

## Reducing Academic Burnout Through Social Support and Life Satisfaction: Evidence from Pakistan

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Article Info	Abstract
<p><b>Article History</b></p> <p>Received: February 17, 2021</p> <p>Accepted: April 25, 2021</p> <p><b>Keywords :</b> Social Support, Life Satisfaction, Academic Burnout, Pakistani Culture, Students</p> <p><b>DOI:</b> 10.5281/zenodo.4718666</p>	<p><i>Codeswitching in the context of single or multiple conversations has been a myth for language experts. Matrix language framework (MLF) model proposed by Myers Scotton (1993) has become very popular for the analysis of language pairs, and is influential in determining matrix language in different language pairs. The aim of this study is to identify matrix and embedded language in Urdu-English data sets of health and science theme. MLF model is applied to an original article on Covid-19. Data sets include language pairs from a published article on the nature of coronavirus. A qualitative design was followed to arrange data sets, language pairs were identified, transcribed and coded carefully according to the Canonical Trilinear Representation. Three layers of data with the first layer of roman Urdu, the second layer of gloss and the third layer of English translation were further analyzed syntactically and morphosyntactically to show how they grammatically occur in the bilingual complementiser phrases. The findings of this study reveal that code-switching was permissible even when it led to structural asymmetry. English insertions received different Urdu markers of gender and number wherever required. Urdu adjectives played a significant role in realizing nouns. Some data sets allowed English insertions without Urdu markers. Moreover, the data supported matrix language frame, morpheme order principle and system morpheme principle and no counter example appeared against MLF model. Thus, the present study is a significant contribution in the related area.</i></p>

### Introduction

The term academic burnout was actually derived from the term job burnout (Kim, Jee, Kee, An, and Lee (2018). However, students are not like a workers, based on psychological perspective, higher studies composed of structural events like assignment, examination, course attendance, presentation, research publication and many more, which can be treated as “work” they performed (Balogun et al., 1996; Jacobs and Dodd, 2003). In some cases, students reached to the burnout stage, often feel fatigued or exhausted that may negatively affect their motivation towards their studies (Schaufeli et al., 2002). This issue of academic burnout is like that of job burnout, and resulted in higher dropout ratio, higher absenteeism, and low academic performance (Jacobs and Dodd, 2003). It is ostensible that such burnout condition adversely affects student’s career. Past studies also highlight the existence of academic burnout in universities (Kim et al., 2018; Karimi et al., 2014; Chang et al., 2016). They argued that factors like social support (SS) may play a vital role in decreasing the level of academic burnout. Social support is one feeling that someone care them, somebody assist them, and he/she is the member of a supportive network (Guruge et al., 2015). Students who fortuitously have various option of social supports may tickle the burnout issue quite easily. A plethora of past literature highlight this issue in detail both in the context of academic setting and business organizations (Kim et al., 2018; Karimi et al., 2014; Chang et al., 2016). However, they explored the direct link between SS and burnout. They generally used SS as a dominant protective and remedial instrument against academic burnout and fail to check the indirect relationship between them via possible intervening variables (Kim et al., 2018; Karimi et al., 2014; Popa-Velea et al., 2017). However, a considerable effort was made by Ye, Huang and Liu (2021) to discover the indirect mechanism regarding this relationship in the context of Chinese students.

As mentioned earlier, past researches shed lights on the direct link of SS on burnout in different cultures, except Ye et al., (2021) whose study provide the evidence of indirect effect through life satisfaction. However, as cultural differences may play a vital role regarding the burnout state of individuals, this study replicate the same model of Ye et al., (2021) in the context of Pakistani culture to examine the direct and indirect effect of SS on burnout via life satisfaction (LS). Our study offers important contributions to the existing body of knowledge in many ways. First, we studied this relationship for the first time in the context of Pakistan. Second, our study enriches past literature by introducing the intervening mechanism of LS on the link between SS and academic

burnout among universities students. Lastly, the results of the current study would help the students about how to overcome their burnout/exhaust level and also enables both parents and teachers to make possible intervention strategies for students having different socioeconomic backgrounds.

### **The Mediating Role of Life Satisfaction**

As reported earlier, past literature greatly elaborates the direct link of SS and academic burnout (e.g., Kim et al., 2018; Balogun et al., 1996; Karimi et al., 2015; Chang et al., 2016), but little or no attention was paid to examine the indirect link between these variables particularly in the context of university students. Past literature in the context of business organizations/employees examine the direct and indirect link between SS and burnout by using different intervening variables like work-family conflict, organizational identification, co-rumination and degree of religiousness (Boren, 2013; Yoon and Lee, 2006). Life satisfaction is a positive psychological state and is important for students to develop and adapt university life (Ojeda et al., 2014). Literature showed that life satisfaction has significant association with study performance, perception about the quality of a university, a sense of belongingness and the ability of self-learn (Audin, Davy and Barkham, 2003; Bjelica and Jovanovic, 2016). Thus, it is presumed that such psychological strength (social support) may play an important transformed component and help to reduce burnout. Students gain support from various sources including their family, teachers, classmates and peers that make them able to achieve higher academic performance and life satisfaction (Garnefski and Diekstra, 1996). For instance, teachers and classmates may provide crucial solutions and suggestions on academic tasks that help them to overcome academic burdens. Furthermore, as per the notion of conservation of resources theory (COR), SS is a conditional resource (Hobfoll, 1989). Such support offers mental and psychological assistance in dealing with strain, depression, anxiety and subsequently improve student's self-efficacy, self-esteem and self-perception (O'Sullivan, 2010). Overall, SS provides both internal and external motives and satisfaction to students.

Life satisfaction not only accede the effect of SS, but also has a strong relationship with student's study status. As mentioned earlier and also shown by past researches, high LS is the reflection of positive emotion that one's gain in his/her life (Lybomirsky, King, and Diener, 2005; Lybomirsky, Sheldon and Schkade, 2005). As Broaden-and-Build theory of positive emotions argued that people with positive emotions are more likely to be self-directed and open-minded during their academic career (Fredrickson, 2001). Additionally, Hagenauer et al., (2018) and Celik and Odaci, (2013) argued that students whose level of LS is high have lower dropout rates. This interesting mechanism not only account for positive effects but also reduce the adverse effects. Thus, based on the cited literature and the buffering-effect model of Cohen and Wills (1985), we proposed that

H<sub>1</sub>: Social support is negatively associated with student's burnout such that increase in social support will reduce student's burnout

H<sub>2</sub>: Social support is positively related with life satisfaction

H<sub>3</sub>: Life satisfaction is negatively related with academic burnout

H<sub>4</sub>: The link between social support and student's burnout is mediated by life satisfaction such that burnout will be low when life satisfaction is high

## **2. Participants and Methods**

### **2.1. Procedures and Sample**

This study was conducted in higher educational institutions (HEIs) operated in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa Province of Pakistan. Through purposive sampling, we approached 500 students to fill the survey instrument. The study participants were informed about the objectives of the study and we assured them about confidentiality of data/responses. We received 270 responses out of 500 distributed questionnaires with a response rate of 54%. Some questionnaires were not properly filled, and some were incomplete, thus we exclude these questionnaires from the study. The final analysis was performed on 252 usable questionnaires that were completed in all aspects. Our study received a low response rate due to disruption in academic activities because of COVID-19.

### **2.2. Measurement**

#### **2.2.1. Social Support (SS)**

To measure social support a 10-item scale originally developed by Xiao (1994) was adapted. Past studies also used this scale to measure social support (e.g., Ye et al., 2021; Yu et al., 2015; Bi et al., 2020). This scale measure social support from the dimensions i.e., subjective support, objective support and support-seeking behavior through five-point Likert scale where 1 denoted strongly disagree and 5 denoted strongly agree. Sample item is "how many close relationships can back you up when you are facing difficulties".

#### **2.2.2. Life Satisfaction (LS)**

To measure life satisfaction a 5-item scale developed by Diener et al., (1985) was adapted for this study. All items were measure on 7-point Likert type scale where 1 represent strongly disagree and 7 represent strongly agree. Past studies also used this scale and found good reliability statistics (e.g., Ye et al., 2021; Kong, Zhao, and You, 2012; Kong and You, 2011). Sample item is "I am satisfied with my life".

#### **2.2.3. Academic Burnout (ABO)**

Academic burnout was assessed through a 20-item scale developed by Rong et al., (2005). All items were measured on five-point Likert scale where 1 denoted completely inconsistent and 5 denoted fully consistent. Sample item is “I fall asleep during lecture”. Previous researches found good reliability values for this scale (e.g., Ye et al., 2021).

### 3. Results

We carried out all the analyses by using PLS-SEM. The details of measurement model and structural model are highlighted in the subsequent sections.

#### 3.1. Measurement Model

Measurement model shows the link between the constructs and indicators variables. measurement model gives us alpha reliability, composite reliability, and average variance extraction (AVE). Further, it displays discriminant validity measured through Fornell-Larcker criteria, factor loading and HTMT. Table1 reports that the values of CRs is well above the standard value, thus insured the scale reliability. The values of AVE for all variables is well above the threshold value of 0.50 (Latif et al., 2019; Ringle et al., 2018), confirming that we established convergent validity. The factor loading values of all scales for all items are loaded well on their respective construct insure discriminant validity. We also assured discriminant validity through Fornell-Lacker criteria reported in Table 2. The bold values reported in Table 2. are the square root of AVE and it must be greater than the values reported below to them. Thus, we established both validity and reliability for the scale used in this study.

#### 3.2. Structural Model

Structural model shows the relationship (path) among the study variables. H<sub>1</sub> evaluates whether social support negatively related with academic burnout. The results show that SS has negative and significant effect (total effect) on ABO ( $\beta = -0.392, t = 7.37$ ). Thus, H<sub>1</sub> is supported. H<sub>2</sub> states that whether SS has significant relation with LS. The results show that SS has strong positive relation with LS ( $\beta = 0.904, t = 35.738$ ). Hence, we received support for H<sub>2</sub>. H<sub>3</sub> evaluates whether LS has negative and significant relation with ABO. We found support for this hypothesis as well ( $\beta = -0.243, t = 2.144$ ) (Table 3).

#### 3.3. Mediation Analysis

After introducing mediator i.e., life satisfaction, the relationship between SS and ABO become insignificant ( $\beta = -0.172, t = 1.499$ ), while the indirect effect through introducing the mediator i.e., life satisfaction to the model was found statistically significant ( $\beta = -0.220, t = 2.122$ ). The result shows full mediation. This indicates that the effect of SS on ABO passes fully through LS. Hence H<sub>4</sub> is supported (Table 4).

Table 1

Composite Reliability and Convergent Validity

	<b>A</b>	<b>Alpha</b>	<b>CR</b>	<b>AVE</b>
<b>Social Support</b>		<b>0.991</b>	<b>0.992</b>	<b>0.926</b>
SS1	0.949			
SS2	0.969			
SS3	0.956			
SS4	0.967			
SS5	0.973			
SS6	0.91			
SS7	0.978			
SS8	0.979			
SS9	0.983			
SS10	0.956			
<b>Life Satisfaction</b>		<b>0.969</b>	<b>0.976</b>	<b>0.891</b>
LS1	0.953			
LS2	0.943			
LS3	0.939			
LS4	0.943			
LS5	0.941			
<b>Academic Burnout</b>		<b>0.969</b>	<b>0.971</b>	<b>0.629</b>
ABO1	0.728			
ABO2	0.816			
ABO3	0.805			
ABO4	0.827			
ABO5	0.819			

ABO6	0.782
ABO7	0.835
ABO8	0.863
ABO9	0.861
ABO10	0.865
ABO11	0.806
ABO12	0.786
ABO13	0.785
ABO14	0.808
ABO15	0.697
ABO16	0.752
ABO17	0.753
ABO18	0.679
ABO19	0.769
ABO20	0.812

*Table 2*  
*Discriminant Validity*

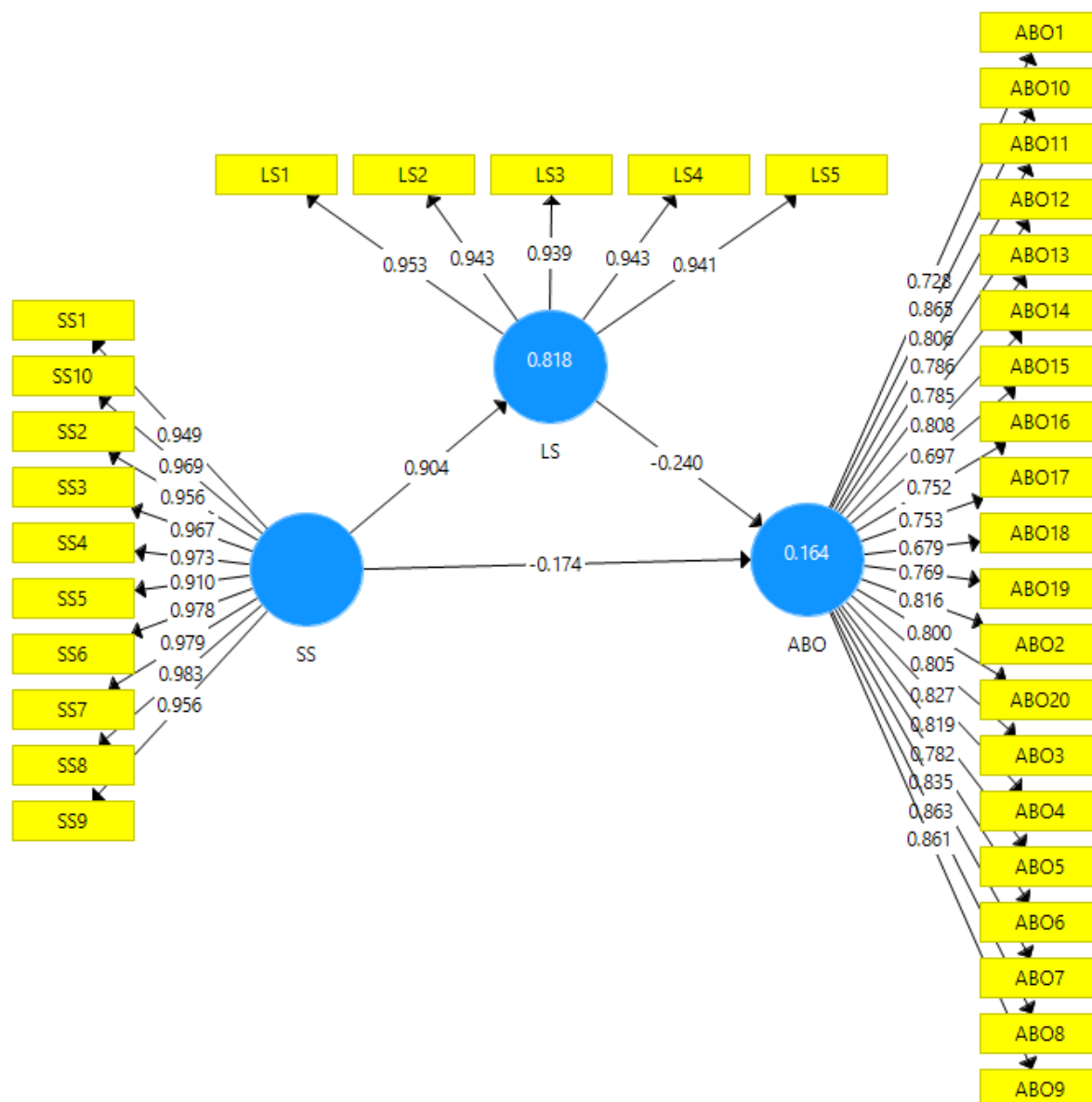
	ABO	LS	SS
ABO	<b>0.793</b>		
LS	-0.398	<b>0.944</b>	
SS	-0.392	0.904	<b>0.962</b>

*Table 3*  
*Hypothesis Testing*

	Path Coefficient	Std. Deviation	T statistics	p value
H1: SS-> ABO	-0.172	0.115	1.499	0.134
H2: LS -> ABO	-0.243	0.113	2.144	0.032
H3: SS -> LS	0.904	0.025	35.738	0.000

*Table 4*  
*Mediation Analysis*

	Total Effects		Direct Effects		Indirect Effects			
	Coefficient	t-value	Coefficient	t-value	Coefficient	t-value	p-value	
SS -> ABO	-0.392	7.37	-0.172	1.499	H4: SS -> LS -> ABO	-0.22	2.122	0.034



#### 4. Discussion

The objectives of the present research were to examine the relationship between SS and ABO in the context of universities students. We also check whether LS play an intervening role on the said relationship. Our findings suggest that SS has negative and significant relationship with ABO. We also found a strong positive association between SS and LS. Our result suggests that LS and ABO has negative signification association. Further, our finding displays that LS fully mediates the relationship between SS and ABO. The findings of the current research offer unique understanding about how SS is associated with ABO directly and via LS among university students. Our study expands the past literature related to SS and ABO by contributing empirical evidence regarding the mechanism through SS affects ABO.

Our findings regarding the negative association between SS and ABO in academic setting was consistent with past researches (i.e., Ye et al., 2021; Kim et al., 2018; Karimi et al., 2014; Popa-Velea et al., 2017). As projected, we found that LS work as an intervening mechanism and offer explanation about why SS is weakly associated with academic burnout. It means that those students who received more support are probably more satisfied which in turn results less burnout. Furthermore, students who are suffering from exhaustive and stressful conditions, a marginal level of social support is surely create a positive perception of LS which in turn reduce academic burnout (Vizoso et al., 2019). Hence, we argued that SS inversely affects academic burnout both internally and externally. As mentioned earlier, SS resultantly eliminate burnout among students by energizing an individual's internal perception (e.g., life satisfaction). Also, it may help to reduce academic burnout by offering external assistance (e.g., supervisor feedback, peer advice and parent care).

#### Practical Implications

As per the findings of the current research and recent literature, we offer some important implications for academicians and practitioners about the increased prevalence of academic burnout. Adapting university life as a challenging task for many students (Duque, 2014), where they interact with numbers of assign tasks (e.g., assignment, presentations, quizzes, exams) that may boost their burnout state. First, our study enhances the past literature by offering empirical evidence on the direct and indirect link between SS and academic burnout via LS among university students. To increase LS, our results suggest that such academic intervention is necessary that offer various supports. For instance, instructors should deliver a series of lectures on importance of SS (i.e., family, parents, teachers, peers, friends) and direct the students about how to obtain the supports from others. Second, it is also necessary for universities administration to provide facilities for both academic and psychological assistance that may help to reduce academic burnout among students.

### Limitations and Future Research Avenues

Although, this study adds incremental contributions to the existing body of knowledge but there are some serious limitations as well that must be considered by future researchers to further extend this study. First, we collect data at one point in time that limit us to check the causality among variables. It is recommended that in future researchers may replicate our model by choosing time-lag or longitudinal research design. Second, we collect data from post-graduate level students as they are well-adjust to the university life as compared to undergraduate students. Further, their level of academic burnout may be low in comparison of undergraduate level. Thus, future studies must account this limitation to better acknowledged academic burnout among students who are new to the university life. Third, our sample was based on universities located in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan where the culture and socio-economic conditions of almost all students are the same. It would be better to collect the data from diverse groups or different cultures that make us able to generalize the study findings. Lastly, we ignore certain important variables that may buffer the relationship of life satisfaction and burnout such as socio-economic status because students belong to rich family background may have less burnout level as compared to those belong to poor family. Thus, future researchers are encouraged to test the moderating effect of socio-economic status on life satisfaction and academic burnout relation.

### Conclusion

Students motivation towards academic achievement can be enhanced through the supports they received from the society. This study empirically tested whether academic burnout among universities students can be reduced through social supports and whether LS intervene the link between SS and ABO. The study found that SS has negative significant relationship with academic burnout. It means that when students received supports from their peers, teachers, family, and friends their burnout will decrease. The study also found that LS completely intervenes this relationship. It means that SS affect LS and LS adversely affect academic burnout among university students.

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