

Academic Burnout and its Association with Undesired Behaviors among Faculty Members at Al-Balqa Applied University from Students' Perspectives

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The present study aims at identifying the association between university students' academic burnout and undesired behaviors among faculty members at Al-Balqa Applied University from students' perspectives. A cross-sectional design was used in this study. To collect data, convenience sampling was used to collect data from the study sample. The sample size consisted of 350 undergraduate students from different academic majors at Al-Balqa Applied University. The research instruments included the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI), which consists of 22 statements distributed over 3 domains: "emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and low personal accomplishment", in addition to the scale of the unwanted behavior developed by Magableh and Abu Ghazal (2013) that covers the following domains: "teaching method, personal characteristics of faculty members, relationship with faculty members, faculty members' efficiency, classroom management and organization, motivational stimulation, and evaluation". Data were analyzed using the Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS) (v. 26, IBM Corp. New York City, USA). Descriptive statistics and parametric tests were used to analyze the gathered data. The results of the study showed that there is a significant statistical association between faculty members' undesired behaviors and students' academic burnout ($r=0.361$). The study concluded that faculty members' undesired behaviors should be addressed to alleviate their impact on student's academic and psychological status. The study recommended conducting further awareness campaigns about coping strategies to alleviate the levels of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and low personal accomplishment.

Keywords: *academic burnout, undesired behaviors, emotional exhaustion, university students*

Introduction

The university stage is one of the most important stages in an individual's life, and it is a critical stage, as it results in generations who are responsible for building and renaissance of society (Sharp and Theiler 2018). The university environment is an experience full of challenges and changes for university youth, which are among the groups that face obstacles and shocks of all kinds while they are in university studies, where students feel pressure and stress represented in several aspects, including academic burnout (Hasan and Bao 2020). University students of different specializations are exposed to various psychological, social, and academic pressures, as a large number of pressures and the student's inability to confront

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them can lead the student to feel many psychological problems related to pressure, including burnout in the learning environment, which may generate a positive feeling towards studying. It pushes him/her to make more effort and dedication to his/her work to achieve his/her goals and makes him/her more connected to his/her studies (Pidgeon and Pickett 2017).

Fawzy and Hamed (2017) study concluded that academic burnout is prevalent among students at all educational levels and in various countries of the world, and some statistics from previous studies confirm that about 40% of university students suffer from academic burnout, with varying degrees of severity, and that the number of students who suffer It is constantly increasing from the first year of education until the last stages of education, and this indicates the gradual nature of this phenomenon.

Asikainen et al. (2020) study also indicated that academic burnout or study-related burnout is an academic problem worthy of study because it can affect the student's academic level, and may lead them to drop out of studies, as well as lead to the formation of negative attitudes towards study.

Peterka-Bonetta et al. (2019) study indicates that academic burnout is preceded by internal variables such as self-efficacy and external variables such as the quality of learning, and many studies have found that academic burnout among university students is related to the behavior of faculty members.

Demetriou et al. (2017) also emphasized that effective university education includes a complex dynamic between the student and the faculty staff member, and is based on several interacting factors, some of which are related to the student and others related to the faculty member, and that the student's behaviors affect the impressions of the faculty staff member about him/her, in addition to that the most important desired behaviors by the faculty member are making the student feels desirable to the extent that allows him/her to communicate with the faculty member smoothly, and to gain the attention and interest of, which helps to establish positive relationships with the faculty member. Magableh and Abu Ghazal (2013) confirm that the faculty staff members often do not realize students' perceptions about them while they are practicing the teaching process and that many of them do not realize the negatives left by some of the behaviors they practice on their students, which may be a factor affecting the level of academic burnout among students.

Research Problem

Academic burnout among university students refers to fatigue, exhaustion, and boredom (emotional exhaustion) resulting from academic demands, a feeling of pessimism, a lack of interest in academic tasks, and a feeling of ineffectiveness as a student (Jensen and Deemer 2019). (It also refers to students feeling emotionally exhausted, cognitively, and physically due to academic requirements, and thus not participating in educational activities (Vizoso et al. 2019).

Evidence suggests that students who experience academic burnout may experience signs such as a lack of interest in academic issues, inability to

consistently attend academic classes, lack of participation in classroom activities, feelings of futility in educational activities, and a lack of interest in academic issues. In general, research-based evidence suggests that university students' academic burnout is significantly affected and increased due to undesired behaviors among faculty staff members. However, there is a significant and clear shortage of studies addressing the association between university students' academic burnout and faculty staff members' undesired behaviors in the Jordanian context. Therefore, the overwhelming concern of the present study was to assess the levels of students' academic burnout and undesired behaviors of faculty members at Al-Balqa Applied University and identify the association between them.

Research Objectives

The present study seeks to achieve the following objectives:

1. To assess the level of students' academic burnout among undergraduate students at Al-Balqa Applied University (BAU).
2. To explore the undesired academic behaviors among faculty members at Al-Balqa Applied University from students' perspectives.
3. Investigate the association between students' academic burnout and undesired behaviors of faculty members at Al-Balqa Applied University.

Research Hypothesis

The present study seeks to test the following research hypothesis:

“There is a significant statistical association between university students' academic burnout and undesired behaviors of faculty members at Al-Balqa Applied University from students' perspectives”.

Previous Studies

A study conducted by Al-Sayed and Ibrahim (2017) aimed to reveal the differences in burnout among university students according to the variables of nationality, gender, and academic specialization among a sample of university students in Egypt (820 students) and a sample of university students in Kuwait (n=880). The study used a researcher-developed burnout scale. The study concluded with several results, including the presence of differences in burnout in favor of Kuwaiti students, and differences in depersonalization towards Egyptian students, while there were no differences between them in efficiency. It was also found that there are differences according to gender (male/female) in favor of females in all domains of burnout, as well as differences in all burnout domains according to specialization (scientific/literary) in favor of scientific students. The results also revealed a significant effect of the interaction of the variables of nationality,

gender, and specialization on the dimensions of psychological burnout, and the Egyptian female students with scientific specialization were in the highest category in experiencing burnout.

In another study by Issa (2021), the purpose of the study was to identify the differences between the hypothetical average and the real average for academic burnout among university students during the COVID-19 pandemic, and to reveal the differences in academic burnout in light of the level of psychological resilience (high - low) and orientations of achievement goals (orientation towards mastery, orientation towards performance - Aggressiveness, orientation towards performance - reluctance) and in light of the interaction between the level of psychological resilience and the orientations of achievement goals, as well as the detection of differences in academic burnout according to the variables (gender, academic specialization, and academic level). The sample consisted of (600) male and female students at Al-Azhar University in Cairo in The academic year 2021/2021. The study adopted the descriptive approach was used, and the researchers prepared measures: academic burnout, psychological resilience, and achievement goals orientations. The results showed a high level of academic burnout during the COVID-19 pandemic in the sample, the presence of statistically significant differences in academic burnout between high and low psychological resilience in favor of low psychological resilience, and the presence of statistically significant differences in academic burnout in the light of achievement goals orientations, and these differences, respectively, are attributed to Orientation towards performance - reluctance, then orientation towards performance - daring, then orientation towards mastery, and there was no statistically significant effect of the interaction between the level of psychological resilience and orientations of achievement goals in academic burnout.

Samawi et al. (2021) conducted a study that aimed at measuring the levels of academic procrastination among university undergraduates and the undesired behaviors among faculty members from students' perspectives. The study participants comprised 430 students during the summer semester of 2016/2017 using the descriptive correlation research design. A data collection tool to assess academic procrastination was developed to test the research hypothesis. The results showed that the level of academic procrastination was moderate, whereas undesired behaviors were high. The results also pointed to a negative association between academic procrastination and undesired behaviors. One of the most domains of undesired behaviors that forecasted academic procrastination is the domain of classroom management.

Wargi (2020) conducted a study that sought to identify the "level of psychological burnout among university students", and to try to reveal the differences between students, which may be attributed to the gender variable. To verify the objectives of the study, the researchers used a tool to measure the "psychological burnout of university students" consisting of (20) items, and based on the descriptive approach and after appropriate statistical treatment, the results concluded that: - The level of psychological burnout among university students is high. - There are no statistically significant differences in psychological burnout among university students due to gender.

The overview of the previous studies addressing the study variables (academic burnout and undesired behaviors) reveals that there is a significant lack of studies exploring the association between academic burnout and undesired behaviors among Jordanian university students, which requires urgent action to cover this literature gap.

Methodology

Research Design

The present study adopted the descriptive cross-sectional research design. This research approach is useful to identify the prevalence or incidence of a specific phenomenon at a specific time point. In addition, this approach is used to collect quantitative data from a specific population regarding a specific phenomenon under investigation. The descriptive cross-sectional research approach is quick and cost-effective.

Research Population

The research population consisted of all university students enrolled in Al-Balqa Applied University in the academic year 2021/2022. Based on the statistical data retrieved from the Jordanian Ministry of higher education, The University has about 35,000 students. It has many colleges spread almost all the governorates of the Kingdom, which are 24 colleges (11 on campus, and 13 distributed in the governorates of the Kingdom).

Research Sample

The convenience sampling strategy was used in this study to select the research sample. The sample size was calculated using Raosoft software. Taking into consideration a population size, a margin of error of 5%, a confidence interval of 95%, and a response distribution of 50%, the minimum number of participants required to conduct this study was calculated to be 326 university students. However, a sample of 350 students was enrolled in this study.

Research Instruments

To collect data, the researcher used the Maslach Burnout Inventory to identify the levels of burnout among Jordanian university students. Maslach Burnout Inventory consists of 22 statements distributed over 3 domains: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and low personal accomplishment. In addition, the researcher adopted the scale of the unwanted behavior developed by Magableh and Abu Ghazal (2013) to identify the undesired behaviors practiced by the university faculty members from students' perspectives. The scale areas are: (teaching method, personal characteristics of faculty members, relationship with

faculty members, faculty members' efficiency, classroom management, and organization, motivational stimulation, and evaluation). The tool in its final form consisted of 56 statements, distributed to the seven domains and each domain 8 items.

Data Analysis

Data obtained from the participants in this study was organized, tabulated, and imported into the Excel sheets to check for completeness. Completed and valid data for analysis was analyzed using the Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS) (v. 26, IBM Corp. New York City, USA). Descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations), and Pearson's correlation coefficient test were used to analyze the harvested data in this study. A significance level of 0.05 was used as a statistical significance threshold.

Results

A total of 380 questionnaires were distributed and we retrieved 350 valid and complete questionnaires, with a response rate of 92.1%. The results presented in Table 1 show the sociodemographic characteristics of the study participants. The mean age of the enrolled students was (22.1±1.05). Male students constituted 20.9% (n=178), whereas females constituted 49.1% (n=172). The results showed that students from scientific disciplines constituted 34.6% (n=121), whereas students from humanitarian disciplines constituted 65.4% (n=229).

Table 1. Sociodemographic and Academic Characteristics of the Enrolled Students (n=350)

Variable	M±SD	F (%)
Age	22.1±1.05	-----
Gender	-----	
1. Male		178 (50.9)
2. Female		172 (49.1)
Faculty	-----	
1. Scientific		121 (34.6)
2. Humanitarian		229 (65.4)

The results presented in Table 2 show the level of burnout among the enrolled university students based on their scores on the Maslach burnout inventory. The results showed that concerning emotional exhaustion, 39.1% (n=137) were having low emotional exhaustion, 20.9% (n=73), and 40% (n=140) had moderate and high emotional exhaustion. In addition, it was found that 29.4% (n=103), 42.6% (n=149), and 28% (n=98) had low, moderate, and high depersonalization, respectively. Moreover, it was found that 13.1% (n=46) had low personal accomplishment, whereas 29.4% (n=103) and 57.5% (n=201) had moderate and high low personal accomplishment). In total, it was found that 28% (n=98) had

low academic burnout, 34.6% (n=121) had moderate burnout, and 37.4% (n=131) had high burnout levels.

Table 2. Levels of Academic Burnout among the Enrolled University Students (n=350)

Domain	Low	Moderate	High
Emotional Exhaustion	137 (39.1)	73 (20.9)	140 (40%)
Depersonalization	103 (29.4)	149 (42.6)	98 (28)
Low personal accomplishment	46 (13.1)	103 (29.4)	201 (57.5)
Academic burnout	98 (28)	121 (34.6)	131 (37.4)

The results presented in Table 3 show the mean scores and standard deviations of the student's responses to the undesired behaviors scale. The results showed that the highest ranked domain was evaluation and assessment (3.14 ± 0.83), followed by the domain of relations with other faculty members (3.00 ± 0.94) in the second rank, and in the third rank was the domain of motivation (2.99 ± 0.88). In the fourth rank was the domain of class management and organization (2.92 ± 0.84), followed by the domain of Personal traits of faculty members (2.76 ± 0.87) in the sixth rank, and the last rank as the domain of Competency of faculty members (2.54 ± 0.88).

Table 3. Means and Standard Deviations of the Enrolled Students (n=350)

Domain	M±SD	Degree	Rank
Teaching Methods	2.90 ± 0.66	Moderate	5
Personal traits of faculty members	2.76 ± 0.87	Moderate	6
Relations with faculty members	3.00 ± 0.94	Moderate	2
Competency of faculty members	2.54 ± 0.88	Moderate	7
Motivation	2.99 ± 0.88	Moderate	3
Evaluation and assessment	3.14 ± 0.83	Moderate	1
Class Management and organization	2.92 ± 0.84	Moderate	4

The results presented in Table 4 show the association between academic burnout and undesired behaviors as perceived by the enrolled university students. The results show that there is a statistically significant association between the undesired behaviors of faculty members and academic burnout ($r=0.361$). It was found that there is a significant correlation between all domains of undesired behaviors of faculty members and all domains of academic burnout as perceived by the university students and the correlation coefficients ranged between 0.126 (personal traits of faculty members Vs emotional exhaustion) and 0.481 (Teaching methods Vs low personal accomplishment).

Table 4. Pearson's Correlation Coefficients between Burnout Domains and Undesired Behaviors Domains

Domain	Emotional Exhaustion	Depersonalization	Low personal accomplishment	Burnout
Teaching Methods	0.316*	0.259*	0.481*	
Personal traits of faculty members	0.126*	0.241*	0.220*	
Relations with faculty members	0.168*	0.315*	0.200*	
Competency of faculty members	0.309*	0.148*	0.284*	
Motivation	0.252*	0.267*	0.188*	
Evaluation and assessment	0.347*	0.251*	0.333*	
Class Management and organization	0.267*	0.421*	0.314*	
Undesired behaviors				0.361*

Discussion

Psychological burnout, characterized by a combination of exhaustion and idealism, has long been associated with professions such as doctors, teachers, security personnel, and managers (Maslach et al. 2001). However, recent studies have shed light on the alarming presence of burnout among university students, prompting psychologists and social experts to pay closer attention to this phenomenon (Beiter et al. 2015, Levecque et al. 2017). In line with this, the current study aimed to investigate the association between undesired behaviors exhibited by faculty members and the academic burnout experienced by students at Albalqa Applied University.

The findings of this study revealed a significant association between faculty members' undesired behaviors and students' academic burnout. The underlying reason for this relationship may be attributed to the scarcity of resources available for students to effectively cope with the demands of their academic environment. When students lack the necessary resources and support systems, they are more susceptible to experiencing academic burnout (Salmela-Aro et al. 2017). Additionally, the personality traits and behaviors exhibited by faculty members can contribute to the occurrence of academic burnout among students. Faculty members who impose excessive demands and create high-pressure environments may inadvertently contribute to the development of burnout symptoms in students (Roeser et al. 2013).

Moreover, the prevalence of undesired behaviors among faculty members can have detrimental effects on students' psychological well-being and academic performance. Research has consistently shown that students' academic self-regulation, a critical factor for academic success, is influenced by various aspects, including the behavior of faculty members (Ryan and Deci 2017, Zimmerman 2013). Academic self-regulation encompasses important components such as intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, self-recognition, self-control, effective communication, self-efficacy, as well as various strategies like memory

techniques, goal-setting, self-evaluation, and seeking help when needed (Dugan and Andrade 2011a, b, Savari and Arabzade 2013, Magno 2011a, b).

By comparing our findings with more recent references, we can observe a growing body of literature addressing the association between undesired behaviors of faculty members and students' academic burnout. These findings align with the broader understanding of burnout and its consequences, emphasizing the urgent need for practical interventions and support systems that promote student well-being, enhance academic self-regulation, and foster positive faculty-student relationships. Educational institutions should prioritize the implementation of comprehensive faculty training programs that not only focus on academic excellence but also emphasize effective communication skills, conflict resolution strategies, and the creation of positive and supportive learning environments. Additionally, institutions can provide resources for stress management, promote work-life balance, and offer professional development opportunities to support the well-being of faculty members and ultimately create a more conducive and harmonious academic environment for students.

Further research in recent years has continued to highlight the concerning prevalence of burnout among university students, amplifying the importance of addressing this issue. Studies have found that academic burnout negatively impacts students' mental health, academic performance, and overall well-being (Müller et al. 2022, Levecque et al. 2017). This has led to increased awareness and calls for proactive measures to prevent and mitigate burnout in higher education settings. Institutions can consider implementing evidence-based interventions such as stress management workshops, mindfulness programs, and counseling services tailored specifically for students facing academic burnout (Beshai et al. 2020). By incorporating these strategies into their practices, universities can create supportive environments that foster resilience and empower students to effectively manage their academic demands while maintaining their well-being.

In addition to student-focused interventions, addressing the issue of undesired behaviors among faculty members is equally crucial. Faculty training programs can be enhanced to include modules on self-care, stress management, and effective communication techniques, allowing educators to better understand the impact of their behaviors on student well-being (Roeser et al. 2013). Furthermore, fostering positive relationships between faculty and students can significantly contribute to reducing academic burnout. Encouraging open communication, providing timely feedback, and offering mentorship opportunities are essential in creating a supportive learning environment that nurtures students' growth and helps prevent burnout (Woolfolk et al. 2020). By equipping faculty members with the knowledge and skills necessary for supporting students' well-being, universities can cultivate a culture of care and support that ultimately benefits both students and faculty.

Recent studies have emphasized the need for a multi-dimensional approach to addressing burnout and its associated behaviors. This includes considering organizational factors such as workload distribution, job autonomy, and recognition systems that acknowledge the efforts of both faculty members and students (Salmela-Aro et al. 2017, Leiter and Maslach 2017). Additionally, developing collaborative partnerships between faculty, students, and administrators

can facilitate the implementation of sustainable solutions to combat burnout. By involving all stakeholders in the conversation, universities can collectively work towards creating a healthy and thriving academic community.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study has provided compelling evidence of a significant statistical association between faculty members' undesired behaviors and the level of students' academic burnout across all domains. These findings highlight the need for immediate action to address this issue and promote the well-being of both faculty members and students.

Based on the insights gained from this research, it is strongly recommended to implement intensive awareness and educational campaigns aimed at increasing students' knowledge and practice of effective coping strategies to mitigate burnout. Providing students with the necessary tools and resources to navigate the challenges of their academic journey can empower them to better manage stress and prevent the negative consequences of burnout.

Furthermore, addressing the issue of undesired behaviors among faculty members is of utmost importance. Educational institutions should prioritize interventions that aim to cultivate a positive and supportive environment, fostering respectful and empathetic interactions between faculty and students. Faculty members should be encouraged to reflect on their behaviors and adopt approaches that promote student engagement, well-being, and success.

The findings of this research on academic burnout and its association with undesired behaviors among faculty members at Al-Balqa, as perceived by students, hold significant implications for practice. Firstly, by recognizing the negative impact of burnout on faculty members, educational institutions can implement targeted interventions and support systems to address burnout and promote well-being among their faculty. This may include providing resources for stress management, professional development opportunities, and fostering a positive work environment that encourages work-life balance. Additionally, the identification of the link between burnout and undesired behaviors emphasizes the need for comprehensive faculty training programs that not only focus on academic excellence but also on developing effective communication skills, conflict resolution strategies, and promoting positive relationships with students. By addressing burnout and its associated behaviors, institutions can create a conducive learning environment that enhances student satisfaction, engagement, and overall educational outcomes.

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