Examining Influential Factors of Students' Academic Burnout: A Case Study at a University in Yunnan, China

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Abstract

Purpose: This study explores the significance of influences among four independent variables—self-efficacy, self-compassion, professional identity, and life satisfaction—on the dependent variable, academic burnout. **Research design, data and methodology:** The research employed the Index of Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) to assess validity and Cronbach's Alpha in a pilot test (n=30) to measure reliability. A total of 140 valid responses from students at Yunnan Minzu University were analyzed using multiple linear regression to verify significant relationships between variables. Following this, a group of 30 students participated in a 14-week Intervention Design Implementation (IDI). Afterwards, the quantitative results from post-IDI and pre-IDI assessments were analyzed using a paired-sample t-test for comparison. **Results:** The multiple linear regression analysis indicates that self-efficacy, self-compassion, professional identity, and life satisfaction significantly impact students' academic burnout. Additionally, the paired-sample t-test results reveal significant differences in self-efficacy, self-compassion, professional identity, life satisfaction, and academic burnout between the pre-IDI and post-IDI stages. **Conclusions:** This study offers implications for reducing academic burnout through the enhancement of self-efficacy, self-compassion, professional identity, and life satisfaction. The findings provide a foundation for designing targeted interventions and support programs in higher education aimed at promoting student well-being, academic engagement, and long-term personal and professional development.

Keywords: Self-efficacy, Self-compassion, Professional Identity, Life Satisfaction, Academic Burnout

JEL Classification Code: A20, D91, I23, M10

1. Introduction

Students at Yunnan Minzu University (YMU) face significant academic challenges that require immediate and substantial efforts to reduce academic burnout. The expansion of higher education has introduced challenges in maintaining the quality of talent development. Under the pressures of academic performance and future employment, university students are increasingly prone to academic burnout. If left unaddressed, this can negatively impact their physical and mental health, lower the quality of talent development, and even lead to career burnout, affecting both individuals and society. Therefore, it is crucial to address the

root causes of academic burnout and prioritize students' mental well-being to enhance education quality and talent development.

To mitigate academic challenges, YMU has implemented an academic warning policy targeting students who fall below academic standards. Since 2021, 1,041 students have received warnings, with 14 required to withdraw after three consecutive warnings. While such systems aim to support academic improvement, research indicates that without personalized support, they may increase stress and hinder motivation (Huang et al., 2024). Similar initiatives in U.S. institutions have shown that academic alerts—when paired with timely intervention—

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can reduce course withdrawals and improve performance (Lederman, 2024). However, effective implementation requires integrating mental health support and tailored guidance to avoid exacerbating academic burnout. In YMU's case, current measures may fall short in addressing students' emotional and psychological needs, underscoring the need for a more holistic support framework.

To better support struggling students, YMU has established a Student Center and a Student Mental Health Center. The university has also introduced courses such as College Student Mental Health Education, Career Planning for College Students, and Employment Guidance for College Students. To assess the extent of academic burnout, researchers, along with two college counselors, observed struggling students and randomly interviewed ten of them. The assessment revealed two key issues: academic burnout is a widespread psychological phenomenon among students, and the existing academic support measures are not comprehensive enough.

The need for targeted, evidence-based interventions is therefore urgent. From three critical perspectives—prevalence of burnout, inadequacy of support systems, and unintended psychological burdens—it is clear that new approaches are needed to improve students' academic experiences and mental well-being.

This study aims to explore the psychological and identity-related factors that influence academic burnout, specifically examining the roles of self-efficacy, self-compassion, professional identity, and life satisfaction. The research seeks to answer the following questions: (1) To what extent do self-efficacy, self-compassion, professional identity, and life satisfaction predict academic burnout among YMU students? (2) Can a structured intervention program significantly improve these factors and reduce burnout?

By identifying key psychological predictors and testing a 14-week intervention program, this study contributes to the academic literature by providing empirical evidence on the effectiveness of non-academic, personal development factors in reducing academic burnout. It offers a practical framework for universities to design more personalized and proactive student support strategies, ultimately enhancing both academic success and student well-being.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Academic Burnout (AB)

The concept of burnout, initially introduced by Freudenberger (1974) in the occupational context, describes the depletion of physical and psychological resources due to prolonged stress. This notion was later extended to the academic realm, with Pines and Kafry (1980) defining academic burnout as a loss of interest and enthusiasm resulting from sustained academic pressure, adversely affecting students' performance. Lian et al. (2005) further characterized academic burnout in college students as a state where academic pressure or lack of interest leads to fatigue, boredom, dissatisfaction, and low self-esteem. Recent studies underscore the multifaceted nature of academic burnout, linking it to factors such as emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment (Andargeery et al., 2024). Moreover, research indicates that academic burnout negatively impacts students' mental health and overall well-being (Liu & Cao, 2022).

2.2 Self-efficacy (SE)

The concept of self-efficacy was first introduced by Bandura (Building upon the understanding of academic burnout, it is essential to explore factors that may mitigate its effects. One such factor is self-efficacy, introduced by Bandura (1977) and later refined by Schunk (1991), defined as an individual's confidence in their ability to achieve goals and successfully complete learning tasks. Higher self-efficacy has been associated with greater confidence in academic performance, stronger learning interest, and lower levels of academic burnout (Jacobs & Dodd, 2007; Perrewe & Ganster, 2002). Recent research corroborates this relationship; for instance, a study by Wang et al. (2022) found that self-efficacy significantly predicts academic burnout among medical students. Furthermore, a study by Zhang et al. (2024) revealed that academic self-efficacy not only directly affects academic burnout but also indirectly influences it through intrinsic motivation and learning engagement. These findings suggest that enhancing self-efficacy can play a crucial role in reducing academic burnout. Based on the literature review, the following research hypothesis is proposed:

H1: Self-efficacy has a significant impact on academic burnout among undergraduates.

2.3 Self-compassion (SC)

In addition to self-efficacy, self-compassion has emerged as a significant factor in addressing academic burnout. Defined by Neff (2003) as an attitude of kindness and understanding toward one's own shortcomings and painful experiences, self-compassion involves recognizing suffering as a common human experience. Research indicates that self-compassion can alleviate symptoms of academic burnout and is significantly negatively correlated with it. For example, a study by Babenko et al. (2018) found that Canadian medical students with lower levels of self-compassion exhibited higher academic burnout. Similarly,

Narimani et al. (2018) observed that the core elements of self-compassion have a significant positive effect in mitigating academic burnout. Recent studies further support this relationship; for instance, a study by Farisandy et al. (2023) demonstrated that self-compassion negatively affects academic burnout in undergraduate students, suggesting that an increase in self-compassion leads to a reduction in academic burnout. Additionally, research by Cousineau (2025) highlights the protective role of self-compassion against the negative effects of academic demands, emphasizing its importance in managing academic stress. These findings underscore the potential of self-compassion as a valuable resource for students to better manage academic pressure and reduce burnout. Based on the literature review, the following research hypothesis is proposed:

H2: Self-compassion has a significant impact on academic burnout among undergraduates.

2.4 Professional Identity (PI)

Another critical factor influencing academic burnout is professional identity. In the context of college students, professional identity refers to the process through which individuals develop an affinity for and identification with their chosen field of study, actively applying acquired knowledge and demonstrating a commitment to their profession (L. Zeng et al., 2021). McCarthy et al. (1990) suggested that academic burnout stems from students' boredom with learning, which can directly impact their future career development. Qi (2010) found a significant negative correlation between professional identity and academic burnout, with emotional identity being the strongest predictor. Recent research supports these findings; for example, a study by Zhang et al. (2024) found that professional identity was negatively correlated with academic burnout, and academic self-efficacy played a partial mediating role in this relationship. These studies suggest that fostering a strong professional identity can be instrumental in reducing academic burnout among students. Based on the literature review, the following research hypothesis is proposed:

H3: Professional identity has a significant impact on academic burnout among undergraduates.

2.5 Life Satisfaction

Beyond professional identity, life satisfaction, a key concept in positive psychology plays a significant role in the context of academic burnout. Defined as an individual's overall evaluation of their quality of life based on personal standards (Shin & Johnson, 1978), life satisfaction is closely linked to an individual's environment and perceptions.

Research has demonstrated a significant relationship between life satisfaction and academic burnout. For instance, a study by Wang et al. (2022) indicated that academic burnout negatively impacts life satisfaction among medical students. Additionally, a study by Liu and Cao (2022) found that academic burnout triggers psychological distress, which can lead to decreased life satisfaction. These findings highlight the importance of addressing academic burnout not only to improve academic performance but also to enhance overall life satisfaction among students. Based on the literature review, the following research hypothesis is proposed:

H4: Life satisfaction has a significant impact on academic burnout among undergraduates.

3. Research Methods and Materials

3.1 Research Framework

The conceptual framework of this study is grounded in four key theoretical perspectives. Lau et al. (2022) emphasize the role of self-efficacy as a protective factor against academic burnout by enhancing students' confidence and resilience in academic challenges. Gerber and Anaki (2020) highlight self-compassion as an emotional regulation strategy that helps reduce stress and buffer against burnout. Hu et al. (2024) demonstrate that professional identity strengthens academic engagement and lowers burnout risk by fostering a sense of purpose and belonging in one's field of study. Lastly, Ye et al. (2021) argue that higher life satisfaction contributes to better psychological well-being, which in turn reduces susceptibility to academic burnout. Together, these frameworks provide theoretical support for the relationships proposed in the research model presented in Figure 1.
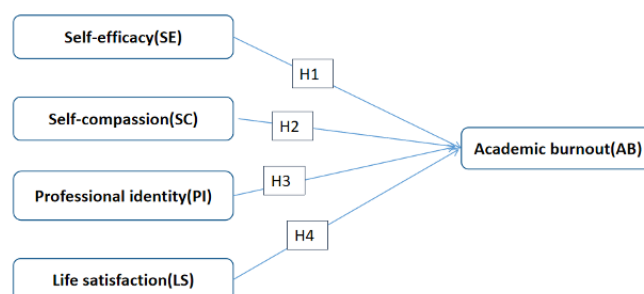

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

3.2 Research Methodology

The research process consists of four distinct stages. In the initial stage, data were collected from the entire research

population (n=145) through a survey to support the proposed conceptual framework. Subsequently, all hypotheses were rigorously tested using multiple linear regression to determine their significance, with a p-value threshold of < 0.05. Hypotheses that were supported by the analysis were retained.

In the second stage, pre-IDI surveys were administered to the remaining 145 students whose responses aligned with the supported hypotheses. In the third stage, the IDI was conducted with a selected group of 30 students over a 14-week period, structured into three phases. The early stage (Weeks 1–4) included team-based sessions focused on internal stress reflection, goal-setting, and group bonding. The middle stage (Weeks 5–14) featured individual counseling and themed academic support activities. The final stage (Weeks 15–16) involved interviews and summary-based reflection to assess student experiences and outcomes.

In the final stage, the same 30 participants completed a post-IDI survey. Pre- and post-intervention data were compared using a paired-sample t-test to evaluate changes across key variables. This structured and phased methodology ensured a comprehensive evaluation of both the conceptual framework and the intervention's effectiveness. Ethical approval was obtained from the university's research ethics committee prior to data collection. All participants were informed about the purpose of the study and participated voluntarily, with full assurances of anonymity and confidentiality.

3.3 Research Population, Sample Size, and Sampling Procedures

3.3.1 Research Population

The research targeted undergraduate students at Yunnan Minzu University (YMU), with a particular focus on freshmen, sophomores, and juniors. Senior students were excluded due to their internships and limited availability on campus. A total of 145 students were invited to participate in the pre-survey, and 140 valid responses were collected via the Wenjuanxing platform after data screening and validation. As of 2024, YMU reported a total student population of approximately 18,132, meaning the final sample represents around 0.8% of the university population.

While the sample size of 140 is generally acceptable for quantitative research and statistical analysis, its relatively small proportion may limit the generalizability of the findings. To address this limitation, the sample was carefully selected to include a balanced representation of different academic years (excluding seniors) and academic disciplines, aiming to reflect the diversity of the student body. Moreover, the use of validated instruments and rigorous data screening enhances the reliability of the results.

3.3.2 Sample Size

The researcher conducted a pilot survey with 30 randomly selected students and verified reliability through a pilot test. Subsequently, 145 YMU students were identified as the research population, resulting in 140 valid responses. The researcher then analyzed the data using multiple linear regression to examine the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. Finally, 30 voluntary students were selected to participate in the IDI intervention stage.

3.3.3 Sampling Procedure

The researcher conducted multiple sampling procedures, which are outlined as follows:

Step 1: Sampling for the Pilot Survey and Pilot Test

The researcher randomly selected 30 students and invited them to complete the survey questionnaire and provide feedback for the pilot survey and pilot test.

Step 2: Sampling for the Pre-Survey

The researcher sampled 145 YMU students from different academic years for the pre-survey by distributing the questionnaire via the Wenjuanxing platform. After data collection, all responses were reviewed, and 140 valid responses were confirmed.

Step 3: Sampling for the IDI

The researcher randomly selected 30 voluntary students to participate in the IDI intervention stage.

3.4 Research Instruments

3.4.1 Questionnaire Design

The researcher designed the survey questionnaire by following three key steps. First, questionnaire sources were identified from five openly published articles (Babenko et al., 2018; Caza & Creary, 2016; Chen et al., 2001; Meriläinen & Kuittinen, 2014; Schaufeli et al., 2002). Second, the survey questionnaire was adjusted and adapted to fit the context of Chinese university students. Finally, the Index of Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) was implemented to assess the validity of the questionnaire.

3.4.2 Questionnaire Components

The survey questionnaire consisted of three main sections. The first section included screening questions designed to filter out participants who did not meet the research criteria. The second section contained basic demographic questions to gather information about the research population, including gender, age, birthplace, and other relevant details. The final section comprised pre-survey questions aimed at assessing the current levels of independent and dependent variables among the total sample of 145 YMU students.

3.4.3 IOC Results

The researcher invited five independent experts, including scholars and doctoral holders, to conduct the Index of Item-Objective Congruence (IOC). Among them, three were educational psychologists, while the remaining two held PhDs in educational management and leadership. During the IOC process, the experts evaluated each questionnaire item using a scoring system: +1 for congruent, 0 for questionable, and -1 for incongruent. In this study, all questionnaire items received scores greater than 0.67, leading the researcher to retain all items.

3.4.4 Reliability and Validity

Cronbach's Alpha (CA) was used in this study to assess the reliability of the questionnaire (Cronbach, 1951). A random sample of 90 participants was selected for the reliability test. The results shown in the Table 1 below indicate that all items passed the reliability test with scores of 0.6 or higher (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994).

Table 1: Pilot Test Result

Variable	Source of Questionnaire (Measurement Indicator)	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha	Strength of Association
SE	Chen et al. (2001)	8	0.953	Excellent
SC	Babenko et al. (2018)	12	0.951	Excellent
PI	Caza and Creary (2016)	23	0.932	Excellent
LS	Meriläinen and Kuittinen (2014)	5	0.735	Acceptable
AB	Schaufeli et al. (2002)	15	0.846	Good

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Demographic Profile

The researcher presented the demographic profile of the entire research population (n=140), followed by the selected group of students (n=30) who participated in the IDI, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Demographic Profile

Entire Research Population (n=140)		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	97	69.3
	Female	43	30.7
Grade	Freshman	49	35.0
	Sophomore	46	32.9
	Junior	45	32.1
Major	Literature	13	9.3
	Science	24	17.1
	Engineering	43	30.7
	Art	13	9.3
	Economics	11	7.9
	Law	3	2.1
	Education	16	11.4
	History	4	2.9
	Management	13	9.3

Entire Research Population (n=140)		Frequency	Percentage
Ethnic Minority	Yes	74	52.9
	No	66	47.1
IDI Participants (n=30)		**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Gender	Male	24	80.0
	Female	6	20.0
Major	Engineering	19	63.3
	Science	11	36.7

4.2 Multiple Linear Regression

Multiple linear regression (MLR) was conducted using data from 140 valid survey responses to assess the effects of self-efficacy, self-compassion, professional identity, and life satisfaction on academic burnout. As presented in Table 3, all four independent variables had statistically significant negative relationships with academic burnout (p < 0.05), supporting all four research hypotheses. The negative standardized beta coefficients indicate that higher levels of these psychological and emotional attributes are associated with lower levels of academic burnout.

Table 3: The Multiple Linear Regression of Four Independent Variables on Academic Burnout

Variable	Standardized Coefficients Beta Value	t-value	p-value	VIF	R^2
Self-efficacy	-0.231	-2.68	0.008*	1.87	0.465
Self-compassion	-0.192	-2.46	0.015*	1.54	
Professional Identity	-0.199	-2.41	0.017*	1.72	
Life Satisfaction	-0.221	-2.55	0.012*	1.89	
Dependent Variable: Academic Burnout					

Note: p-value <0.05*

Self-efficacy (β = -0.231, p = 0.008) had the strongest influence among the predictors, highlighting the critical role of students' belief in their ability to manage academic challenges. This was followed closely by life satisfaction (β = -0.221), self-compassion (β = -0.192), and professional identity (β = -0.199), all of which significantly contributed to reducing burnout symptoms.

The overall model demonstrated a moderate level of explanatory power, with an R^2 value of 0.465, indicating that 46.5% of the variance in academic burnout can be explained by the four predictors. While this is a meaningful proportion in the context of psychological research, it also suggests that other relevant factors may remain unexamined in the current study. Variables such as academic workload, social support, personality traits (e.g., neuroticism or perfectionism), and institutional factors (e.g., curriculum pressure or support services) could also play significant roles in influencing academic burnout and may warrant exploration in future research.

Finally, all Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values were well below the threshold of 5 (Hair et al., 1995), indicating

no multicollinearity concerns among the predictors and supporting the overall validity of the regression model.

Based on the results of the multiple linear regression analysis, the hypotheses were developed in stages. Subsequently, the IDI was conducted to test the following hypotheses:

H5: There is a significant mean difference in self-efficacy between pre-IDI and post-IDI.

H6: There is a significant mean difference in self-compassion between pre-IDI and post-IDI.

H7: There is a significant mean difference in professional identity between pre-IDI and post-IDI.

H8: There is a significant mean difference in life satisfaction between pre-IDI and post-IDI.

H9: There is a significant mean difference in academic burnout between pre-IDI and post-IDI.

4.3 IDI Intervention Stage

The IDI intervention plan lasted for 14 weeks and was designed based on quantitative and qualitative data collected during the pre-IDI stage. The primary objective of the intervention was to enhance students' self-efficacy, self-compassion, professional identity, and life satisfaction to alleviate academic burnout. The researcher implemented the IDI intervention in a chronological sequence, as illustrated in Figure 2.
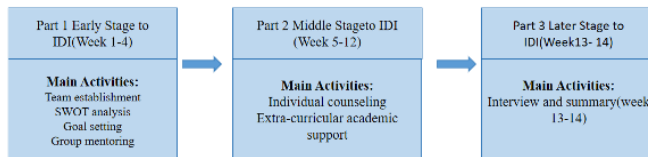

Figure 2: IDI Activities

4.4 Results Comparison between Pre-IDI and Post-IDI

The researcher conducted a paired-sample t-test analysis on all five variables to determine whether there were significant differences between the pre-IDI and post-IDI phases. The results are presented in the tables below, illustrating the paired-sample t-test analysis for the six variables.

Table 4: Paired-sample T-test Results

Variable		Mean	SD	t-value	p-value
Self-efficacy	Pre-IDI	2.296	0.691	-5.334	<0.001
	Post-IDI	3.088	0.602		
Self-compassion	Pre-IDI	2.875	0.337	-4.772	<0.001
	Post-IDI	3.444	0.513		
Professional Identity	Pre-IDI	2.394	0.598	-6.374	<0.001
	Post-IDI	3.139	0.438		
Life	Pre-IDI	2.647	0.473	-6.143	<0.001

Variable		Mean	SD	t-value	p-value
Satisfaction	Post-IDI	3.28	0.381		
Academic Burnout	Pre-IDI	2.971	0.349	5.827	<0.001
	Post-IDI	2.527	0.323		

Table 4 presents the results of the paired-sample t-test analysis comparing the pre-IDI and post-IDI stages:

Self-Efficacy: There was a significant increase in self-efficacy between pre-IDI (M = 2.296, SD = 0.691) and post-IDI (M = 3.088, SD = 0.602); t(29) = -5.334, p < .001 (< 0.05), with a mean difference of -0.792. Therefore, **H5** was supported, confirming a significant mean difference in self-efficacy between the pre-IDI and post-IDI stages.

Self-Compassion: There was a significant increase in self-compassion between pre-IDI (M = 2.875, SD = 0.337) and post-IDI (M = 3.444, SD = 0.513); t(29) = -4.772, p < .001, with a mean difference of -0.569. Therefore, **H6** was supported, confirming a significant mean difference in self-compassion between the pre-IDI and post-IDI stages.

Professional Identity: There was a significant increase in professional identity between pre-IDI (M = 2.394, SD = 0.598) and post-IDI (M = 3.139, SD = 0.438); t(29) = -6.374, p < .001 (< 0.05), with a mean difference of -0.745. Therefore, **H7** was supported, confirming a significant mean difference in professional identity between the pre-IDI and post-IDI stages.

Life Satisfaction: There was a significant increase in life satisfaction between pre-IDI (M = 2.647, SD = 0.473) and post-IDI (M = 3.28, SD = 0.381); t(29) = -6.143, p < .001 (< 0.05), with a mean difference of -0.633. Therefore, **H8** was supported, confirming a significant mean difference in life satisfaction between the pre-IDI and post-IDI stages.

Academic Burnout: There was a significant reduction in academic burnout between pre-IDI (M = 2.971, SD = 0.349) and post-IDI (M = 2.527, SD = 0.323); t(29) = 5.827, p < .001 (< 0.05), with a mean difference of 0.444. Therefore, **H9** was supported, confirming a significant mean difference in academic burnout between the pre-IDI and post-IDI stages.

Based on the paired-sample t-test results, the researcher drew the following conclusions. First, all five variables showed a significant mean difference between the pre-IDI and post-IDI stages. Second, the findings indicate a significant reduction in students' academic burnout following the IDI intervention.

5. Conclusions and Recommendation

5.1 Conclusions

This study explored the factors influencing academic burnout among YMU students. The results indicated that

self-efficacy, self-compassion, professional identity, and life satisfaction were significantly related to academic burnout. These findings align closely with the original research questions and successfully identify key determinants of academic burnout.

When examining the factors associated with academic burnout, the results of this study are consistent with existing literature. Numerous studies have demonstrated from various perspectives that self-efficacy, self-compassion, professional identity, and life satisfaction play a significant role in alleviating academic burnout. According to the multiple linear regression analysis, among the four independent variables examined in this study, self-efficacy had the highest standardized regression coefficient. This suggests that self-efficacy has the strongest impact on academic burnout. One possible explanation for this finding is the expansion of university enrollment, which has increased student numbers and intensified academic and employment competition. As a result, many university students experience heightened pressure in both their academic and career pursuits. The uncertainty of the job market and intense competition further exacerbate students' anxiety about the future. In this context, self-efficacy becomes particularly crucial, as it enhances students' confidence in managing academic and career challenges, encourages proactive planning of their learning and career paths, and enables them to better cope with academic pressure and employment stress, thereby reducing academic burnout and psychological distress.

Additionally, self-compassion, professional identity, and life satisfaction also contribute to alleviating academic burnout to varying degrees. Self-compassion helps students regulate negative emotions and maintain a positive mindset; professional identity fosters a sense of interest and responsibility in learning; and life satisfaction influences students' overall psychological well-being, with higher life satisfaction enhancing motivation to learn and reducing academic burnout.

This study provides valuable insights into the key factors influencing academic burnout among YMU students. The findings offer theoretical evidence for strategies aimed at reducing academic burnout, improving students' mental health, and supporting their personal growth and academic success. Furthermore, these insights have significant implications for enhancing the quality of university talent development. Universities beyond YMU can draw on these findings to implement targeted interventions, such as self-efficacy training programs, workshops to foster self-compassion, initiatives to strengthen professional identity, and campus-wide efforts to improve life satisfaction through student support services. By adopting these evidence-based strategies, other institutions can proactively address academic burnout and foster a more resilient and engaged student body. By highlighting the influence of self-efficacy, self-compassion, professional identity, and life satisfaction, this study provides valuable guidance for educators and policymakers in higher education.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, a series of short-term and long-term strategies are proposed to help mitigate academic burnout and enhance student well-being and academic engagement.

In the short term, it is recommended that universities support students in setting clear learning goals and improving time management skills, which can enhance self-efficacy and life satisfaction. By managing their time effectively, students are more likely to balance academic tasks with personal needs and reduce stress caused by overworking. Equally important is providing emotional support and mental health education, including the creation of safe spaces for students to express emotions and access counseling when needed. Regularly held workshops and seminars can teach students how to manage stress, develop emotional resilience, and cultivate self-compassion. In addition, establishing timely feedback mechanisms and offering personalized academic and psychological interventions can help educators detect early signs of academic burnout. By tailoring support to individual needs, institutions can help students overcome academic challenges, build confidence, and increase motivation.

From a long-term perspective, enhancing students' self-efficacy and professional identity should be embedded into institutional practices. Providing ongoing encouragement, personalized coaching, and opportunities for academic success can strengthen students' belief in their abilities. Furthermore, extracurricular and professional development activities can deepen students' connection with their field of study, fostering a sense of purpose and reducing detachment from academic work. In the long term, integrating professional identity development into the curriculum—through mentoring programs, project-based learning, and career development modules—can create lasting improvements in student engagement and resilience. Likewise, encouraging involvement in extracurricular activities and creating a supportive academic environment contributes to greater life satisfaction, improved mental health, and stronger academic motivation. Universities should institutionalize student-centered environments that promote autonomy, peer connection, and inclusive support systems to ensure sustained protection against academic burnout over time.

Theoretically, this study contributes to the expanding literature on academic burnout by validating a multidimensional model that incorporates emotional,

motivational, and identity-related predictors. It reinforces the relevance of self-efficacy, self-compassion, professional identity, and life satisfaction as key constructs within educational psychology, particularly in the context of student well-being in higher education. By confirming the interconnected roles of these variables, the study provides a foundation for more integrative theoretical frameworks that go beyond academic stress alone.

Practically, the findings offer universities a set of evidence-based strategies to proactively address academic burnout. They emphasize the importance of holistic student support systems that consider emotional health, identity formation, and life satisfaction as part of academic success. Universities can apply these insights to create both preventive and responsive programs that enhance not only student performance but also their long-term development and mental well-being.

5.3 Limitation and Further Study

While this study offers meaningful insights into the factors influencing academic burnout, several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the sample was restricted to students from Yunnan Minzu University, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. Differences in institutional culture, academic policies, and student support systems across universities could influence how students experience burnout, and future studies should consider more diverse and multi-institutional samples to improve external validity.

Second, the use of self-reported data through surveys and interviews may have introduced response biases, such as social desirability or inaccurate self-perception. Although these tools are commonly used in educational research, they may not fully capture students' internal experiences or actual behaviors. Future research could integrate mixed methods, such as behavioral data, academic records, or physiological indicators, to obtain a more objective and comprehensive understanding of academic burnout.

Third, the study evaluated only the short-term impact of the intervention without assessing its long-term effects. The absence of longitudinal follow-up limits the ability to determine the sustainability and lasting benefits of the intervention. Future research should include extended post-intervention assessments to track changes in academic performance, mental health, and burnout levels over time.

By addressing these limitations, future studies can enrich the theoretical and practical understanding of academic burnout, improve intervention design, and contribute to more effective student support strategies across diverse educational settings.

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