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Call for Papers

Volume XVI, Issue 1(19), Summer 2025

Journal of Research in Educational Sciences

The Journal is designed to promote scholars' thought in the field of education with the clear mission to provide an interdisciplinary forum for discussion and debate about education's most vital issues. We intend to publish papers that contribute to the expanding boundaries of knowledge in education and focus on research, theory, current issues and applied practice in this area.

The Editor in Chief would like to invite submissions for the **Volume XVI, Issue 1(19), Summer 2025** of the **Journal of Research in Educational Sciences** (JRES).

The primary aim of the Journal has been and remains the provision of a forum for the dissemination of a variety of international issues, empirical research and other matters of interest to researchers and practitioners in a diversity of subject areas linked to the broad theme of educational sciences.

The aims and scope of the Journal includes, but is not limited to; the following major topics as they relate to the Educational Sciences:

- Educational Psychology;
- Engagement and Community;
- Leadership in Education;
- School Improvement;
- Human Resources in Education;
- Education and Information Science;
- Global strategies in Higher Education;
- Learner's Needs in the 21st Century;
- The Role of Education in The Globalization World;
- Technology-Based Learning.

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The Syndrome of Academic Burnout Experienced by Graduate Psychology Students. The Stress Factor

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Abstract: The aim of the study was to investigate the burnout syndrome experienced by postgraduate psychology students and the role of stress. 101 graduate level psychology students participated in the study. This was a sample survey using a self-report questionnaire. Regarding the level of burn out experienced by graduate psychology students, the results of the survey indicate that the students experience low levels of academic burn out. Regarding the level of stress experienced by psychology graduate students, the results show that participants experience moderate levels of idiosyncratic stress and moderate to high levels of situational stress. The analysis showed that there was no statistically significant difference in the means between males and females. Regarding the relationship between academic burnout and anxiety, Pearson r analysis showed that there is no correlation between the two concepts.

Keywords: academic burnout; stress; psychology students.

JEL Classification: I23.

Introduction

In today's educational landscape, students face many obstacles, including the demands of academic obligations as well as the expectations of society at large. Among these challenges are academic burnout and stress. Academic burnout is a state of emotional, physical, and mental exhaustion resulting from prolonged and excessive stress. This condition can have a negative impact on a student's overall health and academic performance. As highlighted in a study conducted by Dyrbye *et al.* (2010), academic burnout is a widespread problem among students, with a significant portion of the student population reporting high levels of stress and burnout. The pressure to excel academically, balance a social life and plan for the future can become unbearable for students, leading to feelings of burnout.

One of the main reasons for academic burnout is the high expectations students have of themselves and society. The constant pressure to excel in all areas of life, to participate in social activities can lead to an endless cycle of stress and burnout (Rudman & Gustavsson, 2012). Consequently, these high expectations can lead to feelings of anxiety, depression, and lack of motivation to continue with academic pursuits. Furthermore, another factor contributing to academic burnout is the absence of effective coping mechanisms among students (Fares *et*

al. 2016). Many college students often feel overwhelmed by the demands of college life and struggle to find healthy ways to manage their stress levels. As a result, they may resort to negative behaviors such as procrastination, substance abuse, and social isolation, which only further exacerbate their burnout (Gadzella & Baloglu, 2001).

Academic burnout is a critical issue that needs to be explored for several reasons. First, it can provide information about various student behaviors. Second, it can affect students' involvement and participation in academic activities at the university. Finally, academic burnout can affect students' motivation to continue their education (Moneta, 2011). In recent decades, psychologists and educators have examined the impact of academic burnout on the educational and academic environment. Academic burnout is characterized by feelings of inadequacy and mental fatigue, often stemming from chronic stress and a lack of resources to effectively complete tasks. Studies have shown that college students are prone to academic burnout. Research shows an increasing prevalence of academic burnout among students in recent years, underscoring its importance as a research topic in higher education (Neumann *et al.* 1990).

The issue of academic burnout and stress among students is a pressing issue that must be addressed by universities and educational policy makers. To mitigate this problem, universities should offer various resources and support systems to their students. This may involve providing access to counseling services, organizing stress management workshops, and creating academic support programs. These initiatives can greatly assist students in managing the intense pressures of university life (Reddy *et al.* 2018). In addition, it is important for students to learn effective coping strategies, such as proper time management, practicing mindfulness, and engaging in self-care activities. These techniques can serve as preventive measures against burnout and help students cope effectively with stress (Green *et al.* 2022).

In conclusion, academic burnout and stress are significant challenges for the student population today. By knowing the signs of burnout and taking proactive steps to deal with stressors, students can improve their mental well-being and boost their academic achievement. It is imperative for universities to prioritize the well-being of their students and provide them with the necessary support and resources to thrive in their academic endeavours.

Given the alarming increase in this phenomenon, it is important not to depend solely on the education system to adequately equip students for their academic pursuits. Instead, it is imperative to adopt a comprehensive approach that includes psychological assistance in order to safeguard the holistic well-being of students. This responsibility must be shared by both government bodies and university institutions, as students represent the future potential of a nation (Efthimiou *et al.* 2007). By integrating psychological support services, it becomes possible to identify and address student stressors at an early stage, thus facilitating rapid and appropriate interventions (Visnjic *et al.* 2009).

A survey conducted in China by Yuanyuan *et al.* (2020), highlighted the psychological problems that concerned the student population at that time. The study was carried out in two phases during the pandemic. Transient stress, depression and anxiety, were what disturbed them mentally and connected as a consequence of the coronavirus. The indicators of anxiety symptoms increased in the second cycle of the survey, i.e. the value of 11.4% which was initially, was slowly calculated to 14.7%. Seniors and undergraduates developed quite high rates of psychological difficulties. Despite the above data, it is noted that there were many students who were not affected by the outbreak of the epidemic, they appeared not to manifest symptoms of psychological disturbances and to maintain high levels of resilience. Another study was carried out in 2020 by Wenning and colleagues (2020), which addressed a wide range of adults, specifically 89,588 people in China, including 36,865 students. More specifically, female students aged 26-30 were found to be more vulnerable to anxiety. The same is true for sophomores, seniors, and graduate students, while undergraduates are not at much risk.

Students show various reactions to stress, which can be divided into emotional, cognitive, behavioral and physiological reactions. These responses include feelings of fear, anxiety, worry, guilt, sadness, or depression (emotional), appraisal of stressful situations and coping strategies (cognitive), engaging in behaviors such as crying, self-injury, smoking, and irritability (Misra *et al.* 2000).

There is debate among researchers regarding the relationship between stress and self-esteem, with some arguing that low self-esteem may be a consequence of prolonged or repeated exposure to stress (Schafer, 1996). Additionally, negative outcomes associated with stress include increased alcohol consumption (Morgan, 1997), smoking (Naquin & Gilbert, 1996), and increased suicidal ideation (Hirsch & Ellis, 1996). Research has shown that individuals who experience high levels of stress are more likely to engage in unhealthy behaviors (Hudd *et al.* 2000) and are less satisfied with their overall health, including weight and fitness levels (Hudd *et al.* 2000). This dissatisfaction with aspects of health may contribute to lower self-esteem among college students experiencing high levels of stress. It remains uncertain whether stress directly affects an individual's self-esteem, as some

studies suggest a negative correlation between self-esteem and life stress and academic stress (Abouserie, 1994).

Students are a group that are often exposed to quite stressful factors, which affect both their psychosocial and academic status. And while it seems that the syndrome of academic burnout among students has been studied enough, there are no studies investigating the phenomenon in graduate psychology students.

The purpose of the proposed study was to investigate the syndrome of academic exhaustion (burn out) experienced by postgraduate psychology students during periods of increased academic obligations and the role of stress.

The research questions of the study are:

1. What is the level of academic burnout experienced by psychology graduate students?
2. What is the level of stress experienced by psychology graduate students?
3. Are there differences in the levels of academic burnout experienced by graduate psychology students depending on their gender, year of study and family status?
4. Does age affect the levels of academic burnout experienced by graduate psychology students?
5. What is the relationship between academic burnout experienced by graduate psychology students and the stress factor?

2. Method

Research Design

This work is a cross-sectional study. The research followed quantitative methodology, which is a research approach that aims to uncover empirical generalizations and test theoretical hypotheses (Kyriazi, 2000). To achieve this, a sample study was conducted using a questionnaire as the main tool. This method offers the advantage of quantifying opinions and attitudes, as well as providing insight into the feelings of the population being surveyed about a particular topic (Sukamolson, 2007; Creswell, 2016). As dependent variable we defined academic burnout and independent variables were gender, age, year of study and marital status.

Participants and Sample

The researcher used convenience sampling, which involves inviting people who meet the necessary conditions and criteria for research participation and are in their immediate and extended environment to take part in the study (Creswell, 2016). Participants in the research were 101 postgraduate psychology students, who are over 18 years old and speak the Greek language. Participant characteristics are described in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic characteristics

	<i>N</i> (101)	%
Gender		
Male	36	36%
Female	64	64%
Year of Study		
1 ^o	48	48%
2 ^o	50	50%
3 ^o	2	2%
Marital status		
Single	55	55%
Married	33	34%
Widowed	3	3%
Divorced	8	8%
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Age	31,47	6,533

Materials and Tools

For the collection of the research data, a three-part questionnaire was administered which will be accompanied by an information letter to the prospective participants. The first part of the questionnaire contained questions of a demographic nature in order to describe the research sample but also to make the appropriate correlations for the investigation of the research hypotheses. The second part of the questionnaire was the Maslach Burnout Inventory – Student Survey. The MBI, which was developed by Cristina Maslach and Susan Jackson (1982), was derived from qualitative research and includes three dimensions of burnout. The student version of the MBI

serves as a reliable tool for assessing burnout among college students. It consists of three scales: exhaustion, cynicism and professional efficacy. To take the test, participants are presented with 15 statements related to their feelings about the university and then asked to indicate how often they experience these feelings. Cronbach's alpha internal consistency reliability was found to be satisfactory for the factors of the MBI questionnaire, with $\alpha = 0.90$. The third part of the questionnaire was the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI-40) developed by C.D. Spielberger *et al.* (1964). The [STAI-40] is a questionnaire that individuals complete to provide self-reports of their anxiety levels. It consists of a total of 40 items. Respondents rate each item on a Likert scale ranging from 1 to 4. The reliability of the questionnaire is judged to be satisfactory, as shown by its high internal consistency and reliability of repeated measurements. Specifically, the state anxiety subscale exhibits a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.93, while the trait anxiety subscale exhibits a coefficient of 0.92. In addition, the [STAI-40] has been adapted and standardized for use in the Greek population by Liakos and Giannitsi in 1984.

Research Process

After defining the purpose and research questions of the proposed research, the research instrument was constructed in MS Forms and contained the cover letter and questionnaire questions. The questionnaire was distributed electronically to students of the psychology department of the Scientific College of Greece, in online forums where these students participate, with the request that they complete the questionnaire and also send it to other postgraduate psychology students they know. Once the appropriate number of questionnaires was completed, the data was analyzed in order to draw conclusions.

Methodological framework of data analysis

For the analysis of the research data of the present research, it was done through the statistical software SPSS v.27. First, the psychometric properties of the questionnaire were checked. The internal consistency of the tool was checked through the Cronbach α coefficient. α in the present research is equal to .862, a value that shows a high degree of reliability. Descriptive statistics were then performed in order to investigate the levels of academic burnout and stress experienced by the students who participated in the survey. To test the hypotheses and the association of academic burnout, the normality of the population distribution was first checked through the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test. The test showed that $p > .050$, which means that the distribution is normal and thus independent samples t-test and Pearson r were used.

Ensuring and Adhering to the Code of Ethics and Conduct

Ethical considerations play a critical role in any research as they provide a set of protocols that must be followed. These protocols include several fundamental principles, including the importance of treating participants beneficially, respecting them, and ensuring their voluntary participation. A key aspect that should be observed is the guarantee of confidentiality, as it is necessary to maintain the trust and privacy of the participants (Creswell, 2016). In this research, together with the questionnaire, there was a cover letter that informed the prospective participant about the purpose of the research, the organization implementing it, the contact details of the researcher as well as details regarding the observance of confidentiality, anonymity and the possibility to withdraw at any time desired from the process. In addition, the researcher informed the participants that they have the possibility to be informed about the results of the research after the end of it, if they wish. Following this ensured that the research was conducted in a responsible and respectful manner.

3. Results

Academic burnout

As shown in table 2, research participants experience low levels of academic burnout. Specifically, in personal achievement the students have $M=24.61$ ($SD=9.277$), in depersonalization they have $M=5.75$ ($SD=4.743$) and in emotional exhaustion they have $M=8.74$ ($SD=6.348$). According to the manufacturers' instructions, low levels of depersonalization and emotional exhaustion with high levels of personal achievement indicate low levels of academic burnout.

Table 2. Academic Burnout

	ACHIEVEMENT	DEPERSONALIZATION	EMOTIONAL EXHAUSTION
Mean	24,61	5,75	8,74
S.D.	9,277	4,743	6,348
Range	36	24	30

Student anxiety

The students who participated in the research experience moderate levels of temperamental anxiety with $M=42.2$ ($SD=8.411$) and moderate to high levels of situational anxiety with $M= 53.9$ ($SD= 8,413$). The results are shown in table 3.

Table 3. Student anxiety

	TRAIT ANXIETY	STATE ANXIETY
Mean	49,2800	53,9200
Std. Deviation	8,41199	8,41389
Range	60,00	60,00

Differentiation of academic burnout averages based on gender, year of study and marital status

In order to test any difference in the average levels of academic burnout based on the gender of the participants, an independent samples t-test was performed. The analysis showed (see table 4) that there is no statistically significant difference in the averages between men and women as $p>.050$. Specifically, $t=.434$, $df=98$, $p=.665$, Cohen's $d=12.668$ with M men= 39.83 ($SD=14.320$) and M women= 38.69 ($SD=1.529$).

Table 4. Differentiate academic burnout by gender

	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>Cohen's d</i>
Academic Burnout	,434	98	,665	12,668

In order to test for any difference in the average levels of academic burnout based on the year of study and the marital status of the participants, a ONE-WAY ANOVA analysis of variance was performed. The results of the analysis showed that there are no statistically significant differences in the levels of academic burnout of the participants based on their year of study ($p=.115$). On the other hand, it seems that there are statistically significant differences in the levels of academic burnout of the participants based on their family status ($F(3,96)=6.753$, $p<.001$). Specifically, post hoc with the Bonferroni correction showed a difference in the levels of academic burnout between students who are single ($M.O.=39.75$, $T.A.=9.313$) and those who are divorced ($M.O.=26.63$, $T.A.=17.517$, $p=.002$), of students who are married/in a partnership ($M.O.=40.30$, $T.A.=11.884$) with those who are divorced ($M.O.=26.63$, $T.A.=17.517$, $p=.003$) and those who are widowed ($M.O.=55$, $T.A.=28.054$) with those who are divorced ($M.O.=26.63$, $T.A.=17.517$, $p<.001$). The results are shown in table 5.

Table 5. Analysis of variance, academic burnout-marital status

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	η^2
Academic Burnout * What is your marital status?	Between Groups	2745,655	3	915,218	6,753	,000	,174
	Within Groups	13011,345	96	135,535			
	Total	15757,000	99				

Effect of age on levels of academic burnout

To investigate the effect of the age of the research participants, a correlation test with Pearson r was performed (see Table 6.). The analysis showed that there is a negative correlation between age and academic burnout. Specifically $r=-.208$, $p=.038$.

Table 6. Academic Burnout and Age

		Academic Burnout
What is your age?	Pearson r	-,208
	Sig.	,038

Correlation of academic burnout-stress in college students

Regarding the relationship between academic burnout and anxiety, the Pearson r analysis showed that there is no correlation between the two concepts. Specifically, regarding temperamental anxiety and academic burnout $p=.168$, $r=-.138$ and regarding situational anxiety and academic burnout $p=.271$, $r=-.211$. The results are shown in table 7.

Table 7. Academic burnout-stress relationship

		BURNOUT
TRAIT ANXIETY	Pearson r	-,138
	Sig.	,168
STATE ANXIETY	Pearson r	,111

4. Discussion

The aim of the proposed study was to investigate the syndrome of academic exhaustion (burn out) experienced by postgraduate psychology students during periods of increased academic obligations and the role of stress. 101 graduate level psychology students participated in the survey.

Regarding the level of academic burnout experienced by graduate psychology students, the results of the research show that students experience low levels of academic burnout. Specifically, students experience low levels of depersonalization and emotional exhaustion with high levels of personal achievement, which indicates low levels of academic burnout. Accordingly, Jenaabadi *et al.* (2017) and Sharififard *et al.* (2014) research on nursing students showed that students experience moderate levels of academic burnout.

Regarding the level of stress experienced by graduate psychology students, the results show that participants experience moderate levels of temperamental stress and moderate to high levels of situational stress. Similar findings are shown by the research of Yuanyuan and her colleagues (2020) and Jenaabadi and colleagues (2017) where the levels of anxiety experienced by the participating students were low. In order to test any difference in the average levels of academic burnout based on the gender of the participants, an independent samples t-test was performed. The analysis showed that there is no statistically significant difference in the averages between men and women. The research by Onuoha and Akintola (2016) as well as Ogbueghu *et al.* (2019) and Okeke *et al.* (2020) where the levels of academic burnout of students do not seem to differ based on their gender. There is no significant difference depending on the year of study either, a finding that agrees with those of the study by Aguayo *et al.* (2019). The findings of the present study show that there are differences in the levels of academic burnout of students depending on their family situation. Rahmatpour *et al.* (2019) research that investigated the levels of academic burnout of 303 medical school students in Iran in relation to their marital status leads to similar findings. We find similar results in the research of Mahmoudi and colleagues (2019).

Age seems to be another factor that affects the academic burnout of students. This finding is confirmed by other research studies. Younger students, often fresh out of high school, may face a significant transition in terms of the academic and social demands of college life. Increased workload, pressure for excellence and newfound independence can be overwhelming, leading to feelings of emotional and physical exhaustion (Dyrbye *et al.* 2010). In addition, younger students may have less developed coping mechanisms and self-regulation skills, making them more vulnerable to the negative effects of academic burnout. Conversely, older students, who may have more life experience and a better understanding of their own needs and limitations, may be better equipped to manage the demands of higher education. These students may have developed more effective coping strategies, such as time management skills, stress reduction techniques, and a stronger sense of self-efficacy (Galbraith & Merrill, 2015).

Regarding the relationship between academic burnout and anxiety, the Pearson r analysis showed that there is no correlation between the two concepts. The findings of the present research do not seem to agree with those of the research by Gomez *et al.* (2022) but also by Xu *et al.* (2022) where there seems to be a correlation between academic burnout and the stress experienced by students. The results of this research are considered acceptable and reliable as they were found to be consistent with findings from other studies. However, the sampling method used in this research limited the extent to which the participants were representative of the overall population.

To clarify, the participants selected for this study were limited in number, came from specific geographic areas, and were selected based on personal contacts and convenience of the researcher. It would have been

more inclusive and informative to include a larger and more diverse sample of participants, representing different socio-economic backgrounds and different regions of Greece, including both public universities and private schools. Such a sample would have yielded more specialized and differentiated results. This suggests that future research on this topic could be conducted with a different population, such as college students, during a different time period. Although the results would not be identical, incorporating additional elements and conducting open-ended interviews would undoubtedly enrich the study.

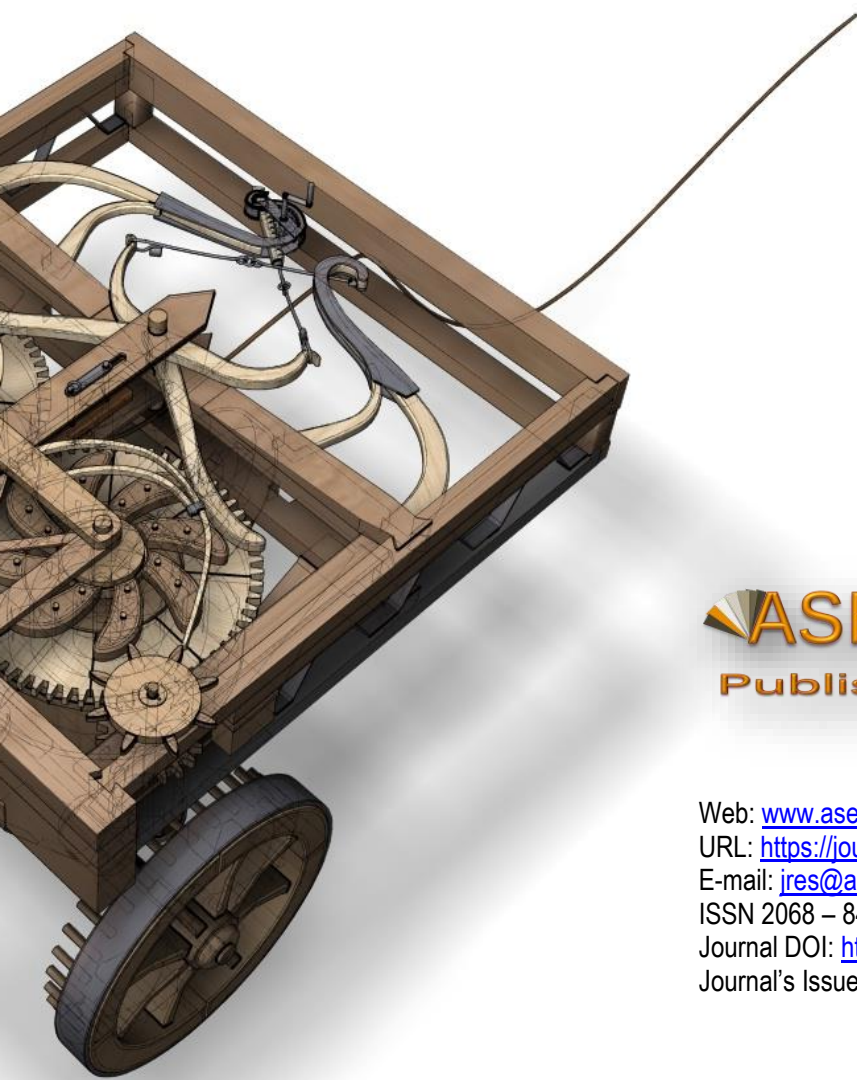
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