

## Understanding the Impact of the Israel-Gaza War in 2023 on the Academic Performance and Well-being of Palestinian University Students: Perceived Loneliness and Academic Burnout

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### Abstract

**Objectives:** This study investigates the impact of the Israel-Gaza War on Palestinian university students in the West Bank, focusing on the relationship between perceived loneliness, academic burnout, and academic performance.

**Methods:** The study is conducted through a correlational research design involving 400 students from four prominent universities in the West Bank, namely Palestine Polytechnic University (PPU), Hebron University (HU), Bethlehem University (BU), and Palestine Ahliya University (PAU).

**Results:** The study uncovers significant negative associations between perceived loneliness and academic performance as well as a positive correlation between perceived loneliness and academic burnout. Additionally, it identifies a negative correlation between academic burnout and academic performance. The findings emphasize the detrimental effects of loneliness and academic burnout on students' educational attainment during the war.

**Conclusions:** Based on the findings, the study emphasizes the need for targeted interventions to support students in conflict-affected regions. The study's implications extend to other universities and policymakers, offering valuable insights for addressing the challenges faced by students amidst adversity.

**Keywords:** Academic burnout, academic performance, loneliness, Israel-Gaza war, Palestinian university students.

### فهم تأثير الحرب على غزة في عام 2023 على الأداء الأكاديمي والصحة النفسية لطلاب الجامعات الفلسطينية: دراسة حول الشعور بالوحدة والإرهاق الأكاديمي

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#### ملخص

**الأهداف:** تبحث هذه الدراسة في تأثير الحرب بين إسرائيل وغزة عام 2023 على طلاب الجامعات الفلسطينية في الضفة الغربية، مع التركيز على العلاقة بين الوحدة المتصورة والإرهاق الأكاديمي والأداء الأكاديمي.

**المنهجية:** تم إجراء هذه الدراسة من خلال استبيان بحثي مترابط شارك فيه 400 طالب من أربع جامعات بارزة في الضفة الغربية، وهي: جامعة فلسطين للتقنية التطبيقية (PPU)، جامعة الخليل (HU)، جامعة بيت لحم (BU)، والجامعة الأهلية الفلسطينية (PAU).

**النتائج:** تكشف الدراسة عن ارتباطات سلبية مهمة بين الوحدة المتصورة والأداء الأكاديمي، بالإضافة إلى ارتباط إيجابي بين الوحدة المتصورة والأكاديمية. كذلك، فإن هذا يحدد العلاقة السلبية بين الإرهاق الأكاديمي والأداء الأكاديمي. تؤكد النتائج على الآثار الضارة للوحدة والإرهاق الأكاديمي على التحصيل العلمي للطلاب خلال فترة الحرب.

**الخلاصة:** تسلط هذه الدراسة الضوء على الحاجة إلى تدخلات موجهة لدعم الطلاب في المناطق المتضررة من الحرب. تمتد آثار الدراسة إلى الجامعات وصانعي السياسات، حيث تقدم رؤية قيمة لمواجهة التحديات التي يواجهها الطلاب وسط الأزمات. الكلمات الدالة: الإرهاق الأكاديمي، الأداء الأكاديمي، الوحدة، الحرب بين إسرائيل وغزة، طلاب الجامعات الفلسطينية.

## Introduction

Over the years, there have been numerous wars and conflicts in the Middle East. Of these long-lasting conflicts, the Israel-Gaza War has become one of the most severe. It is a series of military attacks and conflicts between Israel and the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip that have erupted over time, resulting in an increase in tension and violence. These geopolitical events, which have received attention on all media, have a very significant impact on Palestinians' mental health and lead to various psychiatric disorders, such as fear, anxiety, loneliness, academic burnout, distress, panic and many other psychiatric disorders, but they vary from one person to another due to the different psychological and social characteristics of individuals in Palestinian society.

Academic institutions in Palestine and particularly in West Bank, were not spared from such conflict, in which some Academic institutions were completely kept shut, while others were stipulated to deploy novel solutions like the transition to virtual learning, wherever applicable and whenever possible.

Yet, remote teaching, although it pivotally aided in deciphering a critical complexion in times of such war, as well as furthering the continuum of educational journeys for students in West Bank, it was also accompanied by its distinct set of issues and drawbacks. That said, numerous higher education institutions in Palestine grappled to adopt this method of teaching, and coupled with the technological requirements of eLearning, it became excruciatingly challenging for many students to fully explore the advantages of online learning (Zhang, 2023). The adoption of remote learning in higher education sector in Palestine led to an increasing trend towards a crisis of connection and academic stress. Particularly, the extended periods in which students were abruptly deprived from having the physical interactions with their teachers, peers, colleagues, and mates, as well as the prolongation of alienating study schemes through virtual screens, have critically encapsulated students in dilemmas of social isolation, which consequently led to major concerns regarding the long-term psychological effects this will have on the Palestinian students in real time, and all-around consequential derivative for years to come.

The Israel-Gaza war in 2023 has a profound impact on Palestinian university students in West Bank, disrupting their engagement with university life and aspirations for a brighter future. Exposure to scenes and news alters students' mental and emotional states markedly, diverging from their typical cognitive and emotional functioning. Students may perceive a temporal distortion or view events as surreal, leading to challenges in concentration and memory retention. These cognitive and emotional disruptions, in turn, have a substantial impact on the academic performance of undergraduate students. Yet, the residuals and dependencies of such war still seeps deep into the society's overall health and well-being, especially through predisposing students' attitude hereafter. On this note, it is crucial to trace the resultant trends of loneliness and burnout episodes stemming from such tension and violence and thus examine their impact on the academic performance of university students in Palestine and their state of mental health, a crucial area of pedagogy the current study aims to thoroughly address.

This study was premised on the Cacioppo Evolutionary Theory of Loneliness (ETL) (Cacioppo & Cacioppo, 2018) and Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) (Bandura, 1999; Luszczynska & Schwarzer, 2015; Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2020). The Cacioppo Evolutionary Theory of Loneliness (ETL) posits that loneliness is an evolved adaptation that serves as a warning signal of social disconnection and potential danger. According to this theory, loneliness has evolved as a response to the challenges faced by early humans, such as the threat of physical harm and the need for social resources and support.

ETL assumes that social bonding was essential for the survival of human ancestors, providing protection, resources, and reproductive opportunities. The theory outlines that chronic loneliness can lead to significant negative health outcomes, highlighting the vital role of social integration for optimal functioning. It also suggests that loneliness affects social cognition, making individuals more vigilant to social threats but potentially leading to a cycle of increased isolation due to misinterpretation of social cues. ETL recognizes loneliness as a universal yet variably experienced phenomenon, emphasizing the importance of understanding its evolutionary basis and implications for health and social behavior (Cacioppo & Cacioppo, 2018).

While ETL has gained significant attention in the field of loneliness research, it has also faced criticism from some

quarters. Critics argue that the theory oversimplifies the complexity of loneliness and fails to fully consider the role of individual and contextual factors in shaping loneliness experiences.

However, ETL does not account for the diversity of experiences and expressions of loneliness. While it is true that loneliness may have evolved as a protective mechanism, individuals can experience loneliness in umpteen ways, such as feelings of isolation, emptiness, and abandonment, and may even experience it at varying intensities (Keller et al., 2022). Furthermore, individuals may experience loneliness in response to different life events, such as changes in family and work relationships, as well as physical and mental health challenges. Henceforth, although ETL contributes in underpinning critical facets of communal interactions and their manifestations in contemporary society, it still overlays a paucity in relation to wholly deciphering the intricacy of loneliness experiences and their causes, as the theory usually falls into the trap of depreciating such a kaleidoscopic and multi-faceted phenomenon.

Additionally, ETL may overlook the critical role of social support in mitigating loneliness. While it's acknowledged that social support is vital in reducing feelings of loneliness, its impact is heavily dependent on the quality and nature of the support provided, as well as on individual traits such as personality and coping styles (Hutten et al., 2021; Keller et al., 2022; Wang et al., 2020). These elements are key in determining the degree to which social support can effectively lessen loneliness. Moreover, the influence of cultural and societal norms on perceptions of loneliness and the accessibility of social support further complicates the issue (Saporta et al., 2021). Therefore, ETL might not adequately address how societal norms, individual predispositions, and other contextual factors shape experiences of loneliness and the strategies for addressing it.

Social cognitive theory (SCT) is also being used in this study as it tackles reciprocity, the relationships people have with one another in society, and the process of learning through behavior. This comprises elements that are both cognitive and emotional that characterize feelings as well as social interactions between individuals (Salzmann et al., 2023; Telyani et al., 2021; Bandura, 1989). According to Salzmann et al. (2023) and Bresó et al. (2011), burnout is defined in the same context as a form of tiredness that may be connected to a variety of circumstances, including but not limited to the social, emotional, and occupational domains. SCT links learning-related factors such as, satisfaction to domain-specific resources of an individual and their lives (Shirom, 2005). This can yield in numerous forms, when the setting, regulations, and social norms abruptly change due to a crisis (E.g. Israel-Gaza war) (Edú-Valsania et al., 2022; Liu et al., 2021; Shakeel et al., 2022). This theory is used also for managing negative emotions that can arise due to learning conditions, work-life conflicts, and health or psychological crises. Importantly, during the Israel-Gaza war social support was restricted, which can further generate negative emotions such as, burnout (e.g. Liu & Aunguroch, 2019; Hall et al., 2019; Shakeel et al., 2022), and subsequently intentions to turnover (Khan et al., 2021).

SCT, developed by Albert Bandura (2001), emphasizes the importance of observational learning, imitation, and modeling in understanding human behavior. This theory suggests that individuals learn not only through their own experiences but also through observing the actions and outcomes of others. By examining the interactions between cognitive processes such as attention and memory, behavioral factors like direct reinforcement or punishment, and environmental influences including social context and media exposure, SCT provides valuable insights into how people acquire new behaviors and skills. The theory also makes assumptions about the role of self-efficacy in shaping behavior change. It proposes that individuals are more likely to adopt a new behavior if they believe they can successfully execute it under various circumstances. Additionally, SCT highlights the influence of cultural norms on behavioral acquisition; it posits that societal beliefs shape what is observed as appropriate or rewarded behavior within specific contexts.

While SCT, emphasizes observational learning and the role of modeling in understanding human behavior, Nabi & Prestin (2017) argue that individual behaviors are primarily shaped by internal factors such as personality traits and genetics rather than external influences. They contend that while observation may have some impact on behavior, it is not the primary driving force behind behavioral change. Additionally, the emphasis on self-efficacy may overlook other important determinants of behavior such as motivation or biological predispositions.

SCT can be applied to comprehend the connection between the effects of the conflict in Gaza and the welfare of

Palestinian college students from two primary perspectives. The first involves examining how traumatic events are linked to individual behavior among students during wartime, while also considering environmental and social factors that influence their responses to such stressful circumstances.

By centering our analysis on the facets of student adaptability, intellectual engagement, and social connectivity, alongside the recognition of psychological distress markers such as depression, isolation, and trauma, we utilize the concept of self-efficacy derived from SCT. This theoretical perspective affords critical perspectives on how students' ability to impact their experiences and navigate their life conditions correlates with their academic achievements and psychological health. Through this framework, our study aims to clarify the ways in which students' emotional and academic results are impacted by their sense of self-efficacy, especially when faced with the challenges caused by conflict.

The abovementioned theoretical frameworks provide support and justification for the context of this study as it aims to contribute to the relevant existing literature. The combined premises of ETL and SCT models enabled the researcher to pinpoint a number of essential psychological factors that are thematically included in the data collection process.

### **Problem Statement**

The study aims to investigate the profound impact of the 2023 Israel-Gaza War on the academic achievement and psychological well-being of Palestinian university students in the West Bank. This war has significantly disrupted students' engagement with university life, leading to various psychological issues, including fear, anxiety, loneliness, and academic burnout, further affecting their academic performance. Despite the shift to remote learning as a response to the conflict, this mode of education has introduced its own set of challenges, exacerbating students' feelings of social isolation and academic stress. Given the backdrop of the Cacioppo Evolutionary Theory of Loneliness and Social Cognitive Theory, this study seeks to explore how these compounded factors of war, educational disruptions, and psychological stressors affect students' academic outcomes and mental health. There is a notable gap in research regarding the specific impacts of the Gaza War on academic performance and student welfare within the Palestinian context. Thus, this study will contribute valuable insights to the literature, offering implications for educational policymakers and mental health professionals to better support students during times of crisis.

Based on this, the study proposes the following hypotheses:

H1: There is a significant negative relationship between perceived loneliness and academic performance of university students in West Bank during the Israel-Gaza War violence.

H2: There is a significant positive relationship between perceived loneliness and academic burnout of university students in West Bank during the Israel-Gaza War violence.

H3: There is a significant negative relationship between academic burnout and academic performance.

H4: Academic burnout mediates the relationship between loneliness and academic performance of university students in West Bank during the Israel-Gaza War violence.

### **SignificanceOf The Study**

This study aims to explore the influence of the Gaza war (2023) on the academic achievement and psychological well-being of Palestinian university students. However, there is a lack of literature investigating the factors associated with how Gaza War affected academic performance and student welfare. The study also introduces a novel conceptual framework that has not been utilized in previous research to examine how the war in Gaza impacted university students' academic success and overall well-being by applying Social Cognitive Theory and Evolutionary Theory of Loneliness. Consequently, this study gathers data from prominent Palestinian universities, which adds credibility to its findings.

Furthermore, the study offers significant perspectives on comprehending the influence of conflicts on the academic achievement of college students. It seeks to advise educational policymakers in universities and higher education institutions on implementing more impactful strategies for addressing educational challenges during times of crisis. Besides, the study presents valuable recommendations for mental health professionals working at university counseling centers, focusing on methods to bolster students' resilience and self-efficacy in overcoming diverse obstacles, thus promoting mental well-being and academic accomplishment.

Our study provides a thorough examination of how Palestinian university students perceive their effectiveness in times of war and how it affects both their academic performance and mental well-being. Understanding how students manage their expectations, behaviors, goals, and the difficulties of daily life-especially when under stress from war-requires a solid understanding of the concept of self-efficacy. This study measures how well students are able to cope with major stressors in the context of the Gaza war while pursuing success in both academic and personal performance.

### **Virtual Communication and Educational Strategies Amidst Times of Conflict**

Communication technology has made it unequivocally possible for individuals to connect with people from copious regions seamlessly and in real time. According to Wood and Turkle (2012), this creates the illusion of friendship when indeed in reality, one does not share a mutual double-bounded connection with the opposite party in any meaningful way. This expounds and as a matter of fact aggrandizes the negative outcomes of virtual communication, whereby users may often themselves trapped in the whirlwinds of loneliness and epitomised seclusion once they are forcefully struck by reality. That said, on many occasions, they tend to have thousands of ‘friends’ on social media, but are impoverished from building real-life connections. Wood and Turkle (2012) shed light on this phenomenon by explaining that the interactions that were cultivated online cannot form any meaningful relational bridges and casualties due to a lack of deep interpersonal mutual attachments. Especially. Since the ambivalent emotions of loneliness caused by the lack of intimate and tangible relationships can critically lead to mental health deterioration and general well-being issues (Diehl, 2021, Hammerstein et al., 2021).

On this note, it is abundantly crucial to grasp how academic journeys at university level are exceedingly tasking and are usually considered a major milestone in the life of young adults who choose to pursue their studies and hone their educational vaults and latitude hereafter. Especially since this peculiar period generally marks the first time such students experience independence in its earliest forms. Some may be completely separated from their family and some travel thousands of miles to study. Apart from the newfound independence, individuals pursuing university education generally tend to get a better understanding of the social system and improve problem solving skills and time management amongst others. When combined with the increased pressure in terms of expectations from society, it becomes vindicable and in fact not farfetched to assume that this may be perceived as a mentally straining period for the average student, given all the adjustments and the adversities of adapting to their new surroundings. While many students may cope with the new-fangled experience in a rather fervent manner, others might repeatedly sprauchle in this sudden shift, thus leaving a lasting impression that can have a monumental impact on their future prospects and mental wellbeing in the long run. Indeed, empirical evidence points to the fact that loneliness has a negative impact on academic performance in addition to an increased intention of dropping out of school (Dielh et al., 2020).

A plethora of authors have elucidated those stressors’ such as loneliness, and academic burnout are common issues for a myriad of university students, especially those with no social net or those far from home (Singh et al., 2021; Arkar, Sari, & Fidaner, 2004; Lin & Huang, 2012; Wiseman, Gutfreund, & Lurie, 1995). Hence, when compounded with the mandated lockdowns imposed amid the Israel-Gaza War violence that ensued following the attacks on 7 October 2023, one begins to see how continued isolation from peers, family, and friends might affect the academic performance of young adults trying to navigate and juggle adulthood and the struggles of university life in an otherwise fast-paced world.

Loneliness, academic burnout, and academic performance are interrelated and impact the well-being of university students. While loneliness is an emotional state that can result in feelings of isolation, academic burnout refers to a state of exhaustion, cynicism, and the lack of engagement in academics (Rahmatpour, 2019). Both loneliness and academic burnout can negatively impact academic performance, leading to lower grades and decreased motivation to continue academic pursuits.

The relationship between loneliness, academic burnout, and academic performance can be complex, but there is evidence to suggest that loneliness can exacerbate academic burnout which in return increases the tendencies of loneliness (Schaufeli et al., 2002). This can lead to a vicious cycle in which feelings of loneliness and academic burnout feed off and indeed osmose off each other, thus further impacting academic performance.

### **Literature Review**

El-Khodary et al. (2020) conducted an investigation into the prevalence and nature of war-related traumatic events and posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) among children and adolescents in the Gaza Strip. The study revealed that a substantial majority of participants had encountered traumatic events associated with war, resulting in a heightened occurrence of PTSD symptoms according to the DSM-V criteria. Furthermore, the research delved into the influence of demographic and socioeconomic factors on the correlation between traumatic events and PTSD. The outcomes underscore the significant prevalence of war-related traumatic events and PTSD within the studied population of Palestinian children and adolescents in the Gaza Strip. This underscores the pressing necessity for mental health support in addressing the challenges faced by this demographic. The investigation found that a majority of the youth experienced personal trauma, witnessed traumatic events involving others, and observed the destruction of property during the conflict.

Notably, the prevalence of DSM-V PTSD diagnosis was determined to be 53.5% among the examined sample of Palestinian children and adolescents in the Gaza Strip. Additionally, the study identified a gender disparity, with boys exhibiting a notably higher exposure to traumatic events compared to girls. This included experiences of personal trauma, witnessing trauma to others, and observing the demolition of property. These findings collectively highlight the elevated occurrence of war-related traumatic events and PTSD within the vulnerable demographic of Palestinian children and adolescents residing in the Gaza Strip (El-Khodary et al., 2020).

El-Khodary & Samara (2018) also found that exposure to war-traumatic events, stressful life events, and exposure to traumatic events not related to war trauma were positively correlated with PTSD and depression in Palestinian children and adolescents. The study also found that boys reported more exposure to personal trauma, witnessing trauma to others, seeing demolition of property, and overall traumatic events compared to girls. Girls reported more exposure to stressful life events, exposure to trauma (not related to war-trauma), PTSD, and depression. Overall, the study suggests that exposure to war-traumatic events could be considered a risk factor for PTSD and depression in children and adolescents living in conflict-affected areas.

The main mental health effects experienced by families living in conflict-affected areas, as discussed by Albala & Shapira (2023), include a range of distress and resilience factors. Despite exposure to ongoing conflict-related violence, the adolescents in the study described positive experiences related to growing up in the Gaza envelope, highlighting the strength and resilience of their communities. Albala & Shapira (2023) also emphasize the protective role of family ties, especially parent-child relationships, in the context of coping with conflict-related violence. Additionally, the article discusses the impact of continuous collective stress on adolescents' mental health, highlighting the susceptibility of late adolescents and young adults to potentially traumatic events. Furthermore, they acknowledge that exposure to conflict-related violence affects the mental health of parents and children, with emotional reactions of parents and children being interrelated. It also notes that while exposure to conflict-related violence can lead to emotional and behavioral difficulties, lower subjective well-being, and increased risk of PTSD, anxiety, and depression, there is evidence of resilience and effective coping abilities among individuals affected by conflict. Therefore, the main mental health effects experienced by families living in conflict-affected areas encompass a spectrum of distress, resilience, and coping mechanisms in the face of ongoing geopolitical conflict.

Similarly, children and adolescents in the Gaza Strip are continuously exposed to war-traumatic events and violence in multiple contexts, which aggravates the effects of exposure and leads to higher mental health and behavioral problems. Every child or adolescent had been exposed to at least one war-traumatic event, and approximately two-thirds of the participants had been exposed to violence at home, while around 50% had been exposed to violence in the neighborhood and at school. The effect of exposure to violence on the relationship between exposure to war trauma and mental health and behavioral problems (El-Khodary & Samara, 2020).

### **Loneliness and Academic Performance**

Loneliness has been extensively studied in the field of psychology and is increasingly being recognized as a relevant factor in the academic performance of university students. The relationship between loneliness and academic performance

is thorny and multifaceted, with numerous factors contributing to the overall impact of loneliness on academic outcomes.

Studies have consistently vindicated that loneliness is negatively associated with academic performance. For instance, a study by Alinejad, et al. (2022) exhibits that loneliness was significantly related to having lower GPA numerals among university students. Similarly, a study by Anam and Hitipeuw (2022) showcased how lonely students had significantly lower academic performances compared to those who were less lonely. Additionally, Sawir et al.'s (2008) study focused on international students in Australia and their findings suggest that loneliness has a deleterious effect on academic performance. Their submission was premised on the fact that these students were far from home, isolated from the life they are used to and, thence had a hard time adjusting and making friends, which invariably led to increased levels of loneliness which in turn had a negative impact on their academic performance.

One possible explanation for the relationship between loneliness and academic performance is the impact of loneliness on motivation and engagement in academic tasks. Lonely individuals may experience feelings of hopelessness and apathy, leading to a lack of motivation and engagement in academic tasks (Hughes et al., 2004). Furthermore, loneliness has been linked to lower levels of self-esteem and confidence, which can impact students' ability to participate in academic activities and engage in healthy pursuits of self-reflection and communal enculturation (Cacioppo & Hawkley, 2009).

Another possible explanation is that loneliness may affect students' ability to form and maintain flourishing relationships, including those with peers and instructors. This may lead to a lack of social support and a reduced sense of belonging, which in consequence impact students' ability to prosper and thrive academically (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Additionally, loneliness has been linked to higher levels of stress and anxiety, which can affect students' overall well-being and ability to concentrate and perform well in academic duties (Hawkley & Cacioppo, 2010).

Despite the significant evidence of the negative impact of loneliness on academic performance, some researchers have suggested that the relationship may not have been entirely straightforward. That said, Gurses et al. (2011) argues that the nature of the relationship between loneliness and academic performance may be influenced by individual differences, such as personality, coping styles, and distinct mechanisms, as well as situational factors, such as the availability of social support and the nature of academic endeavours.

All in all, the relationship between loneliness and academic performance is multi-layered and intricate, with numerous factors contributing to the overall impact of loneliness on academic outcomes. While there is significant evidence suggesting that loneliness can have a negative impact on academic performance, further research is needed to fully understand the nature of this relationship and the various factors that influence it.

Based on the above, the researchers seek to test the following hypothesis:

*H1: There is a significant negative relationship between perceived loneliness and academic performance of university students in West Bank during the Israel-Gaza War violence.*

### **Loneliness and Academic Burnout**

The the Israel-Gaza War violence that ensued following the attacks on 7 October 2023 has had a profound impact on Palestinians in West Bank, with many experiencing increased levels of stress, anxiety, and loneliness. This impact has been particularly pronounced among university students, who have had to adjust to a new way of learning and living as a result of online learning. In this context, the relationship between loneliness and academic burnout has become a vital area of investigation.

Studies have found that loneliness is positively associated with academic burnout among university students during online learning. For instance, a study by Kim and Jung (2021) found that loneliness was significantly related to higher levels of academic burnout among Korean university students. Similarly, a study by Kotwal et al. (2021) emphasised that loneliness was a significant predictor of academic burnout among Chinese university students. These findings carve the bedrock of grasping how the COVID-19 pandemic and online learning have exacerbated the relationship between loneliness and academic burnout among university students globally.

To further depict the relationship between loneliness and academic burnout during during the Israel-Gaza War violence, it is crucial to underline the impact of social isolation and reduced social support on students' overall performance. Indeed,

in light of the lack of in-person interactions and the dearth of opportunities for students to engage in social activities and form corporal and long-lasting relationships, numerous students are coerced to combat increased levels of loneliness and decreased social support schemes (Cacioppo & Hawkley, 2009). This, in return, can increase students' susceptibility to academic burnout as they feel overwhelmed and unable to cope with the excruciating demands of academic life (Singh, et al., 2021; Maslach & Jackson, 1981).

Furthermore, one is unable to underemphasize the punitive degree on which online learning has impeded in invigorating increased levels of stress and anxiety, and thus its paramount contribution to academic burnout (Kim & Jung, 2021). Hence, this pestilent stress combined with the dejecting emotions of loneliness may reduce students' ability to cope and seek support (Hawkley & Cacioppo, 2010).

Despite the significant evidence of the relationship between loneliness and academic burnout, some researchers have suggested that the nature of this relationship may be influenced by individual differences and situational factors. For example, Kotwal et al. (2021) argues that the relationship between loneliness and academic burnout may be stimulated by the availability of social nurturement, personality traits, as well as intrinsic and psychological survival tactics.

Based on the foregoing, the researchers seek to test the following hypothesis:

*H2: There is a significant positive relationship between perceived loneliness and academic burnout of university students in West Bank during the Israel-Gaza War violence.*

### **Academic Burnout and Academic Performance**

Academic burnout and academic performance are two important factors that can have a significant impact on the wellbeing and success of university students. The relationship between these two factors has been the subject of much research and debate in recent years, with the aim of understanding the ways in which academic burnout can affect academic performance and how to mitigate its prodigious impact.

Academic stress is the emotional, physical, and psychological strain a student experiences that can be attributed to the academic demands and requirements (Rahmawati, 2012). Heavy course loads, assignments, exams, time management, competitions among students, teacher competency, and lack of resources constitute stress and can trigger cyberloafing in students (Hibrian et al., 2022).

Studies have consistently scrutinised a negative relationship between academic burnout and academic performance among university students (Schaufeli & Enzmann, 1998; Maslach, Jackson, & Leiter, 1996). For instance, a study by Koster et al. (2010) vindicated that higher levels of academic burnout were associated with lower grades and decreased motivation among university students. Similarly, a study by Leiter et al. (2010) found that academic burnout was positively related to lower levels of academic engagement and lower grades among graduate students.

One possible explanation for the negative relationship between academic burnout and academic performance is the impact of decreased motivation and engagement. Academic burnout has been found to be associated with decreased motivation and engagement in academic activities, which can result in decreased academic performance (Schaufeli & Enzmann, 1998). Additionally, academic burnout can also lead to decreased academic self-efficacy, which can further contribute to a notable diminution in the levels of scholarly attainments among university students (Fan et al., 2021; Maslach, Jackson, & Leiter, 1996).

An additional conceivable elucidation regarding the aforementioned is the effect of decreased cognitive functioning. Research has demonstrated that academic burnout correlates with impaired cognitive performance including decreased attention, memory, and problem-solving abilities. Subsequently, such cognitive debilitation can deleteriously modify an individual's intellectual progress and thus their holistic educational excellence (Schaufeli & Enzmann, 1998). Furthermore, academic burnout may lead to diminished vigour and heightened exhaustion, which can have an unfavourable influence on academic achievement (Maslach, Jackson, & Leiter, 1996).

Despite the steadfast indications of a consistent inverse relationship between academic burnout and academic performance, an assortment of scholars has proposed and put forth the notion that the entanglement of this conjugative correlation may be influenced by individual disparities and circumstantial factors. That said, Ozhan and Yuksel (2021)



assert that the link between both variables may be spurred by various coping strategies, personality traits, and individual endeavours.

Henceforth, the surfeit of studies highlighting the correlation between academic burnout and academic performance sharpen the interplay between these noteworthy constructs as well as reiterate its multifaceted nature. Although it becomes palpable how both variables are negatively associated with one another, an all-around comprehension of such relational proximity is still exigently required to further fathom such relationship and the various factors that contribute to it. Additionally, future studies might look into how cultural, socioeconomic, and demographic factors affect the relationship between academic burnout and academic performance. Hence, through a better grasp of the layered nature of such dogma, fitting strategies can be employed to effectively moderate academic performance and lessen the prevalence of academic burnout among university students.

Therefore, the researchers seek to test the following hypotheses:

*H3: There is a significant negative relationship between academic burnout and academic performance.*

*H4: Academic burnout mediates the relationship between loneliness and academic performance of university students in West Bank during the Israel-Gaza War violence.*

## **Methodology**

### **Study Design**

The present study employed a correlational research design, which is a methodology aimed at examining the statistical association between two or more variables, without establishing a cause-and-effect relationship (Lau, 2017). The main objective of this design is to identify whether a statistical association exists between the variables and to determine the strength and direction of that relationship. Specifically, the researchers sought to establish whether or not there is a correlation between loneliness, burnout, and academic performance and as well as the mediating role of burnout in the relationship between loneliness and academic performance.

To fulfil the aims of the present study, surveys were administered to participants, and their academic records for all modules taken over one-semester period (spanning from September to December 2023) were gathered and analysed with the consent of the students.

### **Participant Recruitment**

The study sample comprised students enrolled in four of the most prominent academic institutions in the South of West Bank in Palestine, namely; Palestine Polytechnic University (PPU), Hebron University (HU), Bethlehem University (BU), and Palestine Ahliya University (PAU). This paves the path for ensuring that a large and heterogeneous representative sample of the student population is collected.

### **Inclusion Criteria**

The enrolment criteria mandated that the participants must have been enrolled in their respective universities since at least 2020 to ensure that they had a first-hand experience of the impact of the online learning on their mental well-being and academic journeys. Additionally, all participants were required to voluntarily submit their academic records for Fall semester 2023 while maintaining anonymity.

### **Measures**

To collect data for this study, the researchers opted to make use of both primary and secondary data in the form of questionnaires and academic records respectively. The questionnaire combined the following scales: The University of California, Los Angeles Loneliness Scale-Version 3 developed by Russell (1996), and Maslach Burnout Inventory Student Survey (MBI-GS(S)) developed by Maslach (1981).

In this study, ensuring the validity and reliability of the scales used to measure perceived loneliness and academic burnout is crucial for obtaining accurate and dependable findings. The University of California, Los Angeles Loneliness Scale-Version 3 (UCLA Loneliness Scale) developed by Russell (1996) and the Maslach Burnout Inventory Student Survey (MBI-GS(S)) created by Maslach (1981) were selected due to their robust psychometric properties. The UCLA Loneliness Scale is well-known for its thorough evaluation of loneliness feelings and has undergone rigorous validation processes,

demonstrating strong internal consistency and construct validity across various populations. Similarly, the MBI-GS(S) is a widely recognized tool for assessing academic burnout, with validated subscales that capture exhaustion, cynicism, and professional efficacy, showcasing its reliability and validity in academic contexts. By utilizing these established instruments, the study leverages their proven reliability to accurately measure levels of loneliness and burnout among university students in the South of West Bank.

The questionnaire's first section sought to compile demographic information, including age, study field, institution, gender, and academic discipline. Additionally, this section also involved the inclusion criterion question on length of enrolment and one's agreement to provide their CGPA and results for the Fall semester.

The second segment of the survey was dedicated to eliciting data on the perceived loneliness of the university students, encompassing 20 concise questions. On the other hand, the third part was concerned with garnering information on burnout amongst the participants, consisting of 16 items that assessed feelings of exhaustion, cynicism, and professional efficacy.

### Procedure

Quota sampling was utilised to collect data from the sample population. The sample cohort was divided into four strata namely, Palestine Polytechnic University (PPU), Hebron University (HU), Bethlehem University (BU), and Palestine Ahliya University (PAU). Using a convenience sampling method, data was collected from each stratum until 100 completed questionnaires were obtained from each institution, resulting in a total of 400 completed questionnaires.

The response rate was approximately 92.5%, as only (370) questionnaires were returned completed. All questionnaires contained full responses with no missing values, however only (320) were used for analysis after deducting (50) for pilot tests. Screening procedures revealed no outliers, and the data was found to be normally distributed.

### Results

*H1: There is a significant negative relationship between perceived loneliness and academic performance of university students in West Bank during the Israel-Gaza War violence.*

*H2: There is a significant positive relationship between perceived loneliness and academic burnout of university students in West Bank during the Israel-Gaza War violence.*

*H3: There is a significant negative relationship between academic burnout and academic performance.*

**Table 1. Correlation Matrix**

Academic Performance			Perceived Loneliness		Academic Burnout		Depersonalization		Exhaustion		Inadequacy	
Academic Performance	—											
Perceived Loneliness	-0.909	***	—									
Academic Burnout	-0.703	**	0.644	***	—							
Depersonalization	-0.553	***	0.411	***	0.667	**	—					
Exhaustion	-0.942	**	0.878	**	0.538	**	0.428	*	—			
Inadequacy	-0.142	*	-0.009		-0.468	***	-0.165	**	0.383	*	—	

Note. \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$

Table.1 displays the correlation matrix among all the variables.

The results of table 1 show a significant negative correlation between perceived loneliness and academic performance ( $r = -0.909, p < 0.001$ ) among Palestinian university students in West Bank during the Israel-Gaza War violence. What this goes on to elucidate is that higher levels of perceived loneliness are associated with low academic performance and vice versa. The academic performance of university students suffering from loneliness is likely to be adversely impacted. This inference corroborates the findings of previous research, such as those conducted by Alinejad et al. (2022) who revealed that the lonelier a student is the lower their grade point average (GPA). Moreover, the results also support those proposed by Anam and Hitipeuw (2022) who concluded in their research that students who experience elevated levels of loneliness are significantly more likely to experience suboptimal academic performance. Hence, this further lends credence to the proposition that loneliness and academic performance are inversely related.

Furthermore, the findings depicted in the antecedent table above demonstrate a notable positive correlation ( $r = 0.644, p < 0.001$ ) between perceived loneliness and academic burnout among university students in West Bank during the Israel-Gaza War violence. This indicates that a heightened sense of perceived loneliness is linked to an increased incidence of academic burnout. Hence, the results support those of Kim et al (2021) who found out that loneliness and academic burnout are positively and significantly related. Additionally, the outcomes suggest that higher levels of loneliness are

associated with a greater likelihood of academic disengagement and burnout. It is noteworthy that although the current study was conducted amidst the Israel-Gaza War violence in 2023, it did not explore the Israel-Gaza war's specific influence on burnout exclusively. However, prior research by Kotwal et al (2021) has posited that lockdowns may exacerbate the link between loneliness and academic burnout by intensifying social isolation and modifying learning methods, thereby introducing additional stressors.

Meaning, while loneliness as a sole variable is found to stimulate feelings of burnout and academic strain within the 'traditional' educational mechanism, this positive association is believed to be more discernible and momentous within the context of virtual learning, in which it tremendously influences both the loneliness and academic aspects of the student's overall educational experience. That said, through distance teaching, students are first, naturally kept in a zone of seclusion, and second, expected to cope with a completely novel teaching method which was at the time quite alien to most students. Therefore, intensifying the pressure to excel academically, students found themselves heavily reliant on self-teaching and autodidacticism, particularly during the lockdown of Palestinian universities in the West Bank, a consequence of the violence during the Israel-Gaza War. This situation rendered students unable to seek external assistance from peers or tutors.

Also, the results depict that academic burnout is negatively correlated with academic performance ( $r = -0.703, p < 0.01$ ). The outcomes indicate that high levels of academic burnout are associated with poor academic performance. That being said, students who experience academic burnout as defined in the context of this study, are significantly more likely to perform poorly academically. The results support those by Ozhan & Yuksel (2021) who found that students who experience burnout tend to underperform and struggle in their studies. They however warned that students' response to burnout should not be viewed through a unilateral and homogeneous lens. Rather, they pinpointed how vital facets like individual aspirations, personality traits, overall endurance levels, and coping mechanisms can all have an abundant influence on mediating an association of such nature.

*H4: Academic burnout mediates the relationship between loneliness and academic performance of university students in West Bank during the Israel-Gaza War violence.*

**Table.2 Mediation Analysis**

Type	Effect	Estimate	SE	95% C.I. (a)		$\beta$	z	p
				Lower	Upper			
Indirt	Perceived Loneliness $\Rightarrow$ Academic Burnout $\Rightarrow$ Academic Performance	-0.156	0.0243	-0.20	-0.10	-0.13	-6.43	< .001
Component	Perceived Loneliness $\Rightarrow$ Academic Burnout	0.371	0.0246	0.323	0.419	0.644	15.06	< .001
	Academic Burnout $\Rightarrow$ Academic Performance	-0.421	0.0593	-0.54	-0.31	-0.20	-7.11	< .001
Diret	Perceived Loneliness $\Rightarrow$ Academic Performance	-0.936	0.0341	-1.00	-0.87	-0.78	-27.4	< .001
Total	Perceived Loneliness $\Rightarrow$ Academic Performance	-1.092	0.0281	-1.15	-1.04	-0.91	-38.8	< .001
Note. Confidence intervals computed with method: Standard (Delta method)								
Note. Betas are completely standardized effect sizes								

Mediation analysis was performed to assess the mediating role of academic burnout in the relationship between perceived loneliness and the academic performance of Palestinian university students. The results (seen in table.2) reveal a significant indirect effect of perceived loneliness on academic performance ( $\beta = -.156, t = -6.43, p < 0.001$ ). The total effect of perceived loneliness on academic performance, without the mediator was significant ( $\beta = -1.092, t = -38.84, p < 0.001$ ), and with the inclusion of the mediator, the direct effect of perceived loneliness on academic performance was also still significant ( $\beta = -.936, t = -27.44, p < 0.001$ ).

The results of the fourth hypothesis indicate that academic burnout partially mediates the relationship between perceived loneliness and academic performance among Palestinian university students during the Israel-Gaza conflict. This means that while academic burnout plays a significant role in influencing the association between perceived loneliness and academic performance, it does not fully account for the relationship on its own. The mediation analysis revealed a significant indirect effect of perceived loneliness on academic performance through academic burnout, suggesting that

burnout acts as a mediator in this relationship, partially explaining the impact of loneliness on academic outcomes. This crucially suggests that academic burnout partially mediates the relationship between perceived loneliness and academic performance. Hence, hypothesis four is indeed supported.

While an abundance of studies has been conducted on the relationship between perceived loneliness and academic performance, a dearth still exists in the factors that may prospectively mediate this relationship, not alone how a scarcity of studies specifically consider how academic burnout alone might mediate such association. The results of the current study indicate that while academic burnout does in fact contribute to poor academic performance, it was not the main predictor of academic performance. This further lends credence to Ozhan and Yuksel (2021) work which cautioned that individual students are going to respond differently to academic burnout and therefore, it is not easy to generalise its effect, given the multifarious nature of this study, and the variables being attested. Especially since they are interchangeable based on individual differences, pre-existing dispositions, and personal skills and characteristics.

## **Discussion**

### **Relationship Between Perceived Loneliness and Academic Performance**

It has long been vindicated that human beings have the natural and intrinsic affinity for bridging social ties and connections, as well as building intricate communal networks. Hence the very fundamental basis of a panoptic well-being is to a great extent engraved within one's ability to hone and enrich their gregarious group-based presence. That said, socialisation provides an elevated sense of belonging, as well as emotional support and allows for the exchange of positive social experiences. Thus, in the paucity of such nurturing interactions individuals are deprived from healthy social engagements which can take a toll on their all-encompassing perception of collective property. Indeed, especially when it comes to the pedagogical realm which is not only one of the most monumental stages in a human's life when they strive to fulfil their educational journeys, but also because it is a social brimming pot for building lifelong relationships. That said, pursuing educational endeavours is as vital as pursuing social and interpersonal relationships, and indeed pours right into yielding the fruit of such holistic and kaleidoscopic voyage. Consequently, the Israel-Gaza War violence has prodigiously obliterated all the possible means for practising social interactions of any sort and thus encapsulated many Palestinian students in West Bank in a whirlwind of uncertainty, anxiety, depression, incarcerative isolation, and suffocative loneliness, in the heart of such a novel invigoration of 'technological-ostracism'.

This is further demonstrated through the results of the first hypothesis which denotes a significant negative relationship between perceived loneliness and the academic performance of university students in West Bank during the Israel-Gaza War violence in 2023. On this note, loneliness is often associated with social isolation and the eradication of social and moral support, which are abundant facets that determine a student's overall academic success. Opportunities for formulating real-life conversations and collaborating with one another through networking, knowledge sharing, and peer-peer collaborations provide the indisputable linchpins of a student's learning process, and hence through the shift to online-learning, Palestinian students in West Bank were impoverished of the tangible communications that polish their studies. Rather, it stimulated a sense of alienation and social dislocation, and as a result students might have felt demotivated to complete their academic work and struggled to develop positive relationships with peers and faculty. This may peculiarly become exasperating for freshman students, where they not only have to navigate the natural adjustment from high school to university's unconventional journey, but to simultaneously do so in the midst of Israel-Gaza War violence in 2023. Thus, it becomes plausible how social connections are crucial for a student's academic performance. It is proven how when one is surrounded with a nourishing social web of students who are willing to cooperate with one another and conduct academic tasks collaboratively, be it through peer-peer tutoring, group-study sessions, or even think, pair, and share sessions, students are innately more inclined to motivate one another towards excelling and achieving their optimal academic accomplishments rather than when they are overwhelmed to execute on an individual level.

Additionally, apart from the social aspects, individual who endure loneliness are also prone to having impaired concentration spans, where they tend to be more overwhelmed by their lack of social relationships and forming new friendships over completing their academic obligations (Khairul Anam, 2022). Moreover, the state of online learning

accompanied by Israel-Gaza War and the lack of social connections and support have the potential to trigger pessimistic and adverse emotional states, which may also play an abundant role in exacerbating a student's cognitive functioning, thus making it challenging for students to recall information, and manage academic workloads, leading to poorer academic performance.

#### **Relationship Between Perceived Loneliness and Academic Burnout**

It is also crucial to fathom that increased emotions of loneliness are positively associated with higher levels of academic burnout. That said, as students are inundated with loneliness they may start to disassociate from their social surroundings, and lack the integral academic support needed to withstand the demands of their academic workloads. Hence, resulting in a deteriorated sense of will and motivation, leading to debilitation, lethargy, and eventually academic burnout. Moreover, isolated individuals may resort to counterproductive coping schemes, such as procrastination or substance abuse, which can further infuriate shuddering symptoms of exhaustion and burnout (Ermilio, 2022).

Therefore, in the absence of cornerstones of academic support during the Israel-Gaza War violence, students lack the necessary guidance and encouragement that allows them to persevere through academic challenges, thus resulting in unprecedented waves of academic burnout. Additionally, on the opposite end of this spectrum, academic burnout can also invigorate feelings of loneliness. When students are bamboozled with negative emotions like exhaustion, they may eventually sway away from social interactions and hence leading to a vicious cycle of perpetual loneliness and academic burnout. The Israel-Gaza War violence has further tigered the multifaceted relationship between loneliness and academic burnout, given the deprivation of belonging and connection to the institution itself, and amongst peers and faculty, which is mirrored through attitudes of impartiality and indifference towards academics.

On the other hand, when students are more enshrined within their social stratum and communities, they tend to be more inclined towards completing academic tasks, given the support they receive from their external environments. That is, this sense of unity within their academic circles can act as a buffer against the hindering implications of academic tautness, thus minimising the threat of burnout. Concurrently, students who are less lonely tend to engage in social settings more than others and partake in pertinent opportunities like participating in social festivities, extracurricular activities, recreational pursuits, and hone their interpersonal relationships, which presents students with an eagerness to pursue their purpose beyond the realm of academics, and thus play a paramount role in combating burnout.

#### **Relationship Between Academic Burnout and Academic Performance**

Apart from loneliness, it becomes vindicable how academic burnout and academic performance are negatively associated; when one excels in their scholarly pursuits their risk for experiencing burnout decreases and vice-versa. That said, students who suffer from severe exhaustion and academic burnout, typically exhibit unrivalled streams of nonchalance, withdrawal, and lack of interest in engaging with classroom activities and lessons (Pouratashi, 2018), which may diminish student's willingness and motivation to learn and thus affect their overall academic endeavours negatively. It is abundant to note that the Israel-Gaza War violence has unequivocally shaken the norms of educational systems in West Bank, showering with it a cacophonous state of ambivalent emotions, ranging from fear, to uncertainty, anxiety, and unrelenting stress. Indeed, such dramatic changes in university life have confined Palestinian students and faculty to adopt novel teaching and learning mechanisms, which not only bombarded the conventional academic benchmarks by principle, but also presented substitutes such as remote learning that were by essence daunting and 'exotic', thus escalating the hurdle for students to maintain their willpower and adamancy for educational excellence in a time of such heart-wrenching crises (El-Khodary et al., 2020). Moreover, such pressure is believed to take a grave toll on their emotional and psychological well-being, and hence alter how they tend to partake in the all-about learning progression. In the same light, in their study, De La Fuente (2011) explored the existing factors that pertain stress in educational settings, and elucidated how a plethora of the most prevalent inducements of educational stress related in one way or the other to the teaching process, especially in relation to maladjusted teaching methodologies and poor classroom atmospheres.

This relates to the assumption that student grasp concepts differently, and that they may yield different educational results based on their preferred mode of studying, where some excel for instance in classroom discussions, while others prefer peer-peer deliberation, or to utilise office hours and directly reach out to professors for additional support and boon

from academic resources and material, while on the contrary some prosper and succeed well in independent learning and self-studying. Hence, when the multifacetedness aspect of pedagogy is completely challenged, all students are forced to learn in the same uncovenanted manner in light of the diminishment of educational opportunities, and thus it may not only dwindle their eagerness to candidly seek knowledge, but more critically encompass a road of despondency, discouragement, burnout, and hence waned academic performances. Additionally, burnout has often been linked with individual self-esteem, in which the constant dejection of helplessness, vexation, and self-containment can hamper students' confidence and high spirits, and thus consequently curb their ability to academically flourish or to optimise their academic achievements.

Finally, the relationship between the variables attested in this study crucially underscores the vitality of addressing burnout in non-traditional educational settings such as virtual learning and hybrid teaching, which have become prominent bedrocks of the futuristic pedagogical field in contemporary time and have been picked up by umpteen prestigious academic institutions around the globe as a permanent educational approach. Hence, signifying the urgency to tackle this conundrum in possible future research, especially in the realm of 'hybrid-education'.

### **Conclusions**

This study examines the significant relationships between perceived loneliness, academic burnout, and academic performance among Palestinian university students during where the Israel-Gaza war in 2023 . The findings reveal a concerning pattern of negative associations between loneliness and academic performance, as well as a positive correlation between loneliness and academic burnout. Additionally, a negative correlation was identified between academic burnout and academic performance, emphasizing the detrimental impact of psychological factors on students' educational outcomes during times of conflict.

The findings of this study contribute significantly to the ongoing scientific discussions regarding the effects of loneliness and burnout on academic performance. Particularly noteworthy is the context of the Israel-Gaza conflict in 2023, which has had a profound impact on Palestinian university students in the West Bank. The study highlights the critical importance of understanding how loneliness and burnout, when experienced together, can detrimentally affect the overall well-being and development of university students. The combination of these factors can create a challenging environment for students, potentially hindering their academic progress and overall growth. By recognizing and addressing the interconnected nature of loneliness and burnout, educators and policymakers can implement targeted interventions to support students facing these challenges, especially in conflict-affected regions where the impact may be more pronounced.

### **Limitations And Recommendations**

Although this study provides valuable details about the effects of academic stress and loneliness on university students in the West Bank during the Israel-Gaza war, it essential acknowledge its limitations. The correlational research design employed, although effective in identifying statistical relationships, does not establish causation among loneliness, burnout, and academic performance, leaving room for speculation on the directional influence of these variables. Moreover, the utilization of self-reported measures, primarily via questionnaires, raises the possibility of bias since the responses provided by the participants could be influenced by their social desirability or emotional state at the time. Although the sample represents four major academic institutions in the South of West Bank, it may not fully capture the diverse experiences of all Palestinian university students, thus limiting the generalizability of the findings. Additionally, the study's focus on a single semester may not fully capture the longitudinal effects of the conflict and online learning on students' mental well-being and academic success. External factors such as family support, financial stability, and prior mental health conditions, which could significantly impact the outcomes, were not controlled for in this study, highlighting the need for further research to address these variables.

To further enrich our understanding of this issue, it is recommended to conduct more targeted investigations. Specifically, examining the impact of the Israel-Gaza war in 2023 on college freshmen may yield more insightful results than focusing on second- or third-year students, given that the measurement tool collected grades for the Fall semester. Additionally, future research endeavors could employ different measurement instruments tailored to assess the war's impact on incoming students more explicitly. This approach would contribute to a deep understanding of the interplay between

loneliness, academic performance, and the influence of contemporary digital transformations during conflict situations. Moreover, scholars in the field of behavioural science, communication and pedagogy can consider carrying out a longitudinal study that assesses how students that are ‘socially-introverted’ and self-report as lonely perform academically over a sustained period of time. This will enable researchers to introduce different variables at different stages of the study and to conclusively confirm the effect of loneliness on academic performance.

In conclusion, future studies could explore how academic burnout mediates or intervenes in the relationship between perceived loneliness and academic achievement. It is crucial to expand the scope of such investigations by conducting studies in diverse locations with distinct demographics in other conflict zones. This would provide a nuanced understanding of whether the findings and hypotheses established in the current study hold true across various cultural, academic, and socio-economic contexts. This broader approach to research would contribute significantly to the generalizability and applicability of the insights gained, fostering a more comprehensive understanding of the complex interplay between loneliness, burnout, and academic success.

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