

## Correlation Analysis of Academic Perfectionism, Self-Efficacy, and Burnout among English Department Learners

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### Abstract

Within applied linguistics and foreign language pedagogy, the role of emotions in language learning has been somewhat overshadowed. Addressing this oversight, our study focuses on psychological elements pertinent to English learning stages. We explore the interplay between academic perfectionism, self-efficacy, and language learning burnout. Survey data was collected from 263 English Department students at a university in Malang across the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 6<sup>th</sup> semesters using structured questionnaires. Notably, while second-semester students showed no significant correlation among these variables, meaningful connections emerged for students in the fourth and sixth semesters. Analysis revealed that, though academic perfectionism plays a role, its impact on burnout is relatively minor compared to self-efficacy. There was a distinct correlation between academic self-efficacy and language learning burnout throughout the English program's progression, with a weaker relationship in the 2<sup>nd</sup> semester and a stronger one in the 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> semesters. The results underscore the need for an educational environment that champions growth over mere perfection. Prioritizing stress management, self-reflection, and goal setting is paramount. Furthermore, specialized support is vital to cater to students' shifting needs as they advance academically.

**Keywords:** Academic perfectionism, English learning burnout, self-efficacy

### INTRODUCTION

Learning a foreign language, especially in this research focusing on English learning, encompasses various aspects, including vocabulary acquisition, grammar comprehension, pronunciation refinement, and developing listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. Long periods of slight improvement or repetitive setbacks can be discouraging, which may be triggered at various stages of the learning process or in multiple situations, particularly for students who are only exposed to English in language classes (Liu et al., 2021). It is frequently accompanied by ups and downs, and overcoming challenges is a crucial component. In addition, balancing English learning with other responsibilities, such as work or academic pursuits, can result in limited time and energy for English learning. The

inability to see tangible improvement in students' English language skills despite their efforts can be disheartening, leaving them feeling stuck and unable to advance, leading to frustration and burnout. It is challenging for EFL students to initiate and maintain motivation for learning, mainly when learning burnout occurs. More than ever, students encounter high expectations in their academic performance, which directly impacts personal comfort and, in most cases, leads to unwelcome burnout.

In foreign language education and investigation, scholars have observed a notable occurrence known as "foreign language learners' burnout." This phenomenon pertains to a significant decline in motivation and enthusiasm among language learners, particularly when tackling the challenge of acquiring a third language. (Ehrman, 1996). According to (Ehrman, 1996), their research revealed that some students displayed apathy toward learning English due to the demanding nature of mastering all four language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Specifically, memorizing English words was cited as an exceptionally tedious process, leading to a decline in students' motivation and interest in learning the language. Moreover, Yang et al. (2022) showed that students who studied English through online learning caused burnout that impacted their learning satisfaction.

Developing strategies for preventing English learning burnout and identifying the causes of burnout is a crucial step in this process. Perfectionism is characterized by a desire for perfection, a fear of failure, and an excessive concern with the opinions of others. According to Stoeber and Otto (2006), perfectionism is classified into two subordinate dimensions: perfectionistic strivings and perfectionistic concerns. Self-directed efforts and high personal standards in pursuing perfection, indicative of adaptive perfectionism, are called perfectionistic strivings. Adverse reactions to imperfection and maladaptive perfectionism resulting from fears of failure and errors are linked to perfectionistic concerns. Liu and Berzenski (2022) discovered that the two dimensions of perfectionism interact, implying that whether perfectionism leads to positive or negative outcomes relies on an individual's level of cognitive processing concerning the goals they have established for themselves. In other words, how perfectionistic tendencies manifest and impact individuals is influenced by how they perceive and approach their objectives.

Some previous studies have found perfectionism's positive and negative results in language learning. Bouafes (2020) revealed that negative perfectionism significantly and directly negatively affected EFL learners' speaking performance. This type of perfectionism led to maladaptive behaviors, such as increased anxiety levels and lower self-esteem. In contrast, adaptive perfectionists exhibited a more positive approach to their language learning journey. They demonstrated higher levels of cognitive awareness and consciousness. Moreover, they effectively managed their irrational thoughts by balancing striving for high-performance standards and maintaining a realistic perspective on their capabilities. In their study, Liu et al. (2021) found that perfectionism did not directly predict English learning burnout in mobile learning. However, their investigation revealed that learners with perfectionism tend to exhibit higher levels of grit, which could contribute to their dedication and persistence in language learning.

Recent research has revealed a significant discovery regarding the role of academic self-efficacy in preventing student burnout resulting from excessive academic

perfectionism. [Abarghuei \(2016\)](#) examined that students tended to set unrealistic expectations and goals for themselves, which resulted in burnout. However, the greater an individual's sense of self-efficacy, the more persistently they will strive for and the less they will experience burnout. Emerging evidence suggests that self-efficacy affects the correlation between perfectionism and psychological symptoms. Moreover, in their study, [Yu et al. \(2016\)](#) showed that students who demonstrated elevated levels of maladaptive academic perfectionism are at an increased risk of encountering the incapacitating consequences of academic burnout, but academic self-efficacy offered a promising solution. Students who cultivated and embraced it were better equipped to weather the pressures of perfectionism, ultimately leading to improved well-being and success in their academic pursuits.

Previous studies have highlighted the potential influence of academic perfectionism and academic self-efficacy on students' language learning outcomes and overall well-being. However, there remains a need for further investigation into the relationship between these factors and language learning burnout, specifically among English department students. Failing to conduct this study would lead to a lack of understanding regarding how academic perfectionism, academic self-efficacy, and language learning burnout intersect within the context of English department students. As a result, educational institutions need help identifying and effectively addressing the underlying factors contributing to burnout, impeding their ability to provide appropriate support and interventions for language learners. Consequently, there could be a higher prevalence of burnout, decreased motivation, and suboptimal language learning outcomes among students in English departments.

Thus, the current study explores the correlations between academic perfectionism, academic self-efficacy, and English learning burnout among 2nd, 4th, and 6th semester English department students. By understanding these correlations, the study aims to shed light on the psychological and academic factors influencing English department students' language learning burnout. The findings of this study have the potential to inform educational institutions and practitioners in developing interventions and support systems to address perfectionism-related burnout and enhance academic self-efficacy among language learners. Ultimately, the goal is to create a healthier and more conducive learning environment that promotes students' well-being and fosters their English learning success.

Building upon the background of this study and addressing the identified research gap, two primary research questions were formulated: Firstly, is there a correlation between academic perfectionism and language learning burnout among English Department students in the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 6<sup>th</sup> semesters? Secondly, does academic self-efficacy correlate with language learning burnout for these same students across the mentioned semesters?

## **METHOD**

In this study, we conducted a correlational analysis to investigate the relationships between academic perfectionism, self-efficacy, and English learning burnout. Using correlation studies, we tested specific hypotheses about how these variables were associated and determined the direction of these relationships, which helped validate or

refute our hypotheses. This approach aligns with [Creswell's \(2018\)](#) assertion that correlation studies are valuable in quantitative research for exploring connections between variables.

The purposive sampling method was employed for undergraduates who pursued full-time tertiary education in the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 6<sup>th</sup> semesters at the University in Malang. A total of 263 students (196 females and 67 males) from the English Language Teaching and English Literature Department were assigned to fill out the questionnaires. The range of their ages was from 19 to 22 years old.

The Indonesian translations of the three instruments used in this study have been modified to ensure that students who completed the questionnaire had a clearer understanding of the meaning of each item number. As this research instrument took the form of a questionnaire, Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha$ ) testing was used to evaluate the instrument's reliability. If the Cronbach alpha value of a variable was more significant than 0.6, it was considered reliable. The first questionnaire was 25 items of the Collage Academic Perfectionism Scale ([Liu & Berzenski, 2022](#)), which focused on maladaptive perfectionism in educational settings among college students. The College Academic Perfectionism Scale aimed to capture the presence of perfectionistic tendencies that could be counterproductive or harmful to students' academic progress and overall well-being. It allowed researchers to delve into the various dimensions of maladaptive perfectionism, such as excessive self-criticism, fear of failure, and unrealistic performance expectations. The reliability coefficient Cronbach's was of academic perfectionism .883.

Given our focus on English learning burnout, the Maslach Burnout Inventory–Student Survey (MBI-SS; [Hu & Schaufeli, 2009](#); [Maslach et al., 1986](#)) was particularly suitable as it was used in educational settings to assess student burnout. Fifteen items were designed to capture students' unique stressors and demands, making them relevant to our research context. The reliability coefficient Cronbach's of English learning burnout was .859. The last questionnaire was the General Academic Self-Efficacy Scale (GASE: [Nielsen et al., 2018](#)), comprising five items to measure academic self-efficacy. By utilizing this questionnaire, we aimed to gain valuable insights into how confident the participants felt about their academic skills and their likelihood of achieving academic success. The reliability coefficient Cronbach's was of academic self-efficacy .641.

## FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Data in this study were analyzed using SPSS 26 software, with a primary focus on examining the impact of academic perfectionism and self-efficacy on English learning burnout. We employed multiple regression analysis to determine the influence of these independent variables on the dependent outcome. Specifically, we used the t-test to gauge the distinct contributions of each independent variable to the dependent one. This methodology enriched our understanding of the interplay between academic perfectionism, self-efficacy, and English learning burnout, offering insights into their intricate effects on students' language learning journeys.

Table 1. Regression Analysis of Academic Perfectionism and Self-efficacy Predicting English Learning Burnout among 2nd Semester Students

Model	Unstandardized	Coefficient	t	Sig
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		<b>B</b>	<b>Std. Error</b>		
1	(Constant)	45.088	3.737	12.066	.000
	Academic Perfectionism	.021	.024	.893	.373
	Self-efficacy	-1.088	.148	-7.373	.000

a. Dependent Variable: English Learning Burnout

Table 1 presents the regression analysis for the prediction of English learning burnout among 2nd semester students based on academic perfectionism and self-efficacy. The p-value for academic perfectionism is 0.373, which is greater than the conventional significance level of 0.05, indicating that academic perfectionism does not have a statistically significant effect on English learning burnout. Conversely, the p-value for self-efficacy is less than 0.05, suggesting that self-efficacy has a statistically significant negative effect on English learning burnout.

Table 2. The Result of Coefficient of Determination

<b>Model</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>R Square</b>	<b>Adjusted R Square</b>	<b>Std. Error of Estimate</b>
1	.261	0.068	0.042	1.638
2	.265	0.075	0.098	1.622

a. Predictors: (Constant), Academic perfectionism

b. Predictors: (Constant), Academic Self-efficacy

Table 2 provides a summary of the regression models assessing the impact of academic perfectionism and academic self-efficacy on English learning burnout among 2<sup>nd</sup> semester students. In Model 1, with academic perfectionism as the predictor, 4.2% (adjusted R<sup>2</sup>) of the variance in English learning burnout is explained. In contrast, Model 2, with academic self-efficacy as the predictor, explains 9.8% (adjusted R<sup>2</sup>) of the variance. This indicates that academic self-efficacy has a stronger explanatory power for English learning burnout among these students compared to academic perfectionism.

Table 3. Regression Coefficients for Academic Perfectionism and Self-efficacy Predicting English Learning Burnout among 4<sup>th</sup> Semester Students

<b>Model</b>		<b>Unstandardized B</b>	<b>Coefficient Std. Error</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>Sig</b>
1	(Constant)	15.382	2.165	7.105	.000
	Academic Perfectionism	.453	.092	4.176	.004
	Self-efficacy	.350	.084	4.165	.000

a. Dependent Variable: English Learning Burnout

Table 3 presents the regression coefficients for the prediction of English learning burnout among 4<sup>th</sup> semester students using academic perfectionism and self-efficacy as predictors. Both academic perfectionism (p = 0.004) and self-efficacy (p < 0.001) show statistically significant associations with English learning burnout, with both p-values being less than the conventional significance threshold of 0.05.

Table 4. The Result of Coefficient of Determination

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of Estimate
1	.459	0.200	0.159	1.978
2	.535	0.351	0.301	1.876

a. Predictors: (Constant), Academic perfectionism

b. Predictors: (Constant), Academic Self-efficacy

Table 4 presents the variation in English learning burnout for 4<sup>th</sup> semester students as explained by academic perfectionism and academic self-efficacy. In the initial model, which uses academic perfectionism as a predictor, 15.9% of the variance (as indicated by the adjusted R<sup>2</sup>) in English learning burnout is accounted for. The subsequent model, with academic self-efficacy as the predictor, accounts for a more pronounced 30.1% of the variance. This highlights that, for 4<sup>th</sup> semester students, academic self-efficacy offers a more substantial explanation for English learning burnout than does academic perfectionism.

Table 5. Regression Coefficients for Academic Perfectionism and Self-efficacy Predicting English Learning Burnout among 6<sup>th</sup> Semester Students

Model		Unstandardized B	Coefficient Std. Error	t	Sig
1	(Constant)	2.971	11.753	.253	.000
	Academic Perfectionism	.212	.214	.992	.003
	Self-efficacy	.864	.251	3.441	.000

a. Dependent Variable: English Learning Burnout

Table 5 presents the regression coefficients for the prediction of English learning burnout among 6<sup>th</sup> semester students using academic perfectionism and self-efficacy as predictors. Both academic perfectionism (p = 0.003) and self-efficacy (p < 0.001) show statistically significant associations with English learning burnout. The exceptionally low p-values underscore the strong and significant relationships of both predictors with English learning burnout among the students of this semester.

Table 6. The Result of Coefficient of Determination

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.345	0.257	0.209	2.123
2	0.738	0.472	0.453	3.330

a. Predictors: (Constant), Academic perfectionism

b. Predictors: (Constant), Academic Self-efficacy

Table 6 illustrates the coefficients of determination (R<sup>2</sup> and Adjusted R<sup>2</sup>) for two regression models that predict English learning burnout for 6<sup>th</sup>-semester students. In the first model, where academic perfectionism is the predictor, it accounts for 20.9% (adjusted R<sup>2</sup>) of the variability in English learning burnout. Conversely, the second model, which incorporates academic self-efficacy as the predictor, explains a more considerable 45.3% (adjusted R<sup>2</sup>) of the variance. This indicates that among 6<sup>th</sup>-semester students, academic self-efficacy has a greater explanatory power for English learning burnout in comparison to academic perfectionism.

### **Correlation between Academic Perfectionism and English Learning Burnout among 2nd, 4th, and 6th semester students**

The analysis revealed no correlation among 2nd-semester students, whereas both 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>-semester students exhibited correlations between the studied variables. However, when considering the adjusted R-squared values, it became apparent that academic perfectionism contributed relatively less to the development of burnout in English learning than self-efficacy.

This suggested that students studying English as a foreign language tend to establish challenging and achievable goals. The individuals demonstrated a solid tendency and displayed positive emotional reactions in their activity to optimal functioning in learning the English language while simultaneously avoiding the adverse effects of burnout. The argument presented was supported by the research contributions of [Hanchon \(2010\)](#) and [Liu and Berzenski \(2022\)](#), who suggested that the phenomenon of perfectionism is closely intertwined with the goals that individuals establish for themselves and the resulting emotional responses they display in response to their academic achievements. Interestingly, although an individual exhibiting adaptive perfectionism and another exhibiting maladaptive perfectionism may receive equivalent results, their expectations and goals may trigger divergent emotional responses.

The research conducted by [Wang et al. \(2018\)](#) revealed that individuals exhibiting maladaptive perfectionistic traits are more prone to experiencing higher levels of anxiety and distress associated with performing errors, understanding, and communicating proficiently in a foreign language. Perfectionism, by its very definition, entails a strong dislike for imperfection, making it a formidable obstacle for individuals with perfectionistic tendencies to effectively manage the learning process that is a vital component of obtaining a new language. One of the fundamental factors contributing to this challenge is rooted in the primary language learning process, which involves encountering errors and imperfections regularly. Individuals with a restricted vocabulary and limited grammar knowledge in the target language face a more challenging learning process. Perfectionistic language learners often experience significant burnout and anxiety due to the pressure to achieve ideal language mastery. As a result, the fear of committing errors among language learners can act as a barrier to their advancement and restrict their capacity to adopt the essential trial-and-error procedure that is part of learning a language.

### **The correlation between Academic Self-efficacy and English Learning Burnout among 2nd, 4th, and 6th-semester students**

The findings suggested that the burnout experienced by English Department students about English learning was primarily linked to their academic self-efficacy rather than being attributed to academic perfectionism. This finding aligns with [Surma et al.'s \(2021\)](#) assertion, which supports the positive correlation between academic self-efficacy and burnout. Academic self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief in their ability to perform specific tasks or actions that directly influence their personal effort and achievement level. It is a form of motivation that gives individuals the confidence and assurance to engage in academic pursuits. However, it is worth noting that the expectations associated with it can also negatively impact students' overall self-efficacy levels and their perception of burnout. In other words, while academic self-efficacy can initially act as a

driving force for students, instilling a sense of confidence and belief in their capabilities, the pressure to meet high expectations can eventually lead to feelings of burnout.

Moreover, [stone \(1994\)](#) found that high self-efficacy is associated with overconfidence in one's abilities. [Sitzmann and Yeo's \(2013\)](#) meta-analysis explores the relationship between self-efficacy and performance and discusses the potential downsides of overestimating self-efficacy. They highlight the risks of overconfidence, which can lead to reduced effort, inadequate preparation, and underperformance. In addition, significant proof indicates that individuals constantly exaggerate their competence, mainly when their abilities are poor. Conflicts between what is expected and what is actual can have a negative effect on motivation and learning ([Hayakawa et al., 2020](#)).

However, some alternative perspectives suggest a more complex relationship between self-efficacy and burnout. For example, Bandura (1997) found that students' confidence in their academic abilities significantly influences their learning burnout: the higher their self-assurance in academic tasks, the lower their burnout. Self-efficacy has been linked with lower levels of burnout at baseline and a substantially reduced chance of experiencing more significant burnout over time ([Hall et al., 2019](#)). According to [Rohmani and Andriani \(2021\)](#), students viewed distance learning as an inconvenience and reported high levels of fatigue, which may harm their academic performance. Interventions to enhance self-efficacy may boost students' confidence, decreasing fatigue. One could posit that intellectual fatigue decreases as academic self-assurance increases. A strong sense of self-efficacy enhances an individual's motivation and emotional well-being when confronting challenging situations, concurrently reducing their vulnerability to anxiety, burnout, and depressive symptoms ([Kaiser, 2011](#); [Yildiz, 2023](#)).

It is crucial to emphasize that self-efficacy beliefs correlate with favorable outcomes and offer many benefits. Regardless of its beneficial impact and the number of attempts, the present study has provided a different and broader perspective by identifying that academic self-efficacy influenced English learning burnout. Evidence suggests that the character of self-efficacious students' efforts is also another substance. [Bandura and Schunk \(1981\)](#), the former theory about self-efficacy, discusses the potential negative consequences of it, including a lack of effort, reduced motivation, and performance discrepancies between perceived and actual abilities. The effect of self-assurance in academic tasks on performance varies according to the activity performed. If I presumed, the relationship between academic self-efficacy and English learning burnout is not causal but rather an outcome of accurate performance judgments based on their thinking process. According to the studies conducted by [Weiss and Knight \(1980\)](#) and [Sherf and Morrison \(2019\)](#), individuals with greater self-efficacy tend to exhibit a reduced tendency toward seeking information on problem-solving tasks. They may overestimate their skills and abilities, leading to a mismatch between their perceived capabilities and actual performance. This results in taking on duties or responsibilities beyond their competence, leading to mistakes, disappointment, or inferior performance outcomes.

Students' self-evaluations in English as a foreign language are more accurately tailored to English learning in college. In other words, it is the responsibility of English literature students and English Language Teaching students to master the English language. Hence, individuals can predict their ability to acquire English with a high degree



of accuracy. This statement is confirmed by the section cited in the previous sentence, which states that high self-efficacy advances cognitive processes and success in decision-making. Regarding behavior, the degree has been identified as a component of motivational strategies and determining how actions are planned and executed (Bandura, 1997).

Moreover, when students are confronted with academic demands, their approach to academic tasks and self-perception can significantly impact their academic success. In their research, Hsieh et al. (2007) found that the correlation between high self-efficacy and enhanced resilience is a well-established phenomenon. However, it is noteworthy that individuals with excessively high self-efficacy may encounter difficulties maintaining their perseverance in the face of setbacks, leading to resistance to feedback or constructive criticism. They may view feedback as unnecessary or invalid, which can hinder their ability to learn, adapt, and improve, which leads to performance-avoidance. According to objective orientation and self-efficacy theory, these students may have been more worried about their image than their classmates, who had lower confidence and may have adopted performance-avoidance goals strongly.

## CONCLUSION

This analysis highlights the intriguing differences in the correlation between academic perfectionism and burnout among students at different educational stages. While 2<sup>nd</sup>-semester students displayed no significant correlation, 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> semester students exhibited meaningful correlations between these variables. However, when assessing the adjusted R-squared values, it becomes evident that academic perfectionism played a relatively minor role in burnout compared to self-efficacy. It suggested that the students in that study tended to set challenging yet attainable goals. They demonstrated a strong inclination and adept emotional response toward achieving excellence and optimal performance in acquiring English language skills. Despite this, they could avoid the negative consequences of burnout due to the limited or weak relationship observed between these two variables.

Next, the study's results reveal that there is a correlation between academic self-efficacy and language learning burnout through the different semesters of the English Department program. The results showed a lower percentage in the relationship between academic self-efficacy and English language burnout among 2<sup>nd</sup>-semester students. In comparison, 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> semester students exhibited a higher rate in the relationship between these two variables. Interestingly, the contribution of these two variables also uncovered the existence of adverse effects, often referred to as the "dark side," associated with academic self-efficacy. These negative consequences extended beyond specific academic performances and affected students' habits, expectations, and attitudes, regardless of their level of achievement. Some negative effects associated with academic self-efficacy included an overestimation of abilities, a tendency to disregard the importance of adequate preparation and effort, a lack of realistic self-assessment, resistance to feedback, and decreased persistence when faced with failure.

Some recommendations of the current research are focused on English language teachers, English language students, and other researchers. While there's no correlation between academic perfectionism and English learning burnout in 2<sup>nd</sup> semester English

Department students, it is crucial to keep monitoring these factors. To prevent burnout, educators can offer support, encourage a balanced approach to learning, and promote self-care. Addressing academic perfectionism is vital despite a weak correlation in 4th and 6th-semester students. Creating supportive environments, teaching stress management, promoting self-reflection, setting realistic goals, and advising on time management can mitigate burnout. Educators should tailor strategies to each semester's needs to enhance students' English language learning experiences and well-being.

Furthermore, the negative consequences of academic self-efficacy are crucial for educators and institutions. First, it highlights the need for tailored support at different stages of students' educational journeys in the English Department. Educators should adjust their support as the correlation between self-efficacy and burnout varies across semesters. For example, early-stage students (2<sup>nd</sup> semester) may benefit from interventions to build self-efficacy, while later-stage students (4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> semester) require strategies to address overconfidence and resistance to feedback. Second, educators should promote realistic self-assessment, a growth mindset, and learning from mistakes. Creating an environment that values constructive feedback and sees failures as opportunities for growth can mitigate the harmful effects of overconfidence and reduce burnout risk.

Despite the illuminating findings it has arrived at, the research was limited to undergraduate students at one institution, restricting the applicability of the findings. Future research could explore more diverse student populations regarding demographic, age, and proficiency levels. Additionally, the study was focused on English as a foreign language, making it uncertain whether the findings apply to other languages like Chinese, German, or Arabic.

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