



The Relationship Between of Academic Achievement Motivation and Academic Burnout in Postgraduate Students of Shahid Chamran University of Ahvaz

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to investigate the relationship between of achievement motivation and academic burnout. The sample consisted of 150 MSc students of Shahid Chamran University of Ahvaz within the academic year of 2012-2013 who were selected randomly by multi-stage random sampling method. The data was collected by Academic Motivation Scale (AMS), and Maslach Burnout Inventor-Student Scale (MBI-SS). Pearson correlation analysis showed that intrinsic motivation had a significantly negative correlation with academic burnout. Also Amotivation had a significantly positive correlation with academic burnout. Results of regression analysis also showed that academic achievement motivation, Specifically Intrinsic motivation, and Amotivation, played a major role in predicting academic burnout.

Keywords: Academic Achievement Motivation, Academic Burnout, University Students

INTRODUCTION

The term burnout was first introduced by Freudenberger [1], who defined it as "to fail, to wear out, or become exhausted by making excessive demands on energy, strength, or resources". The concept was further popularized with the development of the Maslach Burnout Inventory [2]. Maslach et al. [2] defined burnout as a syndrome that is composed of three dimensions: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment. Emotional exhaustion refers to demands and stressors that cause people to feel overwhelmed and unable to give of them at a psychological level. Depersonalization is the development of negative and cynical attitudes that can create a callous view of others, perceiving them as deserving of their troubles. Reduced sense of personal accomplishment is the tendency to view oneself negatively and to be dissatisfied with accomplishments. The concept of burnout has been extended to education context that is called academic burnout. Zhang et al.[3] described academic burnout as feeling exhausted because of study demands (exhaustion), having a cynical and detached attitude towards one's schoolwork (cynicism), and feeling incompetent as a student (reduced efficacy).

The literature is replete with studies that examine the relationship of burnout with various individual and, situational or contextual variables. For instance; coping flexibility [3], personality [4], and gender [4, 5]. Situational or contextual variables include school climate [6], social support [4, 5], academic major [7], academic achievement [8], and coursework [9]. A review of the studies on school/academic burnout suggest that these studies are focused on situational stressors - burnout as a function of the situation- and less as a function of the individual's characteristics.

Academic motivation is considered as an important factor in school adjustment and is largely anchored in the self-determination theory (SDT) of Ryan et al. [10]. This theory views motivation as a continuum with intrinsic and motivation at either end, and extrinsic motivation in the middle [10]. Intrinsic motivation refers to engaging in an activity for its own sake and the experience of pleasure and satisfaction derived from participation. Individuals who are intrinsically motivated tend to have an internal locus of control, are driven to accomplish, seek intellectual stimulation, and are enthusiastic about learning new things while extrinsically motivated individuals pursue education to achieve contingent goals, rather than for an intrinsic enjoyment of learning [11].

The third major component of academic motivation, Amotivation (neither intrinsic, and nor extrinsic), refers to the relative absence of motivation. Motivated individuals experience feelings of incompetence and expectancies of uncontrollability. It occurs when individuals perceive their behaviors not resulting in a certain outcome and instead perceive their behaviors as caused by forces beyond their own control [12].

College students face many challenges in their pursuit of higher education. The continuing demands of schoolwork and presence of stressors may lead to negative outcomes like burnout. The self-determination theory explains that the more intrinsically motivated an individual is, the more that he will persevere in the performance of a task or the achievement of a goal. Because an intrinsically motivated person feels that he has control over the outcomes of his behaviors, such person will not easily be discouraged from the pursuit of his goals and this would lessen the impact of burnout. The self-determination theory also explains why decreased intrinsic motivation likely leads to all three dimensions of burnout [13]. In one study, Pisarik [14] found that individuals who experienced greater levels of intrinsic motivation to attend college were more likely to experience lower levels of exhaustion and cynicism, and higher levels of professional efficacy. In addition, he also found out that individuals who experienced greater levels of motivation were more likely to experience higher levels of exhaustion and cynicism, and lower levels of professional efficacy. The results of the research findings suggest that academic achievement motivation has a major role in burnout. The main question of the research was whether there is a relationship between academic achievement motivation and burnout. To answer this question, the following hypotheses are proposed:

Hypothesis 1: There is a negative relationship between intrinsic motivation and academic burnout in university students.

Hypothesis 2: There is a negative relationship between extrinsic motivation and academic burnout in university students.

Hypothesis 3: There is a positive relationship between Amotivation and academic burnout in university students.

Hypothesis 4: There is a multiple relationship between intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation and Amotivation with academic burnout in university students.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research population consisted of all the MSc students of Shahid Chamran University (about 2000 students) in the academic year of 2012-2013. One hundred and fifty students (68 boys and 82 girls) were selected through multi-stage random sampling (ratio). Academic Motivation Scale (AMS), Maslach Burnout Inventor-Student Scale (MBI-SS) were used to collect the data.

Academic Motivation Scale (AMS): The AMS developed by Vallerand et al. [15], is a 28-item Likert-type scale measure three major motivation dimensions: intrinsic, extrinsic, and Amotivation. Research done by Vallerand, et al [15] showed that reliability and validity of the scale (AMS) on Canadian high school students and students has been approved. In the present study, the instrument's Cronbach's alpha levels are 0.83 (intrinsic), 0.76 (extrinsic), 0.66 (motivation). The validity of this inventory by means of the internal consistency was calculated 0.78 for (intrinsic), 0.59 for (extrinsic) and 0.81 for (motivation) which was significant at $p < 0.001$ level.

Maslach Burnout Inventor-Student Scale (MBI-SS): The MBI-SS consists of 16 items that constitute the three scales for exhaustion, cynicism, efficacy and total score. All items are scored on a 6-point frequency rating scale ranging from 1 (never) to 6 (always). The authors reported Cronbach's alphas range from 0.65 to 0.86 across three nationalities. Cronbach's alphas for the instrument in the present study are 0.80 (total), 0.74 (emotional exhaustion), 0.64 (cynicism) and 0.61 (efficacy). Similarly, the validity of this questionnaire by means of the internal consistency was calculated 0.68 for (emotional exhaustion), 0.70 for (cynicism) and 0.79 for (efficacy) which was significant at $p < 0.001$ level.

RESULTS

Table 1 shows the means and standard deviations of the scales. Table 2 shows correlation coefficients of the predictive variables with criterion variable.

According to table 2, there is a negative and significant correlation between Intrinsic motivation and Academic burnout ($r = -0.56$, $P \leq 0.01$). Thus, the research's first hypothesis is approved. There is a negative and non-significant correlation between extrinsic motivation and Academic burnout ($r = -0.094$, $P = 0.251$). Thus, the hypothesis 2 is rejected. There is a positive and significant correlation between Amotivation and Academic burnout ($r = 0.40$, $P \leq 0.01$). Thus, the hypothesis 3 is approved.

According to Table 3 multiple regression analysis (enter method) showed that the Intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation and motivation with Academic burnout ($F = 30.48$, $P < 0.001$). These variables explained 38% of Academic burnout variance. Thus, the hypothesis 4 is approved. The results from multiple regression analysis (stepwise model) showed that the Intrinsic motivation and Amotivation had significant multiple correlation with Academic burnout ($F = 44.43$, $P < 0.001$). These two variables are predictors of Academic burnout. Based on the obtained results, the component of extrinsic motivation eliminated from regression analysis (Table 4).

Table 1. Mean and standard deviation of the predictive variables and criterion variable

Variable	M	SD	N
Intrinsic	71.48	1.40	150
Extrinsic	66.48	1.13	150
Amotivation	11.96	5.54	150
Academic burnout	45.26	1.09	150

Table 2. Correlation coefficients of the predictive variables and criterion variable

Criterion Variable	Predictive Variables	Correlation Coefficient (R)	Sig.
Academic burnout	Intrinsic motivation	-0.56	P≤0.01
	Extrinsic motivation	-0.094	P≤0.251
	Amotivation	0.40	P≤0.01

Table 3. The results of multiple regression analysis with enter model

Dependent Variable	Predictors	MR	RS	F & P	Regression coefficients		
					1	2	3
Academic burnout	Intrinsic motivation	0.56	0.31	F=68.80 P<0.001	β= -0.56 T= -8.29 P=0.001		
	Extrinsic motivation	0.61	0.37	F=44.43 P<0.001	β= -0.48 T= -7.14 P=0.001	β= 0.25 T=3.74 P=0.001	
	Amotivation	0.62	0.38	F=30.48 P<0.001	β= -0.50 T= -7.30 P=0.001	β= 0.53 T=3.91 P=0.001	β= 0.092 T= 1.40 P=0.162

Table 4. The results of multiple regression analysis with stepwise model

Dependent Variable	Predictors	MR	RS	F & P	Regression coefficients	
					1	2
Academic burnout	Intrinsic motivation	0.56	0.31	F=68.80 P<0.001	β= -0.56 T= -8.29 P=0.001	
	Amotivation	0.61	0.37	F=44.43 P<0.001	β= -0.48 T= -7.14 P=0.001	β= 0.25 T=3.74 P=0.001

DISCUSSION

The present study has been designed for studying the relationship between academic achievement motivation and academic burnout. In general, the results show that there is a negative and significant relationship between intrinsic motivation and academic burnout. Individuals who are intrinsically motivated to face challenges of assignments show a greater persistence. It is clear that success in academic assignments leading to a feeling of competency and increasing interest to continuation of education in them. They simply will not allow other people or external events to influence on them. Such a person is not easily discouraged from pursuing his goals [13]. So it can be expected that these students are less susceptible to the negative consequences of academic burnout. On the other hand, in the self-determination theory individuals without motivation show passive and avoidance behaviors, and have no hope of controlling their environment. Therefore, they assign themselves to different situations. As a result, the consequences of this being passive are irresponsibility and lack of effort to resolve issues [13]. So it can be expected that these students to experience greater academic burnout.

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