

Investigating the role of online - exams on university students' psychological burnout

¹Yousef Thyab Awad, ²Mazouz Jabber Alawneh

¹Vice President of Al-Quds Open University for Social Responsibility

²Academic Vice President of Al-Quds Open University, Nablus Branch

Abstract

This study aimed to investigate the role of online - exams on university students' psychological burnout. The sample of the study consisted of (364) university students (17.13%) chosen randomly from a total population of (6,236). To achieve the study objectives, a 35- item questionnaire was used to cover three domains: emotional stress, emotional insensitivity, and lack of sense of accomplishment. Validity and reliability of the questionnaire were both measured and scored acceptable value. The results of the study showed that the level of psychological burnout among the students ranged between medium and high. Medium. All items, except for three items, scored medium. Significant differences were also found due to gender in favor of the females, differences due to age in favor of 20 years age and due to school level in favor of the second-year level. Mean while, the results showed no statistically significant differences due to the faculty variable and the interaction between gender and age variables, faculty and school level. The results also showed that the domain of emotional stress explained 92% of the variation, while the domain of emotional insensitivity explained 5.4% of the variation, and lack of sense of accomplishment explained 2.6% of the variation. The researchers recommended providing promotive programs to strengthen students' endurance and their psychological toughness, especially the females and the oldest age, in addition to conducting comparative studies between students of open education and traditional education.

Keywords: Psychological burnout ,online exams, Al-Quds Open University.

INTRODUCTION

A major feature of the recent era is the rapid advancement of technology, which tends to pose several types of challenges and problems that affect people's life to the extent that they suffer from psychological disorders and diseases. What characterizes this era is that education has become one of the first priorities of communities all over the world. Such priority necessitates some measures to help the 21st learners face the expected challenges and ensure that they live their normal life with a strong motivation and psychological comfort (Awad, 2010 (.

Recent psychological studies show a tendency to focus on the mental health of teaching staff, as burnout has been gaining widespread attention among workers in the field of education, as well as students, especially in recent years (Haraki, 2009, p. 88). However, the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic has affected all spheres of life all over the world which forced the countries to take several measures to face this worldwide crisis. Education, in particular, has been greatly affected by this pandemic when schools and universities were closed and physical spacing was one choice to prevent the horrible spread of the pandemic. During the past two

years, all life activities around the world have gone through difficult conditions which are considered the most dangerous and the worst in history. As a result, billions of people were subjected to quarantine, while markets, airports and transportation were all disrupted.

With reference to the causes of psychological burnout, it might be argued that the search for the causes of psychological burnout is not very different from the search for the causes of work pressure, based on the similarity of circumstances and the background in which they both grow. The individual who suffers from psychological burnout is attributed to his suffering from psychological pressures resulting from harsh conditions (Awad, 2010).

During the COVID-19 pandemic, it was necessary to adopt e-learning due to the difficulty of holding face-to-face meetings as a measure to ensure the continuity of education on one hand, and to compensate for the educational loss, on the other hand. Nevertheless, e-learning is not without problems and challenges, including lack of appropriate educational environment and lack of appropriate training required to employ such form of teaching and learning. Thus, different psychological feelings are expected to exist in such non-traditional system of education. These feelings will be worse when the target students find themselves sitting for online- exams to be critically evaluated while they struggle to get high marks under the ongoing conditions, when the internet connection is disrupted within difficult realities. Such conditions and others tend to cause psychological pressures on the learners with apparent disturbing psychological signs.

Under emergency situations that occur without sufficient preparedness, individuals are subject to the feelings of low achievement and lack of energy, while others might feel unimportant which causes some sort of psychological burnout. In this regard, psychological burnout refers to a state of physical and emotional exhaustion caused by the many demands of work, such as caring for others and other stress-related responsibilities or obligations. This phenomenon makes

individuals indifferent to their work or even to the individuals who serve them. This phenomenon may also lead to some physical problems including headache, stomachache, sleep problems, and increased blood pressure. These symptoms are not attributed to work fatigue, but to the individual's inability to secure a balance between work requirements and other life activities (Khamisa, 2018)

The phenomenon of psychological burnout with its symptoms and consequences that affect the whole educational sector has attracted the interest of recent research, as the workers in the field of psychological counselling, educational management, psychiatry and special education as it negatively affects the behaviours, actions and performance of the person who suffers from burnout (Al-Kharasha, Arabiyat, 2005).

E-learning has recently left an apparent impact on the three pillars of education; namely, the instructor, the curriculum and the student. With reference to the the instructor, the traditional role of this instructor has greatly changed as a result of the new technologies that created a clear shift in his/ her activities and responsibilities. Besides the student was also affected by the new reality especially in relation to the electronic exams which are prepared in a different format as a result of the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, This different format creates a feeling of non-productivity among the students since the format is not expected to suit all teaching materials and subjects. Such shortcoming might be due to the nature and criteria of online exams.

Burnout is defined by Ratib (1997) as a state of exhaustion on the physical and mental level leading to a negative self-perception of a person, negative attitudes towards work, life, people, and others, as well as lack of idealism and having a feeling of anger. Margaret Loyed (in Al-Rashidi, 2019) asserts that individuals are exposed to many situations and events that cause psychological, physical or behavioural pressures including exams anxiety, quarrels, financial crises, and other stressful situations that result in negative or even

positive results, depending on the type and nature of individual's exposure.

Results of research in the field of psychology have almost revealed a relationship between psychological stress and unfavorable effects including disorder of the individual's perception, lack of clarity of self- concept, memory weakness, dispersion, the possibility of having mental and physical illness, and the frequency of severe pressures that leads the individual to anger, fear, sadness , as well as a sense of shame and jealousy (Al-Jubouri; Hafiz, 2017)

Furthermore, the phenomenon of psychological burnout has attracted the interest of psychological researchers due to the negative effects of such phenomenon that leads to poor compatibility, when workers are exposed to certain circumstances that they cannot control, which prevent them from playing their role effectively. Such cases create a kind of disability or helplessness to perform their tasks as required which may lead to a state of exhaustion at the emotional and psychological level (Khamaisa, 2018)

For students, burnout may occur when students have fewer resources and materials to cope with the requirements of the academic environment. Besides, the student's personality has an effect on burnout such as the possibility of suffering from neuroticism which means that the academic demands and life demands may add more pressures to the students' life which tend to create psychological burnout.

Psychological burnout has negative effects on students' academic performance and their psychosocial and social development. This phenomenon is known in the educational community and can be seen in students' unwillingness to participate in the learning activities, in their cognitive and emotional exhaustion caused by excessive educational demands such as academic burden including writing research, sitting for exams and attending lectures. Such requirements and others lead to skipping lectures, demotivation, academic procrastination and even to high dropout rates (Al-Shahry, 2020). In this regard,

the person who suffers from psychological burnout usually reveals some symptoms such as fatigue, stress, sleep problems, conflict, pessimism, impatience , frustration and a negative outlook towards students and the profession alike(Al-Qaryouti and Al-Khatib, 2006).

Some studies carried out in various professional jobs such as teaching, medicine and other social professions revealed a state of emotional, physical and muscular exhaustion occurring as a result of the excessive requirements imposed due to the nature and requirements of these professions (Haraki, 2009).

With regard to the many theories which have tried to explain the phenomenon of psychological burnout, behaviorisms states that this kind of burnout is attributed to some environmental factors that highlight the importance of modifying behavior to ensure better performance and productivity. On the other hand, the cognitive theory postulates the existence of internal factors that determine human behavior, thus, if a person's perception of a situation is negative, he or she has symptoms of psychological burnout. The psychoanalysis theory claims that the conflict between the components of the id , the ego and the superego causes psychological burnout (Talhi, 2019).

In the light of the aforementioned introduction and the spread of the the COVID-19 pandemic with its negative impact on the educational process in general and university students, in particular, the current study aims to address the degree of burnout resulting from online exams which were one possible solution during the exceptional circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Statement of the problem

E-learning is a contemporary approach that aims to save time and efforts while investing in modern technologies as a means to ensure quality of education. However, there has been some kind of variation between universities and countries with reference to e-learning adoption. As a result of the spread of the COVID-19

pandemic, the emergency conditions forced all educational institutions around the world to opt for remote education using electronic assessments and exams because of the closure of educational institutions. Universities, as a measure to prevent the spread of the pandemic, were forced to suspend all forms of face-to-face education including the exams which were decided to be online. This decision caused some strange attitudes and produced a special type of exam anxiety. Such anxiety resulted from different factors including the nature of the online exams which were based on multiple-choice answers, weakness of the infrastructure of the internet due to the large number of users, which all in all created psychological burnout among university students who were obliged to sit for such exams. In light of this situation, the problem of the study can be identified in answering the following questions:

1. What is the level of psychological burnout resulting from the online-exams among the students of Al-Quds Open University?
2. Are there statistically significant differences at ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) between the average responses of the study sample regarding the level of psychological burnout due to gender, age variables and the interaction between these variables?
3. Are there statistically significant differences at ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) between the average responses of the study sample regarding the level of psychological burnout due to the level of study, faculty and the interaction between these two variables?
4. Are there statistically significant differences at ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) in terms of the impact of emotional stress, emotional insensitivity, and lack of sense of accomplishment on the level of psychological burnout resulting from online exams among students of Al-Quds Open University?

Objectives of the study

The current study aimed to :

1. Identify the level of psychological burnout resulting from online-exams among students of Al-Quds Open University.
2. Identify the role of gender, age and interactions between them in the level of psychological burnout resulting from the online-exams at Al-Quds Open University.
3. Identify the role of academic level, faculty and interactions between them in the level of psychological burnout resulting from online-exams at Al-Quds Open University.
4. Identify the extent to which the domains of emotional stress, emotional insensitivity, and lack of sense of accomplishment are affected by the level of psychological burnout resulting from the conduct of online exams among students of Al-Quds Open University.

Significance of the study

The significance of this study comes from the importance of psychological burnout and the negative effects it might have on students' performance as a result of using online exams. Furthermore, the significance can be seen in the scarcity of previous studies that dealt with the issue of psychological burnout during the COVID-19 pandemic although there are some previous studies in the Arab World and in the west that examined this phenomenon but mostly focused on the impact of psychological burnout on students in general.

The significance of this study also lies in providing more interest in the psychological burnout caused by online exams among specific groups of students at Al-Quds Open during the spread of COVID-19 pandemic.

Limitations of the study

This study is limited to all students of Al Quds Open University except for the students of Faculty of Media because this specialization is somewhat new at QOU. The study is also limited to the first semester of the academic year 2020/2021.

Terminology

Psychological burnout : one's response to the psychological tension caused by the environment in which the student lives and consists of three dimensions: emotional stress, emotional insensitivity, and lack of sense of accomplishment. (Maslach, Jackson, Lieter, 1996).

Maslach (1977) defines burnout as a psychological condition characterized by a range of negative qualities such as stress, psychological instability and a tendency to isolation, as well as negative attitudes towards work and colleagues.

Psychological burnout is thus a reflection or a reaction to unlikely working conditions, with several effects, such as a low sense of responsibility, depletion of psychological energy, abandonment of ideals, increased negativity, blaming others in case of failure, lack of motivation, lack of effective performance, frequent absence from work and job instability (Khatib, 2007, p6)

Operational definition

Psychological burnout is defined operationally as the degree scored by the student on the psychological burnout inventory used in this study which includes (35) items distributed over three domains : emotional stress, emotional insensitivity, and lack of sense of accomplishment.

Previous studies

Many studies have dealt with psychological burnout, its impact and its relationship to certain variables. To start, Hassanain and Ibrahim (2017) aimed to explore the differences in the level of psychological burnout among university students according to the variables of nationality, gender and specialization within a sample of Egyptian and Kuwaiti university students. Results revealed that there are differences in favor of the females in psychological burnout according to gender, as well as differences in all dimensions of burnout according to specialization

(scientific/literary) in favor of scientific-stream students. The results also revealed a significant effect of the interaction between gender and specialization variables on the dimensions of psychological burnout, whereas the Egyptian students with scientific specialization scored the highest level of psychological burnout.

Al-Shahri (2020) aimed to identify the relationship between academic burnout and academic self-sufficiency on a sample of secondary school students. The results showed that the students suffered from high academic burnout, while there was a negative correlation with a statistical significance at level (0.01) between academic burnout and academic self-sufficiency among the sample. It was also found that there were no statistically significant differences in the student's academic burnout due to gender, while there were statistically significant differences due to the academic specialization.

Ahmed, Zainab, Fatiha and Pomdin (2020) conducted a study to identify the level of psychological burnout among university students and also to detect the differences between students due to gender. The sample consisted of (67) third-year students who specialize in Guidance and Counseling, chosen randomly. To achieve the study objectives, a 20- item questionnaire was used. The results showed that the level of psychological burnout among the sample was high while no statistically significant differences were found between the students due to gender.

Boufrah and Moses (2017) sought to detect the reliability and validity of the teachers' psychological burnout inventory prepared by Maslach and Jackson, through using a 22 -item inventory divided into three main domains: emotional stress, emotional insensitivity, and lack of sense of accomplishment. The sample comprised 330 primary, middle, and secondary teachers. The validity of the inventory was verified by internal consistency and discriminatory validity. As for the indicators of scale reliability, it was calculated through reapply method, alpha Kronbach equation and the half-retail method. The results revealed that all the values of reliability and validity were

high and statistically relevant and strongly indicate the validity of the scale.

A study carried out by Hassanein and Al-Shabrawi (2017) examined the differences in psychological burnout among university students according to the variables of nationality, type and specialization. The sample involved 820 Egyptian students and 880 students from the university in Kuwait. The results found differences in the level of emotional insensitivity among the Egyptian students and differences due to gender in favor of females in all dimensions of psychological burnout. Moreover, differences were found in all dimensions of psychological burnout due to specialization (scientific/literary) in favor of the students of the scientific stream. The results also revealed a statistically significant effect of the interaction between gender, type and specialization on the dimensions of psychological burnout.

Nasraoui and Zarwal (2017) to adapt Maslach psychological burnout inventory in its version of the human profession (MBI-HSS) to be used with university education in the Algerian environment. To achieve this objective, a cluster sample of (423) instructors was used with the Arabic version of the inventory. The results were as follows: to estimate the validity of grades, construct validity was used through applying the factor analysis method. Results showed that the items were classified into three groups: (emotional exhaustion, emotional insensitivity, personal achievement). To estimate the reliability of grades, the application method was used once, and then the internal consistency was calculated and revealed a statistically high level (0.90). Using the Guttman equation also revealed a high level of reliability (0.81, 0.81) for the two parts of the scale with the overall scale, and (0.90) between the two parts of the scale. New criteria for interpretation were also suggested to cover the aforementioned domains.

Ramati (2015) aimed to study the academic burnout among university students with high and low levels of self-competence. The sample comprised (120) students from Tababi University. The results concluded that students

with higher standard deviation had a higher self-efficacy, while students whose standard deviation was below the average had lower self-efficacy.

Al-Jaafra, Baddah, Al-Khatib and Al-Kharabasha (2013) studied the level of psychological burnout among university students in public and private universities living in dormitories and their relationship with both gender, educational level, specialization and achievement. The results indicated a high level of psychological burnout among university students living in dormitories, and statistically significant differences were found in the dimensions of psychological burnout due to gender in favor of males, as well as differences due to specialization. Results also showed that there were no statistically significant differences in the dimensions of psychological burnout due to students' level of study.

Bowie (2012) examined the level of psychological burnout among university students in the Faculty of Social Sciences at The University of Qasdi Marbah Burqla" in relation to the variables of gender (male-female) specialization (psychology - education sciences) residence pattern (internal-external) and the impact of these variables on psychological burnout. The results indicated that the level of psychological burnout among the university students was high, and that there were no statistically significant differences between the averages of university students due to their gender as well as due to their specialization.

Rochette (2012)) conducted a study to identify the level of psychological burnout among students and its relationship with sources of anxiety and three dimensions of psychological burnout, which is confusion. The findings revealed a high level of burnout among students and that university education affects various aspects of student's life, either on the personal or family side to include the financial side.

Comments on the previous studies

The researchers benefited from the results of previous studies as follows:

1. The literature review helped the researchers in building the study tool, and benefiting from the statistical treatments used for the current study.
2. As the current study addresses the variable of gender, it tends to intersect with the studies of (Hassanein & Ibrahim, 2020), Ahmed; Zainab, Fathia & Bumdin (2020), Ja'afara; Baddah; Khatib & Khrabsha (2013), Bawe (2012) and Jassim (2010).
3. When addressing the variable of faculty (specialization, the current study intersects with the studies of Hassanein & Ibrahim, 2020, Shahri (2020), Ja'fara; Baddah; Khatib & Khrabsha (2013), Bawe (2012) and Jassim (2010).
4. The current study is unique different from other previous studies in examining age and school level variables
5. This study is unique studying the level of psychological burnout among students of Al-Quds Open University which was an impact of online exams)

Methodology and procedures

Study design

To achieve the objectives of the study, the descriptive approach was utilized as this approach studies existing events, phenomena and practices without the researcher's intervention (Barakat, 2019).

Study population

The study population comprises 6,236 students at Al Quds Open University in Nablus branch enrolled in the first semester of the 2020/2021 academic year. Table (1) shows the characteristics of the study population in relation to gender and faculty variables.

Table (1): *Distribution of the study population in terms of Gender and faculty Variables*

| Faculty | Gender | | Total |
|--------------------------------------|--------|--------|-------|
| | Male | Female | |
| Technology and applied sciences | 242 | 516 | 758 |
| Social and family development | 156 | 308 | 464 |
| Administrative and Economic Sciences | 1317 | 1722 | 3039 |
| Educational sciences | 167 | 1230 | 1397 |
| Arts | 105 | 473 | 578 |
| Total | 1987 | 4249 | 6236 |

Students of the Faculty of Media were excluded because the specialization is new at Al-Quds Open University

Sample of the study

A stratified random sample of (364) students was chosen by gender and faculty variables according to Robert Mason equation. Table (2) shows the characteristics of the sample members by Gender and faculty variables, while table (3) shows the characteristics of distributing the members of the study sample according to its independent variables.

Table (2): *Distribution of the study sample by Gender and Faculty variables*

| Faculty | Gender | | Total |
|--------------------------------------|--------|--------|-------|
| | Male | Female | |
| Technology and applied sciences | 15 | 29 | 44 |
| social and family development | 10 | 18 | 28 |
| Administrative and Economic Sciences | 75 | 101 | 176 |
| educational sciences | 10 | 72 | 82 |
| Literature | 6 | 28 | 34 |
| Total | 116 | 248 | 364 |

Table (3): Distribution of the study sample according to their independent variables

| Variable | Level | number | percentage |
|-------------------|---------------------------------|------------|--------------|
| Gender | Male | 116 | 31.9 |
| | Female | 248 | 68.1 |
| | Total | 364 | 100.0 |
| Age | Less than 20 years old | 308 | 84.6 |
| | 20years and older | 56 | 15.4 |
| | Total | 364 | 100.0 |
| Educational level | First | 127 | 34.9 |
| | Second | 95 | 26.1 |
| | Third | 62 | 17.0 |
| | Fourth | 80 | 22.0 |
| | Total | 364 | 100.0 |
| Faculty | Technology and applied sciences | 44 | 12.1 |
| | Social and family development | 28 | 7.7 |
| | Administrative and Economic | 176 | 48.4 |
| | Educational sciences | 82 | 22.5 |
| | Arts | 34 | 9.3 |
| | Total | 364 | %100 |

Study tool

The researchers developed the study tool after reviewing several previous related to the subject of the study such as Wabli (1995), Jassim (2010), Zeroual, Nasraoui (2017), Hijazi; Mohammed (2017) and Al-Shahri (2020). Accordingly, the tools involves two sections:

Section 1: Includes variables related to students' gender, age, educational level, and faculty.

Section 2: Includes 35 items that measure the degree of psychological burnout resulting from the conduct of online exams among students of Al-Quds Open University in Nablus branch. The tool was divided into three domains: (emotional stress (13) items, emotional insensitivity (12) items, and lack of sense of achievement (10) Items.

The researchers also used Likert five- point scale to measure each item as follows:

| Not applica ble | Slightly applica ble | Mediu m applica ble | Very applica ble | Highly applica ble |
|--------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Validity of the tool

The researchers relied on a range of procedures to ensure validity of the study tool, including face validity and construct validity. As for face validity, the tool was presented to a jury of 10 expert referees in the field of the study from Al-Quds Open university, An-Najah national University and Istiqlal University. The researchers asked jury to determine the appropriateness of the items to the level of psychological burnout among students, and the integrity of the language for each items and to amend, clarify and delete items that are inappropriate from their points of view, and which are not in line with their beliefs and by virtue of their extensive and great experience with the objectives and comprehensiveness of the study. Based on their comments and suggestions, some items were either amended, deleted or added, and the agreement ratio between the arbitrators scored (80%). The questionnaire in its final form consisted of (35)

items divided into (3) domains: emotional stress (13 items), emotional insensitivity (12 items), and lack of sense of achievement (10 items). As for construct validity, the researchers extracted the Pearson correlation coefficient for each domain of the study with the overall degree on a pilot sample of 40 students and the results are shown in Table (4) below:

Table (4): *Pearson correlation coefficient for the domains of the study*

| Domain | Number of items | correlation |
|------------------------------|-----------------|-------------|
| Emotional stress | 13 | 0.94 |
| Emotional insensitivity | 12 | 0.96 |
| Lack of sense of achievement | 10 | 0.96 |

Table (4) shows that the Pearson coefficient values for each domain of study ranged from (0.94-0.96) indicating that the instrument has appropriate constructive validity and meets the objectives of this study.

Reliability

To ensure the reliability of the study tool, the method of internal consistency was used through Cronbach alpha, after administering the tool on a pilot sample (40) students outside the basic sample. Table (5) shows the results.

Table 5: *Reliability and overall grade coefficients using Cronbach Alpha*

| Domain | Number Of items | Alpha coefficient value |
|------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| Emotional stress | 13 | 0.92 |
| Emotional insensitivity | 12 | 0.93 |
| Lack of sense of achievement | 10 | 0.92 |
| Total | 35 | 0.97 |

Table (5) shows that the internal consistency coefficient (Cronbach Alpha) was appropriate, as the correlation coefficient values on the study domains were (0.92) and (0.93) respectively while the Cronbach Alpha coefficient for the total score of the tool (0.97). These values are appropriate and acceptable for the application of the study.

Study procedures

1. Choosing a random sample of the study from Al-Quds Open University students.
2. Building the study tool and turning it into an electronic questionnaire.
3. Piloting the tool on an outside sample (40 students) in order to ensure the construct reliability and its suitability for application.
4. Distributing the tool on the sample electronically.
5. Analyzing the collected data using SPSS.

Statistical processing:

After collecting the data, they were statistically processed using the SPSS. Frequencies, percentages, means, standard deviations, t-test for a single sample, (LSD), two-way analysis of variance and linear regression analysis were used.

Results and discussion:

In order to explain the value of the average calculation of Items or the overall degree of the study tool, the scale below was used as shown in Table (6).

Table (6): *The indication of the mathematical average of results.*

| Level | Mean |
|--------|-----------|
| Low | 1 – 1.66 |
| Medium | 1.67-3.33 |
| high | 3.34- 5 |

In the light of the statistical processing of the study data, the following results were achieved:

Results related to the first question: What is the level of psychological burnout resulting from the online-exams among the students of Al-Quds Open University?

In order to answer this question, means and standard deviations were calculated and the results are shown in Table (7).

Table (7): Means and standard deviations of the level of psychological burnout resulting from online exams among students of Al-Quds Open University ranked according to their importance (descending order)

| | Domain | Item | mean | Standard deviation | Level |
|-----|--------|--|------|--------------------|--------|
| .1 | Third | I'm tired of sitting for more than one online exam a day. | 3.47 | 1.63 | high |
| .2 | First | I feel distressed as a result of sitting for online exams. | 3.46 | 1.64 | high |
| .3 | Third | The low readiness of networks makes me unable to accomplish my tasks. | 3.42 | 1.58 | high |
| .4 | First | I'm frustrated that online exams are difficult to match with the teaching materials. | 3.17 | 1.63 | Medium |
| .5 | First | I am worried because there is no justice due to the restriction of online exams. procedures. | 3.16 | 1.59 | Medium |
| .6 | Second | It hurts me to feel that the system of online exams considers students as objects not as human beings. | 3.15 | 1.66 | Medium |
| .7 | Third | The performance of online exams negatively affects my academic achievement. | 3.11 | 1.66 | Medium |
| .8 | First | I'm embarrassed that people question the credibility of the online exam. | 3.05 | 1.65 | Medium |
| .9 | Second | I suffer from the inability to express my opinion through online exams. | 3.05 | 1.60 | Medium |
| .10 | First | I feel nervous about the requirements of studying for the online exam. | 2.92 | 1.52 | Medium |
| .11 | Second | I suffer from distraction and lack of concentration due to the online exam. | 2.90 | 1.63 | Medium |
| .12 | First | I get exhausted at the end of the online exam. | 2.89 | 1.52 | Medium |
| .13 | Third | I face the difficulty of fulfilling my school ambitions because of online exams. | 2.85 | 1.63 | Medium |
| .14 | Third | I feel uncomfortable after online- exams. | 2.85 | 1.61 | Medium |
| .15 | Second | I'm in pain because my specialty doesn't fit the nature of the online exams. | 2.84 | 1.67 | Medium |
| .16 | Third | I'm afraid I will not be able to pass the school stage because of the online exams. | 2.84 | 1.67 | Medium |
| .17 | Second | I'm in pain because of the difficulty of making friends because due to the online exams. | 2.82 | 1.66 | Medium |
| .18 | First | I feel that my study drains my emotions. | 2.79 | 1.45 | Medium |

| | Domain | Item | mean | Standard deviation | Level |
|--------------|--------|---|-------------|--------------------|---------------|
| .19 | First | I feel psychologically burnout due to studying for online exams. | 2.75 | 1.61 | Medium |
| .20 | Third | I suffer from the rigidity of online exams. | 2.74 | 1.51 | Medium |
| .21 | First | Online exams have poor administrative procedures which make me suffer. | 2.73 | 1.55 | Medium |
| .22 | First | I feel exhausted when studying for online exams. | 2.67 | 1.51 | Medium |
| .23 | Third | I feel that the courses I register do not fit my ability to sit for online exams. | 2.67 | 1.65 | Medium |
| .24 | Second | I suffer when I feel that other people underestimate the value of online exams. | 2.66 | 1.54 | Medium |
| .25 | First | Dealing with the online exam techniques causes fatigue. | 2.65 | 1.64 | Medium |
| .26 | Third | I suffer from inability to reconcile online exams with my social relationships. | 2.63 | 1.55 | Medium |
| .27 | Second | I have a hard time adapting to the nature of online exams. | 2.61 | 1.56 | Medium |
| .28 | Third | I get bored when sitting for online exams. | 2.61 | 1.62 | Medium |
| .29 | First | I suffer from severe strangulation because of my weak ability to reconcile scientific and technical abilities to take online exams. | 2.60 | 1.50 | Medium |
| .30 | Second | I feel like some people hurt me when I talk about their problems with online exams. | 2.57 | 1.48 | Medium |
| .31 | First | I feel exhausted when I wake up in the morning to take an online exam. | 2.56 | 1.59 | Medium |
| .32 | Second | I have the idea of leaving college because of the online exams. | 2.49 | 1.68 | Medium |
| .33 | Second | I am indifferent to the problems of students who suffer from online exams. | 2.46 | 1.51 | Medium |
| .34 | Second | I like to stay far away from others to avoid talking about online exams. | 2.45 | 1.55 | Medium |
| .35 | Second | I've become tougher with people due to the pressures of online exams. | 2.38 | 1.52 | Medium |
| Total | | | 2.88 | 1.15 | Medium |

Table (7) shows that the level of psychological burnout resulting from online exams among students of Al-Quds Open University ranged from medium to high with means ranging from (2.38-3.47). The table also shows that the item " I've become tougher with people due to the pressures of online exams " received the lowest

means (2.38), while the item " I'm tired of sitting for more than one online exam a day" scored the highest means (3.47). As for the domains of the study, the results are shown in Table (8).

Table (8): Means and standard deviations of the study domains ranked by importance

| Domains | Arithmetic mean | standard deviation | level |
|------------------------------|-----------------|--------------------|--------|
| Lack of sense of achievement | 2.92 | 1.24 | Medium |
| Emotional stress | 2.88 | 1.15 | Medium |
| Emotional insensitivity | 2.70 | 1.19 | Medium |
| Total | 2.83 | 1.14 | Medium |

Table (8) shows the order of the domains of psychological burnout resulting from the conduct of online exams among students of Al-Quds Open University. The table shows that the domain of "lack of sense of achievement" came in the first place with a mean (2.92), while the "emotional stress" domain came second with a means (2.88). The domain "emotional insensitivity " came in the third place with a means (2.70). Meanwhile, the total degree scored a means of (2.83) which indicates that the level of psychological burnout among students of Al-Quds Open University was medium.

The results above indicate that online exams relieve student's fear, especially when the questions are limited to multiple-choice format which. Such format is limited to the bottom of the cognitive pyramid unlike the essay-type questions which need the students to use higher order thinking skills HOTs such as analysis, synthesis evaluation. These results disagree with the results of Al-Shahri (2020), Ramah, Ahmed, Zainab, Fathia, and Pomdin (2020) Bowie (2012) and Roshetti Study (2012) whose results indicated high degree of psychological burnout. The results are also inconsistent with Jassim (2010) whose results showed a low degree of psychological burnout which might be due to the different sample as Jassim's study was conducted on high school students while this study was conducted on university students.

Results related to the second question: Are there statistically significant differences at ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) between the average responses of the study sample regarding the level of psychological burnout due to gender, age

variables and the interaction between these variables?

In order to answer the second question, Two-Way Analysis of Variance was used and the results are shown in Table (10).

Table (10): Results of Two-Way Analysis of Variance to indicate the differences between the average level of psychological burnout due to gender and age and interaction between them

| Variable | sum of squares | df | mean squares | F | Sig |
|--------------|----------------|-----|--------------|------|-------|
| Gender | 5.68 | 1 | 5.68 | 4.46 | *0.04 |
| Age | 6.28 | 1 | 6.28 | 4.92 | *0.03 |
| Age * Gender | 0.17 | 1 | 0.17 | 0.13 | 0.72 |
| Error | 458.82 | 360 | 1.27 | | |
| Total | 3387.55 | 364 | | | |

Significant at $\alpha \leq 0.05$

Table (10) reveals that there are no statistically significant differences at ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) between the average responses of the study sample of the psychological burnout due to the interaction between the gender and age variables since the value of the statistical indication level (0.72) was greater than the level of significance. The table also shows that there are statistically significant differences at ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) between the average responses of the study sample of psychological burnout resulting due to gender and age The statistical indication level values were respectively (0.04, 0.03) and these values were below the indication level (0.05). To determine the source of differences by gender variable and age variable, their means were calculated as shown in Table (11).

Table (11): Means and standard deviations to determine the source of differences by Gender and Age variables

| Variable | Group | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|----------|-------|------|--------------------|
| Gender | Male | 2.68 | 1.20 |

| | | | |
|------------|-------------------------------|------|------|
| | Female | 2.90 | 1.10 |
| Age | Less than 20 years old | 2.78 | 1.13 |
| | 20years and older | 3.09 | 1.12 |

Table (11) shows that there are statistically 3 significant differences at ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) in the level of psychological burnout between males and females, and the differences were in favour of the females. These results are consistent with Al-Shahri (2020), Hassanein, Al-Sayyed, Al-Shabrawi and Ahmed (2017) who found that the females' psychological burnout was higher than that of males. This might be attributed to the relative importance that the females give to exams which are supposed to help them get a degree that can promote their position in male society where they can find a better status and better job opportunities.

The results also showed differences between the age group (under 20 years of age) and the age group (older than 20 years). The differences were in favour of the age group (over 20 years of age). This result is in line with the multiple age groups exist at Al Quds Open University, unlike other universities where age levels are almost identical. Besides, students under the age of 20 tend to be more serious and more interested in conducting high school exams, which might have reduced their psychological burnout. On the contrary, and according to the nature of Al-Quds Open University system, students can combine study and work, which gives them less serious psychological attention.

Results related to the third question: Are there statistically significant differences at ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) between the average responses of the study sample regarding the level of psychological burnout due to the level of study, faculty and the interaction between these two variables?

To answer the third question which deals with the variables of level of study and faculty, Two-Way Analysis of Variance was used and the results are shown in Table (12).

Table (12): Results of Two-Way Analysis of Variance to indicate the differences between the average level of psychological burnout due

to level of study and faculty and interaction between them

| Variable | sum of squares | df | mean squares | F | Sig |
|---------------------------------|----------------|------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|
| Level of study | 13.89 | 3 | 4.63 | 3.66 | *0.01 |
| Faculty | 3.19 | 4 | 0.80 | 0.63 | 0.64 |
| Level of study * Faculty | 17.16 | 12 | 1.43 | 1.13 | 0.33 |
| Error | 435.47 | 344 | 1.27 | | |
| Total | 3387.55 | 364 | | | |

Significant at $\alpha \leq 0.05$

Table (12) shows that there are no statistically significant differences at ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) between the average responses of the study sample of psychological burnout due to faculty variable and the interaction between the academic level and the faculty. The value of the level of statistical indication was respectively (0.64) (0.33), and these values are greater than the level of significance (0.05). These results can be explained by the fact that most university students suffered from some kind of psychological pressures regardless of specialization, as the COVID-19 pandemic brought almost the same emergency conditions for all educational institutions and students of Al-Quds Open University were not an exception.

The table also reveals that there are statistically significant differences at ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) between the average responses of the study sample in the level of psychological burnout due to the level of the study, since the values of the statistical indication level (0.01) was below (0.05). To determine the source of differences, LSD test was used and the results are shown in Table (13).

Table (13): *LSD results to indicate the differences between the level of psychological burnout resulting from electronic examinations among students of Al Quds Open University due to level of study*

| Variable | Level | Mean | second | Third | fourth |
|-----------------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|-------|--------------|
| Level of study | First | 2.693 | *0.45- | 0.12- | 0.003 |
| | Second | 3.146 | | 0.33 | *0.46 |
| | Third | 2.816 | | | 0.12 |
| | Fourth | 2.690 | | | |

Table (13) shows that there are statistically significant differences at ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) in the level of psychological burnout resulting among students of Al-Quds Open University. The differences were between the level of second year on the one hand and the level of the first year and the fourth year. These differences were in favor of the level of a second year. The high degree of psychological burnout of second – year students can be explained by the fact that during the spread of the COVID-19, the new students were given electronic lectures in high school which to some extent reduced their burnout, while second-year students who were not accustomed to this situation were more psychologically burned, especially when they were halfway through. The third and fourth levels of study, which did not show differences in their favour, can be explained by claiming that these students passed a large part of their

study plan which gave them higher confidence and reduced the suffering and psychological burnout due to the presence of a previous scientific experience.

Results related to the fourth question: Are there statistically significant differences at ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) in terms of the impact of emotional stress, emotional insensitivity, and lack of sense of accomplishment on the level of psychological burnout resulting from online exams among students of Al-Quds Open University?

To answer the fourth question which is related to the impact of emotional stress, emotional insensitivity, and lack of sense of accomplishment on the level of psychological burnout, the linear regression was used through employing stepwise method and Table (14) shows the results.

Table (14): *Results of stepwise linear regression analysis for the impact (lack of sense of achievement, emotional stress, emotional insensitivity) at the level of psychological burnout*

| Variable | correlation | R ² | regression line b | T | sig |
|------------------------------|-------------|----------------|-------------------|-------|--------|
| Emotional stress | 0.96 | 0.920 | 0.95 | 64.56 | *0.000 |
| Emotional insensitivity | 0.96 | 0.054 | 0.49 | 27.56 | *0.000 |
| Lack of sense of achievement | 0.94 | 0.026 | 0.33 | 27.43 | *0.000 |

Significance at $\alpha \leq 0.05$

The results above reveal that there are no statistically significant differences at ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) in the impact of the domains (lack of feeling of achievement, emotional stress, and emotional insensitivity) on the level of psychological burnout resulting from online exams of students at Al-Quds Open University. Results of the analysis of linear regression using (Stepwise) indicated that the domain of emotional stress, ranked first in terms of the impact on the level of psychological burnout which score (0.92) of the level of psychological burnout. The domain emotional insensitivity came in the second place when scoring (0.054) of the level of psychological burnout while the

lack of sense of achievement came in the third place when scoring (0.026).

These results indicate that all domains of psychological burnout are located on a continuous line in terms of their impact on psychological burnout with differences in their degree of impact. The high degree of emotional stress can be explained by the fact that the psychological burnout is greatly affected by this dimension due to the excess emotional sensitivity that dissipates the student's balance when sitting for the online exams which are different from the essay format exams. The lower degree of emotional insensitivity can be explained by claiming that the individual usually attempts to adapt to the psychological pressures that appear during the exams to

relieve the pressure. Students of QOU passed the high school exams and spent time at university, which created some sort of academic immunity against any academic pressures such as online exams.

Recommendations

In light of the aforementioned results, the researchers recommend:

1. Increasing the use of electronic activities that can reduce the negative impact of online exams while promoting students' confidence.
2. Creating online manuals and guidelines for online exams to reduce the psychological burnout in its three dimensions.
3. Changing the format of online exams through including questions that measure higher- order thinking such as essay questions, , explanation or analysis which may reduce the pressure of the limited format questions.
4. Conducting comparative studies to compare between traditional universities and open universities in terms of online exams and the academic pressures they generate as well as their impact on psychological burnout.
5. Conducting comparative studies on students' satisfaction with online and other face-to-face exams.
6. Exploring the impact of other variables on psychological such as age, place of residence, and cumulative average.

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