

Extended Abstract

The Relationship between Resilience, Hope, Emotional Intelligence and Academic Burnout among Iranian University Students

Majid Sadoughi¹ Mohammadreza Tamannaefar² Jamile Naseri³

University of Kashan

Introduction

Academic burnout is a major challenge among university students and has not yet received due attention by researchers. Newman (2001) believed studying this phenomenon is of utmost importance because it can possibly contribute to explain students' adaptation with academic engagement. Burnout symptoms include emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and decline in personal efficacy (Moneta, 2011; Vatsa & Robersona, 2011). In fact, burnout is a general reaction to stress (Adriaenssens, 2015), and academic burnout has negative effects on students in terms of physical and psychological well-being. Hence, much research, especially in positive psychology, has focused on factors which moderate the effects of stress (Luthans & Youssef, 2007). As one of the important factors, resilience is defined as the person's capacity to respond to or even actualize in stressful situations. Salomon (2013) found that there was a relationship between resilience and academic performance among students. Also, Isabel's (2012) study on medical students showed that students with higher resilience experience less emotional exhaustion and burnout. As another important factor, hope refers to the person's ability in setting goals, considering necessary alternatives to achieve one's goals, and having sufficient motivation. Sapio (2010) found a statistically significant relationship between hope and academic performance; individuals with higher levels of hope have more suitable goals and are more successful. Furthermore, emotional intelligence is another key factor for success in academic settings. Mavoroviles and Sanchez-Ruiz (2011) found that there was a statistically significant relationship between students' emotional intelligence and their academic performance. Likewise, Arockia and Sangeethe (2013) found that emotional intelligence can predict students' academic performance and improve it. Given the importance of academic burnout as a challenge which can disrupt students' academic performance and endanger their physical and psychological health, it is extremely essential to identify factors relevant to this phenomenon. Considering the dearth of research in this field, the present study aimed to explore the relationship between resilience, hopefulness and emotional intelligence, in one hand, and academic burnout, on the other hand, among Iranian students.

1- Assistant professor. Department of psychology, University of Kashan, Iran. Email: sadoughi@kashanu.ac.ir.

2- Associate professor. Department of psychology, University of Kashan, Iran. Email: tamannai@kashanu.ac.ir.

3- (Corresponding author) M.A. in educational Psychology, University of Kashan, Iran.

Email: jamile.nasery@gmail.com

Research questions

The present study was guided by the following research questions:

1. Is there a statistically significant relationship between resilience, hopefulness and emotional intelligence, in one hand, and academic burnout, in the other hand among Iranian university students?
2. Can resilience, hopefulness, and emotional intelligence significantly predict academic burnout for Iranian university students?

Method

The present study was descriptive with correlational design. The statistical population consisted of all students at University of Kashan, Iran, in the academic year of 2015-2016. Using Morgan's Table, 300 students were chosen through stratified cluster sampling in faculties of engineering, basic sciences, and humanities. The participants filled out Snyder Hope Scale, Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale, Shot Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire, and Bersu Academic Burnout Scale.

Results

There was a statistically significant negative relationship between academic burnout and resilience ($r=-.24$, $P<.01$), hopefulness and job burnout ($r=-.38$, $P<.01$) and emotional intelligence and academic burnout ($r=-.21$, $P<.01$). This means that as resilience, hopefulness, and emotional intelligence increase, academic burnout decreases. Emotional intelligence ($\beta=-.21$, $P<.01$), hopefulness ($\beta=-.30$, $P<.01$), and resilience ($\beta=-.17$, $P<.01$) can reversely predict academic burnout. All in all, these three variables can explain for 24% of the variance in academic burnout.

Discussion and Conclusions

The findings of the present study showed that there was a statistically significant relationship between resilience and academic burnout, which is in line with the findings of Isabel, Garcia, and Peloss (2012), Salomon (2013), and Martin, and March (2016). This could be justified by considering the fact that students face different challenges at university, which makes them psychologically prone to burnout. High capacity for resilience causes individuals to adopt different approaches in dealing with academic challenges. Resilience helps students confront challenges without being seriously affected (Allistre & Kimmon, 2009). In addition, the findings revealed that there was a statistically significant negative relationship between hopefulness and academic burnout, which is in line with Pearson (2008), Sapio (2010) and Ajam Ekrami, Rezaei, and Bayani (2015). Hopefulness is an important motivating factor. In fact, hopeful individuals are more focused on their goals and have relatively higher motivation as compared with their peers (Kiafar, Kareshki, & Hashemi, 2014). Hope is an effective strategy to cope with academic procrastination (Alexander, & Onwuegbuzie, 2007), thereby decreasing academic burnout. Finally, the statistically significant relationship between emotional intelligence and academic burnout is in agreement with the findings of Mavroveli and Sánchez-Ruiz (2011). This could be due to the fact that students with higher emotional intelligence can clearly understand and regulate their own emotions and those of other people. Therefore, emotional intelligence can empower students to have a better interaction with their professors, which in turn leads to academic satisfaction and prevents academic burnout. Emotional intelligence can increase the person's responsibility and his/her chance of success by improving their capacity for flexibility, adaptiveness, and impulsivity. Consequently, this can decrease their academic burnouts.

Key words: Resilience, hope, Emotional intelligence, Academic burnout, Academic performance