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Academic Burnout Among Undergraduate And Postgraduate University Students Of Delhi-NCR

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Abstract: Burnout has primarily been perceived as a workplace stress overload phenomenon, but with the passage of time and the modernisation wave at its peak presently, burnout has begun to manifest itself in the lives of the student population too. In the light of paucity of related literature within the Indian research pool, the present study was undertaken to examine the differences on the academic burnout levels among the undergraduate and postgraduate university students of Delhi NCR. The response form prepared using the Oldenburg Burnout Inventory-Student Version was circulated among the students both via online and offline mediums. A total sample of 150 students (75 undergraduates and 75 postgraduates) were drawn with the help of snowball sampling approach from various colleges of Delhi NCR. The data was analysed using Independent samples t test and the result findings indicated a statistically significant difference on the level of disengagement academic burnout dimension, whereas no significant difference was revealed on the level of exhaustion academic burnout dimension. The present findings pose pertinent implications for both public and private educational institutions toward the planning, management and prevention of burnout among their student population enrolled in various undergraduate and postgraduate programs.

Index Terms: Academic Burnout, Disengagement, Exhaustion, University Students, Oldenburg burnout inventory-student version

I. INTRODUCTION

Burnout as a concept was first elucidated by Herbert Freudenberger (1974) as the condition “to fail, wear out, or become exhausted by making excessive demands on energy, strength, or resources” (Kahill, 1988). Burnout has primarily been perceived as a workplace stress overload phenomenon, but with the passage of time and the demands of modernisation at its peak presently, burnout has begun to manifest itself in the lives of the student population too (Bakker et al., 2002; Demerouti, et al., 2001). Academic burnout refers to the exhaustion and disengagement symptoms experienced by students on account of long term exposure to specific educational demands (Reis et al., 2015; Ezeudu et al., 2020).

Despite the fact that the students are not formal employees of the educational institutions which they attend. Bresó et al., (2007) highlighted that from a psychological viewpoint, many of their activities can be considered as “work”. Student life amid a university setting demands pupils to occupy themselves in an array of demanding tasks such as attending lectures, writing assignments, studying and attempting examinations which all form a part of “work” in the life of a university student.

College goes experience serious and prolonged stressors amid their academic ecosystem such as educational workload, time limitations, continuous examinations, competitive peer environment, perceived irrelevance of subject matter, and inadequate support and attention from the professors- all accounting for development of burnout among the college pupil populations (Moneta,

2011). College student burnout gives rise to increased absenteeism, reduced motivation to meet academic deadlines, and elevated attrition rates. The psychological symptoms of burnout among college goers manifest in the form of frustration, anxiety, depression, hostility, and fear; Physiological symptoms manifest in the form of sleep disturbances, physical fatigue, and increased substance abuse (Yang, 2004)

Due to paucity of related literature within the Indian research pool, the present study was undertaken to examine the differences on the academic burnout levels of undergraduate and postgraduate college students studying in numerous colleges of Delhi NCR.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A study by *Song et al.*, (2022) studied the relationship between digital classroom teaching and pupil's academic burnout in a group of 206 Chinese university students. The result findings showed that inapt and excessive use of unintegrated digital learning and teaching pedagogies in the classroom was positively associated with college students' academic burnout. From the causal point of view, academic burnout correlated more with students' personal factors than with external factors like teachers, university rules and environment implicating digital technology integration, enriching teacher leadership in the digital classroom, boosting peer support and nurturing students' resilience as meaningful options of safeguarding against academic burnout.

A study by *Li et al.*, (2021) evaluated the prevalence and the association of some possible factors with burnout among undergraduate students of a Chinese university in Dali. The results of the cross-sectional study analysed via ANOVA and multiple linear regression revealed an overall academic burnout prevalence of 38.1% with higher burnout mean scores for women. The study findings revealed 3 burnout predictors comprising social factors, school factors, and interpersonal communication of the undergraduate university students.

Škodová et al., (2017) examined the differences in engagement and burnout syndrome among 171 nursing and psychology students of a Slovakian university. The study findings reflected a significant negative association between the engagement and burnout levels of students with higher engagement scores among the psychology students while higher burnout levels among the nursing students.

Rahmati (2015) studied academic burnout in the Iranian context with high-low level of self-efficacy using the Bresno's academic burnout and Sherer's self-efficacy questionnaires. The result findings showed a negative relationship among self-efficacy and academic burnout dimensions, emotional exhaustion, uninterested in academics and inefficacy of academics.

David (2010) highlighted the relationship of individual personality, academic motivation and burnout among 150 college going students using bivariate correlations and path analyses. The findings indicated a significant link between the conscientiousness personality dimension and burnout dimension of efficacy; substantial link between cynicism dimension of burnout and both extrinsic motivation and amotivation; substantial link between intrinsic motivation and burnout dimension of efficacy; substantial link between cynicism burnout dimension and both emotional exhaustion and efficacy.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

To examine the differences on the academic burnout levels of undergraduate and postgraduate college students studying in various universities of Delhi NCR with the following two objectives:-

1. To study the difference on the level of disengagement dimension of academic burnout among UG & PG university students.
2. To find out the difference on the level of exhaustion dimension of academic burnout among UG & PG university students.

The sample for the present study consisted of 150 student respondents (75 undergraduate and 75 post-graduate) attending regular in the age group of 17-24 years belonging to various universities based in Delhi NCR. Oldenburg Burnout Inventory- Student Version (OLBI-S) by Campos et al., (2012) which measures the academic burnout on two dimensions: exhaustion and depersonalization was employed as a research tool for the present study. The scale consists of 16-items on a 4-point likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly agree) to 4 (strongly disagree), with both subscales comprising eight items each, out of which four are positively worded and four negatively worded. The negatively worded items on each subscale follow reverse scoring (1=4, 2=3, 3=2 and 4=1). Higher OLBI-S mean scores indicate higher academic burnout in a student. The scale depicts a good internal consistency reliability with 0.77 as the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient value.

The collected data was statistically analysed by computing mean, standard deviation and t test scores for the study sample.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1- Mean, SD and t value for Disengagement Burnout dimension among UG & PG students

Burnout Dimension	Academic Group	N	Mean	SD	t value	Sig (p)
Disengagement	Undergraduate	75	19.68	3.28	3.507	Sig***
	Post-graduate	75	17.75	3.47		

Significant at both levels (0.05 & 0.01)

Table 2- Mean, SD and t value for Exhaustion Burnout dimension among UG & PG students

Burnout Dimension	Academic Group	N	Mean	SD	t value	Sig (p)
Exhaustion	Undergraduate	75	20.73	3.74	1.814	Insig
	Post-graduate	75	19.68	3.37		

Insignificant at both levels (0.05 & 0.01)

The present research was conducted to study the differences on the level of academic burnout (disengagement and exhaustion dimensions, respectively) among undergraduate and post-graduate university students of Delhi NCR. From the result findings, it can be inferred that for the level of academic burnout corresponding to the **disengagement** dimension (Table 1), the mean score of undergraduate & postgraduate students was found to be 19.68 and 17.75 respectively, with a t value of 3.507 which was found to be significant at both .05 and .01 levels of significance, thus clearly indicating a significant difference in the disengagement academic burnout levels of the two academic groups with undergraduates reporting a higher academic disengagement in comparison to the postgraduates. The reported results can be attributed to unrealistic expectations about the work standard expected at university, anticipated grades and the amount of work required (Baik et al., 2015; National Survey of Student Engagement, 2015; Larkin et al., 2011).

The present result findings for the level of academic burnout corresponding to the **exhaustion** dimension (Table 2), reported the mean score of undergraduate & postgraduate students to be 20.73 and 19.68 respectively, with a t value of 1.814 which was found to be statistically insignificant at both .05 and .01 levels of significance, thus indicating no significant difference in the exhaustion academic burnout levels of the two academic groups. The reported findings are in congruence with an Indian comparative study of stress and burnout by Mandava et al., (2018) among undergraduate and postgraduate orthodontic students which also revealed no statistically significant difference in the exhaustion stress and burnout levels of both the groups.

V. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The present study is a significant addition to the presently scarce literature on academic burnout among Indian university students. There are statistically significant differences on the level of disengagement academic burnout dimension and no significant differences on the level of exhaustion academic burnout dimension among undergraduate and postgraduate university students. Pertinent implications are posed for both public and private educational institutions toward the planning, management and prevention of burnout among their student population enrolled in various undergraduate and postgraduate programs. Further analysis of positive and negative predictive factors associated with burnout scores would facilitate the development of targeted resources for students most susceptible to burnout early in their academic career.

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APPENDICES

Academic Burnout Scale-Student Survey

Below you find a series of statements with which you may agree or disagree. Please indicate the degree of your agreement by selecting the response that best reflects your experiences lately.

S.no.	Question	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1	I always find new and interesting aspects in my studies.				
2	There are days when I feel tired before I arrive in class or start studying.				
3	I can usually manage my study-related workload well.				
4	Over time, one can become disconnected from this type of study.				
5	I find my studies to be a positive challenge.				
6	After a class or after studying, I tend to need more time than in the past in order to relax and feel better.				
7	I can tolerate the pressure of my studies very well.				
8	Lately, I tend to think less about my academic tasks and do them almost mechanically.				
9	I feel more and more engaged in my studies.				
10	While studying, I often feel emotionally drained.				
11	After a class or after studying, I have enough energy for my leisure activities.				
12	It happens more and more often that I talk about my studies in a negative way.				
13	This is the only field of study that I can imagine myself doing.				
14	After a class or after studying, I usually feel worn out and weary.				
15	When I study, I usually feel energized.				
16	Sometimes I feel sickened by my studies.				