

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE, SOCIAL SUPPORT AND ACADEMIC BURNOUT AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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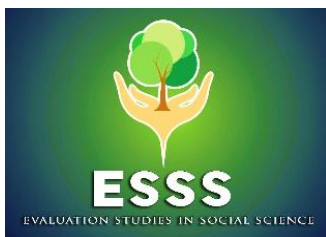
ABSTRACT

The study conducted aimed to investigate the interplay between emotional intelligence, social support, and academic burnout among University of Malaya students enrolled in the Faculty of Education. Specifically, it sought to discern any notable disparities in emotional intelligence and burnout concerning gender, as well as differences in social support and academic burnout across various socioeconomic statuses. Additionally, the research endeavored to explore the correlations between emotional intelligence, social support, and burnout in university students. A quantitative survey design was employed, with convenience sampling chosen to enlist Bachelor's Degree students from three departments within the Faculty of Education, resulting in 257 participants, including 20 male and 237 female students. Descriptive analyses revealed a mean age of 1.50 among participants. Three main instruments were utilized: the Emotional Intelligence by Schutte, the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS), and the Burnout Inventory for University Students (BIUS). Data analysis was performed using descriptive statistics and inferential methods via JAMOVI and SPSS version 23 software. The findings indicated no significant gender-based differences in emotional intelligence and academic burnout. Similarly, socioeconomic status did not show a significant association with social support and academic burnout. However, there was a noteworthy moderate negative correlation between emotional intelligence and academic burnout ($r = -0.442$, $n = 257$, $p < .001$), as well as between social support and academic burnout, $\rho = -0.323$, $p < .001$). This study provides valuable insights for future academic endeavors concerning emotional intelligence, social support, and academic burnout.

Keywords: *emotional intelligence, social support, burnout, Burnout Inventory for University Students (BIUS), university students*

INTRODUCTION

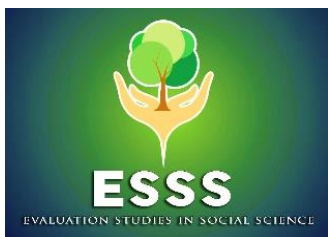
It was estimated that 1.5 billion students across 156 countries were unable to continue face-to-face schooling due to COVID-19. (UNESCO, 2020) In addition, the implementation of MCO also resulted in massive changes with widespread effects to students in higher education institutions due to campus closure, border enforcement, roadblocks, social and physical distancing, quarantine as well as the change to online based teaching and learning (Sufian et al., 2020).



Nevertheless, the importance of education was not being ignored through the implementation of hybrid-based teaching and learning which combines both face-to-face and online elements (MOHE, 2021). This was crucial in ensuring that the process of learning is maintained despite the current critical situation. In the context of Universiti Malaya, the hybrid learning approach has been employed since the new semester starting on 18 October 2021 (UM, 2022). Throughout this transition period, students will be dealing with various events and experiences in acclimating themselves to this new learning environment. They are also highly affected by academic stress due to exponential increase in workload within a short period of time (Sagita et al., 2017; Rodrigo et al., 2020). The continuous increase in issues combined with their inability to cope thus led to mental health problems including academic burnout (Emerson, et al., 2023).

Academic burnout is defined as a psychological syndrome that manifests in response to prolonged pressure in carrying out specific tasks. It is related to three main dimensions namely: (a) emotional fatigue, (b) exhibition of deteriorating performance and (c) depersonalisation (Maslach & Jackson, 1981; Maslach & Leiter, 1997). Emotional fatigue refers to the drain in an individual emotional resource simultaneously affecting the context of his or her physical fatigue in carrying out tasks. Following that, exhibition of deteriorating performance relates to the decrease in self-potential and workplace productivity. Finally, depersonalisation points to the negativity, cynicism, and disassociation from other individuals in the workplace. Cynicism refers to one's indifference and lack of interest in their career. Through this, burnout is expected to be most prevalent in cases involving major mismatch between personal traits with the demands for carrying out duties (Maslach & Leiter, 1997). In the context of academic burnout, a dimensional framework similar to the one postulated by Maslach & Jackson (1981) is still used but applied in the context of students who are mostly affected by peer pressure, course workloads and other relevant psychological factors (Moldes, et al., 2019).

Research on academic burnout started to really gain traction within the last decade with greater interests in promoting the improvement of students' mental health. Malaysian researchers were also not exempted in this movement to generate more research on academic burnout and its relationship with various predictors. Nevertheless, the amount of research in this field is still minimal and requires major addition. Several notable academic burnout research in Malaysia include looking at its context within Malaysian medical students (Chin et al., 2016), burnout among medical students during clinical year (Daud et al., 2021), burnout and eating disorder (Kristianto et al., 2016), burnout and psychological pressure (Arif et al., 2021), as well as burnout, pressure, and coping strategies (Fares et al., 2016). As mentioned, enrolment in universities could lead to unfavorable experiences to students (Shin et al., 2011) due to the learning environment which is pivoted upon high academic requirements. It has been observed that various research on academic burnout have been carried out in the context of teachers, doctors, nurses, and managers. Nevertheless, research specific on academic burnout amongst students have remained limited (Rahmati, 2015) particularly in the context of non-medical students. As of now, most of the research involving academic burnout was focused

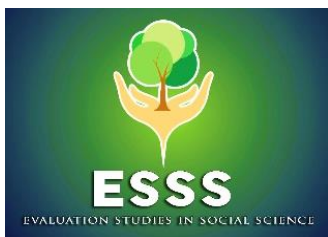


only on medical students (Chin et al., 2016; Daud et al., 2021; Kristianto et al., 2016; Arif et al., 2021).

In discussing academic burnout, factors that have been highly debated pertain to its relationship with emotional intelligence (Esmaili et al., 2018) and social support (Zimet et al., 1998; Ye, et al., 2021). According to Esmaili, Khojasteh and Kafipour (2018), emotional intelligence was connected to individual performance. These researchers believed that emotional intelligence was the key factor in determining an individual's achievement due to its role in instilling responsibility, good interpersonal relationship as well as high degree of collaboration with peers. Apart from that, it has also been suggested that high levels of emotional intelligence results in lower mental pressure therefore reducing an individual's propensity to burnout. Based on research conducted in Pakistan, it was reported that female students demonstrate greater dominance in the context of emotional intelligence as compared to the male counterparts (Fida et al., 2018). In contrast, a research based in Iran by Meshkat and Nejati (2017) found that there are no significant differences in the emotional intelligence scores across genders. Hence, this research aims to delve into the possibility of distinguishing emotional intelligence by gender in context of the targeted population.

There are also other factors in the discussion of academic burnout including social support which covers the feeling of being loved, taken care of, cherished, and respected by others with significance in an individual's life. Social support plays an important role in curbing burnout within university students. This is due to the attributed effects of social support towards burnout whereby high levels of social support correlates to low prevalence of burnout (Greenglass, Fiksenbaum & Burke, 1994). Several studies have also been carried out on the relationship between academic burnout and social support. For instance, Rana Kilic (2021) looked into academic burnout amongst medical students whilst Yusef Karimi (2014) focused on social support and academic burnout within students. Both these studies reported that high degree of social support resulted in lower tendency for the students to be affected by academic burnout. Henceforth, identifying the relationship between these variables including the aforementioned social support and academic burnout is essential in developing alternatives to improve students' overall university experience and at the same time improve the potential of succeeding in their education.

From the perspective of gender differences, it has been observed that female students were more affected by academic burnout compared to males (Kilic et al., 2021; Popa-Velea et al., 2017). This is also supported by the findings of Alqifari et al. (2021) and Sharad et al. (2021) whereby cases of academic burnout in females were reported at a higher frequency. Contrarily, Frajerman et al. (2019) and Janatolmakan et al. (2021) demonstrated no significant relationship and correlation between academic burnout with gender. A different finding was then published by Bikar et al. (2018) which highlighted greater occurrence of academic burnout among male students within a sample size of 362 students. Thus, this research hopes to address this gap in the context of students in the Faculty of Education, Universiti Malaya as well as to identify conditions for burnout with respect to gender.



In summary, the objectives of this research are as follows:

1. to identify differences in emotional intelligence between male and female students
2. to identify differences in social support between male and female students
3. to identify differences in manifestation of academic burnout between male and female students
4. to investigate the relationship between emotional intelligence and academic burnout amongst university students
5. to investigate the relationship between social support and academic burnout amongst university students

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

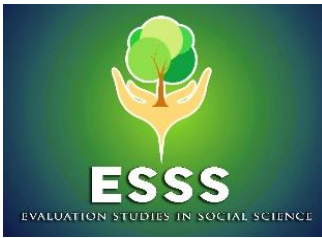
This research was conducted through a cross-sectional approach. A survey method was employed in which the instruments emotional intelligence test by Schutte et al (1998), Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS) and Burnout Inventory for University Student (BIUS) were utilized for data collection. This is in accordance with the observation by Zhang et al (2017) that the survey method is an appropriate choice to measure respondents' opinion on specific topics or issues, fulfillment of objectives as well as their personalities and attitudes. Through the online survey method design, researchers are able to collect data from a predetermined population sample within a set period of time (Evans et al., 2018). Finally, research samples were selected based on convenience sampling from students enrolled in the Bachelor programmes within the Faculty of Education, Universiti Malaya.

Research Location

The selected location, Universiti Malaya, is geographically situated within the capital of Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur. Urban universities typically have a higher population density and a more diverse student body, which can contribute to a wider range of academic and social pressures. These factors can intensify the experiences of stress and burnout among students. The diversity in academic backgrounds, social expectations, and personal objectives can create a complex environment where academic burnout can be explored in multiple dimensions (Bono et al., 2020).

Research Population and Sampling

At the time of the research, it was estimated that 600 students fit the criteria highlighted above (Universiti Malaya, 2022). Referring to the formula developed by Krejcie and Morgan (1970) to determine sample size, approximately 234 samples are needed to adequately represent a population of 600 students. Thus, the research employed a convenience sampling method for



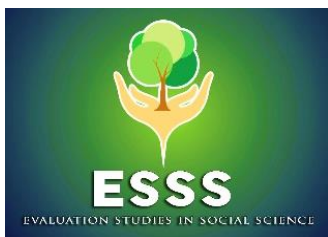
students enrolled in three programmes offered by the Faculty of Education namely Bachelor of Counseling, Bachelor of Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) and Bachelor of Early Childhood Education.

Research Instrument

For this research, the level of emotional intelligence, social support and academic burnout were measured using a questionnaire comprising four main sections namely A, B, C, and D which were designed based on the research objectives outlined. To measure students' emotional intelligence, the emotional intelligence test developed by Schutte et al. (1998) were adopted. Next, the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS) was utilized in measuring social support and finally, the Burnout Inventory for University Students (BIUS) was employed in assessing academic burnout.

Data Analysis

Analysis of the collected data was carried out using two statistical programmes namely JAMOVI and the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 23.0. This is due to the quantitative nature of the research. From the questionnaire, responses were collected, recorded, and digitalised for further analyses. The two software packages were utilized in tandem to verify the results of the analyses. Furthermore, their use, especially SPSS, have been proven in providing accurate analyses that are relatively error-free (Johnston, 2017).



RESULTS

A total of 257 Bachelor's Degree students enrolled in programs under the Faculty of Education of the University of Malaya participated in this study. Student demographic information can be categorized based on gender, age, family income category, race, program of study and year of study. Table 1 displays a breakdown of the frequency distribution according to the previously outlined categories. The gender distribution was heavily skewed towards women, who constituted 92.2% (237 respondents), with men representing only 7.8% (20 respondents). This disparity was attributed to difficulties in recruiting male participants. Age-wise, the respondents were predominantly 18 to 22 years old, making up 50.2% of the sample (129 respondents), while those aged 23 to 27 accounted for 49.4% (127 respondents), and a single respondent was over 28, contributing to 0.4%. The mean age was calculated at 1.50.

In terms of family income, 58.4% of the participants (150 respondents) fell into the B40 category, 28.8% (74 respondents) were in the M40 category, and 12.8% (33 respondents) belonged to the T20 category, with a mean family income category score of 1.54. Racial composition showed a majority of Malay respondents (81.3% or 209 people), followed by Chinese (8.2% or 21 people), Indians (4.7% or 12 people), and natives of Sabah and Sarawak (5.8% or 15 people).

The analysis of the program of study indicated that Early Childhood Education students were the majority (42.8% or 110 respondents), followed by those in the Counseling program (36.2% or 93 respondents), and Teaching English As Second Language (TESL) students (21% or 54 respondents). Year of study data showed that the third year had the highest representation at 33.9% (87 respondents), followed by the second year at 30% (77 respondents), the first year at 26.8% (69 respondents), and the fourth year at 9.3% (24 respondents), highlighting the distribution across different stages of their education.

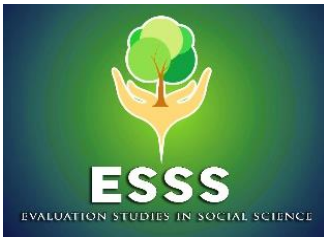


Table 1
Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (N = 257)

Demography	n	%	M	SD
Gender				
Male	20	7.8		
Female	237	92.2		
Age				
			1.5	0.51
18 – 22	129	50.2		
23 – 27	127	49.4		
> 28	1	0.4		
Family Income Category				
B40	150	58.4		
M40	74	28.8		
T20	33	12.8		
Race				
Malay	209	81.3		
Chinese	21	8.2		
Indian	12	4.7		
Natives of Sabah/Sarawak	15	5.8		

Program of Study

Counselling	93	36.2
Early Childhood Education	110	42.8
Teaching English as Second Language	54	21

Year of Study

Year 1	69	26.8
Year 2	77	30
Year 3	87	33.9
Year 4	24	9.3

Emotional Intelligence

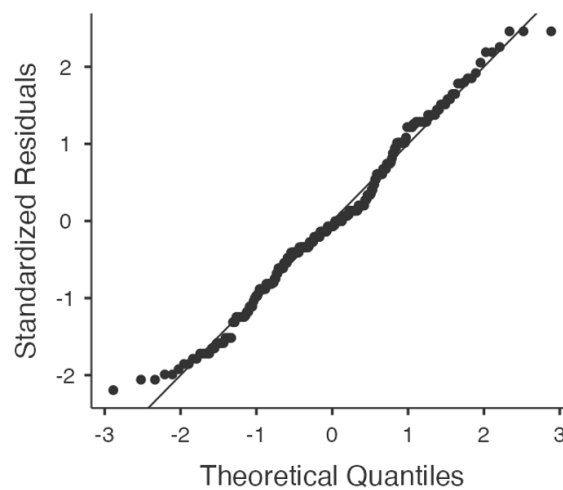


Figure 1

The Q-Q Plot for Total Emotional Intelligence Scores

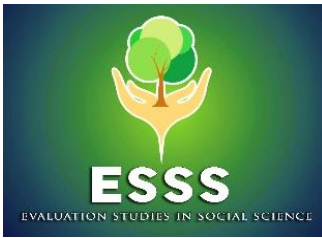


Figure 1 shows the Q-Q plot for total emotional intelligence scores. It shows that the points lie on a straight line. Thus, the data distribution is normal. Hence, the suitable test to be used in comparing emotional intelligence scores between males and females is t-test.

Table 2

Independent Sample T-test for Emotional Intelligence

	t	df	p	Mean Difference	SE difference	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower	Upper
Emotional intelligence	0.51	255	0.612	0.05	0.10	-0.15	0.26
		Gender	N	Mean	Median	SD	SE
Emotional intelligence		Male	20	3.96	3.94	0.36	0.08
		Female	237	3.91	3.88	0.45	0.03

Table 2 shows the independent sample t-test that was done to examine the difference in the level of emotional intelligence between male and female university students. The mean score of the level of emotional intelligence of male university students ($M = 3.96$, $SD = 0.36$) was slightly greater than the mean score of the level of emotional intelligence of female university students ($M = 3.91$, $SD = 0.45$) and the mean difference was (mean difference = 0.05, 95% CI: -0.15 to 0.26). The emotional intelligence scores of the two groups did not have different variances, Levene's ($1, 255$) = 1.75, $p > .001$. Therefore, the t-value for the difference in the level of emotional intelligence between male and female university students shows no significant difference, $t(255) = 0.51$, $p > .001$.

Table 3

Independent Sample T-test for Dimensions of Emotional Intelligence

Dimension	t	df	p
Self-awareness	0.13	255	0.895
Social skills	-0.49	255	0.623
Emotional management	0.50	255	0.619
Empathy	1.64	255	0.102

Based on Table 3, the results of the test show that there is no significant difference in the dimensions of emotional intelligence between male and female university students, namely from the dimensions of self-awareness ($t = 0.13, p > 0.05$), social skills ($t = -0.49, p > 0.05$), emotional management ($t = 0.50, p > 0.05$) and empathy ($t = 1.64, p > 0.05$).

Social Support

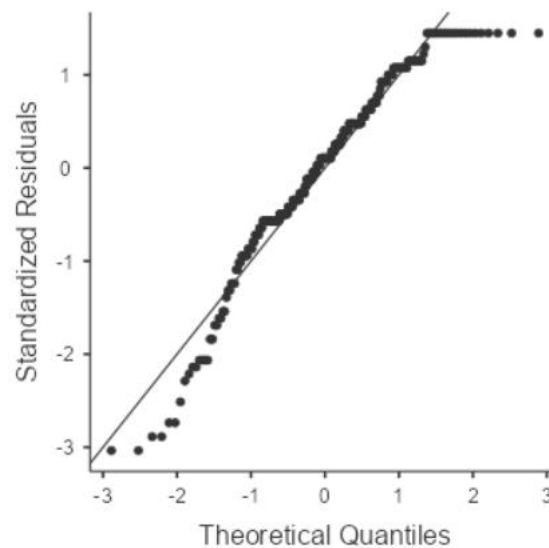


Figure 2

The Q-Q Plot for Total Social Support Scores

Figure 2 shows the Q-Q plot for total social support scores. It shows that the points are not on a straight line. Thus, the data distribution was not normal. Hence, the suitable test to be used in comparing social support scores between males and females is Mann-Whitney U test.

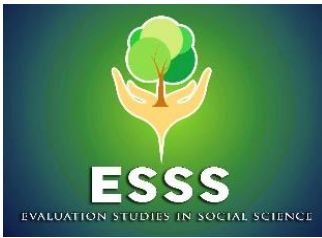


Table 4

Mann-Whitney U Test for Social Support Scores

	Statistic	<i>p</i>
Social support	2151	0.492

Table 4 shows the results for the Mann-Whitney U test that was conducted to determine whether there is a difference in social support scores between males and females. It indicates that there was no significant difference between groups, ($U = 2151$, $p = 0.492$).

Table 5

Mann-Whitney U Test for Dimensions of Social Support

Social Support Dimension	t	<i>p</i>
Family	2286	0.792
Friends	2039	0.298
Significant others	2053	0.318

Table 5 shows the results for the Mann-Whitney U test that was conducted for every dimension of social support between males and females. For dimension of family, it indicates that there was no significant difference between groups ($U = 2286$, $p = 0.792$). For dimension of friend, there was no significant difference between groups ($U = 2039$, $p = 0.298$). For dimension of significant others, there was also no significant difference between groups ($U = 2053$, $p = 0.318$).

Academic Burnout

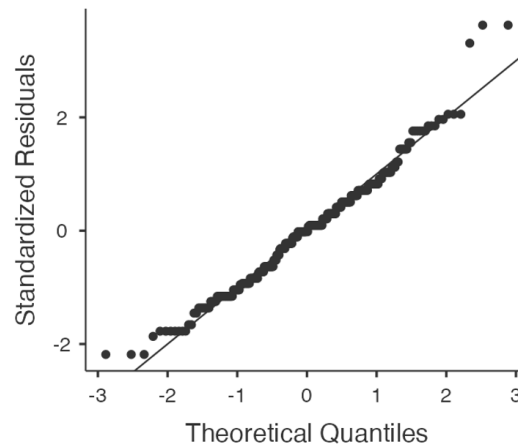


Figure 3

The Q-Q Plot for Total Academic Burnout Scores

Figure 3 shows the Q-Q plot for total academic burnout scores. It shows that the points lie on a straight line. Thus, the data distribution was normal. Hence, the suitable test to be used in comparing academic burnout scores between males and females is t-test.

Table 6

Independent Sample T-test for Academic Burnout

	Statistic	df	p	Mean difference	SE difference	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower	Upper
Academic burnout	-0.40	255	0.691	-0.04	0.10	-0.24	0.16
	Gender	N	Mean	Median	SD	SE	
Academic burnout	Male	20	1.92	1.91	0.38	0.08	
	Female	237	1.96	1.95	0.44	0.03	

Table 6 shows the independent sample t-test that was done to examine the difference in the level of academic burnout between male and female university students. The mean score of academic burnout of male university students ($M = 1.92$, $SD = 0.38$) was slightly smaller than the mean score of academic burnout of female university students ($M = 1.96$, $SD = 0.44$) and the mean difference was (mean difference = 0.04 , 95% CI: -0.24 to 0.16). The scores of the level of academic burnout for the two groups did not have different variances, Levene's ($1, 255$) = 0.59 , $p > .001$. Therefore, the t-value for the difference in the level of academic burnout between male and female university students shows no significant difference, $t(255) = -0.40$, $p > .001$.

Table 7

Independent Sample T-test for Dimensions of Emotional Intelligence

Emotional Intelligence Dimension	Statistic	df	<i>p</i>
Emotional exhaustion	-0.76	255	0.448
Depersonalization	0.84	255	0.402
Performance reduction	-0.75	255	0.456

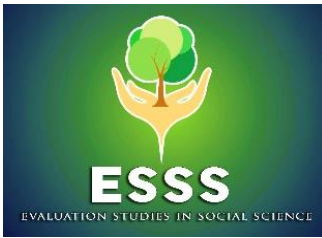
Based on table 7, the findings of the t-test show that there was no significant difference in the dimensions of academic burnout between male and female university students, namely from the dimensions of emotional exhaustion ($t = -0.76$, $p > 0.05$), depersonalization ($t = 0.84$, $p > 0.05$) and performance reduction ($t = -0.75$, $p > 0.05$).

Relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Academic Burnout

Table 8

Pearson's correlation between emotional intelligence and academic burnout

		Academic Burnout
Emotional Intelligence	Pearson's r	-0.44
	<i>p</i> -value	<.001



Based on Table 8, it was found that there was a significant moderate negative relationship between the level of emotional intelligence and academic burnout, $r = -0.44$, $n = 257$, $p < .001$ (Cohen, 1988). Therefore, the results of the study show that the higher the level of emotional intelligence, the less the level of academic burnout of university students. Based on the r value, emotional intelligence explains 19.54% of the variance of the respondent's score in the academic burnout instrument.

Relationship between Social Support and Academic Burnout

Table 9

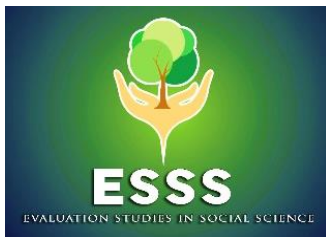
Spearman's correlation between social support and academic burnout

		Academic Burnout
Social Support	Spearman's Rho	-0.32
	p -value	<.001

Based on table 9, it was found that there was a significant moderate negative relationship between the level of social support and academic burnout, $\rho = -0.32$, $p = < .001$. Therefore, the results of the study show that the higher the level of social support, the less the level of academic burnout among university students.

DISCUSSION

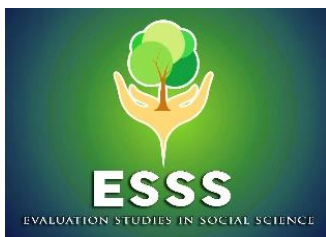
The first objective of this study was to identify differences in emotional intelligence between male and female students. The findings of this study show that there was no significant difference between male and female university students in terms of emotional intelligence. The results of the same analysis also show that the four dimensions of emotional intelligence which are self-awareness, social skills, emotional management and empathy do not show significant differences between male and female university students. A previous study by Abe et al., (2018) has found findings that are consistent with this study where the researcher stated that there was no significant relationship between emotional intelligence and gender. This study, which consisted of 357 first-year medical student respondents, reported that gender differences did not contribute to emotional intelligence or empathy. Researchers report that personality is



the most important factor in influencing emotional intelligence rather than gender. Next, a study by Erbil et al., (2016) also found a consistent finding that there was no significant difference for emotional intelligence and gender. The results of their level of emotional intelligence are high and cannot be distinguished in the context of gender as in this study. Additionally, the findings of this study also support a previous study conducted by Meshkat et al (2017) which shows that there was no significant difference in the overall amount of emotional intelligence context. However, gender findings tend to be different when it comes to aspects of self-awareness, interpersonal relationships, self-esteem and empathy where women exhibit higher findings than men.

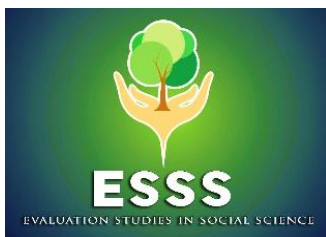
In addition, there were also studies that have different results from this study. For example, studies by Fakaruddin & Tharbe, (2018) and Musa et al., (2021) state that female university students exhibit higher emotional intelligence than male university students. This dominance can be seen through the scores of female students who stand out in all aspects of emotional intelligence. In addition, the researcher also stated that the superiority of female students in emotional intelligence may be related to the instinctive nature of being a woman which was usually great in sensing, evaluating and controlling emotions. In addition, girls also tend to be more emotionally intelligent because their education was biased towards feelings and emotions, while boys learn to lessen certain emotions such as guilt, sadness and fear. This was closely related to the cultural approach practiced by most global societies. However, it was different to the findings by Ali et al., (2021) which revealed that males show higher emotional intelligence than females. Male students were also seen to be smarter in terms of self-emotional control and awareness than females. Similarly, a study by Ahmed et al., (2019) stated that men were higher in well-being and self-control. However, for emotionality, generally women were judged to be more emotional beings.

The second objective for this study was to identify differences in social support between male and female students. The findings of this study show that there was no significant difference in social support between male and female university students. The results of the same analysis also show that the three dimensions of emotional intelligence which are family, friends and significant others do not show significant differences between male and female university students. Although studies related to social support and gender have been widespread, the researcher could not find previous studies that have the same findings as this study. Most of the studies found that there were gender differences in the level of social support among students. For example, a study conducted by Kneavel., (2015) found that women have larger social support networks and receive larger quality of social support compared to men. A study from Carolina et al., (2015) also reported the same finding where females receive more support than males and have tendencies to demand and provide support. According to the researchers, this is because female students have more adjustment-related issues than male students, or because they are more likely to display psychological discomfort and have more trouble making friends on campus, thus they may show a greater need for help. Another reason is that men typically think getting help is inappropriate, but women are more likely to see it as a way to cope.



The next objective was to identify differences in manifestation of academic burnout between male and female students. The findings of the study show that there was no significant difference between the level of academic burnout based on gender. Based on the three dimensions of academic burnout, namely emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and performance reduction, there was no significant difference between male and female university students. This finding is supported by a previous study conducted by Daud N et al., (2021) who found that there was no significant difference between burnout with male and female gender. This is supported by a study from Ogbueghu et al., (2019) who also found no significant relationship between burnout and gender among 550 respondents from university students taking Economic Education courses in North-Eastern Nigeria. Janatolmakan et al., (2021) also found the same for university students where there was no significant difference between the rate of academic burnout and gender for nursing and midwifery course students. Researchers believe that students regardless of whether they are male or female should have high resilience in the face of pressure in order to avoid emotional stress and academic lethargy. This is to prepare themselves with nursing knowledge when stepping into the real world of work. However, there were also studies that have different findings from this study. For example, a study conducted by Kafle et al., (2021) among medical students in Nepal. The following study found that 50% of female respondents experienced mental health and disability compared to male respondents. A study by Kilic et al., (2021) also found similar findings in which female students showed higher burnout than males through 342 medical student respondents. This may be due to the psychological burden felt by women is higher than men such as emotional stress (Redondo-Flórez et al., 2020). In addition, by instinct, female students will tend to identify negative events that occur in their lives and be more emotional than males (Popa-Velea et al., 2017). Different from that, a study by Khosravi., (2021) reported that the level of fatigue of male students was higher than female students as a result of 417 medical student respondents. This was supported by the study of Bikar et al., (2018), where the rate of academic burnout of male students was higher than female students. This may be due to the fact that male students think more about job opportunities and the probability of being unemployed after graduation and at the same time affect their level of burnout.

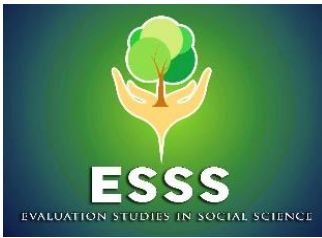
The fourth objective of this study was to investigate the relationship between emotional intelligence and academic burnout amongst university students. The findings of the study based on table 8 show that emotional intelligence has a significant moderate negative relationship with academic burnout which means the higher the level of emotional intelligence, the less the level of academic burnout of university students. There were also previous studies that have findings that are consistent with this study. For example, findings from Cazan & Năstasă, (2015) state that emotional intelligence plays an important role in helping students face stressful situations in order to reach a high level of satisfaction in life. From there, university students were in need of emotional resources to avoid exhaustion. The results of this study were aligned with previous research in which emotional intelligence predicts the dimensions of academic burnout and life satisfaction which form a significant negative relationship. Next, based on a study by Beierle et al., (2019) involving 86 medical trainees, stated that emotional intelligence has an effect on burnout where it forms an inverse relationship. The researcher also



thinks that the element of emotional intelligence is something that is valuable to be implemented in the curriculum which has the potential to reduce the level of burnout. Treat et al., (2021) also found a proven negative correlation between emotional intelligence and academic burnout ($p < 0.05$). It can be said that different aspects of emotional intelligence can reduce student burnout.

Not only that, a study by Sadoughi et al., (2017) also found that there was a significant negative relationship between academic burnout and resilience ($r = -.24$, $p < .01$), fatigue and hope ($r = .38$, $P < .01$) as well as fatigue and emotional intelligence ($r = -.21$, $p < .01$). Researchers report that elements of emotional intelligence can improve students to interact better with their environment and at the same time lead to academic satisfaction and avoid burnout. In addition, Testa & Sangganjavanich, (2016) also stated that a higher score for mindfulness and emotional intelligence was related to a lower burnout score. Saeed & Ahmad, (2017) also found that the level of academic burnout was strongly associated with emotional intelligence among undergraduates. This was due to emotional intelligence being able to help lower cynicism, emotional exhaustion and reduced performance as well as increase dedication. However, through searching the findings of previous studies, the researcher did not find findings that were different from this study. Therefore, it can be concluded that most previous studies found that emotional intelligence has a significant negative relationship with burnout in the context of university students. This reinforces the importance that the element of emotional intelligence was applied in the structure of the students' education so that the mental health of the students is more guaranteed.

Based on the final objective, this study was aimed to determine the relationship between social support and academic burnout among university students. The findings of this study based on table 9 show that social support has a significant moderate negative relationship with academic burnout which means the higher the level of social support, the less the level of academic burnout of university students. The findings of this study are supported by a study from Kilic et al., (2021). The results of their study found that social support was a significant predictor and identified as a protective factor for academic burnout. A study from Yuqiao Ye et al., (2021) also reported the same findings that social support has a negative relationship with academic burnout. According to the researchers, this may be due to students who receive more support will feel more satisfied with their lives, and it is likely causing the students to face less academic burnout. Parallel with the buffer-effect model (Cohen & Wills, 1985), the findings of this study suggest that natural optimism in life can be created when social support is increased, and this inherent optimism acts as a protector to avoid an individual from experiencing academic burnout. However, no findings that were different from this study were found. In summary, many studies agree that social support plays a crucial role in reducing burnout among university students. This means that having a good support system, from friends, family, or significant others, can significantly lessen the feelings of burnout. It highlights the importance for students, especially those in university, to recognize the value of social support and actively seek it as a key strategy to minimize the chances of experiencing academic burnout.

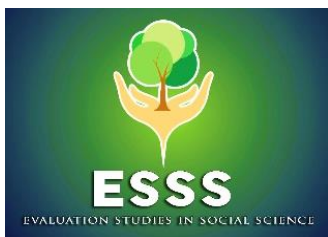


The researcher suggests future studies on emotional intelligence, social support, and academic burnout to include a broader population beyond a single faculty to enhance the comprehensiveness and generalizability of the results. The current study's limitations, such as the skewed gender ratio among the 257 participants from the Faculty of Education in a Malaysian university, could be addressed by employing stratified random sampling to better reflect the actual male-to-female student distribution. Additionally, expanding the research to include more faculties and universities is recommended to achieve more comprehensive findings. Implementing preliminary surveys to identify programs with balanced male and female student numbers could further improve gender representation in the research data.

To overcome the challenge of recruiting sufficient respondents, future researchers are advised to use incentives, such as offering vouchers to participants who complete the questionnaire. This approach could motivate potential respondents and ensure more accurate responses. Beyond gender, incorporating variables like socioeconomic status, learning environment, and age could enrich the study's depth. Utilizing qualitative research methods, including structured interviews, was proposed to gather more detailed information, supporting the quantitative findings and contributing to a well-rounded study. These recommendations aim to refine future research in this field, offering valuable insights for universities, parents, and researchers, and encouraging further investigation to benefit the community at large.

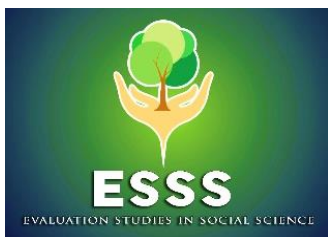
CONCLUSION

Overall, this study has achieved all the research objectives that have been stated. The results of this study can be seen mostly in line with previous studies. Findings from this study show that there was no significant difference in emotional intelligence between male and female university students. The same findings were also obtained for the aspects of social support and academic burnout where there was no significant difference between male and female university students. Next, for the aspect of the relationship between emotional intelligence and academic burnout, there was a significant moderate negative relationship. The relationship between social support and academic burnout also obtained similar results. These findings not only reinforce the importance of fostering emotional intelligence and social support systems in educational settings but also pave the way for future research to explore effective interventions that can enhance student well-being and academic success.

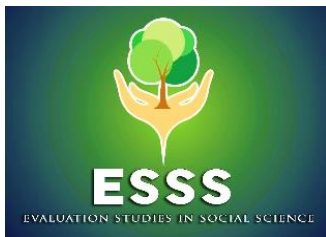


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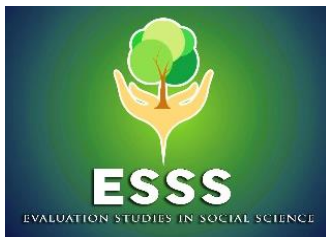
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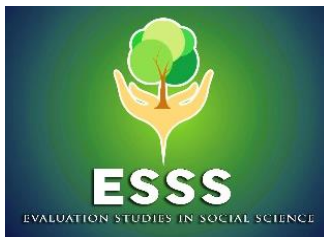
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