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Peer Social Support and Resilience as Determining Factors of Academic Burnout in College Students

Ananda Eka Puspaningrum[1], Arcivid Chorynia Ruby[2]

[12] Department of Psychology, Universitas Muria Kudus, Indonesia

Keywords

Academic burnout, peer social support, resilience.

Abstract

Academic burnout is a significant issue among students, characterized by emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and feelings of incompetence in academic tasks, often caused by chronic stress. The relevance of this issue is highlighted by the role of peer social support and resilience as independent variables influencing academic burnout. This study aims to evaluate the relationship between peer social support and resilience on academic burnout among students. The research sample consisted of 381 students selected through quota sampling. Data were collected using Likert scales, including scales for academic burnout, peer social support, and resilience. The analysis results show a correlation coefficient r_{x12y} of 0.354 with a significance of 0.001 ($p<0.01$), and an effective contribution of 12.5%, indicating a significant relationship between peer social support and resilience on academic burnout. Further analysis shows that peer social support has a significant positive correlation with academic burnout ($r_{x1y} = 0.348$, $p<0.01$), while resilience does not show a significant relationship with academic burnout ($r_{x2y} = 0.134$, $p>0.05$). In conclusion, peer social support is significantly associated with academic burnout, while resilience does not have a significant impact. These results indicate that academic pressure and heavy workloads influencing academic burnout. Additionally, social pressure and competition within the educational system can also affect the levels of academic burnout. Universities need to develop intervention programs that not only focus on social support and resilience but also on stress and time management skills for their students.

✉ Email correspondence: anandaekaaaa@gmail.com

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INTRODUCTION

College students are defined as individuals pursuing higher education at various institutions such as universities, colleges, and academies (Anggraini & Desiningrum, 2018). As the primary subjects in the educational system, students have the responsibility to study various subjects, complete assignments, and achieve good academic results to enhance their knowledge and skills (Husna et al., 2014). According to Chan (2016), another goal for students is to obtain a degree to secure a job after completing their education. In their effort to achieve these goals, students often face high workloads and pressures that can lead to exhaustion and loss of motivation (Dinata & Fikry, 2023). Fatigue and lack of motivation in academic settings are closely linked to the psychological term academic burnout**.**

Academic burnout is a significant problem among students, characterized by emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and a sense of incompetence in academic tasks (Arlinkasari & Akmal, 2017). This condition is often caused by chronic stress in the academic context. Research by Ramadhan et al. (2022) shows that 81.9% of participants experienced moderate levels of academic burnout. Another study by Amarsa et al. (2023) found that 73.3% (77 students) experienced moderate academic burnout. These studies indicate that students are a group vulnerable to academic burnout.

Students face unique challenges compared to other educational groups, such as the need to develop new learning techniques, learn more independently, and face many uncertainties (Capone et al., 2020). Students are not only required to have technical skills but also mental toughness, strength, and specific character traits. Students deal with various demands and obstacles such as simultaneous assignments, practical work, study load requirements, and thesis writing (Gatari, 2020).

Caught in a continuous cycle of doing assignments, attending classes, and preparing for exams, students often sacrifice rest time, sleep, and recreational activities to achieve the "ideal" results (Tsabita et al., 2023). Pine dan Kafry (Lian et al., 2014) found that students experience higher levels of exhaustion compared to social workers. As a result, students may feel bored and lack interest in studying (Lian et al., 2014). Freudenberger and Richelson (Khairani and Ifdil, 2015) state that people who experience burnout are usually those who were initially enthusiastic. Those suffering from burnout generally have high aspirations, enthusiasm, and strong moral and work ethics. However, Slivar (Lian et al., 2014) argues that too high expectations lead to pressure, resulting in anxiety and exhaustion.

Students who continuously experience exhaustion due to academic demands may develop academic burnout (Sumarni et al., 2021). Academic burnout is characterized by fatigue due to learning demands, lack of engagement with tasks, and feelings of incompetence (Lathifah et al., 2023). Academic burnout explains psychological aspects such as stress and pressure experienced by students during

their learning process. This also describes emotional exhaustion, a tendency towards depersonalization, and feelings of low personal accomplishment (Orpina & Prahara, 2019).

According to Safitri and Dewi (2020), academic demands require students to complete many tasks and meet deadlines in a short time. Academic burnout can also result from personal issues such as difficulties in social relationships (Permatasari et al., 2021). Students are in a phase that demands independence and readiness to face academic tasks, making resilience important for continuing their education (Durso et al., 2021). Resilience is a mechanism that allows individuals to stay strong despite adversity (Supadi et al., 2021).

Students who lack resilience are likely to find it harder to handle academic pressure and failure during their studies. Research by Redityani and Susilawati (2021) shows that resilience compensates for the negative impact of burnout on students. Resilience helps improve mental and academic well-being. Thus, it is essential for students to develop resilience to overcome pressure and difficulties during their studies (Uyanne, 2021).

Apart from resilience, social support is also important and can be obtained from peers (Tri & Hartati, 2013). Peer support may include emotional, informational, or instrumental support from friends to reduce stress and enhance personal well-being (Pangestu & Nurhadianti, 2024). Peers often understand students' emotions and experiences due to their similar age and developmental stage (Andriani et al., 2020). Research by Liu and Cao (2022) suggests that the relationship between stress and academic burnout may be mediated by social support. Social support can help reduce stress and academic burnout in students.

Based on initial questionnaires and interviews conducted with 60 students, the results showed that 58.3% (or 35 out of 60 respondents) experienced academic burnout. Interviews revealed that the causes of academic burnout included difficulty keeping up with classes, dissatisfaction with campus facilities, excessive assignments, and perceived inability to complete tasks. Many students lacked clarity in their academic goals and lost the motivation to excel. Other causes included the demand to interact with many people for assignments and presentations, as well as the perceived difficulty of some courses, which led to a loss of interest in mandatory subjects. Although resilience and social support have been studied before, it is important to research them again as academic and social dynamics may change over time. This study aims to update and deepen our understanding of how peer social support and resilience affect academic burnout in students.

METHOD

Design

This study uses a quantitative approach with a correlational design to understand the relationship between peer social support and resilience as determining factors of academic burnout among active students at Universitas Muria Kudus. A correlational study determines the direction and strength of relationships between the variables being studied (Azwar, 2017).

Participants

The research sample consisted of 381 students from Universitas Muria Kudus. The sampling method used was quota sampling, a technique where a certain number of individuals are selected to represent the overall characteristics of the population (Azwar, 2017). The participants were students enrolled from the 1-7 semester.

Instruments

a. Academic Burnout

The instrument used to measure academic burnout was based on the dimensions proposed by Schaufeli et al. (2002). This instrument includes three main dimensi ons:

Table 1
Blue Print Academic Burnout Scale

No	Dimension	Number of Items		Example Item	Validity Range
		Fav	Unfav		
1.	Exhaustion	6	1	I find it difficult to maintain productivity in my coursework	0,410 – 0,747
2.	Cynicsm	12	2	I often feel isolated or uncomfortable when on campus	
3.	Reduced Academic Efficacy	5	4	I feel that my abilities and knowledge are insufficient to achieve academic goals	

b. Peer Social Support

The peer social support scale is based on aspects Sarafino and Smith (2011) described. This instrument measures four aspects:

Table 2
Blue Peer Social Support Scale

No	Aspect	Number of Items		Example Item	Validity Range
		Fav	Unfav		
1.	Emotional of Esteem Support	6	3	I feel disappointed when my friends do not pay attention when I complain about something	0,371 – 0,674

2.	Tangible or Instrumental Support	4	2	My friends are willing to help me when I need subjects for assignments
3.	Informational Support	5	-	My friends are always ready to give me advice and guidance
4.	Companionship Support	7	3	I have friends who share common interests with me

c. Resilience

The resilience scale is based on aspects proposed by Reivich & Shatte (Olson, 2007). This instrument measures seven aspects:

Table 3
Blue Print Resilience Scale

No	Aspect	Number of Items		Example Item	Validity Range
		Fav	Unfav		
1.	Emotional Regulation	3	1	I can control my anger when I am upset to avoid an outburst	0,480 – 0,670
2.	Impulse Control	2	1	I strive to complete my tasks before the deadline	
3.	Causal Analysis	4	2	I can identify the source of the problems I face	
4.	Self Efficacy	5	-	I am confident in my ability to work effectively in group tasks	
5.	Realistic Optimism	2	1	I believe that my future will be better	
6.	Empathy	2	1	I can read facial expressions to understand what others are feeling	
7.	Achievement	4	1	I am able to see the good in every situation	

Procedure

This study utilized a distribution scale to measure academic burnout, peer social support, and resilience. Data collection took place from July 27th to July 29th, 2023, using Google Forms as the online distribution platform. This platform was chosen for its ability to speed up data collection and provide respondents with easy access. The study subjects comprised 381 students from Universitas Muria Kudus, selected using the quota sampling technique based on a determined quota using the Slovin formula. The Google Forms questionnaire was divided into seven sections. In the first section, respondents were asked to provide personal information such as

name, gender, faculty, and WhatsApp number. The second and third sections contained 15-item scales for academic burnout, while the fourth and fifth sections contained 15-item scales for peer social support. The sixth and seventh sections contained 15-item scales for resilience.

Data analysis

Once the scales were completed, the collected data were evaluated based on predetermined scores. The results were then processed using IBM SPSS Statistics version 15 for Windows. The hypothesis was that a relationship exists between peer social support and resilience and academic burnout among students.

RESULT

This section presents demographic data from the 381 students who participated in the study. Table 4 shows the demographic characteristics of the respondents, including gender and field of study:

Table 4
Respondent Demographic Data

Demographics		Number of Respondents	Percentage
Gender	Female	228	59,84%
	Male	153	40.16%
Field of Study	Psychology	57	14,96%
	Law	28	7,35%
	Agrotechnology	22	5,77%
	PBSI (Indonesian Language and Literature Education)	13	3,41%
	PBI (English Education)	24	6,3%
	PGSD (Primary School Teacher Education)	20	5,25%
	Mathematics Education	26	6,82%
	Guidance and Counseling	15	3,94%
	Accounting	50	13,12%
	Management	46	12,07%
	Mechanical Engineering	21	5,51%
	Electrical Engineering	15	3,94%
	Industrial Engineering	10	2,62%
	Informatics Engineering	23	6,04%
	Information Systems	11	2,89%

Most respondents were female, accounting for 59.84%, while 40.16% were male. The majority of respondents came from the Psychology program (14.96%).

Hypotheses Testing

Major Hypotheses

SPSS software was used to analyze the regression with two predictors using correlation techniques to test the main hypothesis. The results obtained are as follows:

Tabel 5
Major Hypotheses Testing Result

R	R Square	F	p-value
0,354	0,125	7,585	0,001

The regression analysis results show a significance level 0.001 ($p < 0.01$) with r_{x12y} of 0.354. This means there is a very significant relationship between X1 (peer social support) and X2 (resilience) with Y (academic burnout), with a practical contribution of 12.5%.

Minor Hypotheses

1. Correlation Between Peer Social Support and Academic Burnout

Table 6
Correlation Between Peer Social Support and Academic Burnout

Variable	r	R Squared	p-value
Peer Social Support – Academic Burnout	0,348	0,121	0,000

Based on the table above regarding the product-moment test, it is known that peer social support and academic burnout show a correlation coefficient of r_{x1y} of 0.348 with p of 0.000 ($p < 0.01$). This indicates a very significant positive relationship between X1 (peer social support) and Y (academic burnout). The higher the peer social support, the higher the academic burnout, and vice versa, the lower the peer social support, the lower the academic burnout.

2. Correlation Between Resilience and Academic Burnout

Table 7
Correlation Between Resilience and Academic Burnout

Variable	r	R Squared	p-value
Resilience – Academic Burnout	0,134	0,018	0,083

Based on the table above regarding the product-moment test, the correlation between resilience and academic burnout shows a correlation coefficient of r_{x2y} of 0.134 with p of 0.083 ($p > 0.05$). This means there is no significant relationship between X2 (resilience) and Y (academic burnout). Whether resilience is high or low does not significantly affect academic burnout.

DISCUSSION

The balance between academic and personal life that is often disrupted leads to academic burnout. Someone experiencing academic burnout feels emotional exhaustion, loses interest, and feels ineffective in their academic endeavors (Muflihah & Savira, 2021). The results of this study show a significant relationship between peer social support and resilience with academic burnout. It was found that peer social support and resilience only account for 12.5% of the variance in

academic burnout among students, as indicated by a correlation value of 0.354 with a p-value of 0.001 ($p < 0.01$). This means that 87.5% of academic burnout is caused by other factors. Academic burnout is not only influenced by social support from peers and resilience; many other factors play significant roles. One of the main causes is academic pressure and the high workload. Students are often faced with a busy schedule, accumulating tasks, and tight deadlines, all of which can cause stress and exhaustion (Rostiana et al., 2023).

Further analysis reveals a very significant positive relationship between peer social support and academic burnout, with a correlation value of 0.348 and a p-value of 0.000 ($p < 0.01$). This means that the higher the peer social support, the higher the academic burnout experienced by students. This finding suggests that while peer social support is generally considered helpful, in some cases, it may increase social pressure, contributing to burnout. Students may feel the need to excel in order to be accepted in their peer group, adding mental and physical burdens. Moreover, in a competitive academic environment, peer support can become a source of competition where students feel the need to compete with their peers to gain the same recognition or achievements. This kind of pressure can exacerbate feelings of exhaustion and burnout.

The study also reveals that resilience has a positive, though not statistically significant, relationship with academic burnout, with a correlation value of 0.134 and a p-value of 0.083 ($p > 0.05$). This indicates that resilience, while generally considered the ability to bounce back and overcome challenges, may not always be a shield against academic burnout. One reason may be that resilience often involves adjusting to long-term stressful situations, whereas academic burnout is usually triggered by intense and sudden academic pressures (Ríos-Risquez et al., 2018). Additionally, resilience is a complex trait that involves endurance and effective coping strategies that vary among individuals (Wu et al., 2020). If students lack adequate coping skills or academic pressure is too high, resilient individuals may experience burnout. This suggests that while resilience is essential, it may need to be combined with other support systems and stress management strategies to prevent burnout effectively.

The distribution of the academic burnout scale from 109 study subjects indicates that most students are in the moderate to high burnout category. The empirical mean score of 91.03 with a standard deviation of 10.820 shows that most subjects experience fairly high levels of burnout. Specifically, 10 subjects (9%) are in the very low category, 16 subjects (15%) are in the low category, 38 subjects (35%) are in the moderate category, 38 subjects (35%) are in the high category, and 7 subjects (6%) are in the very high category. This indicates that while a small group of students experiences very low burnout, most are in the moderate to high range, suggesting significant academic pressure on this group.

The distribution of the peer social support scale from 109 study subjects indicates an average level of peer social support that is relatively high, with an empirical mean score of 90.06 and a standard deviation of 6.548. The category distribution shows that 7 subjects (6%) have deficient peer support, 24 subjects (22%) have low peer support, 40 subjects (37%) have moderate peer support, 26 subjects (24%) have high peer support, and 12 subjects (11%) have very high peer support. This distribution shows that most students receive moderate to high levels of peer support, which can be an essential factor in helping them cope with academic pressures. However, a significant proportion of students also report low peer support, which may make them more vulnerable to burnout.

The distribution of the resilience scale from 109 study subjects shows that most students have good resilience levels, with an empirical mean score of 74.24 and a standard deviation of 4.258. The category distribution shows that 7 subjects (6%) have very low resilience, 23 subjects (21%) have low resilience, 32 subjects (29%) have moderate resilience, 41 subjects (38%) have high resilience, and 6 subjects (6%) have very high resilience. This data suggests that many students possess strong abilities to face and recover from stress or pressure, which is crucial in the challenging academic context. However, there is a small percentage with low resilience, who may need additional support to cope with academic pressure.

This study measured variables limited to peer social support and resilience, which were found to contribute only 12.5% to academic burnout, while other factors such as academic pressure and workload were not measured. Although peer social support showed a significant positive relationship with academic burnout, this relationship may be influenced by other factors such as social pressure and competition. This study used only quantitative data from questionnaires, which may not adequately capture the individual experiences of students, and it did not explore the coping strategies used by students. Further research is needed to explore the various factors influencing academic burnout and to develop more comprehensive interventions.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that peer social support and resilience only contribute slightly to academic burnout among students, accounting for just 12.5%. This means that many other factors, such as academic pressure and heavy workloads, play a larger role in influencing burnout. The findings indicate that higher peer social support can lead to higher academic burnout, possibly due to social pressures and competition within the educational system. Meanwhile, resilience, although considered an important ability to cope with stress, does not significantly correlate with academic burnout. These findings suggest that besides social support and resilience, students also need other comprehensive strategies, such as good time

management and stress-coping techniques, to tackle and prevent academic burnout effectively.

Students experiencing academic burnout should prioritize tasks, set deadlines, organize their study schedules wisely, talk to lecturers, counselors, or friends for support, and make time for rest and recreational activities outside the academic environment. If necessary, professional help should be considered. Universities should also increase social support through positive interaction activities, such as study groups and social events while developing educational programs that emphasize resilience and self-control skills. Future research should include more variables that influence academic burnout to improve the findings of this study.

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