

A Survey on Academic Burnout of Higher Vocational College Students in Jiujiang Vocational University

Zhang Xiaoxi and Puteri Roslina Abdul Wahid

Abstract – Academic burnout has become an important problem that troubles the learning and life of vocational college students. Academic burnout not only leads to internal and external problems such as depression, aversion to learning, and dropout among students, but also affects their future employment and career development. The study takes students in Jiujiang Vocational University as the research object and uses questionnaire to investigate and analyses the current situation of their academic burnout. The results showed that there was no significant gender difference in the total score of academic burnouts, improper behavior, and reduced personal accomplishment, while there was a significant gender difference in dejection. Girls had a significantly higher degree of emotional depression in academic performance than boys. And the reduced personal accomplishment of students majoring in primary school mathematics education is significantly lower than that of students majoring in primary school Chinese education and primary school English education.

Keywords – Survey, Questionnaire, Academic burnout, Higher vocational college students, Jiujiang Vocational University

I. INTRODUCTION

Academic burnout has become an important problem that troubles the learning and life of vocational college students (He, Chen, & Hui, 2022). Academic burnout not only leads to internal and external problems such as depression, aversion to learning, and dropout among students, but also affects their future employment and career development. Therefore, exploring the influencing factors and internal mechanisms of academic burnout among vocational college students has an important practical significance.

According to Chen (2019), many vocational college students generally face problems such as insufficient learning motivation, lack of interest in their majors, inappropriate learning methods, and inadequate personal time management. In addition, phenomena such as playing with mobile phones, addiction to the internet, and cheating in exams are repeatedly prohibited in class. Poor academic performance, delayed graduation, and even dropout are common occurrences in Chinese vocational colleges. It is very common for vocational college students to be late for class, leave early, sleep during class, play with their phones, read extracurricular books, and even skip classes or classes.

Walker (2012) found that cognition of academic resistance and promotion factors has a significant impact on the mental health of American college students. In other words, the way students perceive features that enhance or hinder their academic abilities can affect their mental health. The study also found that in South Africa, graduate students encounter many academic obstacles during the degree process, such as completing their studies on time, moving between different classes, making difficult decisions, and dealing with crises. However, resources to deal with these academic obstacles are limited, resulting in higher levels of burnout (Van, et. al., 2004).

The transformation and upgrading of high-precision manufacturing and service industries in China's current supply side reform cannot be achieved without the continuous delivery of highly specialized technical and applied talents by the vocational education system. Vocational college students are the main reserve talents for the national high-tech manufacturing and service industry, and their learning ability and level will directly affect their own and the development prospects of the country. Therefore, from the perspective of social needs and the development needs of learners themselves, seeking countermeasures to reduce academic burnout among vocational college students is an important link to improve the quality of vocational education and enhance the employment literacy of graduates from higher vocational colleges.

II. PROBLEM STATEMENT

The academic burnout of vocational college students is severe. It is very common for vocational college students to be late for class, leave early, sleep during class, play with their phones, read extracurricular books, and even skip classes (Jia, Wang, & Dai, 2014). This is due to the inability of many vocational college students to accurately position the importance of learning, grasp the relationship between learning and employment, and lack the pressure and academic level to continue their studies, most of them can't show great interest in learning, have a negative attitude towards learning, and have a low level of academic self-efficacy, resulting in serious academic burnout. Wu (2016) stated that the problems that vocational college students face include not striving for progress, aversion to learning, skipping classes, plagiarism in exams, and addiction to online games and lack of concentration are particularly common in vocational and ordinary colleges, and according to media reports, the proportion of college students who have never skipped classes during their time in school is almost zero. Academic burnout can have many negative effects on adolescents. On the one hand, it can lead to psychological

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symptoms such as depression and anxiety (Taylor, et. al., 2013), and on the other hand, it can lead to a series of externalized problems such as truancy, dropout, and mobile phone addiction in behavior (Rudolph, et. al., 2010).

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

The term "fatigue" was first proposed by Freudenberger (1974) and has since become a new hot topic of research for many psychologists. Yang (2004) believes that academic burnout is a phenomenon of low sense of achievement and low enthusiasm caused by heavy academic burden, academic pressure, or other psychological factors during the learning process. Lian, Yang, and Wu (2005) proposed a new definition of academic burnout based on their research, which refers to the negative emotions such as boredom, frustration, and even avoidance of learning activities that arise from students lacking interest and motivation in learning and having to engage in learning activities.

The impact of demographic variables on learning fatigue is very significant. Some foreign scholars believe that there is a high correlation between burnout status and gender differences (Maslach, 1997). Zhang's (1989) study found that there was no significant difference in the level of academic burnout between male and female students in university. Yang (2004) proposed that the level of academic burnout among college students, including those from vocational colleges, will also increase with grade advancement. Zhu (2007) found through research that in terms of grade differences, second year high school students showed the highest level of learning burnout among the three grades, followed by first year and third year high school students.

IV. METHOD

Subject

The survey was conducted on 298 first-year students in Jiujiang Vocational University. Among them, 167 were girls (56.04%) and 131 were boys (43.96%). There are 103 students majoring in primary school Chinese education, 97 students majoring in primary school mathematics education, and 98 students majoring in primary school English education. The average age is 18.94 years old.

Questionnaire

The study used the College Student Academic Burnout Questionnaire, which was developed by Lian, Yang, and Wu (2005), consisted of 20 questions. It includes three dimensions: dejection, improper behavior, and reduced personal accomplishment. The Cronbach's Alpha value of this questionnaire is 0.833, indicating that the questionnaire has good reliability. The questionnaire was first targeted at college students, but in the subsequent research of many scholars, it was found that the questionnaire is also applicable to the group of vocational college students.

Data Analysis

Conduct testing on a class-by-class basis. Use SPSS 29.0 to conduct descriptive statistics and correlation analysis on the data.

V. FINDINGS

Gender Differences in Academic Burnout

TABLE I: COMPARISON OF GENDER DIFFERENCES IN THE TOTAL SCORE AND SUB DIMENSIONS OF ACADEMIC BURNOUT

	Male	Female	t	P
Dejection	23.5±1.21	27.7±1.50	26.05	<0.001
Improper Behavior	31.1±0.87	31.1±0.88	0.367	0.357
Reduced Personal Accomplishment	23.1±1.63	22.3±1.61	-4.326	<0.001
Total Score	77.7±2.29	81.1±2.27	12.825	<0.001

Using independent sample t-test to analyze gender differences in academic burnout among students the results showed that there was no significant difference in improve behavior ($t=0.367$, $p>0.05$) between genders, while rejection ($t=26.05$, $p<0.001$), reduced personal acceptance ($t=-4.326$, $p<0.001$), and total score of academic burnouts ($t=12.825$, $p<0.001$) showed significant differences between genders. Girls have significantly higher levels of emotional depression and overall academic burnout compared to boys, while boys have significantly lower levels of achievement.

Major Differences in Academic Burnout

TABLE II: COMPARISON OF MAJOR DIFFERENCES IN THE TOTAL SCORE AND SUB DIMENSIONS OF ACADEMIC BURNOUT

	Mean Square	F	P
Dejection	131.5	24.443	<0.001
Improper Behavior	0.157	0.205	0.815
Reduced Personal Accomplishment	209.2	153.113	<0.001
Total Score	36.9	4.703	0.01

Through analysis of variance, a difference analysis was conducted on the academic burnout of students in their majors. The results showed that there was no significant difference in improve behaviour ($F=0.205$, $P>0.05$) in their majors, while there was a significant difference in dejection ($F=24.443$, $P<0.001$), reduced personal accomplishment ($F=153.113$, $P<0.001$), and total score of academic burnouts ($F=4.703$, $P<0.05$) in their majors. The level of emotional depression among students majoring in primary school Chinese education is significantly higher than that of students majoring in primary school English education and primary school mathematics education. The sense of achievement of students majoring in primary school mathematics education is significantly lower than that of students majoring in primary school Chinese education and primary school English education, and the total score of academic burnouts is significantly higher

than that of students majoring in primary school Chinese education and primary school English education.

VI. DISCUSSION

In the study of learning issues for vocational college students, there are differences in gender levels. A study has found that male students experience more severe academic burnout than female students, with scores higher than female students in all dimensions of academic burnout (Wang, 2008). There are also studies showing that there is no significant difference between boys and girls in academic burnout, and there is a difference in academic burnout between boys and girls, but it does not reach a significant level (Chen, 2019). In this study, there was significant difference in the total score and sub dimensions of academic burnout among vocational college students of different genders, such as emotional depression, with female students experiencing significantly higher levels of academic depression than male students. The reason for this research result may be that girls have delicate emotions, are more sensitive, and have slightly weaker resilience than boys. Once they encounter difficulties and setbacks in learning, they can easily affect their confidence and show emotional depression.

On the other hand, this study found that the sense of achievement of students majoring in primary school mathematics education was significantly lower than that of students majoring in primary school Chinese education and primary school English education. This may be because mathematics majors require higher thinking abilities from students compared to Chinese and English majors, and require students to have a good learning foundation. Jiujiang Vocational University is a vocational college with a high proportion of female students. Most of the students who enter the school also have weak foundations in middle school, so it is more difficult to achieve success in mathematics than in Chinese and English majors.

VII. LIMITATION

The scope of sample selection in this study is limited to the Jiujiang Vocational University. Samples were not taken from vocational colleges in other provinces and cities, and there is a lack of comparison between different regions, so the applicability of this study in regions with different levels of development can't be determined.

This study used self-report scales with strong subjectivity, there are errors in understanding the problem, concealing true thoughts or actual situations, which have a certain impact on the accuracy of the research results.

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