

A Study on the Causes of Academic Burnout Among Vocational School Students and Strategies for Rebuilding Their Motivation to Learn

Zhong Yan ¹, Marlissa Omar ^{1,*} and Fathiyah Mohd Kamaruzaman ¹

¹ STEM Enculturation Research Center, Faculty of Education, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Bangi, Malaysia, 43600 UKM Bangi, Selangor, Malaysia

* Correspondence author: p118313@siswa.ukm.edu.my

Abstract: To investigate the current status and causes of academic burnout among vocational college students, this study conducted an empirical investigation using a questionnaire survey. The research tools consisted of a self-developed “Vocational College Student Academic Burnout Scale” and an “Academic Burnout Causes Questionnaire.” The study sample comprised 205 students from S Vocational College in a certain city, and descriptive statistical analysis and difference analysis were performed using SPSS 25.0. The findings revealed that the overall mean score for academic burnout among vocational college students was 2.3773, indicating a slightly below-average level, with the “low sense of achievement” dimension standing out most prominently, with a mean score of 2.6300. Demographic difference analysis showed that there were no significant gender differences in academic burnout, but significant differences were observed across regions and grade levels: rural students exhibited significantly higher levels of burnout than urban students, and third-year students also exhibited significantly higher levels of burnout than students in the other two grade levels. The impact of these factors, ranked from strongest to weakest, is as follows: the student themselves, parents, teachers, the subject, and the school; the mean score for “the student themselves” was 2.9400. Based on these findings, this paper proposes strategies for rebuilding learning motivation across five dimensions—the student themselves, parents, teachers, the subject, and the school—thereby providing vocational colleges with scientifically sound and feasible strategies for addressing student learning burnout.

Keywords: learning burnout; causes; rebuilding learning motivation; vocational colleges

1. Introduction

In recent years, the phenomenon of learning burnout among vocational school students has been increasing, becoming a major problem in the education field [1]. Learning burnout not only affects students' academic performance but also has a negative impact on their mental health and future development [2]. Correctly understanding the underlying reasons for learning burnout among vocational school students is crucial for formulating effective strategies to rebuild their learning motivation and reducing their learning burnout.

The main causes of learning burnout among vocational school students come from factors such as academic pressure, course design, and teacher-student interaction. Vocational school students major in specialized fields, but the knowledge is very extensive and complex, requiring a lot of effort and time to learn. Therefore, if students' academic performance is not as expected as they hoped, they will experience frustration and anxiety, which will then affect their interest and motivation in learning [3]. At the same time, vocational schools are characterized by emphasizing practicality and application, but some schools have too many or overly complex course designs, resulting in excessive burden for students and a lack of autonomy and time management skills [4-5]. Additionally, the quality of teaching and learning is one



of the key factors affecting the educational quality. Some vocational schools, due to insufficient teacher resources, have insufficient teacher-student interaction, resulting in affected teaching quality and reduced students' motivation and interest in learning [6]. The strategies for rebuilding learning motivation need to be comprehensively utilized, covering various aspects such as ideological guidance, addressing learning pressure, and strengthening teacher-student interaction, to effectively improve the comprehensive quality of vocational school students, making them more proactive and autonomous in learning and career pursuits, and achieving all-round development [7-8].

Domestic and foreign scholars have conducted extensive research on the causes of learning burnout among vocational school students and their coping strategies, achieving certain results. Among the studies conducted by domestic scholars, literature [9] analyzed the mediating relationship between learning self-efficacy, learned helplessness, and learning burnout among students in Chinese higher vocational colleges. The questionnaire survey indicated that learned helplessness played a partial mediating role between learning self-efficacy and learning burnout, emphasizing the importance of teachers adopting targeted strategies to address students' learning burnout. Literature [10] examined the correlation between family function, academic self-efficacy, and learning burnout among students in vocational schools. Through surveys of students, it was shown that students in the nursing major with higher family function levels may have stronger academic self-efficacy, thereby reducing the degree of learning burnout. Literature [11] evaluated the learning burnout of vocational school students in China, and the results indicated that academic pressure was positively correlated with learning burnout symptoms and negatively correlated with campus life satisfaction. It suggested strategies such as reducing academic pressure and improving campus life satisfaction to alleviate students' learning burnout. Literature [12] used random sampling to survey the academic burnout situation of college students in higher vocational colleges in China. The results showed that learning motivation and its various dimensions were significantly negatively correlated with students' learning burnout, especially more pronounced at the organizational level and specific dimensions. Literature [13] introduced the application of learning feature segmentation technology in addressing learning burnout issues in vocational education. Through questionnaire surveys, scores were given for learning burnout manifestations, teacher-student relationships, vocational interests, and internal sensory preferences, revealing the factors contributing to students' learning burnout and proposing multiple coping strategies. Literature [14] analyzed the relationship between perceived stress, social support, psychological resilience, and learning burnout among students in higher vocational education in China. The research results indicated that perceived stress had a significant positive impact on academic burnout, while it had negative impacts on social support and psychological resilience. Reference [15] examined the impact of intervention measures on the learning burnout of vocational education students based on a literature review, revealing the effectiveness of learning burnout intervention measures. Among them, group counseling was the most widely used method, and exercise intervention might be the most effective approach. Reference [16] studied the degree of learning burnout among vocational school students during the COVID-19 pandemic, based on a random sampling survey method, indicating that male students, students living in urban areas, non-only children students, and students majoring in science and engineering had a higher degree of learning burnout than other groups, and proposed three strategies to reduce students' learning burnout caused by attending school. Reference [17] discussed the relationship between professional adaptability, academic burnout, and self-efficacy of vocational college students, through questionnaires, indicating that professional adaptability was significantly positively correlated with academic self-efficacy; professional adaptability was significantly negatively correlated with academic burnout. Reference [18] analyzed the mediating role of academic self-efficacy in the relationship between parental social support and learning burnout in vocational colleges, and the research results showed that parental social support was negatively correlated with students' learning burnout, and academic guidance should be provided to students to address their learning burnout.

Regarding the research by foreign scholars, Reference [19] aimed to develop a stress management guide to prevent learning burnout among vocational education students and verified that this stress management guide met acceptable standards and was suitable as a medium for counselors to promote students' development of stress management skills and prevent learning burnout. Reference [20] aimed to understand the current situation of learning burnout among students at Kelan Vocational School, through a questionnaire survey, indicating that students with learning burnout showed significant performance in multiple indicators, including physical fatigue, emotional exhaustion, low self-esteem, de-personalization, and decreased academic confidence. Reference [21] investigated the impact of psychological resilience on learning burnout among vocational education students, and a questionnaire survey showed that students with higher perceived stress and lower psychological resilience reported higher symptoms of learning burnout. Reference [22] analyzed the degree of learning burnout among vocational high school students in Tamansari District, and the questionnaire survey indicated that 67%

of students had moderate learning burnout, manifested as emotional exhaustion, boredom, low self-esteem, de-personalization, and decreased academic motivation, and emphasized the design of personalized counseling services based on self-management skills to help reduce students' learning burnout. Reference [23] examined the impact of learning burnout and soft skills on academic performance of vocational school students, and a questionnaire survey showed that effectively managing learning burnout and cultivating necessary soft skills could synergistically promote the improvement of educational experience and create a favorable environment for academic success. Reference [24] examined the relationship between learning burnout and mental health among 56 Swiss vocational school students, and analyzed the alleviating effect of physical exercise on learning burnout, and the results showed that learning burnout was closely related to the aggravation of depressive symptoms, decreased life satisfaction, lower psychological resilience, and deteriorated sleep quality, emphasizing the need to actively promote physical exercise to prevent learning burnout. Reference [25] explored the relationship between the satisfaction of basic psychological needs of vocational education students and learning burnout feelings and dropout intentions, and the survey results indicated that supporting the basic psychological needs of vocational education students helps reduce learning burnout and dropout intentions. Reference [26] investigated the influencing factors of learning burnout among vocational school students, and the research showed that the use of electronic devices and academic pressure were important factors affecting students' learning burnout. These studies emphasized the universality of learning burnout among vocational school students, indicating that it can easily cause problems such as low mood and reduced learning motivation, revealing the causes of learning burnout among students, including learning pressure, psychological resilience, family and social support, and highlighting the need to meet students' psychological needs, physical exercise, and other targeted strategies to alleviate learning burnout.

This study employed a questionnaire survey to conduct an empirical investigation into the causes of academic burnout among vocational college students and strategies for rebuilding their motivation to learn. The questionnaire survey method enabled the rapid collection of quantitative data from a large sample, facilitating subsequent descriptive statistics and tests for differences. Based on the "Vocational College Student Academic Burnout Scale," the current state of students' academic burnout was examined. SPSS 25.0 was used to perform descriptive statistical analysis and independent samples *t*-tests on the valid questionnaires to identify the characteristics of burnout dimensions and demographic differences. Furthermore, the "Questionnaire on the Causes of Academic Burnout" was used to identify the specific causes of students' academic burnout and the extent of their impact. Based on these findings, strategies for rebuilding academic motivation were formulated from a multidimensional perspective.

2. Research Design

2.1. Research Questions

This paper focuses on two main questions: (1) Is academic burnout a widespread problem among students at vocational colleges today? (2) What factors influence academic burnout among students at vocational colleges?

2.2. Study Population

This study used classes at a vocational college in a certain city as the sampling units and grade levels as the sampling strata. Three classes were randomly selected from the first, second, and third grades to serve as the survey subjects, resulting in a sample of 205 students. Of these, 68 were first-year students, 77 were second-year students, and 60 were third-year students. There were 89 male students, accounting for 43.41% of the total, and 116 female students, accounting for 56.59% of the total. The basic characteristics of the study participants are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. The basic situation of the study

Variable		Number	Percentage (%)	Cumulative percentage (%)
Gender	Male	89	43.41	43.41
	Female	116	56.59	100.00
Region	City	72	35.12	35.12
	Countryside	133	74.88	100.00
Grade	First grade	68	33.17	33.17
	Second grade	77	37.56	70.73
	Third grade	60	29.27	100.00

2.3. Research Tools

The research instrument used in this study is the “Vocational College Student Academic Burnout Scale,” which was developed by the researcher. In developing the scale, we drew upon relevant scholars’ classifications of burnout dimensions and the three-dimensional theory of burnout, dividing the scale into three dimensions: “physical and mental exhaustion,” “academic detachment,” and “low sense of accomplishment.” We also conducted a pilot test with a sample of students and adjusted the scale based on the results of the item analysis.

The “Questionnaire on the Causes of Academic Burnout” was developed independently based on prior research. This study will use this questionnaire to investigate the causes of academic burnout among students in all three grade levels at S Vocational College. The questionnaire consists of two parts. The first part covers the participants’ basic information, including name, class, gender, and midterm grades; Part Two is the questionnaire on the causes of academic burnout, which primarily covers four factors: students, teachers, the school, and parents, as well as academic subjects. The questionnaire uses a 5-point Likert scale, where scores of 1–5 represent “strongly disagree,” “somewhat disagree,” “unsure,” “somewhat agree,” and “strongly agree,” respectively. Participants were required to carefully read the instructions before answering and were given a time limit of 15 minutes; the questionnaires were collected on the spot. This study primarily used this questionnaire as the main measurement tool to investigate the causes of academic burnout among students in three grade levels at S Vocational College.

The primary data for this thesis are derived from survey questionnaires. The reliability and validity of these questionnaires directly reflect the actual circumstances of the respondents; therefore, it is essential to conduct the necessary tests of reliability and validity before performing data analysis. Cronbach’s alpha coefficient can determine the internal consistency of a scale. Cronbach’s alpha ranges from 0.00 to 1.00; the higher the coefficient, the more reliable the scale. The Cronbach’s alpha reliability coefficients for the “Vocational College Student Academic Burnout Scale” and the “Questionnaire on the Causes of Academic Burnout” were 0.90 and 0.92, respectively, indicating high reliability and making them suitable for data analysis.

To ensure the validity of the questionnaires, KMO and construct validity tests must be conducted. Validity refers to the extent to which a measurement tool or method can accurately measure the intended construct. Validity is divided into three types: content validity, criterion validity, and construct validity. Among these, construct validity refers to the degree of correspondence between a specific structure reflected in the measurement results and the measured values. Construct validity is determined by extracting common factors from all variables in the scale; each common factor is highly correlated with a specific group of variables, and these common factors represent the basic structure of the scale.

First, the survey data were tested using the KMO sampling adequacy test and Bartlett’s sphericity test. KMO is the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy; a higher KMO value indicates more common factors among the variables and greater suitability for factor analysis. It is generally considered that if the KMO value is less than 0.5, the data are not suitable for factor analysis. The KMO values for the “Vocational School Student Academic Burnout Scale” and the “Questionnaire on the Causes of Academic Burnout” were 0.941 and 0.936, respectively, indicating that both passed the validity test.

2.4. Research Process

I designed the questionnaire in early November. After analyzing and revising it three or four times, I finally distributed the survey to all classes across all grade levels on November 7, 2025. By that time, I had already been interning at this middle school for nearly four months. I distributed the questionnaire only after gaining a certain level of understanding and familiarity with the school, the classes, and the other students and teachers. More importantly, with more than half of the semester already passed, I had developed a general understanding and had carefully observed the students’ academic performance and attitudes.

On Friday afternoon during self-study period, the author distributed questionnaires to students in

Grade 1, Class 1; Grade 2, Class 3; and Grade 3, Class 4. In accordance with the school's grade distribution, the author distributed questionnaires to three classes—from first through third grade—at the vocational school, and remained on site to patiently guide and supervise the students as they completed the questionnaires, striving to ensure the survey was completed efficiently and with high quality. The questionnaire response rate was 100 percent: 205 questionnaires were distributed, and 205 were returned.

3. Research Findings

3.1. An Analysis of the Current State of Academic Burnout Among Vocational School Students

A total of 205 valid questionnaire responses were entered into SPSS 25.0 for statistical analysis, as shown in Table 2.

The mean (M) for the overall Academic Burnout Questionnaire for vocational college students was 2.3773, with a standard deviation (SD) of 0.7124, indicating that students at this institution experience academic burnout and that the overall level of burnout is slightly below average. Furthermore, based on the mean scores, the three dimensions of the questionnaire, ranked from highest to lowest, are: low sense of accomplishment, physical and mental exhaustion, and academic detachment. Among these, the mean score for the low sense of accomplishment dimension was $M = 2.6300$, slightly below the median score of 3 on the five-point Likert scale. This indicates that academic burnout among students at this vocational college is most pronounced in terms of low sense of accomplishment, suggesting that these students exhibit a low sense of accomplishment in their studies. The mean score for the physical and mental exhaustion dimension was $M = 2.2950$, indicating that academic burnout among vocational school students at this institution is particularly pronounced in terms of physical and mental exhaustion. The mean score for the academic detachment dimension was $M = 2.1140$, indicating that academic burnout among vocational school students at this institution is relatively less pronounced in terms of academic detachment.

Table 2. The overall situation of burnout

	<i>N</i>	Minimum value	Maximum value	Mean	Standard deviation
Physical exhaustion	205	1.0000	4.2310	2.2950	0.6735
Academic alienation	205	1.0000	4.2003	2.1140	0.7698
Low sense of accomplishment	205	1.2842	4.7103	2.6300	0.8051
Master table	205	1.1530	4.1985	2.3773	0.7124

The results of the analysis of the physical and mental exhaustion dimension are shown in Table 3. The items with higher mean scores in the table are Items 3, 12, 8, and 6. Among these, Item 3—"At the end of a day of studying, I feel extremely exhausted"—had the highest mean score, $M = 2.52$, followed by Item 12, "I often feel completely exhausted from studying at school," with $M = 2.35$, indicating that students perceive their daily academic workload as heavy and find it tiring. Next is Item 8, "Studying often leaves me feeling empty inside, not knowing what to do," with $M = 2.16$, suggesting that students do not take their studies seriously enough. Finally, Item 6, "Lately, I often feel completely exhausted," had a mean of 2.14. This indicates that, on the physical and mental exhaustion dimension, students' high scores were concentrated on Items 3 and 12—that is, most students agreed with these two items. Consequently, it suggests that the majority of students experience fatigue during the learning process, a situation that requires teachers' attention.

Table 3. Analysis of physical and mental exhaustion dimensions

Item	Mean	Standard deviation
Q3: I am tired of the end of my English study one day.	2.53	0.652
Q6: Learning makes me feel very empty and don't know what to do.	2.14	0.771
Q8: I have been exhausted in recent times.	2.16	0.845
Q12: I am often exhausted by learning at school.	2.35	0.778

Table 4 presents the statistical results for the academic disengagement dimension. The items with higher mean scores in the table are Items 9, 4, and 10, indicating that most students believe these three items best reflect their actual situation. Among them, Item 9—"In my studies, I often fail to feel a sense

of accomplishment”—had the highest mean score ($M = 2.25$), suggesting that students have a low sense of accomplishment in their studies. Question 4, “I feel that I don’t understand it anyway, so it doesn’t matter whether I study or not,” ranked second with a mean of $M = 2.10$, indicating that students do not have a proper attitude toward learning. Third was Question 10, “I feel that learning is meaningless to me,” with a mean of $M = 2.09$, suggesting that students do not perceive the significance of learning.

The above data indicate that, on the academic disengagement dimension, most students have a negative attitude toward learning, primarily manifested in an inability to experience a sense of achievement from learning and a belief that learning is meaningless. In summary, they hold a negative attitude toward learning, which leads to academic burnout.

Table 4. Academic alienation dimension statistics

Item	Mean	Standard deviation
Q4: I think I don't understand it anyway, I can't learn.	2.10	0.835
Q7: My study is poor, I want to give up learning English.	2.06	0.953
Q9: In learning, I often don't feel a sense of accomplishment.	2.25	0.784
Q10: I don't think learning means anything to me.	2.09	0.859
Q13: I study with self-abandonment.	2.07	0.862

All items in the low sense of achievement dimension are reverse-scored, and the data has been entered accordingly. The analysis results for the low sense of achievement dimension are shown in Table 5. The items with the highest mean scores, in descending order, are Item 5, Item 11, Item 16, and Item 15, all of which are relatively close to the median of 3. Item 5 has the highest mean score at 2.89. This indicates that most students agree with these four items. Based on the above analysis, it can be observed that the majority of students experiencing academic burnout have low levels of a sense of accomplishment—that is, they lack confidence in their studies, attribute poor academic performance to their own shortcomings, and feel pessimistic about their academic abilities. This pessimism typically has a negative impact on students’ enthusiasm for learning, leading to a lack of motivation and, consequently, academic burnout.

Table 5. Statistical table of low achievement dimensions

Item	Mean	Standard deviation
Q1: I can devote myself to study.	2.52	0.926
Q2: I can always achieve my goals.	2.52	1.022
Q5: When I study, I forget everything around me.	2.89	0.814
Q11: I can finish the exam well.	2.65	0.953
Q14: I can effectively solve the problems that arise in my own study.	2.54	0.778
Q15: I can always handle problems easily.	2.63	1.006
Q16: I can easily master my knowledge.	2.66	0.937

The results of the gender difference analysis on academic burnout are shown in Table 6. There were no significant gender differences in academic burnout among vocational school students; however, female students scored slightly higher than male students on the “low sense of achievement” dimension, with a t -value of -2.112 , indicating that female students experience a higher degree of low sense of achievement. Vocational school students are currently in the adolescent stage of the five stages of individual psychological development. Upon entering adolescence, a series of physical and physiological changes occur, accompanied by complex psychological changes. Adolescence tends to begin earlier for female students than for male students; consequently, female students experience more psychological issues during this stage than their male counterparts. Female students have a stronger sense of self and are more concerned with their self-image. At the same time, they experience significant emotional fluctuations and may feel more intense depression, anxiety, irritability, diminished self-esteem, fatigue, and feelings of inferiority. Therefore, in terms of academic burnout, female students report lower levels of a sense of accomplishment than male students.

Table 6. Study the gender difference of burnout

Gender Factor	Male(N=89)		Female(N=116)		t
	M	SD	M	SD	
Physical exhaustion	2.285	0.874	2.932	0.711	-1.085
Academic alienation	2.276	0.695	2.505	0.971	-0.465
Low sense of accomplishment	2.947	0.789	3.459	0.943	-2.112*
Study burnout score	2.592	1.304	2.912	1.912	-1.623

The results of the regional analysis of academic burnout are shown in Table 7, indicating significant regional differences in academic burnout among vocational school students. Rural students' academic burnout scores were significantly higher than those of urban students, suggesting that rural students at School S experience a higher level of academic burnout than their urban counterparts. Rural students scored significantly higher than urban students on the three dimensions of personal and physical exhaustion, academic detachment, and low sense of accomplishment. However, urban students' average total burnout score was 0.682 points higher than that of rural students, indicating that the level of academic burnout among rural students is far greater than that of urban students.

There may be two reasons for this: First, family-related factors. There are a relatively large number of left-behind children among rural students, who lack parental companionship and care; parents of rural students generally have low educational attainment and lack scientific guidance for their children's studies. This results in children studying without clear goals, in a passive manner, and without motivation; they view learning as a mere task and ultimately fail to gain a sense of respect and self-fulfillment from their studies, leading to higher levels of academic burnout. Students in urban areas have closer home-school communication than their rural counterparts; parents place greater emphasis on their children's studies; students have higher achievement motivation, greater enthusiasm and initiative in learning; they are more confident in taking on greater challenges and pressure; and they experience lower levels of academic burnout. Second, school-related factors. Rural students have fewer outlets for emotional release when facing emotional or other issues; left-behind students attending vocational schools in rural areas experience significantly higher levels of academic burnout than their counterparts in urban areas. Urban schools generally have a stronger teaching faculty than rural schools, as well as better learning environments and facilities. A superior learning environment combined with scientific guidance fosters greater self-confidence, a stronger sense of superiority, greater motivation to learn, and lower levels of academic burnout among students.

Table 7. Analysis of regional differences in burnout

Region Factor	City(N=72)		Countryside(N=133)		<i>t</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	
Physical exhaustion	2.864	1.285	3.265	0.845	-2.251*
Academic alienation	2.364	1.071	2.792	0.978	-3.045*
Low sense of accomplishment	2.327	1.151	2.977	0.956	-3.512**
Study burnout score	2.561	1.698	3.243	1.082	-3.899***

The results of the analysis of grade-level differences in academic burnout are shown in Table 8. There are significant grade-level differences in academic burnout among vocational school students. The level of academic burnout is positively correlated with grade level; that is, academic burnout increases as students advance through the grades. As grade level increases, the level of academic burnout shows an upward trend, with third-year students exhibiting the highest level of academic burnout, with a mean score of 2.927. The most pronounced grade-level differences were observed in the "low sense of accomplishment" dimension, which was positively correlated with grade level, followed by "personal and physical exhaustion" and "academic detachment." Personal physical and mental exhaustion is positively correlated with grade level. The levels of academic detachment, from highest to lowest, are second grade, third grade, and first grade. As students advance through the grades, their knowledge base expands and academic pressure increases. Under the pressure of exams, students' study intensity continues to rise; with no outlet for stress relief, their motivation to learn declines, leading to personal physical and mental exhaustion and an inability to find joy or a sense of accomplishment in learning. Second grade is a transitional and critical period, as well as a high-risk time when students' academic performance is prone to decline. The curriculum in second grade differs significantly from that of first grade. Combined with the fact that second-graders are not yet psychologically mature and lack self-awareness, they often struggle to find reasonable solutions when faced with problems, resorting instead to self-reassurance or giving up altogether, resulting in peak levels of academic disengagement. By the time they reach third grade, they become more rational; when faced with exams, they push themselves to study, and their level of academic disengagement consequently decreases.

Table 8. Study the results of the study of burnout

Grade Factor	First grade(N=68)		Second grade(N=77)		Third grade(N=60)		<i>F</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	
Physical exhaustion	2.156	1.021	2.259	0.955	2.546	1.013	4.02*
Academic alienation	2.541	1.077	2.932	0.968	2.840	1.098	5.145**
Low sense of accomplishment	2.325	1.152	2.703	1.034	2.922	0.956	7.832***
Study burnout score	2.544	1.683	2.823	1.527	2.927	1.231	8.206***

3.2. An Analysis of the Causes of Academic Burnout Among Vocational School Students

To alleviate academic burnout among vocational school students, this study analyzes the specific causes of academic burnout from five perspectives—student factors, teacher factors, school factors, parental factors, and subject-related factors—in order to identify more effective strategies for enhancing students’ interest in learning. The overall statistical results regarding the causes of academic burnout are shown in Table 9. The minimum score on the academic burnout questionnaire was 1.00, and the maximum was 4.70, with a mean (*M*) of 2.8855 and a standard deviation (*SD*) of 0.7321. These findings indicate that academic burnout among vocational school students is significantly influenced by these factors. First, the “Student Factors” dimension (*M* = 2.9400) had the highest value among the five factors, indicating that students believe their own reasons lead to academic burnout. Second, the “Parental Factors” dimension (*M* = 2.9234) had the second-highest mean, suggesting that students attribute some of their academic burnout to their parents; The “Teacher Factor” (*M* = 2.8652) indicates that students attribute their academic burnout to teachers; The Subject Dimension (*M* = 2.8368) and the School Factor (*M* = 2.8193) indicate that some students attribute their academic burnout to subject-related and school-related factors, respectively. Based on the above analysis, the factors contributing to academic burnout, ranked from strongest to weakest influence, are: the students themselves, parents, teachers, subjects, and the school.

Table 9. Statistical results of the overall situation of burnout

	<i>N</i>	Minimum value	Maximum value	Mean	Standard deviation
Student factor	205	1.00	4.77	2.9400	0.8675
Teacher factor	205	1.00	4.62	2.8652	0.8794
School factor	205	1.00	4.53	2.8193	0.8362
Parental factor	205	1.00	4.53	2.9234	0.7990
Subject matter	205	1.00	5.00	2.8368	0.8803
Master table	205	1.00	4.70	2.8855	0.7321

4. Strategies for Rebuilding Motivation Among Vocational School Students

Students should cultivate positive self-affirmations and strengthen their self-confidence by keeping a study journal or recording their successes, thereby reducing learned helplessness. They should make good use of digital tools for previewing and reviewing material, take the initiative to form or join study groups, and draw on peer interactions to spark intrinsic motivation.

Parents should create a quiet, orderly home learning environment for their children, minimize distractions, and regularly discuss academic progress with them—replacing criticism with active listening and encouragement to help alleviate their anxiety. They should proactively maintain communication with homeroom teachers or subject instructors to stay informed about the school’s curriculum and work with teachers to ensure their children complete after-school assignments. Parents should also pay attention to their children’s emotional changes; when children experience frustration, they should guide them to view failure in a positive light and help them analyze the causes of their setbacks.

Vocational schools should encourage teachers to utilize digital teaching methods in their instructional activities. Since students at vocational schools often have a relatively weak academic foundation, teachers who simply teach abstract theoretical knowledge will struggle to inspire students’ autonomy in learning, and students are prone to experiencing learning fatigue. When teachers prepare lessons carefully, deliver them in an engaging and interesting manner, and treat every student equally, students can feel the teacher’s expectations, which in turn boosts their confidence and reduces learning fatigue. Furthermore, leveraging the advantages of digital teaching tools—such as establishing a blended online and offline teaching platform and implementing an integrated in-class and out-of-class teaching model—can

stimulate students' interest in learning and enhance their autonomy in the learning process. First, before class, teachers assign preparatory tasks on the learning platform. Students are required to search online for micro-lecture resources, video and audio materials, and reference materials to prepare for new content. Second, during class, teachers incorporate technology-enhanced instruction, design various hands-on activities, and employ case-based teaching methods to stimulate students' curiosity and increase their classroom engagement. Finally, teachers assign various project-based tasks to students after class, using online assessments and teacher-student interactions to monitor their progress in completing these tasks.

Vocational colleges should collaborate with enterprises to optimize their curriculum design, emphasizing the practical strengths of courses so that students' knowledge structures meet societal demands. Optimizing the curriculum helps alleviate student burnout. Currently, enterprises require associate degree graduates with strong practical skills who can immediately assume on-the-job roles. To cultivate such talent, vocational colleges must establish an integrated curriculum system combining practical skills courses, general education courses, and theoretical foundation courses. Practical courses focus on cultivating students' practical skills, incorporating simulated practice, on-the-job training, and project-based internships. This allows students to progressively deepen their practical abilities, enabling them to successfully complete project tasks, job-specific assignments, and comprehensive internship requirements. The purpose of theoretical courses is to equip students with the theoretical knowledge needed to guide their practical learning. This ensures that students can apply theory to practice while simultaneously exploring theory through practical experience. By integrating general education and foundational theory courses with practical courses, students will no longer view general education courses as optional or unnecessary.

Many students at vocational colleges have expressed that the approach to management in these institutions is not designed to facilitate their learning and daily lives, but rather focuses solely on reducing administrative costs and streamlining management processes. Precisely because vocational colleges fail to listen to students' voices and conduct teaching and management activities without regard for students' needs and interests, students find their campus life deeply unsatisfying. If students who struggle academically find genuine enjoyment in their studies, they will naturally overcome their academic difficulties. When students fail to find joy in both their studies and daily life, they are prone to developing academic burnout. To boost students' motivation, vocational schools should listen to their concerns, improve their living conditions, and enhance their overall experience.

5. Conclusion

This study used a questionnaire survey to investigate the overall situation of academic burnout among vocational college students and its underlying causes. It also proposed corresponding strategies for rebuilding academic motivation to help these students alleviate academic burnout.

The overall mean score for academic burnout among vocational college students was 2.3773, indicating that academic burnout is generally at a slightly below-average level. This suggests that, while burnout at School S has not yet reached a widespread or severe level, it should still be taken seriously and kept within an acceptable range. Among the three dimensions—physical and mental exhaustion, academic detachment, and low sense of accomplishment—the dimension of low sense of accomplishment exhibited the most pronounced levels of academic burnout, with a mean score of 2.6300. This indicates that students generally lack confidence in their own academic abilities. While the levels of academic burnout in the dimensions of physical and mental exhaustion and academic detachment were relatively low, they still warrant attention to prevent further increases in students' academic burnout levels.

There are no significant gender differences in academic burnout among vocational school students, but there are notable regional and grade-level differences. Rural students scored significantly higher than urban students on dimensions such as personal physical and mental exhaustion, academic detachment, and low sense of achievement, while urban students' average total academic burnout score was 0.682 points higher than that of rural students. Third-year students exhibited the highest levels of academic burnout, with an average score of 2.927.

Currently, the problem of academic burnout among vocational school students is primarily caused by five factors: student-related, parent-related, teacher-related, subject-related, and school-related factors. The influence of student-related factors ranks first in intensity, indicating that intrinsic motivation is the key determinant of academic burnout.

Based on the above causes, this study proposes a multidimensional strategy for rebuilding learning motivation: students should strengthen their sense of self-efficacy; parents should create a supportive environment; teachers should utilize information technology to implement blended learning; subject curricula should be optimized to highlight the practical advantages of the courses; and schools should listen to students' needs to improve management and services, thereby comprehensively enhancing students' motivation to learn.

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