

# Burnout and School Performance: A Study among Students in The Region of Béni Mellal (Morocco)

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**Abstract:** To maintain a good school performance, students must generally make sustained efforts over a long period of time considering frequency of evaluations. Thus, their desire to maintain or achieve good grades can lead them to stressful situations. This study aims at assessing the level of the school burnout and its relationship with the students' school performance in the Moroccan region of Béni-Mellal. To do this, a total of 400 students (54% girls and 46% boys); at different grade levels and branches; were invited to complete questionnaires on a voluntary basis and anonymity: a Burnout Inventory questionnaire (School Burnout Inventory) adapted to the school environment, a school performance record and a listing of clinical information. As a result, the findings are twofold: First, the prevalence of school burnout is High by taking into account the mean of burnout scores (3,8 for exhaustion at school, 3,2 for Cynism and 3,6 for inadequacy at school) and by taking account the level of exhaustion (40% Heavily exhausted). Second, the burnout leads to a reduction in the students' school performance, and the later, in its turn, can influence the feeling of school burnout. Third, school burnout varies by gender, so girls are at higher risk than boys. In this respect, it is hoped that further studies should be conducted so as to explore other factors that may have an impact on school performance, such as the parents' educational level or the students' reduplication.

**Index Terms:** School Burnout, school Burnout Inventory, School performance.

## I. INTRODUCTION

School is the everyday life of students and it's largely in, and from this space, that they will build their future, will affirm their personality, will grow and empower themselves.

Although we recognize the importance of several factors contribute to school success, progress remains to be made, especially regarding mental health status and its impact on this success.

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It is recognized that good mental health has a major influence on psychological and physical well being of the student, and that it can influence positively or negatively attention, absenteeism, vigilance and learning [1].

In this context, this study focuses on school burnout and its relationship with the students' school performance. Indeed the burnout as a concept was first introduced in the world of factories and companies. That is, only workers and employees can be subject to this disorder. Yet, it becomes clear that it can be also relevant in the field of education, given the similarities between the two contexts [2], [3], [4]. As a matter of fact, just like workers, students are asked to make efforts once at school. That is the students' 'job' doesn't differ a lot from that of any worker. They usually join classes, do different tasks in several school subjects and often sit for exams. Moreover, they are committed to do their tasks on a daily basis for long hours respecting predetermined deadlines. However, their job doesn't always end at school, they usually have much homework to do mainly when it comes to some school levels. It is actually a kind of engagement which is psychologically demanding [5], [2]. As a result, the school burnout seems like a reaction to everyday's difficulties students should bear to go beyond whatever feelings of pression. Such being the case, once at school, students may be subject to a chronic stress due to their commitment to perform well. This also may be traced back to their inability to fulfill their dreams, reach the goals they fixed themselves or satisfy their parents [6]. The school burnout stands for a stress chronic syndrom related to school, it is characterized by the following:

-Emotional exhaustion because of school requirements associated with a chronic fatigue related to overloaded school programs.

-A feeling of cynism towards school manifested for instance in students' lack of interest and their inability to give sense to their job.

-A feeling of inadequacy, when it comes to students, which is a kind of lack of performance which exceeds schooling to school in general [6].

He or she may feel inefficient in his or her role as a learner [7], [8]. According to the studies conducted in different countries, between 7 and 15 percent of teenagers suffer from a severe burnout level [9] [10] [11]. Moreover, a number of the burnout disorder risk factors have been identified. For instance, several studies show that the burnouts' severity differs when it comes to the gender (girls are more affected than boys) [12], [13]. The students' level as well as the types of studies are important factors

(teenagers in their last year of school and those preparing to go to the university are more at risk). Students longing for best school achievement and performance show higher level of burnout than slow learners [14]. Studies support that the school exhaustion can bring students to higher level of absenteeism, low motivation to do school tasks, reduced school performance and high percentage of dropping out [5], [15].

**II. METHODOLOGY**

*A-Participants*

This study was conducted among 400 high school students were randomly selected, aged between 15 and 21 years, belonging to public educational institutions, divided between an urban area and a rural area. Most of participants with a moderate school performance (Table1).

*B-Measures*

-A form for collecting sociological variables such as age, gender and attended school class.

-A grid of students' school performance obtained from their booklets.

-School burnout was measured using the School Burnout Inventory (SBI) [2], [16]. The SBI consists of 9 items measuring three first-order factors of school burnout: (a) exhaustion at school (four items), (b) cynicism toward the meaning of school (three items), and (c) sense of inadequacy at school (two items). All the items were rated on a 6-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*completely disagree*) to 6 (*strongly agree*).

*C-Procedure*

A collaboration agreement was established with the delegation of Education of Beni Mellal in order to allow us to conduct a questionnaire survey of six institutions of public teachings. Participants were asked to complete a paper version of the questionnaires after the objectives of the study were presented and students were informed of the voluntary and anonymous character of their participation. The questionnaires were completed by students in the classroom in their free time for a period of two hours. We did a data collection and analysis with the software SPSS-22.0 (Statistical Package for the Social sciences).

**III. RESULTS**

*A-General characteristics of the respondents (Table1)*

**Table 1 : General characteristics of the respondents (N=400)**

Variable	Definition	Frequency	Valid Percent
Gender	F	216	54
	M	184	46
School class	common core	178	44,5
	first year of the Bachelor	138	34,5
	second year of the Bachelor	84	21
School Performance	Low	24	5
	Moderate	241	72
	High	72	22,5
Age	15	80	20,0
	16	110	27,5
	17	96	24,0
	18	60	15,0
	19	38	9,5

*B-Prevalence of school Burnout :*

Based on a mean of school burnout scores, 3.8 is estimated for emotional exhaustion as a mean scores, 3.2 for cynism and 3.6 for the sense of inadequacy at school. The mean of Burnout total score is 3.6. (Table2).

**Table 2 : Mean of school Burnout scores**

School Burnout	exhaustion at school	Cynism	inadequacy at school	Total Burnout
Mean	3,8	3,2	3,6	3,6

Referring to the level of exhaustion (not exhausted, moderately exhausted « score>30 », and heavily exhausted « score>34 »), the results show a high

percentage of exhausted students (60.5%), 40% of whom are heavily exhausted (Table3).

**Table 3 :Prevalence of school burnout**

Level of exhaustion	Frequency	%
Normal	158	39,5
Moderately exhausted	82	20,5
Heavily exhausted	160	40,0
Total	400	100,0

C-School Burnout and school performance : (Table4)

Regarding the influence of school burnout on students' academic performance, the results show a significant relationship between the two ( $F=4,375$  ;  $p=0,013$ ). The

post hoc test shows that there is a significant difference between low and high performance students in terms of the mean of school burnout score (35,70) and (30,84) respectively ( $p=0,018$ ).

*Table 4 :Comparison of school burnout means based on school performance.*

Indicator	Academic performance	N	Mean	SD	Erreur standard	Df	F	p.
School Burnout	Low level	20	35,70	8,838	1,976	397	4,375	0,013
	Average level	288	32,65	7,337	,432			
	High level	90	30,84	6,324	,667			

C-School Burnout by gender : (Table 5)

Table 5 shows that the mean score of school burnout among girls (34,16) is higher than that of boys (30,43). The difference is significant ( $p<0,05$ ) and as a result, girls are more exhausted than boys.

*Table 5 : Independent t-test showing gender difference in the level of school Burnout*

Indicator	Gender	N	Mean	SD	standard error	t	Df	p
School Burnout	Female	216	34,16	6,566	0,447	5,21	365,10	0,000
	Male	184	30,43	7,569	0,558			

#### IV.DISCUSSION

The results obtained in this study show that the prevalence of school burnout is high. The mean score of school burnout (3.6) is higher than that of Finland's students (2,41) [17]. Considering the level of exhaustion, 29% of French students are exhausted while our students are much more exhausted [18]. And taking into account the highly exhausted students, against 10 to 15% for Finland's students, our study revealed a higher percentage which is 40%. These differences place the Moroccan education system in comparison with others, , in fact, these systems are more developed and so the students do not feel stressed and get the resources to cope with burnout.

Therefore, these results show that the participants feel extreme fatigue due to school workload and feel depleted of their physical and emotional resources which makes this emotional exhaustion a regulation strategy to distance oneself emotionally and physically of the workload [3] [19]. Indeed, in a school context, students continually have work to do, precise timetables and a lot of study hours. They also have a lot of study and work outside class hours and this is one reason why they continually feel being mentally challenged [2], [5]. To

this must be added the specificities of the Moroccan educational system. Indeed, the stakeholders of the Moroccan school sector continually report that the school curricula and pedagogical approaches used are inappropriate and make the student work excessively. Therefore, the student feels a school overload and hence a chronic fatigue towards school work. The students show a loss of interest and an inability to find meaning in the school work, which results in the student's indifferent and disengaged attitude towards his project work. This student's weakening commitment to school work reduces, in the long run, the energy available to perform well at work and be effective in solving problems [20]. Emotional exhaustion and disengagement from school work are strongly connected. In fact, students tend to use indifference when they are exhausted and discouraged [3], [19]. This leads students to follow instructions of school work without showing initiative and emotional involvement. They can even do it ironically and have cynical thoughts. The participants experience a feeling of inadequacy as students. Perception of effectiveness refers to the feeling of competence, accomplishment and productivity. It is a kind of answer to the presence of one or two other dimensions. Indeed, it is difficult to feel competent when you have a feeling of intense exhaustion. In the same way, the student who is

disengaged from his school work may find it difficult to be engaged and to experience a sense of effectiveness.

Our study has shown that students having a high level of burnout tend to have a lower academic performance, which is consistent with the studies that argue that school burnout may lead to higher absenteeism, low motivation for school work, a reduction in performance and a high dropout rate [5],[15].

Since the student gradually withdraws from his studies, he is more likely to experience failures and dissatisfactions in his academic performance. He can feel incompetent in his role as a student (feeling of inefficiency) [7], [8].

Drawing upon students who experience extreme burnout, our study has shown that girls are more affected than boys, which is consistent with other studies that show that school burnout severity varies according to gender (girls are at higher risk than boys). Indeed, girls are more emotionally sensitive and fragile than boys [12], [13].

### CONCLUSION

The results of this study show that students in the Beni Mellal region suffer from school burnout, and girls are more at risk than boys. On the other hand, there is significant influence of school burnout on school performance, which will alter the school life of these students. Following the results obtained, various factors could be developed to continue the work initiated in this study, like the parents' educational level or the students' reduplication as factors that may have an impact on school performance.

Mental health is largely absent from the priorities of education system in Morocco, and that will desicion making, funds , training sessions, professional perfection as well as coordination and collaboration between the sectors of education, health.... to achieve the emotional well-being of students and improve their ability to study.

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