

## Academic Burnout and Its Relationship on the Anxiety of the Senior High School Students Amidst the Online Learning Modality

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### Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused a significant impact to people; most especially, among the students. This has resulted in numerous changes, particularly in the students' learning styles. Thus, in the midst of the pandemic, online learning has posed a significant challenge to all levels of the educational system. This is because of the abrupt transition from face-to-face learning to online classes. Hence, this required the students to adjust and adapt to a new learning modality to which they were not accustomed. Academic burnout was one of the most significant challenges that these students faced; it is due to the excessive amount of academic tasks and pressure that they were subjected to. As a result, their experience with academic burnout had resulted to anxiety. Thus, this study aimed to investigate the relationship between academic burnout and anxiety among the senior high school students here in the Philippines. The findings revealed a significant relationship between academic burnout and anxiety ( $r=0.121$ ).

**Keywords:** Anxiety, Online Learning, Academic Burnout, Covid-19 Pandemic, Senior High School Students

### Introduction

COVID-19 has brought a great difference to each and everyone's life. This pandemic has brought positive and negative impacts that everyone was able to experience. COVID-19 pandemic challenged not only the health sector of our country but also the education sector of it. A study conducted by Dayagbil, Palompon, Garcia, and Olvido (2021) has shown that during the pandemic, professors have made adjustments in teaching with the help of the policies of their institutions. Their study has also found that most of the students experienced a hard time complying with their activities and requirements with limited or no internet connection. Students got no choice but to adapt to the new learning environment, which was through online learning (Alam et al., 2021). Thus, Alam et al. (2021) stated that with the immediate and unexpected shift from face-to-face learning to online learning from being stuck at home due to the pandemic, students weren't able to adjust easily. Having the students being accustomed to face-to-face learning, the sudden shift to online learning has created mental disturbance among the students. Hence, online learning and emotional intelligence have a significant effect on the stress, burnout, and academic performance of the students. Their findings have also shown that online learning can influence the said factors of the students.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO,

2019), burnout refers to the feeling of consumption of one's energy or exhaustion. Heavy workloads, responsibilities, and obligation, as well as the pressure and adjustment to online learning, has resulted in stress, anxiety, and exhaustion, which leads to academic burnout for most of the students. Especially since we are dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic. By these means, they only have a limited social support system given the fact that they were forced to stay indoors. This has been a significant issue in the present period of time. Especially for those students who are having a hard time adapting and learning with the new learning modality. In fact, a study from Saudi Arabia found that students have dealt with depression and anxiety due to the academic pressure during online classes. Their study has shown that 35% of the respondents have dealt with moderate to extreme levels of anxiety during online learning (Khoshaime et al., 2020). Additionally, a study in the Philippines has discovered that during online classes, most of their college respondent experienced mental health issues, specifically, burnout. Results have shown that respondents experienced moderate to high risks of burnout (Ramos et al., 2021).

The current situation that the world is facing, as well as the daily challenges in online learning that the students are dealing with, this resulted in the students experiencing academic burnout and anxiety amidst the pandemic. According to the study conducted by Kocak and Secer (2018), there is a significant relationship between school burnout and anxiety. It was also stated

that burnout was a big factor in depression and anxiety. Additionally, a study conducted by Tomaszek and Muchacka-Cymerman (2022) concluded that academic burnout and anxiety are significantly related to each other. Thus, these two are factors of high post-traumatic symptoms.

However, some research found that there is no direct relationship between academic burnout and anxiety. According to Talih, Daher, Daou, and Ajaltouni (2018), there is an indirect relationship between burnout and depression or anxiety among the 4 years of medical school. Additionally, a study conducted by Koutsimani, Montgomery, and Georganta in 2019 investigated the association of burnout and anxiety. Burnout is the outcome of stress and it triggers anxious reaction. Thus, this made them to investigate the relationship between these two factors. Results have found out that burnout and anxiety is not directly associated with each other. Moreover, the study of Andriyani et al. (2017) that is conducted a study to high school students showed that burnout and anxiety is not directly associated on student's well-being.

Moreover, this study investigates the relationship between academic burnout and anxiety among senior high school students amidst online learning modality. Further, it will provide awareness on how the school and parents can help their children towards having positive well-being.

### Research Question

This study investigates the relationship between academic burnout and anxiety of senior high school students amidst online learning modality. Specifically, this sought to answer the following question:

1. Is there a significant relationship between academic burnout and anxiety of senior high school students amidst online learning modality?

## Literature Review

### Academic Burnout

A study of McCormack, Macintyre, O'Shea, Herring and Campbell (2018), burnout was caused by chronic stress. This has caused negative consequences to the physical and mental well-being of a person. Maslach and Leiter (2015) defined burnout as a psychological syndrome response that emerged from chronic interpersonal stressors. Some of the responses are overwhelming exhaustions, cynicism and detachment,

and the feeling of ineffectiveness and lack of achievement.

According to Zhang et al. (2007) as cited by Charkhabi et.al (2013), burnout among tertiary students is referred as the feeling of tiredness that is caused by academic demands, lack of enthusiasm in doing academic duties, and the feeling of incompetence as a student. Moreover, a study has found that people or students who are dealing with burnout academically may experience things such as: disinterest towards academic tasks, absenteeism to classes continuously, and the feeling of inadequacy in doing academic tasks (Yang & Farn, 2005 as cited Charkhabi, Abarghuei & Hayati, 2013).

In the present time, education is considered as the key to success. It has become one of the essentials to have a prosperous and wealthy nation. Education is a stepping stone towards any development. Thus, academic achievement has become one of those challenges that students are facing. Academic achievement has become the standard to a student's ability, their ability to enter college, and determines their careers and job in the near future. Due to this reason, students experienced academic pressure in order to get good academic grades (Oyoo, Mwaura, Kinai, & Mutua, 2020).

Based on the study of Pascoe, Hetrick, and Parker (2019), previous research has shown that academic stress can reduce a student's achievement when it comes to doing academic work. This can cause students to lose motivation and increase their chances of dropping out of school. Lin and Huang (2014) found out that stress has been a great factor on students to have a negative impact when it comes to learning. Thus, poor academic performance is highly associated with academic burnout. A study conducted by Jung et al. (2015) found out that there is a positive correlation between academic stress and academic burnout.

According to Rahmatpour et al. (2019), students with academic burnout were incapable of participating in their classes regularly. They also showed signs of incapability to learn new lessons and a sense of insignificance. As a result, their GPA, interest in the field of study, and time spent studying has been affected. Additionally a study has found that students with high levels of burnout were more likely to be less satisfied with their performance academically and achieve lower performance outcomes. Moreover, a study found that academic burnout is a common problem among students, and has a great impact on their well-being. This includes their functionality,

satisfaction, and perspectives and point of views about their future (Atalayin et al, 2015).

According to the study conducted to 249 students the Philippines, workload is correlated positively to exhaustion or burnout. Also, academic achievement influences academic efficacy that can also lessen the chance of a student to experience exhaustion or burnout (Velasco, 2019). Another study that is administered by Ramos et al. (2021) found out that people experienced mental health issues; specifically, burnout during the surge of pandemic. College students are at higher risk of experiencing this phenomenon. Results have shown that 245 respondents have moderate to high risks of dealing with burnout. Additionally, resilience and academic burnout is directly associated with each other. Results have found out that most of the students from 605 respondents have experienced moderate levels of academic burnout (Tus et al., 2021).

### Anxiety

Anxiety, according to Sharma and Sharma (2015), is derived from the Latin word "angere" which means "to cause distress". Knight and Depua (2019) defined anxiety as the prolonged state apprehension or uneasiness that is brought by an uncertain event that is considered a possible threat. Anxiety is associated with the word fear. Fear is described as a phasic response to the presence of threat. Anxiety, according to the DSM V, is the anticipation of a future threat and is frequently associated with muscle tension and vigilance in preparation for future danger, as well as cautious or avoidant behaviours. (American Psychiatric Association, 2013)

According to Demir (2020), the COVID-19 pandemic caused widespread anxiety among people worldwide. A study conducted by Santabarbara et al. (2021), the world is experiencing crisis due to the COVID-19 epidemic. Especially, health related crisis. The transmission of COVID-19 virus has threatened physical, as well as mental well-being of the people worldwide. Results have found out that 7.3% is the rate of anxiety disorders worldwide, and it could be increased three times higher during the pandemic.

A study conducted in the Philippines found out that one-fourth of the respondents experienced moderate to severe anxiety during the COVID Pandemic (Tee et al., 2020). In addition, a study conducted among 203 graduated students in the Philippines have shown that COVID-19 stress, anxiety, and fear due to pandemic have significant relationship with resilience, that is

also related to coping (Oducado et al., 2021).

According to Alkandari (2019), students who are in higher education face many challenges. Students are most likely to experience anxiety. Students face anxiety when they think or feel that they are incapable of achieving their academic or non-academic purposes. Based on the prevalence study conducted by Zhang et al. (2020), a number of high school respondents experienced depression and anxiety symptoms during the COVID-19 pandemic. Results have found out almost one-third of their high school students respondents have dealt with anxiety symptoms.

Based on the study of Reddy et al. (2018), adolescents are at a high risk of being vulnerable to the problems related with academic. Additionally, Zhang et al. (2022) found out that anxiety symptoms, as well as other factors such as hopelessness and depressive symptoms has a direct relationship between academic stress. According to Ladejo (2021), social and academic risk factors can cause students to feel anxious. Factors such as balancing out priorities and fear of failing are likely to improve or worsen the feeling of distress or anxiety. Moreover, Mofatteh (2021) discovered that untreated poor mental health can lead to students to experience anxiety. Thus, this could affect their quality of life and academic performance in the long run.

Students who are experiencing higher level of anxiety is more likely to demonstrate more negativism related to emotions and have a lower level of academic self-efficacy (Alemany-Arrebola et al., 2020). A study conducted by Rabei, Ramadan, and Abdallah (2020) have found out that self-efficacy and future anxiety have been shown to have an impact on student performance. It was also discovered that anxiety among students is significantly related to self-efficacy. Anxiety and self-efficacy is a vital role in academic performance of a student. It was found out in a study as well that students with high level of test anxiety are more vulnerable to experience negative influence in their ability to do well academically (Barrows, Dunn, & Lloyd, 2013).

According to Adeoye (2015), students can be easily affected by anxiety, which also can affect their academic performance. A study of Mirawdali (2018) concluded that students who are experiencing anxiety are unable to perform at their full potential. Chernomas and Shapiro (2013) have found out that stress, depression, and anxiety can influence students' learning and academic performance. Studies have shown a general increase of mental health problems

among tertiary students.

Locally, a study conducted by De Paz, Armstrong, and Mullan (2021) showed that most of the respondents have dealt with mild anxiety, fatigue, and depression. However, some also experienced moderate-severe. According to Cleofas and Rocha (2021), anxiety is common problem among Filipino college students. Additionally, students from low-income households were seen to experience increased level of consequence-related anxiety. The rates of depression and anxiety are increasing as years passes by. Results have shown that students who struggle to cope with their studies are five times more likely to suffer from depression and anxiety. (Alibudbud, 2021)

### Academic Burnout and Anxiety

According to Kocak and Secer (2018), there is a positive and significant correlation detected between school burnout and depression-anxiety. Burnout was also found related to depression and anxiety. Thus, school or academic burnout can be considered as one of the important factor for depression and anxiety. Based on the study of Pokhel, Khadayhat, and Tulachan (2020), depression, anxiety, and burnout were observed among the respondents of their study. Most of these respondents have experienced academic-related stress. According to Fernandez-Castillo (2021), there is a positive correlation between anxiety and burnout. The study conducted shown that students who faced the evaluation test during the COVID-19 pandemic experienced anxiety and burnout. Thus, the two variables are concluded to be related to each other, and eventually suggested to address anxiety to decrease the occurrence of burnout among students. Moreover, the study of Koutsimani, Montgomery, and Georganta (2019), found out that there is a significant association between burnout and anxiety. In addition, a cross-sectional study conducted by Ding et al. in 2014, proven that there is a significant correlation between burnout and anxiety. The study was conducted through 1,423 healthcare workers respondents in 52 health centers in the communities in China.

However, in the study of Liasi et al. (2021), it was shown that there is no direct correlation between academic burnout and anxiety. Instead, there is a direct correlation between anxiety and the distance between one's home and hospital. According to the study conducted among Chinese hospital staffs of intensive care unit by Zhang et al. (2020), burnout was indirectly associated with anxiety symptoms. Additionally, a network analysis study conducted by Ernst et al. (2021), have shown that there is no direct

correlation between burnout and anxiety. Thus, anxiety is only a mediating factor of burnout. Moreover, a study of Adabi and Ghafournia in 2020 conducted to the English teachers in Iran, it was proven through the results between the variables that there is a negative and insignificant relationship between teachers' anxiety and teachers' burnout.

## Methodology

### Research Design

To further understand the relationship between academic burnout and anxiety among senior high school students, this study employed descriptive-correlational design. Thus, it is a type of non-experimental research that investigates the relationship and phenomenon that is already present among the variables (Quaranta, 2017).

### Respondents

This study was conducted among 151 senior high school students who are currently enrolled from private schools during 2021-2022. The respondents are currently studying through the form of online learning modality due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, this allowed the researchers to employ convenience sampling method through the use of Google forms. Convenience sampling is the most common technique among non-probability sampling, wherein researchers uses respondents who are convenient to them (Edgar & Manz, 2017). According to Putnick and Bostein (2017), the use of convenience sampling technique provides a low-cost, systematic, and easier way in data gathering.

### Research Instruments

The researchers used two standardized instruments in collecting specific data to determine the relationship among academic burnout and anxiety. The researchers utilized the Maslach Burnout Inventory designed by Maslach, Jackson, and Leiter (1996). In addition, the Depression, Anxiety, Stress Scale developed by Lovibond and Lovibond (1995) to measure the anxiety that the students are facing.

The Maslach Burnout Inventory was the most used instrument to measure burnout. This type of instrument consist these 3 dimensions of burnout: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment. The MBI is a self-administered type of questionnaire that is consists of 15 questions that is



used to assess one's experience with regards to burnout (Maslach & Jackson, 1981).

On the other hand, the Depression, Anxiety, Stress Scale 21 was utilized to assess the mental well-being status of the respondents. The DASS-21 designed by Lovibond and Lovibond in 1995 is the most frequent instrument in measuring depression, anxiety, and stress scale. This instrument consists of 42 questions related to depression, anxiety, and stress scale (Jiang et al., 2020). Researchers made use of 7 questions; specifically, those questions that is used to assess an individual's experience of anxiety.

### Procedures

Prior to the data collection, researchers made sure that ideas and concepts of this study are thoroughly understood in determining the relationship between the two variables. Therefore, researching and considering different viewpoints with regards to academic burnout and anxiety was done. An online survey through Google forms was created by the researchers for the data gathering. Researchers administered 15 questions through the use of Maslach Burnout Inventory to assess one's experience of burnout, and 7 questions through the use of DASS-21 to determine the respondents' experience with regards to depression, anxiety, and stress.

Before answering the actual questionnaire, the respondents were required to answer consent in participation. Therefore, the data collected through the help of the respondents were able to conform with the Data Privacy Act of 2012 (RA 10173). This is used to protect the confidentiality of the respondents. Following the data gathering is the compilation of the data accumulated through the survey form. Researcher made use of Microsoft Excel and Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) in compiling, calculating, and interpreting the results.

### Ethical Consideration

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the current situation of the Philippines, researchers conducted the data gathering through the use of Google form. This is to ensure the safety of the researchers, as well as the respondents that made this study possible.

Moreover, ethical considerations were highly practiced with this study. To start with, the study itself was consented by the research professor of the researchers. The instruments used, as well as the approach in collecting data are also under the permission of the research professor.

The survey form was disseminated through the use of social media posting through various online platforms. This allowed the researchers to gather data from respondents who are qualified for the criteria of the study. The consent to participate the study was strictly implemented. Respondents were given a choice to agree with the terms and conditions or ignore the survey form. Furthermore, the respondents' personal details and information were used for research purposes only. Thus, their personal privacy were protected and not compromised throughout this study.

With the factors stated above, allowed the researchers to use the English language in creating the survey form that is suited for both Filipino and English speakers. Therefore, ethical considerations were absolutely implied.

### Result

This section reveals the study's findings through the use of a research question. Further, making use of SPSS, the Pearson correlation coefficient was computed. With this, comparing and determining the mean and the relationship between variables was concluded.

#### Relationship between Academic Burnout and Anxiety

The study primarily focuses on the relationship between academic burnout and anxiety. As seen in table 1, the statistical analysis demonstrated that the variables which are academic burnout and anxiety are significantly correlated with each other. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Table 1

*Relationship Between Academic Burnout and Anxiety*

CORRELATION		
	<i>Academic Burnout</i>	<i>Anxiety</i>
<i>Academic Burnout</i>	-	.121*
<i>Anxiety</i>	.121*	-

In the study by Fernandez-Castillo (2021), it was proven that burnout and anxiety are related to each

other. Further, the results found that students who took access tests in universities during the COVID-19 pandemic faced high levels of burnout and anxiety. Moreover, Fernandez-Castillo also found out that the COVID-19 pandemic contributed to the students experiencing higher levels of anxiety at least 2 months prior to the actual exam. Thus, it is concluded that burnout and anxiety correlate with each other.

In addition, according to a meta-analysis study conducted by Koutsimani, Montgomery, and Georganta (2019), burnout is highly associated with anxiety. The findings of the study have shown that individuals who are more vulnerable to experiencing high levels of anxiety are more likely to develop and experience burnout as well. Thus, the two variables are proven to have a relationship.

## Discussion

Various studies came up with different results regarding the relationship between academic burnout and anxiety. However, some studies tend to neglect the significance of the two variables as to how it correlates with each other. The response of the participants has become the indicator to make a final decision with regard to academic burnout and anxiety. Thus, this analysis reveals that academic burnout is significantly correlated with anxiety. The results showed that students who experience burnout are most likely to experience anxiety as well. Additionally, this study also reveals that the online learning modality during the COVID-19 pandemic plays a role in increasing the likelihood of students to experience academic burnout. Thus, when students are dealing with academic burnout, chances are also high for them to experience anxiety. Furthermore, in order to decrease the levels of anxiety, parents, teachers, school and their institutions should monitor the burnout that the students are facing.

Therefore, schools should promote a healthy learning environment amidst the COVID-19, wherein students can work with ease and under less pressure to decrease the level of burnout. Thus this will also decrease the risk among students of experiencing anxiety. In addition, academic burnout should be remarked as a cause of anxiety among the students.

## Conclusion

The online learning modality amidst the pandemic that

the students are facing in the present period of time plays a vital role in students' mental well-being. Thus, increasing the chances of them experiencing academic burnout also increases their risk to experience anxiety. As stated in the findings of this study, there is a significant correlation between academic burnout and anxiety among students in the Philippines, indicating that the null hypothesis is rejected. With the reliable number of respondents ascertained amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, there was an alteration in their mental well-being and coping capability.

Therefore, researchers strongly recommend the parents, as well as the school to check up and monitor their children's condition. Thus, avoidance of the student's experience of burnout should be practiced and prioritized. The study suggests the school conduct occasional breaks or health breaks and consideration in giving and assigning academic tasks among the students; particularly, with the current situation of the pandemic, they are facing. Thus, this will help the students to avoid the risk of experiencing burnout resulting in them experiencing anxiety as well. In conclusion, creating a healthy learning environment amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as implementing rules and consideration with regard to giving academic tasks will lessen the risk of the students experiencing burnout that will eventually result in them dealing with anxiety. Hence, students will be able to maintain healthy mental well-being even with online learning modality amidst the pandemic.

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