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Understanding Burnout in Undergraduate Students: The Role of Social Media

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Abstract

This study investigated different factors relating to undergraduate burnout and whether social media could act as a protective factor. The study group was comprised of 66 female undergraduate psychology students at Brescia University College. Participants completed one questionnaire with seven subscales which measured the following variables: subjective well-being, student subjective well-being, personality traits, social support, stress, online support, and burnout. The participants were divided into three groups based on their burnout scores. The results of the ANOVA indicated that there were significant differences between the three burnout groups on: subjective well-being, student subjective well-being, conscientiousness, extraversion, openness, social support, and stress.
Understanding Burnout in Undergraduate Students: The Role of Social Media

University students experience a lot of ups and downs during their education. Many students can adjust to the transition from high school to university, but some cannot. “First-year university students encounter a plethora of stressors: making new relationships, modifying existing relationships with parents and family, loss of income and increased costs, and developing study habits for a new and challenging environment while tackling the task of functioning as independent adults” (Morton, Mergler, & Boman, 2014, p.91).

Research conducted in the United Kingdom on university students found their well-being decreased significantly during the first semester (Morton et al., 2014). Stallman (2008) also conducted a study assessing university students and found more than half experienced psychological distress within the first 6-13 weeks of the school semester (Morton et al., 2014). This study also pointed out that 22% of students under the age of 18 reported very high levels of psychological distress, which impacted their daily life (Morton et al., 2014).

Studies have found that a student's perceived level of stress can have a significant effect on their transition into university and their academic success (Morton et al., 2014). A study conducted on first-year students in Queensland Universities found that 1 in 5 students do not re-enroll the next year due to their inability to cope with their perceived level of stress (Morton et al., 2014). It is important university systems understand the severity of a student's perceived stress levels because all students should have the opportunity to graduate (Morton et al., 2014).

Burnout syndrome is a physical and psychological reaction to chronic stress (Gorgens-Ekermans & Brand, 2012). Researchers are aware that chronic stress can lead to burnout and burnout can lead to the development of psychological disorders such as anxiety and depression (Storrie, Ahern, & Tuckett, 2010). A study conducted by Storrie and colleagues (2010) found
that 83% of students reported being moderately or severely stressed, meaning 83% of the student population was at risk of burnout. Poor grades, academic probation, social isolation, inadequate finances, and decreased emotional and behavioural skills can all lead to emotional distress (Storrie et al., 2010). A university student needs to learn how to cope with stress to be successful (Storrie et al., 2010). Many universities provide students with mental health presentations and resources, but few discuss the risks of burnout and how to prevent it from occurring.

Previous research on burnout has mainly focused on the workplace. In the 1970s, Freudenberger and Maslach were the first scholars to write about burnout, and research in this area has continued to grow since then (Chen, Wu, & Wei, 2012). Many studies have suggested that there are three main symptoms of burnout: emotional exhaustion, cynicism, and feelings of professional inefficacy (Kim, Jee, Lee, An, & Lee, 2017). Emotional exhaustion is feeling like one’s emotional resources are depleted (Shin et al., 2014). Cynicism refers to the belief that people are only interested in themselves and lack empathy (Shin et al., 2014). Feelings of professional efficacy represent one’s feelings of incompetence and lack of personal achievement (Shin et al., 2014). Maslach pointed out that these symptoms will only appear if the individual does not have a sufficient amount of resources to meet the demands (Chen et al., 2012). Maslach’s burnout inventory model is still the leading model being used today to measure burnout (Bianchi, Truchot, Laurent, Brisson, & Schonfeld, 2014).

If an individual is not able to meet the demands of his or her work environment, it puts them at risk of developing psychological health problems, such as depression, low motivation, and anxiety (Shin et al., 2014). Studies have found a strong correlation between feelings of emotional exhaustion and depression (Mohammed, Ali, Youssef, Fahmy, & Haggag, 2014). Clinical depression has been defined as “a mood disorder in which feelings of sadness, loss,
anger, or frustration interfere with everyday life for an extended period of time” (Mohammed et al., 2014, p.40). Burnout has always been related to a job context, whereas depression has not been associated with any specific situation, and yet Mohammed et al. (2014) found a significant association between the two. Mohammed et al. (2014) found that medical residents who were not depressed were 14 times less likely to be burned-out. Similarly, Iacovides et al. (1999) suggested that younger participants who experience burnout symptoms were more likely to develop mild depression (Mohammed et al., 2014). In another study, researchers found that based on the DSM-IV criteria, half of the participants with severe burnout also had a depressive disorder (Ahola et al., 2005). Research has also found anxiety to be related to burnout (Turnipseed, 1998). A study conducted by Turnipseed (1998) found that job control, social support, and supervisory relations reduced the relationship between anxiety and burnout. Ahola and colleagues (2005) reported that employees suffering from burnout were more likely to have a medically certified sickness absence lasting longer than nine workdays. Even though it has been years since the concept of burnout was first developed, research continues to view it as a work specific condition (Bianchi et al., 2014).

Maslach’s model defined burnout as “a crisis in one’s relationship with work” (Bianchi et al., 2014, p.357). Burnout has also been defined as “a job-related mental state” (Chen et al., 2012, p.808). Some researchers believe burnout is a work-specific phenomenon related to excessive workload in any environment. A substantial amount of literature emphasizes how burnout is related to job stressors, dysfunction of the work conditions, and extreme emotional demands (Chen et al., 2012). Although most researchers argue burnout is only present in a work context, others say it is context-free and can occur in any area of life (Bianchi et al., 2014).
Recent studies have suggested that burnout exists outside of the job-domain and can be found in an academic setting (Kim et al., 2017). Several researchers support this finding and discuss how burnout can be seen in secondary, as well as post-secondary school settings (Kim et al., 2017). Maroco, Campos, and Duarte (2012) found college students have a higher risk of developing burnout because they experience a wide range of concerns or stressors on a daily basis. Research has also shown that test taking, classes, homework and extracurricular activities are all considered ‘work’ and can lead to student burnout (Kim et al., 2017). Students can experience emotional exhaustion because of their coursework demands; they can form a detached attitude towards their degree and develop feelings of low academic achievement (Maroco, Campos, & Duarte, 2012). In extreme cases, burnout can cause a student to drop out or lead them to commit suicide (Maroco et al., 2012). Burnout has always been considered an important phenomenon in the human service work profession and should be considered as important in an academic setting (Shin et al., 2014).

Social support is one’s perceived availability of resources and structural characteristics of a social network (Choenarom, Williams, & Hagerty, 2005). The support of others can act as a buffer in stressful situations and promote well-being (Choenarom et al., 2005). A study conducted by Martin and Burks (1985) found that non-family social support systems acted as a buffer against stress for college women. Martin and Burks (1985) point out that social support has a stronger buffering function when someone is suffering from high-stress levels rather than low-stress levels. Similarly, Kim et al. (2017) found that students who have fewer and less supportive relationships are at a higher risk of burnout.

Many researchers have investigated the relationship between social support and burnout. A meta-analysis found a negative correlation between burnout and social support, meaning as
social support increases, a person’s risk of burnout decreases (Kim et al., 2017). Social support can come from many different sources such as family, friends, school, and work (Kim et al., 2017). Research has suggested that support from friends is unique because the source is a peer and the relationship is one of equality (Kim et al., 2017). This finding is especially important for university students because most students live away from home and will only have their friends as their primary source of support at school. In addition to various sources of support, students also have different channels in which they receive support. Social support can be found through in-person interactions, as well as online communications.

Social media has become a part of our everyday life. Social media’s primary function is to allow people to “connect, communicate, and interact with each other” (Wang, Tchernev & Solloway, 2012, p.1829). A Globe and Mail article by Anderssen (2016) found that the average teenager receives 51-100 text messages a day. Although many parents believe students spend too much time on their phones, research has shown that social media helps students maintain and strengthen their relationships. (Wang et al., 2012). Maintaining these social relationships can help lower the risk of developing burnout. Cole, Nick, Zelkowitz, Roeder, and Spinelli (2016) also found that online social support was more important to individuals who had low levels of in-person social support. In contrast with these studies, Wang et al. (2012) found that social media only gratifies emotional and cognitive needs, not social ones. Researchers have also found that excessive social media use can contribute to emotional exhaustion (Charoensukmongkol, 2016). Charoensukmongkol (2016) pointed out that emotional exhaustion can lead to cynicism, which can lead to a lack of personal accomplishment, ultimately causing burnout. Although many studies support social media, more research is needed to find out why only some individuals benefit from it.
According to Asendorlf and Wilpers (1998) personality does influence our social relationships. Many researchers have reported social support as being the most important construct to protect against the symptoms of burnout (Singh & Suar, 2013). Some students struggle to form these social relationships, which can put them at a higher risk of developing burnout. Individuals with Type D personality have social anxiety and avoid social situations (Kupper & Denollet, 2014). These individuals would benefit more from social media because it gives them an opportunity to interact with others without having to be face to face. Researchers have also reported that some employees show burnout symptoms more often than others due to their personality traits (Chen et al., 2012). Asendorpf and Wilpers’ (1998) study also found that personality affected social relationships. In this study, students who scored low in shyness had twice as many new friends in 1 year than the students who scored high in shyness (Asendorpf & Wilpers, 1998).

Most of the research on personality focuses on the Five-Factor model, which measures personality traits (Alarcon, Eschleman, & Bowling, 2009). The Five-Factor model has five personality dimensions: emotional stability, extraversion, conscientiousness, agreeableness, and openness (Alarcon et al., 2009). A study conducted by Alarcon and colleagues (2009) examined the relationship between the Five-Factor model and the three symptoms of burnout. The study found that emotional stability had the strongest association with emotional exhaustion (Alarcon et al., 2009). In relation to personal accomplishment, Alarcon and colleagues (2009) found that extraversion, conscientiousness, and agreeableness were positively related to personal accomplishment. Thus showing again how personality factors can influence one’s risk of developing burnout.
Personality traits and social support are not the only factors that can protect against burnout; subjective well-being has been known to reduce the effects of health-related outcomes caused by burnout (Singh & Suar, 2012). Subjective well-being is a “positive psychological state characterized by a high level of satisfaction with life” (Singh & Suar, 2012, p.22). Individuals who experience joy and have a positive outlook on life are less at risk of developing burnout because these positive emotions act as a buffer against it (Sing & Suar, 2012). Singh and Suar (2012) also found that subjective well-being can speed the recovery time for someone who is experiencing burnout symptoms. Thus suggesting happy people are less likely to become burnt out.

In the current study, subjective well-being was measured using the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS; Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985) that focuses on satisfaction outside of school and the Multidimensional Student’s Life Satisfaction Scale (BMSLSS; Seligson, Huebner, & Valois, 2003) which measured satisfaction with school. Personality was examined using the IASR-B5 which is commonly used to measure personality (Trapnell, & Wiggins, 1990). Social support was measured using the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support which provided information about one’s support system (Zimet, Dahlem, Zimet, & Farley, 1988). Perceived stress was measured with the Perceived Stress Scale which is commonly used to measure stress. Online support was measured using a revised version of the Social Network Scale created by Cole et al. (2016) which provided information as to how an individual receives social support, online versus in person. Burnout was measured using the Maslach Burnout Inventory-Student Survey which is commonly used to measure student burnout (Schaufeli, Martínez, Marques Pinto, Salanova, & Bakker, 2002).

The current study examined whether undergraduate student burnout affected subjective
well-being, student subjective well-being, social support, online social support, and stress. The subjects were divided into three groups based on burnout scores to allow for group comparisons. Students who scored high in burnout were expected to score high in stress, low in both subjective well-being measures, and low in both measures of social support.

The study also examined whether social media could act as a form of social support and protect against burnout. It was predicted that students who scored high in neuroticism and introversion would use social media as their primary form of social support. Students who used social media as their primary form of social support were expected to have the same outcomes as someone who received in-person social support. It was also predicted there would be a relationship between personality and burnout symptoms.

Method

Participants

The sample consisted of 66 undergraduate female students who were enrolled in an introductory psychology course at Brescia University College. Two students were enrolled in the prelim program, 47 were in first year, 13 were in second year, two were in third year, and finally, two were in fourth year. The average number of courses a student was enrolled in was 4.83. Regarding involvement outside of school, 42 students had a part-time job which ranged in hours from 1-36, and 31 students were involved in extracurricular activities which ranged in hours from 1-20. The participants were selected using the SONA system and were tested in small groups with approximately 8 participants. Each subject received one credit for participating.

Materials

Each participant completed one questionnaire composed of seven subscales with a total of 158 items, including the demographic questions. Subjective well-being was measured using
the Satisfaction with Life Scale and the Multidimensional Student’s Life Satisfaction Scale. The Satisfaction with Life Scale was composed of five items measured using a seven-point Likert scale (SWLS; Diener et al., 1985). The Multidimensional Student’s Life Satisfaction Scale was a five-item scale measured using a seven-point Likert scale (BMSLSS; Seligson et al., 2003). Personality was examined using the IASR-B5 which was composed of 50 items and was measured using a seven-point Likert scale (Trapnell et al., 1990). Social support was measured using the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support which consisted of 12 items measured using a seven-point Likert scale (Zimet et al., 1988). Perceived stress was measured with the Perceived Stress Scale which was composed of 14 items measured using a seven-point Likert scale. Online support was examined using a revised version of the Social Network Scale which was composed of 15 items and measured using a seven-point Likert scale (Cole et al., 2016). Burnout was measured using the Maslach Burnout Inventory-Student Survey which had 15 items measured using a seven-point Likert scale (Schaufeli et al., 2002). The order of the subscales in the questionnaire was consistent with the order listed above.

Procedure

The study took place in a Brescia University College classroom. Upon entering the room, students were asked to read the letter of information and sign an informed consent form. Individuals were then given the questionnaire and told that each subscale had instructions for them to follow. Testing took approximately 10-15 minutes. Once participants completed the questionnaire, they were given a debriefing form providing them with contact information if they had any further questions and an article to read relating to the study.

Results
Participants were divided into three groups based on burnout scores. The first group was called the low burnout group whose burnout scores ranged from 0-8.99. The second group was the moderate burnout group whose burnout scores ranged from 9.00-12.49. The third group created was the high burnout group whose burnout scores ranged from 12.50-18.58. These divisions were chosen to provide three groups of similar sizes. Four participants were left out of the analyses because one was in high school, one could not understand the questionnaires, one questionnaire was in the wrong order, and one had too many blank answers. For those who forgot to answer one or two questions, the missing values were replaced with the participants mean response score for that scale. Once the participants were divided into groups and all scores were accurate a one factor analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to analyze group differences in subjective well-being, student subjective well-being, social support, and stress. After the ANOVA’s were conducted, Turkey’s Post Hoc tests were run to see where the difference lied.

The first ANOVA indicated that there were significant differences in subjective well-being scores between the groups F(2, 63) = 9.57, \(p<.01\), \(\eta^2 = .23\). As shown in Figure 1, the low burnout group scored the highest in subjective well-being. There was a medium effect which indicated that 23% of the variability between subjective well-being scores could be attributed to burnout groups. The post hoc test showed that the high burnout group differed from both the low and moderate burnout groups (p’s <.05).

The second ANOVA indicated that there were also significant differences in student subjective well-being scores between the groups F(2,63)=8.14, \(p=.001\), \(\eta^2 = .20\). As shown in Figure 2, the low burnout group scored the highest in student subjective well-being. There was a
Figure 1. Mean of subjective well-being associated with the low (n=21), moderate (n=24), and high (n=21) burnout groups. The error bars represent standard error of the mean. * different from both of the other groups (p’s<.05).
Figure 2. Mean of student subjective well-being associated with the low (n=21), moderate (n=24), and high (n=21) burnout groups. The error bars represent standard error of the mean. * different from both of the other groups (p’s<.05).
medium effect which indicated that 20% of the variability between student subjective well-being scores was generated by the burnout groups. The post hoc test shows that the high burnout group differed from both the low and moderate burnout groups (p’s <.05).

A third ANOVA was conducted to see if the groups differed in the amount of social support they received. The three groups differed in total social support, F(2,63) =6.36, p=.003, \( \eta^2 = .17 \), again with the low burnout group scoring the highest. There was a medium effect which indicated that 17% of the variability in social support scores could be attributed to burnout groups. The post hoc tests showed that high burnout group differed from both the low and moderate burnout groups (p’s<.05).

The groups did not differ in their scores on friend support or significant other support (p’s >.05). The three burnout groups did, however, differ in their scores on family support, F(2,63) =6.26, p=.003, again with the low burnout group scoring the highest. The post hoc test showed that the low burnout group differed from the high burnout group and the moderate burnout group differed from the high burnout group. The groups did not differ significantly in their scores of online social support, (p >.05).

The study also analyzed the differences between stress scores in the burnout groups. The ANOVA indicated a significant group difference in level of stress, F(2,63) =15.36, p=.00, \( \eta^2 = .33 \), with the high burnout group scoring the highest. There was a large effect which indicated that 33% of the variability in stress scores could be attributed to burnout groups. The post hoc test showed that all three groups differed from one another (p’s<.05).

The relationship between burnout symptoms and personality factors was explored using a correlational analysis. As shown in Table 1, conscientiousness and openness were significantly related to all burnout symptoms. Extraversion was related only to professional efficacy and
Figure 3. Mean of student social support score associated with the low (n=21), moderate (n=24), and high (n=21) burnout groups. The error bars represent standard error of the mean. * different from both of the other groups (p’s<.05).
**Figure 4.** Mean of student social support score associated with the low (n=21), moderate (n=24), and high (n=21) burnout groups. The error bars represent standard error of the mean. * different from both of the other groups (p’s<.05).
Table 1: Correlations between personality and burnout symptoms as well as personality and forms of social support.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Exhaustion</th>
<th>Cynicism</th>
<th>Professional Efficacy</th>
<th>Social Support</th>
<th>Online SS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Conscientiousness</td>
<td>-.452**</td>
<td>-.476**</td>
<td>.627**</td>
<td>.487**</td>
<td>.138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Extraversion</td>
<td>-.220</td>
<td>-.082</td>
<td>.402**</td>
<td>.317**</td>
<td>.166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Openness</td>
<td>-.347**</td>
<td>-.475**</td>
<td>.567**</td>
<td>.118</td>
<td>-.032</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Agreeableness</td>
<td>-.212</td>
<td>-.370**</td>
<td>.384**</td>
<td>.229</td>
<td>-.117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Neuroticism</td>
<td>.382**</td>
<td>.070</td>
<td>-.168</td>
<td>-.287*</td>
<td>-.169</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p<.05

**p<.01
neuroticism was only associated with exhaustion. Agreeableness was related to cynicism and professional efficacy.

The relationship between online vs. in-person social support and personality were also explored using a Pearson correlation. As shown in Table 1, Conscientiousness, extraversion and neuroticism were significantly correlated with social support. No personality factors were related to online social support.

**Discussion**

Burnout syndrome can deteriorate one’s mental, physical, and behavioural health (Singh & Suar, 2013). The purpose of this study was to determine whether there was an effect of undergraduate student burnout on subjective well-being, student subjective well-being, social support, online social support, and stress. The study also aimed to examine whether personality was correlated with burnout symptoms and well as social support.

First, it was hypothesized that students who scored high in burnout would have high-stress scores, low subjective well-being scores, and low social support scores. The study found that students who scored high in burnout had higher stress scores, lower subjective well-being scores, and lower social support scores. Second, it was hypothesized that online social support would be as effective as in-person social support. The results showed that online social support did not differ between the three burnout groups, whereas in-person social support did. Thus online social support was not as effective as in-person social support. Next, the study examined the correlation between personality and burnout symptoms. Several personality factors were found to be related to the different symptoms of burnout. Finally, the study found a significant correlation between personality and in-person social support but was not able to find one for online social support. Thus certain personality traits were not found to be more present in
students who use social media as social support.

The study divided the participants into three groups based on burnout scores. The lowest burnout score was 3, and the highest was 18.53. The demographic questionnaire indicated that roughly half of the participants had a part-time job (n=42) and half of the participants were involved in extracurricular activities (n=31). In the high burnout group, only four participants had part-time jobs, and ten were involved in extracurricular activities, whereas in the low burnout group 10 participants had part-time jobs and 14 were involved in extracurricular activities. The participants were also taking around a 4.83-course load as well, which indicated that something else was responsible for the differences in burnout scores because the workload was similar between all participants. Thus if all three burnout groups had a similar workload, the low burnout group was responding to stress differently and had other protective factors that the high-burnout group did not. Since the differences in scores could not be attributed to demographic differences, the study examined the differences in subjective well-being score, student subjective well-being scores, stress score, social support score, and online social support scores between the burnout groups.

Overall the results of the study were consistent with previous findings. Singh and Saur (2013) conducted a study on the buffers against software developer burnout and found that subjective well-being partially reduced the adverse effects of burnout. The study also found that software developers who experienced more job burnout had lower subjective well-being (Singh and Saur, 2013). Similarly, the current study found that undergraduate females who scored high in burnout were scoring low in subjective well-being and student subjective well-being.

Stress has always been related to burnout, as most research suggests that burnout is caused by chronic stress (Bianchi et al., 2014). Many researchers go as far to say that the
fundamental cause of burnout is chronic stress (Bianchi et al., 2014). Much of previous research has focused on job burnout, but now researchers are arguing that burnout can exist outside of the workplace because chronic stress exists outside of it (Bianchi et al., 2014). The current study was able to further contribute to the research on stress and burnout and found that undergraduate students who scored high in burnout, also scored high in stress.

The majority of researchers also agree that social support is the most important buffer against detrimental effects of burnout (Singh and Saur, 2013). A study conducted by Kim and colleagues (2017) found that Korean University students who felt less supported by significant others were more likely to be burned out. Thus this study suggests a relationship between burnout and social support in university students. The current research supports these findings as it was found that social support significantly differed between burnout groups. The low burnout group had the highest scores on social support, whereas the high burnout group had the lowest scores on social support. The current study also examined the different types of social support; family, friends, and significant other. The results indicated that family support was the only type of support that significantly differed between the three burnout groups. Thus family members have an important role in helping prevent their children from experiencing burnout in university.

There has been little research done on whether online media can act as a form of social support. A study conducted by Cole and colleagues (2016) study suggests that although social media can lead to victimization and cyberbullying, it may generate a new kind of social support that could operate similarly to in-person social support. Cole and colleagues (2016) found that although low in-person support was a stronger predictor of low self-esteem, depressive symptoms, and maladaptive cognitions, low online social support was also associated with these outcomes. Sonja and Breuer (2017) explain how previous research on social network sites (SNS)
indicate that these sites can help people gain social support. Sonja and Breuer (2017) conducted a longitudinal study on the relationship between social network sites, online social support, and well-being. The study found no link between online social support and stress or life satisfaction but did find that social network users reported greater feelings of online social support than those who used texting to communicate (Sonja and Breuer, 2017). Similarly, the current study found no buffering effects of online support on student burnout. The online social support measure that was used in the current study was not found to differ between the three burnout groups significantly. However, it is possible that the results could be due to the fact that the questionnaire focused more on the usage of online media sites and texting, rather than whether or not the individual felt supported by them. The current study supported Sonja and Breuer’s (2017) findings of social networking sites and online social support not being able to decrease feelings of stress like in-person support does.

This study also examined the relationship between personality and burnout symptoms as well as personality and social support. The study found that conscientiousness and openness were significantly related to all burnout symptoms. Extraversion was related only to professional efficacy and neuroticism was only associated with exhaustion. Agreeableness was related to cynicism and professional efficacy. The current research supports Chen and colleagues (2012) whose study found that some employees show burnout symptoms more often than others due to their personality traits.

A relationship between personality and in-person social support was also detected. Conscientiousness, extraversion, and neuroticism were significantly correlated with social support. In contrast, no personality factors were related to online social support, which does not support previous findings on social media. Cole, Nick, Zelkowitz, Roeder, and Spinelli (2016)
proposed that online social support was more important to individuals who had low levels of in-person social support, whereas the current study found that despite the differences in in-person social support scores between the burnout groups, online social support scores remained the same.

Of course, the study has a few limitations. Firstly, the participants could have answered the questionnaire in a socially desirable way. Social desirability bias could explain why only family social support was significant. Students could have feared judgment if they reported having low support from friends or significant others. The participants also could have chosen to keep their real academic struggle to themselves. As mentioned previously the online social support measure did not truly measure what this study set out for it to do.

Although this study has the few limitations mentioned above, it still was worthwhile because there has been little research done on undergraduate student burnout. This study had significant findings that can be used to help develop better resources to support students. Awareness and normalization of burnout syndrome can prevent more serious psychological disorders from developing. Future research still needs to be conducted in this area to develop a stronger understanding of which students are at risk of developing burnout syndrome. Researchers should also consider creating a new online social support scale that examines feelings of support and not how often individuals use social media. This new scale should be more accurate in measuring whether online communication can be a successful form of social support.


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UNDERSTANDING BURNOUT


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