

## ***Study Burnout and Academic Self-Efficacy of Undergraduates in the Universities in Northwest Zone, Nigeria***

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### **Abstract**

*The study investigated study burnout and academic self-efficacy among undergraduates in the universities in Northwest zone, Nigeria. Two research objectives were raised. One research question was answered and one null hypothesis was tested. Correlational research design was employed. The population of the study were 50,046 300-level undergraduates. A multi-stage sampling technique was used. The sample of the study was 381 participants. Two validated instruments, Copenhagen Study Burnout Scale (CSBS) and Academic Self-Efficacy Scale (ASES), were used to collect data. Pearson products moment correlation was used for the analysis at .05 level of significance. It was found that majority of undergraduates (252; 66 %) have low level of study burnout and that study burnout has significant negative relationship to academic self-efficacy ( $r = -.190, p = .000$ ). Based on the findings, it was concluded that increase in study burnout decreases academic self-efficacy among the undergraduates. It was recommended, among others, that all curriculum practices should be tilted towards encouraging undergraduates to develop and strengthen positive belief for academic activities and a policy to facilitate the creation of study burnout management units should be established in universities and academic self-efficacy of undergraduates should be evaluated more often.*

**Keywords:** study, burnout, academic, self-efficacy, undergraduates

### **Introduction**

The problem of academic self-efficacy among undergraduates in the universities of north-western Nigeria remains a source of concern over the years. Academic self-efficacy

explained the individual's innate belief to undertake and pass an academic task successfully without failure. It was observed that many undergraduates in the universities continue to disbelieve in what they are capable of performing in relation to completing some specific academic tasks; most especially in cases of poor outcomes or failures in courses. It was observed by the researchers that over the years, there is a growing concern that the problem of academic self-efficacy seems to lure undergraduates into academic misconduct which in many cases leads to their expulsion from universities because they do not have positive belief for passing courses on their own abilities. It should be noted that expulsion of undergraduates from universities as a result of misconduct has direct connection with the problem of academic self-efficacy. The problem of academic self-efficacy among the undergraduates may not be unconnected to the feeling of study burnout against academic activities on the campuses.

Multidimensional theory explained burnout in terms of personal exhaustion, depersonalization and lack of or reduced personal accomplishment. Burnout among student is a feeling of failure because of being overloaded and misuse of energy and personal resources. Students' burnout and the classroom assessment environment are interrelated structures. Study burnout brings about numerous negative characteristics such as depression, lack of motivation, increased tendency to absenteeism, dropout and low academic achievement. Pala (2012) buttressed that studies have explored study burnout among college students and reported that it was as a result of overcrowded classes, examinations, doubtful employment as a teacher, side jobs, and extracurricular activities. Feelings of being undervalued by lecturers and colleagues, perceptions of excessive academic demands and workloads, and limited latitude in decision making due to time and resource constraints are also inherent in being a student.

Many scholars, such as Sharififard et al. (2014) have established empirical evidences that study burnout reduces self-efficacy of students. Manzano-Garcia and Ayala-Calvow (2013) explained that personal and academic stressors result in academic burnout which has negative effect on self-efficacy and achievement of students. Sugara et al. (2020) explained that academic burnout significantly reduced academic self-efficacy among university students. Also, Jenaabadi et al. (2017) posit that university students' self-efficacy is affected by academic burnout. Similarly, Moradzade et al. (2017) found that academic burnout reduces academic self-efficacy among high school students. Most of the students have high level of burnout and that may lead to absence from classes, poor motivation for completing coursework, demoralization and eventually to dropping out of school (Duru et al., 2014). However, few scholars like Charkhabi et al. (2013) explained

that academic burnout improves self-efficacy and learning experiences among students in universities.

There is gross shortage of studies on burnout among undergraduates; many scholars call for research in the area. For example, Kalantarkousheh et al. (2013) mentioned that burnout in students is an important research area for the university because of the following reasons; first, academic burnout can be an important key to perception of various student behaviours such as academic function during a study session. In addition, burnout influences students' relations with faculty and university. For example, study burnout affects undergraduates' commitments to the faculty and their engagement in scientific affairs after graduation. Study burnout can influence students' eagerness and enthusiasm for study. May et al. (2015) also mentioned that no much studies were found in the literature that investigated the relationship between study burnout and the classroom environment, and between the students' burnout and academic self-efficacy and achievement, association between these constructs are yet to be documented among college students and that research on the potential impairment of cognitive processes that may contribute to the relationship between school burnout and academic self-efficacy is greatly limited. The main purpose of the study therefore is to examine the relationship between study burnout and academic self-efficacy among the undergraduates in North West geopolitical zone, Nigeria.

### **Objectives of the study**

To achieve the stated target of the study, the following research objectives were set to guide the study.

1. To determine the proportion of high and low level of study burnout among undergraduates in northwest zone, Nigeria.
2. To examine the relationship between study burnout and academic self-efficacy among undergraduates in northwest zone, Nigeria.

### **Research question**

The following research question, in line with objective one, guided the study:

1. What is the proportion of high and low level of study burnout among undergraduates in northwest zone, Nigeria?

## **Hypothesis**

The following null hypothesis, in line with objective two, guided the study:

**H<sub>0</sub>** There is no significant relationship between study burnout and academic self-efficacy among undergraduates in northwest zone, Nigeria.

## **Methodology**

The study adopted correlational research design. The population of the study covered 50,046 undergraduates from the fourteen (14) functional public universities in the zone that were in level 300. The population is heterogeneous in the sense that it comprises both male and female students with an average age of 24 years. After a multistage sampling process, a sample of three hundred and eighty-one (381) undergraduates (244 male & 137 females) was randomly selected from the six (6) public universities in northwest zone, Nigeria. The sample size was recommended by the Research Advisors (2006) guidelines for determining representative of the population.

Two instruments were used to collect data for the study. A 25 items Copenhagen Study Burnout Scale (CSBS), with 4 subscales (Personal Burnout, Studies Burnout, Colleagues Burnout, & Teacher Related Burnout), adapted from Campos et al. (2013) was used to collect data on study burnout and a modified 27 item in a 4-points Likert scale format with four subscales (Self engagement, Self-oriented decision making, others-oriented problem solving and Interpersonal climate) Academic Self-efficacy Scale (ASES) adapted from Sagone and De-Caroli (2014). Each of the two instruments was scored 1 mark as the lowest option and 4 marks as the highest. The two instruments were pilot tested and a strong reliability of .875 was obtained for CSBS and .892 for ASES.

The data was collected within the period of two weeks in each of the universities. Descriptive statistics of simple percentage and frequency counts were used to answer the research question, and inferential statistic of Pearson Products Moments Correlation was used to test the null hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance.

## Presentation of results

The summary of the data collected was presented as follows:

**Table 1:** Proportional distribution of the respondents by university

		Frequency	Percentage	Cum.
	Name of the University	(n)	(%)	Percentage
1	Bayero University Kano	133	34.9	34.9
2	Federal University Dutse	58	15.2	50.1
3	Umaru Musa Yar'adua University, Katsina	53	13.9	64.0
4	Kaduna State University, Kaduna	89	23.4	87.4
5	Federal University, Gusau	29	07.6	95
6	Sokoto State University, Sokoto	19	05.0	100
	<b>Total</b>	<b>381</b>		

From Table 1, a total of 381 undergraduates were served the two instruments administered across the six selected universities. The proportional number of the participants from each of the universities was depicted. The larger proportion of the participants were 133 from Bayero University Kano; it was followed by 89 participants from Kaduna State University, 58 participants of Federal University Dutse were the next group, followed by 53 respondents from Umaru Musa Yar'adua University, Katsina. The penultimate university was Federal University, Gusau with 29 respondents. The university with least proportion was Sokoto State University with 19 participants.

**Table 2:** Distribution of the respondents by gender

		Frequency	Percentage
	Gender	(n)	(%)
1	Male	244	64.04
2	Female	137	35.96
	<b>Total</b>	<b>381</b>	<b>100</b>

From Table 2, out of the 381 undergraduates that responded to the instruments, 244 covering 64.04% were male and 137 covering 35.96% were female. It can be seen from the table that more males participated in the study than their female counterparts.

**Research question 1:** What is the proportion of high and low level of study burnout among undergraduates in northwest zone, Nigeria?

To answer this research question, frequency count and percentage were used, and the result is as summarised in Table 3.

**Table 3:** Distribution of respondents by the levels of study burnout

Levels of Study Burnout		Frequency (n)	Proportion	Percentage (%)
1	High level	129	0.34	33.86
2	Low level	252	0.66	66.14
Total		381	1.00	100

From Table 3, it can be seen that only 129 respondents indicated experiencing high level of study burnout while 252 undergraduates indicated low level. Hence the answer to the research question which asked about the proportion of the levels of study burnout is that majority of the undergraduates (66.14%) have low level; but 33.86% reported to have high level of study burnout.

**Ho1:** There is no significant relationship between study burnout and academic self-efficacy among undergraduates in northwest zone, Nigeria.

Table 4 contains results of the Pearson Product Moment correlation between study burnout and academic self-efficacy of the participants.

**Table 4:** PPMC statistics for correlation between study burnout and academic self-efficacy

		Academic self- efficacy	Study burnout
Academic Self- efficacy	Pearson Correlation	1	-.190**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	381	381
Study Burnout	Pearson Correlation	-.190**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	381	381

\*\* Correlation is significant at 0.05 level (2-tailed)

From Table 4, the r-value obtained in the correlation between study burnout and academic self-efficacy of the 381 participants was  $-.190$ , and the p-value was  $.000$ . Therefore, the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant relationship between study burnout and academic self-efficacy among the undergraduates in northwest zone, Nigeria is hereby rejected. The reason is because based on the analysis, the p-value ( $0.000$ ) obtained is less than the alpha value of  $0.05$ ; thus, the correlation showed a statistically significant but negative relationship. This means increase in study burnout reduces academic self-efficacy of the undergraduates.

### **Summary of the findings**

The study has the following findings:

- i. The proportion of undergraduates with low level of study burnout was  $66\%$  compared to their counterpart with high level with  $34\%$  in public universities in northwest zone, Nigeria.
- ii. Significant but negative relationship was found ( $r = -.190$ ,  $p = .000$ ) between study burnout and academic self-efficacy among undergraduates in universities in northwest zone, Nigeria.

### **Discussion of the findings**

In relation to the research question, the study showed that  $66\%$  of the undergraduates have low level of study burnout. This is not in line with the explanation of Duru et al. (2014) concerning high level of school burnout among students. A few of the respondents ( $34\%$ ) have high feeling of study burnout which may possibly create fear for not graduating among students.

As for no significant relationship between study burnout and academic self-efficacy in null hypothesis, the result of the study found significant inverse relationship between the two psychological variables. Sugara et al. (2020) explained that the many students were not successful because study burnout is believed to affect their performance, belief and quality of life. The finding of the study supported Manzano-Garcia and Ayala-Calvoew (2013) multi causal model of burnout which reiterated that input (personal stressors such as negative personal experiences) and study stressors (such as courses overload) culminate to study burnout (an unfulfilled academic expectation and robotization of behaviour). The finding is also in line with what Sugara et al. (2020) found that academic burnout significantly reduced academic self-efficacy among university students. Also, studies by Jenaabadi et al. (2017) and, Moradzade et al. (2017) found similar result between academic burnout and academic self-efficacy among high school students. Also, in Iran.

Jung et al. (2015) also found significant negative relationship between academic stress and academic self-efficacy among Chinese adolescents; while Sharififard et al. (2014) also explained significant negative correlation between study burnout and academic self-efficacy among undergraduates also in Iran. The similarities of the results with this present study may not be unconnected to the fact that the variables were the same. Also, all the subjects were all university students. This signifies that possibly undergraduates irrespective of differences in locations; experience study burnout feeling alike. In contrary, the result is not in agreement with that of Charkhabi et al. (2013) who reported insignificant relationship between academic burnout and self-efficacy among university students. The possible reason for the contradiction in the findings is because the former result was based on academic burnout and general self-efficacy. Differences in the measuring instruments may be a factor too in the difference in findings.

### **Conclusion**

Based on the findings, the researchers arrived at the conclusion that majority of the undergraduates have low level of study burnout. Increase in study burnout reduces academic self-efficacy among the undergraduates in the universities in North West zone, Nigeria.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings and the conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are made:

- i. The study has found majority of respondents with low level study burnout; it is imperative that being completely positive all the time produces better results. The researchers recommended among others that all curriculum practices should be tilted towards encouraging undergraduates to develop and strengthen positive belief for academic activities.
- ii. Undergraduates should be encouraged against feeling of exhaustion, cynicism and lack of achieving (study burnout) as it reduces their academic self-efficacy. Instead, they should be optimistic for passing all courses on their own if they study harder. A policy to facilitate the creation of study burnout management units should be established in universities as this could be of good help.

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