect the emotional well-being of Radiologic Technology interns. There is also limited understanding of how academic preparation influences students' ability to cope with clinical demands. Addressing these gaps may improve internship programs and strengthen support systems for interns.

This study aims to contribute to the improvement of support systems and balanced clinical workloads for Radiologic Technology interns. By exploring interns' lived experiences, the study provides insights into the academic and clinical challenges they encounter. The findings may help improve curricular design, internship policies, and clinical supervision strategies.

Additionally, LORMA Colleges, clinical supervisors, and partner hospitals may use the findings to strengthen internship programs and mentoring practices. The study may also serve as a valuable reference for future researchers in Radiologic Technology education and clinical training. Overall, the study seeks to support the development of competent and resilient future radiologic technologists.

2. Objectives

This study aimed to explore the lived experiences of Radiologic Technology interns during clinical duties.

3. Materials and Methods

This study utilized a qualitative descriptive phenomenological research design to explore and describe the lived experiences of Radiologic Technology interns during their clinical duties (Dumlao, 2023). The design focused on understanding participants' perspectives and experiences in their natural clinical environment.

The study was conducted at the College of Radiologic Technology of LORMA Colleges in Carlatan, City of San Fernando, La Union, involving 10 participants selected until data saturation was reached. Saturation was achieved when additional interviews no longer generated new themes or insights related to the interns' experiences.

Participants were selected through purposive sampling because they met the study criteria and possessed relevant clinical experiences. The study focused on Radiologic Technology interns who voluntarily participated and shared their lived experiences during clinical duty.

The inclusion criteria included 4th-Year Radiologic Technology interns enrolled at LORMA Colleges during S.Y. 2025–2026, aged 21 years old and above, with at least six months of clinical experience and completion of one semester of internship. Participants were assigned in different clinical settings, including MMMH and MC in Batac, Ilocos Norte, and ITRMC in San Fernando, La Union, and willingly provided informed consent.

Following approval from the Research Ethics Committee (REC) and permission from the Dean of the College of Radiologic Technology, participants were recruited through formal announcements and direct communication. The researchers explained the study's purpose and ensured voluntary participation.

Semi-structured face-to-face interviews were conducted individually in a private room at SLRT, LORMA Colleges, every Saturday. Interviews lasted approximately 30 to 45 minutes and were audio-recorded with participants' consent. Each participant underwent at least three interviews, with the final interview conducted to validate responses.

Open-ended questions were used to encourage participants to discuss their experiences, perceptions, and coping strategies during clinical duties. Researchers also documented observational notes and non-verbal cues to support data interpretation.

The researchers analyzed the data using Braun and Clarke's six-phase thematic analysis framework. Interview responses were reviewed, coded, organized into themes, and refined to identify meaningful patterns regarding the lived experiences of Radiologic Technology interns during clinical duty.

4. Results

The results of the analysis of the selected participants provided an understanding of the Radiologic Technology interns' experiences, feelings, lessons and insights during their clinical duty. This chapter presents the individual interviews detailing their lived experiences regarding professional demands and personal adaptation. From the collected data, the researchers identified three major themes: (1) Workload Exposure, (2) Time

Pressure and Flux, and (3) Coping Mechanisms and Calibration.

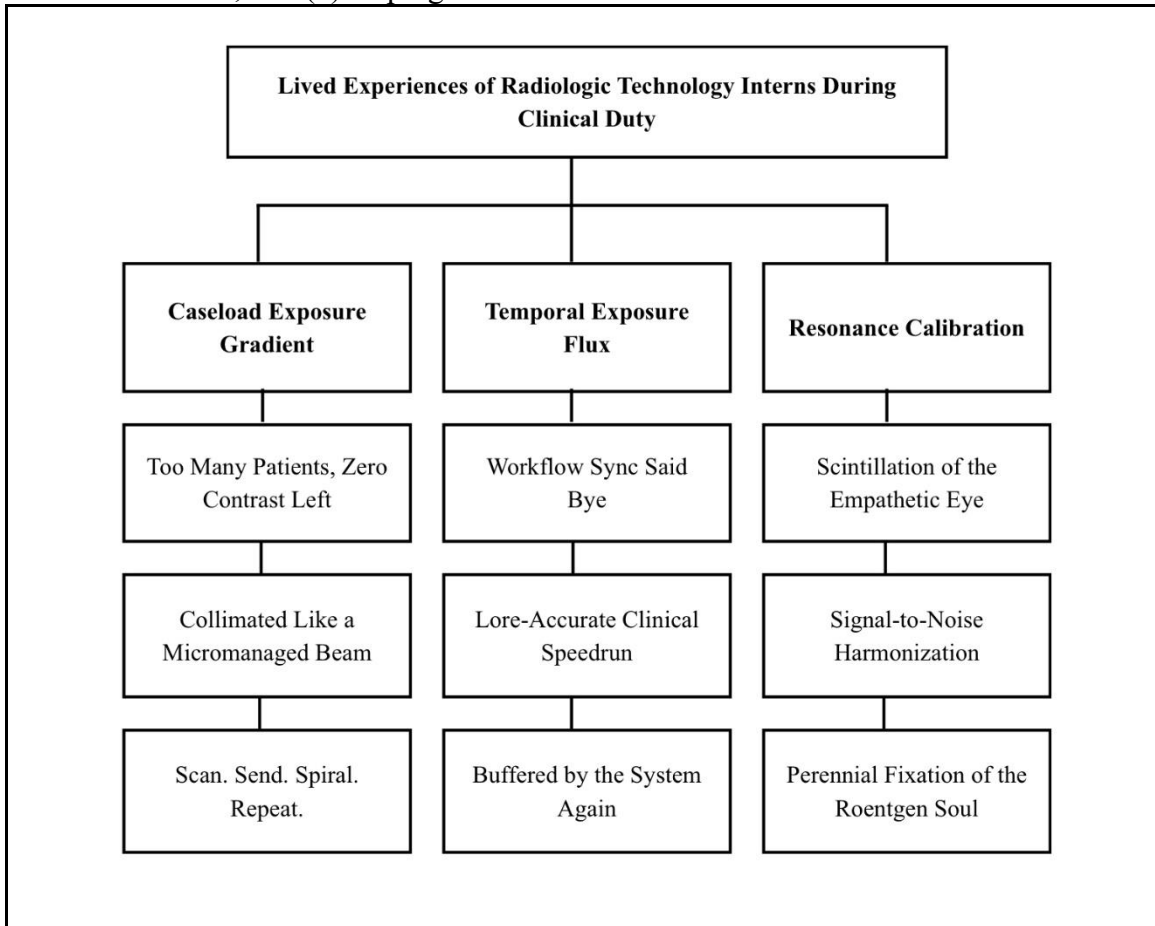


Figure 1 Lived experiences of Radiologic Technology Interns During Clinical Duty were analyzed, revealing three (3) major themes and ten (9) subthemes. 'Caseload Exposure Gradient' describes the heavy workload experiences while the themes 'Temporal Exposure Flux' explores the time pressure faced by the interns, and 'Resonance Calibration' explores the coping strategies and overall lessons learned respectively.

5. Discussion

The first major theme, **Caseload Exposure Gradient**, describes how participants experienced heavy workloads and continuous patient flow during their clinical duties. The demanding and repetitive nature of tasks significantly shaped their clinical performance and overall experiences while also helping them develop adaptability and resilience in the workplace.

The subtheme **Too Many Patients, Zero Contrast Left** highlights how participants perceived the clinical environment as stressful yet formative due to the overwhelming number of patients, especially in public hospitals. The continuous influx of patients created pressure and exhaustion, requiring interns to remain focused and professional throughout their duties. Despite the challenges, these experiences strengthened their discipline, resilience, and ability to manage workflow efficiently.

The subtheme **Collimated like a Micromanaged Beam** describes the strict supervision and rigid adherence to clinical protocols experienced by participants during their internship. Interns reported feeling pressured to avoid mistakes and carefully follow

staff instructions to prevent reprimands. Although constant monitoring created anxiety and apprehension, participants also recognized that staff guidance and mentorship improved their confidence, patient handling skills, and procedural competence.

The subtheme **Scan, Send, Spiral, Repeat** discusses the repetitive and exhausting nature of administrative and clinical tasks during internship. Participants described their work as physically and mentally draining due to the endless cycle of encoding, patient positioning, and routine procedures. Over time, the repetitive workflow became mechanical and monotonous, making interns feel obligated to continuously perform the same tasks until the end of their shifts.

The second major theme **Temporal Exposure Flux** describes the interns' experiences of adapting to constantly changing clinical schedules, shifting workloads, and varying learning demands during clinical duty. Participants highlighted how fluctuating work rhythms, emergency situations, and workflow interruptions required continuous adjustment and adaptability in the hospital environment.

The subtheme **Workflow Sync Said Bye** emphasizes the unpredictable and demanding nature of clinical schedules. Participants shared that extended duties, uncertain end times, and continuous patient flow created stress and exhaustion, but these experiences also strengthened their resilience, time-management skills, persistence, and accountability. Constant exposure to unpredictable workflows helped interns adapt to the fast-paced reality of clinical practice.

The subtheme **Lore Accurate Clinical Spectrum** describes how the high-pressure clinical environment accelerated interns' learning and professional growth. Participants explained that maintaining focus, discipline, and professionalism helped them manage demanding workloads effectively. Guidance from clinical staff also improved their confidence, technical skills, and procedural competence, allowing them to transform pressure into meaningful clinical experience.

The subtheme **Buffered by the System Again** discusses how workflow interruptions, delays, and operational limitations became part of the interns' learning experiences. Participants described how delays caused by equipment preparation, staff availability, and strict clinical standards required patience, careful attention, and technical adjustment. These interruptions often allowed interns to recalibrate their skills and adapt school-based knowledge to actual hospital practice.

The third major theme **Resonance Calibration** focuses on the coping mechanisms, emotional adjustments, and lessons learned by Radiologic Technology interns during their clinical internship. Findings revealed that interns developed empathy, self-regulation, professionalism, patience, and resilience while dealing with the emotional and technical demands of clinical practice.

The subtheme **Scintillation of the Empathetic Eye** highlights how interns developed empathy toward patients and staff as a way of coping with emotionally demanding situations. Participants emphasized the importance of patience, understanding patients' conditions, and recognizing their struggles despite stressful interactions. Expressions of gratitude from patients also gave interns a sense of fulfillment and motivation, reinforcing their commitment to compassionate and patient-centered care.

The subtheme **Signal-to-Noise Harmonization** describes how interns managed stress and minimized interpersonal conflict by building supportive relationships with co-interns and clinical staff. Participants viewed their fellow interns as an important support

system that helped them endure stress, fatigue, and demanding workloads. Positive relationships and teamwork with staff and co-interns also improved communication, reduced conflict, and created smoother workflow during duty.

The subtheme **Perennial Fixation of the Roentgen Soul** reflects the interns' strong commitment to their professional growth and future careers as Radiologic Technologists. Participants described how discipline, mentorship, and continuous exposure to clinical practice helped them build confidence, improve technical competence, and gradually see themselves as future professionals in the field. Learning practical techniques from clinical staff also allowed interns to refine their skills beyond textbook knowledge.

6. Conclusion

This study explored the lived experiences of Radiologic Technology interns during their clinical duties and revealed that clinical internship plays a vital role in developing technical competence, adaptability, resilience, and professional growth. Exposure to heavy workloads, repetitive procedures, unpredictable schedules, and demanding clinical environments enabled interns to strengthen their confidence, efficiency, and ability to perform under pressure. Despite experiencing stress, fatigue, and workflow interruptions, interns were able to adapt to the fast-paced nature of hospital settings and gradually improve their clinical skills and decision-making abilities.

The findings further showed that continuous exposure to different patient situations, staff interactions, and challenging clinical responsibilities contributed to the development of emotional resilience, empathy, professionalism, and patient-centered care. Interns learned the importance of patience, emotional control, teamwork, and maintaining professionalism even in stressful situations. These experiences also enhanced their communication skills, coping strategies, and readiness for future professional practice.\

Moreover, the study highlighted that constantly changing clinical workflows and emergency-based learning environments served as important opportunities for personal and professional development. Although the internship experience was physically and emotionally demanding, it allowed interns to become more adaptable, disciplined, and clinically prepared for the responsibilities of becoming future Radiologic Technologists. Overall, the study concludes that clinical internship is not only essential for technical skill acquisition but also for shaping emotionally resilient, competent, and patient-centered healthcare professionals. influenced the quality of care provided to patients.

7. Acknowledgements

This study was made possible through the guidance, support, and encouragement of individuals who contributed to the completion of this research. The researchers sincerely express their gratitude to everyone who helped broaden their knowledge and perspectives throughout this academic journey.

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The researchers also express their appreciation to Mr. Jerome C. Vera and the Research Ethics Committee for approving the conduct of the study and supporting the research process.

Sincere gratitude is extended to all participants who voluntarily shared their experiences and insights during data gathering. Their cooperation and participation played a vital role in the completion of this study.

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9. Appendices

APPENDIX A Approval Sheet from the Research Ethics Committee



LC-REC Form #024
APPROVAL LETTER

REC Reference #: 2026-020

April 8, 2026

To: **Rodrigo Callos Jr., Lance Caleb Failon, Renato Maglaya, Marc Jolo Manzano, Jazzlyn Mae Morales and Janine Valdez**
LORMA Colleges, College of Radiologic Technology

Subject: Approval of the Research Study – “LIVED EXPERIENCES OF RADIOLOGIC TECHNOLOGY INTERNS DURING CLINICAL DUTY” – by the Research Ethics Committee (REC).

Dear Researcher/s,

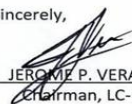
The Research Ethics Committee (REC) has reviewed your application to conduct the above-mentioned research study in the Ilocos Training Regional Medical Center and Mariano Marcos Memorial Hospital and Medical Center with you as the Principal Investigators within a duration of April 8, 2026 to April 8, 2027.

The Following documents have been reviewed and approved:

1. Endorsement of the Research Coordinator
2. Title and Statement of the Problem/Objective
3. Literature Review
4. Methods and Procedures
5. Population and Locale
6. Exclusion/Inclusion Criteria
7. Data Analysis
8. Ethical Considerations

The institutional REC expects to be informed about the progress of the study, any revision in the protocol before implementation and participants'/respondents' information/informed consent. Likewise, you are required to provide the Board a copy of the final report.

Yours Sincerely,


JEREMIE P. VERA, LPT
Chairman, LC-REC

10. Author(s) Biodata

Rodrigo G. Callos, Lance Caleb F. Failon, Renato B. Maglaya, Marc Jolo D. Manzano, Jazzlyn Mae S. Morales, and Jhanine O. Valdez are 3rd-year students enrolled in the Bachelor of Science in Radiologic Technology at LORMA Colleges. Together with their research adviser, Mr. Bernardo B. Tayaban Jr., they conducted a study exploring the “Lived Experiences Of Radiologic Technology Interns During Clinical Duty”. The group demonstrates strong commitment and dedication to their research endeavor, aiming to gain meaningful insights into clinical internship experiences and contribute to the advancement of radiologic technology education.