



PERFECTIONISM AND ACADEMIC BURNOUT IN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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Abstract

Perfectionism is characterized by a tendency to set excessively high personal standards and engage in self-critical evaluation. Academic burnout is characterized by students experiencing sadness, detachment, and a perception of poor personal success due to curriculum burden, pressure, or additional psychological aspects. The aim of this present study is to identify the relationship between perfectionism and academic burnout in university students. This study employed a correlational research design with a sample of 122 university students. The results highlight that in Pearson's correlation the r value is 0.401 which is positively correlated in perfectionism and academic burnout. The results revealed a moderate positive correlation between perfectionism and burnout in academic fields, indicating that the more perfectionism there is, the more the students suffer from burnout at the university. The findings imply that there is a necessity for self-compassion training and realistic goal-setting and adaptive coping strategies as interventions to reduce burnout.

Keywords: Perfectionism, Academic Burnout, University Students, Personality Traits

Introduction

Perfectionism is described as a personality trait where one imposes very high standards on oneself and judges one's worth depending on the quality of one's performance. There can be different

reasons for such behavior, it can be a self-driven thing (self-oriented) or it can be due to the perceived expectations from others (socially prescribed perfectionism) (Stoeber et al., 2009). It is true that some forms of perfectionism are adaptive and therefore, they fuel motivation and success while others, i.e. maladaptive perfectionism, cause individuals to suffer from various mental health issues and poor adjustment. Academic burnout is a phenomenon that is specific to students which is characterized by the following indicators: emotional exhaustion, the feeling of being disengaged from one's academic activities and the belief that one has been less effective academically all as a consequence of the prolonged academic demands and pressure (Balogun et al., 1996). The effect of burnout is negative on motivation, attendance and academic performance hence it is a major concern among students in universities.

Corresponding to career burnout, academic burnout is characterized by students experiencing sadness, detachment and a perception of poor personal success due to curriculum burden, pressure, or additional psychological aspects (Balogun et al., 1996, Lingard et al., 2007, Yang, 2004, Zhang et al., 2007). In contrast to the condition affecting healthcare providers, student burnout can result in higher absences, a shortage of motivation to finish necessary activities, a higher failure rate and other issues (Meier and Schmeck, 1985). The adverse implications of student tiredness on academic achievement are obvious.

Review of Literature

Bellam, A., & Curran, T. (2025) examined perfectionism and work performance: a meta-analysis. The study has mixed findings in correlation of perfectionism in hours of work and performance. Analyses contain 28 sample with 9560 participants across all included studies (57.62% female; Mage = 35.26). The findings demonstrated a favorable correlation between the number of hours worked and perfectionistic worries and strivings. Only perfectionistic aspirations, nevertheless were positively correlated with job success. Perfectionism was favorably connected with both hours worked and performance, according to the complete unique impacts of strivings and worries. The theoretical and practical ramifications of the results are examined.

Bisht, M., & Sethi, S. R. (2025) examined impact of Perfectionism and Self-Compassion on Academic Burnout. Impact of Perfectionism and Self-Compassion on Academic Burnout among Higher Education Students. The study examined the levels of perfectionism and self-compassion in terms of gender, the interrelations that exist between them, and their predictive effects on academic burnout among higher education students in India. The correlational design included 287 participants, aged between 18 and 44 years, with a group composition of 47% male and 52% female participants. Almost Perfect Scale-Revised was used for measuring perfectionism, Self-Compassion Scale for measuring self-compassion, and Copenhagen Burnout Inventory-Student

Version for measuring burnout. For the complete analysis, t-tests, correlation and regression were done using JASP accordingly. There is no significant difference in the t-scores regarding perfectionism ($t=-0.51$, $p=0.61$), self-compassion ($t=-0.89$, $p=0.38$), and burnout scores with regard to gender differences ($t=0.59$, $p=0.56$); perfectionism was not related to self-compassion ($r=0.01$, $p=0.86$) and to burnout ($r=-0.06$, $p=0.31$); self-compassion negatively significantly predicted burnout ($r=-0.33$, $p<0.001$) and significantly predicted it ($b=-0.33$, $p<0.001$, $R^2=0.11$).

Front. Psychol (2025) were conducted the study on the impact of academic burnout on academic achievement: a moderated chain mediation effect from the Stimulus-Organism-Response perspective. The sample size used in the study were 306 university students. The tools used in the were Academic burnout scale) Carmona-Halty et al., 2024), Learning satisfaction scale (Topala and Tomozii, 2014), Learning engagement scale (Dauzon-Ledesma and Izquierdo, 2023), Academic achievement scale (Luo et al., 2023) and educational value scale (Seetee et al., 2020). The findings of the Study are highlighting a significant chain mediation effect of learning satisfaction and engagement in the relationship between academic burnout and academic achievement.

Menon et al., (2025) investigated parental Expectations and Fear of Negative Evaluation. The present study explored whether perceived parental expectations and FNE relate to each other among Indian emerging adults by considering the mediating effect of maladaptive perfectionism during extended parental involvement in contemporary society. This study conducted in Cross-sectional design with 466 Indian emerging adults in the age range of 18-25 years, PPEI ($\alpha = 0.92$), Frost Multidimensional Perfectionism-Brief Scale (maladaptive subscale; $\alpha=0.81$), and BFNE-S ($\alpha = 0.95$) were used. The study embodied correlations, hierarchical regression and mediation modeling. Results: Positive correlations emerged between parental expectations and maladaptive perfectionism, $r = 0.32$, $p < .01$; parental expectations and FNE, $r = 0.24$, $p < .01$, maladaptive perfectionism and FNE, $r = 0.64$, $p < .01$. Regression showed that both predictors accounted for 41% of variance in FNE; further, it was found that parental expectations-FNE linkage was fully mediated by maladaptive perfectionism (indirect $\beta = 0.20$, $p < .01$).

Nandani Arora (2024) was conducted the study on A Study on Examining Academic Burnout among Indian College Students. The Study aims to understand the relationship between personality traits, self-esteem, and self-efficacy with academic burnout among Indian college students. The sample size used in the study were of 316 students. The research design used in the study is quantitative correlational design research design. The tools used in the were the Copenhagen Burnout Inventory-Student Version, Big Five Personality-2, Rosenberg Self-esteem scale and General Self-Efficacy measure. The findings of the Study suggested that the Big Five personality

traits (except open-mindedness for personal burnout), self-esteem, and self-efficacy play an important role in the experience of all four dimensions of burnout among Indian college students.

Thakhur et al., (2024) conducted the study on perfectionism in Adults: Associations with Gender and Socioeconomic Status. The present study examined the relationship of perfectionism with demographic variables, namely gender and socioeconomic status, in young adults and implications for mental health interventions. Methodology: Cross-sectional design with 85 English-speaking participants (44 males, 40 females; aged 18-26) recruited on a voluntary basis through informed consent. Tools included Big Three Perfectionism Scale-Short Form (BTPS-SF; 16 items assessing rigid, self-critical, narcissistic dimensions; Likert 1-5; $\alpha=0.80-0.90$) and modified Kuppaswamy SES Scale (education, occupation, income of family head). Data collection through Google Forms was analyzed using correlations and comparisons. Results: Females reported higher self-critical perfectionism as compared to males on rigid, self-critical (most evident) and narcissistic dimensions. Individuals with higher SES (for example, 55.4% graduate heads, 28.9% professionals, incomes $>₹1,06,850$) showed elevated perfectionism, thus linking socioeconomic pressures to perfectionistic tendencies.

Zheng et. al., (2023) were conducted the study on Factors associated with academic burnout and its prevalence among university students: a cross-sectional study. The Study aims to evaluate the current state of academic burnout among Chinese college students and its influencing factors. The sample size used in the study were of 22,983 students. The research design used in the study is A cross- sectional research design. The findings of the Study found that Male students had higher burnout scores than female students, upper-grade students had higher burnout scores than lower-grade students and students who smoked had higher burnout than non-smokers during the school day.

Need for the Study

More time at work are associated with perfectionistic anxieties and strivings, but only efforts effectively demonstrate higher productivity, suggesting that perfectionism may be advantageous and expensive at work (Bellam and Curran.,2025).The anticipation of receiving a poor grade is directly related to assumed expectations from parents by unhealthy perfectionism (Menon et al.,2025).Regarding university students, self-acceptance has been shown to be stronger predictor of reduced academic burnout than perfectionism (Bisht and Sethi 2025).There are lack of studies related to dimension of perfectionism rather more studies are related to interpersonal variable (Menon et al., 2025;Thakur et al., 2024; Arora, 2024; Bisht & Sethi, 2025).

Objectives of the Study

- To assess the level of perfectionism in university students

- To assess the level of Academic Burnout in university students
- To identify the relationship between Perfectionism and Academic Burnout in university students.
- To examine the difference in perfectionism among university students based on age level.
- To examine the difference in academic burnout among university students based on age level.

Hypotheses of the Study

- There is no significant difference in the level of Perfectionism in university students
- There is no significant difference in the level of Academic Burnout in university students
- There is no significant relationship between Perfectionism and Academic Burnout in university students.
- There is no significant difference in the level of perfectionism among university students based on age level.
- There is no significant difference in the level of academic burnout among university students based on age level.

Methodology

Research Design: This study was carried out in Quantitative – Correlational studies

Sampling Method: Samples were collected through simple random sampling

Sample: In this descriptive research, the population used in this study where university students Participants were selected from Karaikudi city in the Sivaganga district.

Sample Size: The data is collected from university students of age group 18-25 and the total sample size is 122. For the purpose of analysis, the age variable was categorized into two groups: 18–21 years and 22–25 years.

Procedure: The present study is correlational study which explore relationship between perfectionism and academic burnout. The data was collected from university students. The data were collected using simple random sampling method using Google forms. This research focuses on the perfectionism and academic burnout and the participants were sent google forms within these aspects and the responses received from the participants are used for analyzing the data.

Statistical analysis: The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, independent samples t-test, and Pearson's product-moment correlation using SPSS.

Tools used in this study

Big Three Perfectionism Scale–Short Form (Feher et al.,2019) measure perfectionism as a personality trait it focus on subjective belief and behavior rather than general view. It contains the three dimensions on Rigid, Self- Critical and Narcissistic perfectionism which contain 16 items in total with 5-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree to 5= strongly agree). This scale contain reliability with 0.80

Burnout Assessment Tool (BAT) (Schaufeli, W.B., De Witte, H. & Desart, S.,2019) is 12 item measures occupational syndrome as burnout with 5-point Likert scale. It contains four dimensions with exhaustion, mental distance, emotional impairment and cognitive impairment. Internal consistency is good with 0.90

Results and Discussion

TABLE 1: Descriptive Statistics – Mean, Median, Mode, SD, Skewness & Kurtosis of perfectionism and Academic Burnout in university students.

Variables	No of Samples	Mean	Median	Mode	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
Perfectionism	122	52.1	52	48	10.7	-0.29	-0.04
Academic Burnout	122	32.6	34	36	7.5	-0.23	1.14

Table 1 provides the data of descriptive statistics on perfectionism in university students. These descriptive revealed that in perfectionism. the mean is 52.1, the median is 52, the mode is 48, the SD is 10.7, the skewness is -0.29 which shows the negative distribution and the kurtosis is (-0.04) is shows mesokurtic distribution. In Academic Burnout the mean is 32.6, the median is 34, the mode is 36, in the SD is 7.5, the skewness is -0.29 which represents the negatively distributed and the kurtosis is 1.14 which is leptokurtic. The descriptive statistics shows the normal distribution which allow the study to continue.

TABLE 2 shows the data on the level of perfectionism and Academic Burnout in university students.

Variables	No of Samples	High	Moderate	Low
Perfectionism	122	23	78	21
Academic Burnout	122	20	80	22

The levels were calculated using Mean SD of perfectionism and Academic Burnout. In perfectionism the participants who scored 63 and above denote a high level of perfectionism.

Academic Burnout the participants who scored 40 and above denote a high level of Academic burnout. In perfectionism the participants who scored 41 and below denotes a low level of perfectionism. Academic Burnout the participants who scored 25 and below denotes a low level of Academic burnout. In perfectionism, the participants who scored between 62 to 40 denote a moderate level of perfectionism. In Academic burnout, the participants who scored between 26 to 39 denote a moderate level of Academic burnout.

According to Table 2, in Academic burnout 23 participants fall under the high level of Perfectionism, 78 participants fall under the moderate level and 21 participants falls under the low level. The distribution indicates that most university students fall under the moderate level of perfectionism. This finding provides a descriptive understanding of perfectionism levels but does not involve hypothesis testing

In Academic burnout 20 participants fall under the high level of Academic burnout, 80 participants falls under the moderate level and 22 participant falls under the low level of Academic burnout. Hence the stated hypothesis "There is no difference in the level of Academic burnout in university.

TABLE 3: Mean difference “t” test analysis of perfectionism in university students based on age factor.

Variables	Age	No of sample	mean	SD	t value
Perfectionism	18 - 21	65	51.96	10.66	0.0773@
	22 - 25	57	52.11	10.73	

Note: @Not significant at 0.05 level, *significant level at 0.05, **significant level at 0.01 level

From analyzing the data, this table shows the mean score of perfectionism in university students based on the age factor is 0.0773. It denotes there is no significant difference at the level of 0.05. Hence, the stated hypothesis "There is no significant difference in the mean score of perfectionism in university students in the age factor” is accepted.

TABLE 4: Mean difference “t” test analysis of Academic Burnout in university students based on age factor.

Variables	Age	No of sample	Mean	SD	t value
Academic Burnout	18 - 21	65	32.58	7.50	0.0367@
	22 - 25	57	32.63	7.50	

Note: @Not significant at 0.05 level, *significant level at 0.05, **significant level at 0.01 level

From analyzing the data, this table shows the mean score of academic burnouts in university students based on the age factor is 0.0367. It denotes there is no significant difference at the level of 0.05. Hence, the stated hypothesis "There is no significant difference in the mean score of academic burnouts in university students in the age factor" is accepted

TABLE 5 Correlation between perfectionism and academic burnout in university students

Variables	r value
Perfectionism	0.401
Academic Burnout	

Table 5 demonstrates a moderate positive correlation ($r = 0.401$) between perfectionism and academic burnout in university students. This means that students with high levels of perfectionism suffer more from academic burnout than those with lower levels. Hence, the null hypothesis of no significant relationship between the two factors is rejected.

Conclusion

The present study reveals that there exists a moderate positive correlation between perfectionism and academic burnout in the case of university students. Despite the fact that the setting of goal-oriented striving could potentially increase the level of motivation, the tendency to be overly self-critical seems to amplify the risk of burnout. The study found no significant differences in either perfectionism or academic burnout among the different age groups. The results indicate that students' acceptance and practice of perfectionism along with the use of self-compassion and setting of realistic goals should be incorporated into the preventive measures against academic fatigue and mental stress.

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