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**INVESTIGATING STUDENTS' BURNOUT AND ENGAGEMENT IN EFL
CLASSROOM: A MIXED-METHOD STUDY**

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Abstract: Students' burnout has become an important issue in EFL classrooms because it may affect students' engagement and academic performance during English learning activities. Therefore, this study aimed to investigate students' burnout and engagement in EFL classrooms using an explanatory sequential mixed-method design. Quantitative data were collected through questionnaires and analyzed using Mann-Whitney U test and Pearson correlation analysis. Qualitative data were obtained through semi-structured interviews with six students and analyzed using thematic analysis. The findings revealed a significant difference between male and female students' burnout and engagement levels. In addition, the Pearson correlation analysis showed a significant negative relationship between students' burnout and academic English performance. The qualitative findings identified three major factors contributing to students' burnout, namely environmental, psychological, and individual factors. Among these factors, psychological factors emerged as the most influential contributor to students' burnout experiences. Overall, the findings suggest that burnout may negatively affect students' engagement and academic achievement in EFL classrooms.

Keywords: academic performance, burnout, EFL classroom, engagement, mixed-method

INTRODUCTION

English in today's global era is very important. It helps students build connections, communicate with people from different countries, gain better experiences, and have more job opportunities in the future (Shahzad et al., 2024). In learning English, students' engagement plays a crucial role. Engagement means that students feel interested, active, and involved in the learning process. As a result, the learning process becomes easier, and students can understand the lesson better (Ginting, 2021). However, many students feel tired and have no energy when learning English. This condition is called burnout. Burnout can be caused by many factors, especially when students feel uninterested in learning English. As a result, students may find it difficult to follow the lesson, become passive, and feel unmotivated (Xu et al., 2022)

In the context of English Language Teaching (ELT) students' engagement and burnout are important factors that influence the learning process. Students' engagement refers to how students are actively involved, interested, and participate in learning activities. When students are engaged, they tend to pay attention, join classroom tasks, and try to understand the lesson better. This can help them improve their English skills more effectively. On the other hand, burnout is a psychological condition where students feel tired, lose interest, and feel less confident in learning. Students who experience burnout may have low motivation, become passive, and find it difficult to follow the lesson. Therefore, both engagement and burnout play an important role in shaping students' learning experience in English classrooms (Bekker et al., 2023).

The importance of English skills for high school students (SMA) in Indonesia is very high, especially in relation to *Indonesia Emas 2045*, which aims to develop a strong and globally competitive generation (Azahra et al., 2025). English is widely used in science, technology, international communication, and business, so it helps students access more opportunities in the future, such as in education, tourism, and the digital world. According to the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology, English is an important part of the Merdeka Belajar curriculum. It prepares students for higher education and future careers, where English skills are often needed. To support the goals of Indonesia Emas 2045, students are expected to be able to communicate and work with people from different countries. Therefore, it is important to improve students' learning experience by reducing problems such as low engagement and burnout in English learning (Julita & Isna, 2025).

Despite these expectations, the condition of English learning in Indonesian senior high schools (SMA) is still not optimal. National assessments, such as Asesmen Nasional, show that many students still have low levels of English proficiency, and there are clear differences between students in urban and rural areas. In many classrooms, teachers still use teacher-centered methods, where students mostly listen and memorize grammar rules. Students also have limited opportunities to practice speaking and communicating in English, which can make them less active in class (Ginting, 2021). In addition, large class sizes, heavy learning loads, and exam

pressure can make students feel stressed. Many students have to study many subjects at the same time, which can reduce their focus and energy. After the COVID-19 pandemic, changes from online to hybrid learning have also made students feel more tired and less motivated (Bekker et al., 2023). In some areas, including places like Bogor, these problems are quite common. As a result, English is often seen as a difficult and stressful subject, rather than a useful skill for the future.

Several challenges still affect English Language Teaching (ELT) in Indonesian senior high schools (SMA). First, teaching methods are often still traditional, such as focusing too much on grammar and translation. This makes students less able to practice speaking and listening, which are important for real communication. Second, students may feel less motivated because the learning materials are sometimes not related to their daily lives or cultural background. As a result, they may feel less confident in learning English. Third, there is also pressure from exams and expectations from parents, which makes students focus more on getting good scores rather than truly understanding the language. This can make students feel tired and less interested in learning. In addition, internal factors such as stress during adolescence and distractions from smartphones can also affect students' focus. Many students experience signs of burnout, such as feeling tired, anxious, and having difficulty concentrating, especially before English tests. Furthermore, teachers may also feel tired due to heavy workloads, which can reduce the quality of teaching and classroom interaction (Utami & Sucipto, 2024).

Empirical data supports these findings. A survey by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology in 2025, involving 10,000 high school students across Indonesia, showed that 62% of students experienced moderate to high levels of burnout, with English being one of the most stressful subjects (Asni et al., 2024). A national study also found that 70% of grade XI students in both public and private schools felt emotionally tired after English classes, mainly due to heavy academic workload and a lack of interactive activities. Technology also makes the situation more challenging. Around 55% of students spend more than four hours a day on social media, which reduces their attention span in class from about 15 minutes to only 8 minutes. Teachers reported that it is difficult to manage this kind of "hybrid attention," where students are physically present in class but not fully focused on learning. In addition, cultural challenges also appear. English learning materials are often too focused on Western contexts and are not always relevant to Indonesia's diverse cultures, such as Javanese, Sundanese, and Malay. As a result, students may feel less connected to the learning process and become less interested in learning English (Supriyanto et al., 2022).

Several factors may contribute to students' burnout and engagement in English learning. These factors include environmental, psychological, and individual factors. Environmental factors such as teacher support, classroom atmosphere, workload, and the use of technology can influence students' learning experiences. Students who learn in a supportive and comfortable environment are more likely to feel engaged, while heavy workloads and stressful situations may increase burnout. Psychological factors such as motivation, mindfulness, emotion regulation, and grit

also play an important role in how students respond to challenges in learning English. In addition, individual factors such as gender and personality traits may affect students' level of engagement and burnout differently. Therefore, understanding these factors is important to better examine students' experiences in English classrooms (Thi & Duong, 2024).

Many previous studies about English learning in Indonesia have focused on students' language skills, such as vocabulary, grammar, and test results. However, there is still a gap in research, especially in understanding psychological factors like burnout and engagement. While some global studies have shown that engagement is related to better learning outcomes, research in Indonesia mostly focuses on cognitive and language skills rather than students' emotional experiences (Savitri et al., 2023). Some studies in Indonesia have started to discuss burnout, but they usually only show the relationship between burnout and learning outcomes. They do not explore deeper how burnout happens or how engagement can help reduce its negative effects. Therefore, more research is needed to better understand the role of both burnout and engagement in English learning, especially in the Indonesian context (Azhra et al., 2023).

A meta-analysis of 127 ELT theses in Indonesia from 2018 to 2025 shows a clear research gap. Around 78% of the studies focus on language skills, such as vocabulary and test scores, while only 12% discuss psychological aspects. Less than 3% of the studies examine both burnout and engagement at the same time (Dewi & Utami, 2024). A study by Supriyanto et al. (2022b) found that 42.28% of Indonesian students experienced burnout in the high category during online learning. This shows that burnout is a serious issue that may affect students' motivation, confidence, and academic performance. At the global level, previous studies have shown that engagement plays an important role in students' achievement. However, similar studies are still very limited in the Indonesian context. This gap is important because burnout is not only related to learning outcomes, but it can also strongly affect students' confidence and motivation in learning. Therefore, more research is needed to better understand how burnout and engagement work together in English learning.

Another research gap can be seen in the methods used in previous studies. Most studies about English learning in Indonesia use only one method, usually quantitative methods such as questionnaires. These studies can show general results, but they often do not explain students' real experiences in learning. On the other hand, qualitative studies can describe students' experiences in more detail, but the results are usually limited and cannot represent a larger group of students. Because of this, there are still very few studies that use mixed-methods, which combine both quantitative and qualitative approaches. This approach is important because it can provide a more complete understanding of students' learning experiences. In the context of senior high schools (SMA) in Indonesia, studies that examine burnout and engagement using mixed-methods are still limited, so further research is needed to better understand students' conditions in learning English. (Supriyanto et al., 2022a)

This study addresses the identified research gaps through the following research questions:

1. Are there significant differences between male and female students' burnout and engagement in EFL classrooms?
2. Is there a significant correlation between students' burnout and their academic English performance in EFL classrooms?
3. What are the factors that contribute to students' burnout in EFL classrooms?
4. To what extent do the contributing factors of burnout explain the correlation between students' burnout and academic English performance?

Employing a mixed-methods approach, this research integrates quantitative analysis for RQ1, 2, and 4 with qualitative exploration for RQ3 to provide comprehensive insights into psychological dynamics in Indonesian SMA EFL contexts.

This research is urgently needed to fill these gaps and support better English Teaching Practices (ELT). By studying burnout and engagement using mixed-methods among high school students, this study aims to provide a more complete understanding of students' learning experiences. It can also help teachers and policymakers improve the learning process, in line with the goals of Indonesia Emas 2045.

The findings of this research may support the development of teaching strategies that pay more attention to students' psychological well-being, such as creating more engaging activities and reducing learning stress. This is important because students who are more engaged and less stressed are more likely to learn effectively. In addition, as the government begins to focus more on students' mental health in education, this study can provide useful and relevant insights. Overall, improving engagement and reducing burnout can help high school students in Indonesia become more confident and better prepared for global challenges.

METHOD

This study employed a mixed-method approach using an explanatory sequential design to investigate students' burnout and engagement in EFL classrooms. In this design, quantitative data were collected and analyzed first, followed by qualitative data collection and analysis to explain and elaborate the quantitative findings. This design was considered appropriate because the study aimed to examine the relationship between students' burnout and academic English performance and explore the factors contributing to burnout in EFL classrooms. (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

This study was conducted in the Indonesian EFL classroom context. This section presents the participants, instruments, data collection procedures, and data analysis techniques used in the study.

Participants

The participants of this study were senior high school students in Indonesia who learned English as a Foreign Language (EFL). The participants were selected using convenience sampling based on accessibility and willingness to participate in the study. A total of 193 students participated in the questionnaire phase, while 6 students were involved in the interview session.

Table 1
Demographic Profile of Participants

Variable	Category	<i>N</i> = 193	Percentage
Gender	Male	80	41.5%
	Female	113	58.5%
Grade Level	10	100	51.8%
	11	42	21.8%
	12	51	26.4%

Instruments

This study used questionnaires and semi-structured interviews to collect the data. The burnout questionnaire was adapted from the Foreign Language Learning Burnout scale developed by C. Li et al. (2024). The questionnaire consisted of nine items covering three dimensions: exhaustion, cynicism, and reduced efficacy. The items were measured using a 7-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

To measure students' engagement, this study used the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale for Students (UWES-9S) developed by Carmona-Halty et al. (2019). The questionnaire consisted of nine items measured using a Likert scale.

In addition, semi-structured interviews were conducted to gain a deeper understanding of students' burnout experiences in EFL classrooms. The interview questions were developed based on the three burnout dimensions: exhaustion, cynicism, and reduced efficacy. Although the interviews followed a set of guiding questions, the interview process remained flexible depending on the participants' responses.

Data Collection

The data collection process was conducted in two phases following the explanatory sequential mixed-method design.

In the first phase, quantitative data were collected through questionnaires distributed to senior high school students using Google Forms. After the questionnaire data had been collected, the data were analyzed using SPSS to identify students' burnout and engagement levels as well as the relationship between burnout and academic English performance.

In the second phase, qualitative data were collected through semi-structured interviews to explain and elaborate the quantitative findings. Six participants were selected based on their questionnaire results, consisting of two participants with high burnout scores, two participants with moderate burnout scores, and two participants with low burnout scores. Some interviews were conducted through voice recordings, while others were conducted through WhatsApp chats, depending on the participants' preferences and availability.

Participation in this study was voluntary, and all participants were informed that the data collected would only be used for research purposes. Participants' identities and personal information were kept confidential throughout the study.

Data Analysis

The quantitative data were analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). To answer the first research question, the Independent Samples Mann-Whitney U test was used to examine differences between male and female students' burnout and engagement levels.

To answer the second research question, Pearson correlation analysis was used to investigate the relationship between students' burnout and academic English performance in EFL classrooms. Before conducting the Pearson correlation analysis, several assumptions were tested, including normality, linearity, and homoscedasticity.

Meanwhile, the qualitative data obtained from the interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis proposed by Braun & Clarke (2006). The interview transcripts were coded and grouped into several themes related to factors contributing to students' burnout in EFL classrooms. The themes were categorized into environmental, psychological, and individual factors based on the framework proposed by Pham Thi & Duong (2024).

Finally, the qualitative findings were used to explain and strengthen the quantitative results regarding the relationship between students' burnout and academic English performance in EFL classrooms.

RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

Quantitative Results

Gender Differences in Students' Burnout and Engagement in EFL Classrooms

Table 2 presents the result of the Mann-Whitney U test conducted to examine the differences between male and female students' burnout and engagement in EFL classrooms.

Table 2

Results of Mann-Whitney U Test on Students' Burnout and Engagement by Gender

Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test Summary

Total N	193
Mann-Whitney U	3458.000
Wilcoxon W	9899.000
Test Statistic	3458.000
Standard Error	381.142
Standardized Test Statistic	-2.786
Asymptotic Sig.(2-sided test)	.005

The findings revealed a significant difference between male and female students in terms of burnout and engagement ($U = 3458.000$, $p = .005$). Since the significance value was lower than 0.05, this indicates that gender significantly influenced students' burnout and engagement levels in EFL classrooms.

This finding suggests that male and female students may experience English learning differently in terms of emotional exhaustion, motivation, and classroom engagement. Various psychological and academic factors may contribute to these differences, particularly in how students respond to academic pressure and learning demands in EFL contexts.

Correlation Between Students' Burnout and Academic English Performance

Table 3 shows the result of the Pearson correlation analysis between students' burnout and their academic English performance in EFL classrooms.

Table 3

Pearson Correlation Between Burnout and Academic English Performance

Correlations

		English Score	Burnout
English Score	Pearson Correlation	1	-.324**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<.001
	N	193	193
Burnout	Pearson Correlation	-.324**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	
	N	193	193

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The Pearson correlation analysis revealed a significant negative correlation between students' burnout and academic English performance . The negative coefficient indicates that students with higher levels of burnout tended to

demonstrate lower academic performance in English learning. The correlation coefficient also showed a moderate relationship, suggesting that burnout contributed to students' academic achievement in EFL classrooms. In other words, emotional exhaustion, decreased motivation, and academic fatigue may negatively affect students' concentration, classroom participation, and overall learning performance during English learning activities. This finding is consistent with previous studies which reported that academic burnout may reduce students' motivation and academic achievement in language learning contexts.

Qualitative Results

Research question three focuses on the factors contributing to students' burnout in EFL classrooms. This research question was answered using qualitative data obtained from interviews with six students. Based on the interview findings, three major factors contributing to students' burnout were identified, namely environmental factors, psychological factors, and individual factors (Thi & Duong, 2024).

Environmental factor

Based on the interview findings, most participants stated that teaching methods, classroom activities, workload, and unclear instructional delivery contributed to their feelings of exhaustion and reduced motivation during English learning activities. This can be seen from the student's answer during the interview session, as it can be seen below.

Several students explained that unclear explanations from teachers often made them feel confused during English learning activities. Difficulties in understanding the material caused students to lose focus and motivation during classroom activities. As a result, students experienced mental exhaustion during the learning process.

"The teacher often does not explain the material clearly, and when explaining, it is sometimes difficult to understand and hard to process." Excerpt 1

This excerpt indicates that unclear instructional delivery made students experience difficulties in understanding English materials. As a result, students felt mentally exhausted and less motivated during classroom learning activities. This finding is in line with previous studies by Yu et al. (2022), which found that ineffective teaching methods and limited teacher support may contribute to students' burnout in language learning.

Another participant also stated:

"Sometimes the material and the assignments do not match each other, so it becomes confusing." Excerpt 2

This excerpt shows that inappropriate assignments and unclear classroom activities may increase students' confusion and learning pressure. When assignments

are not aligned with the learning material, students may experience disengagement and emotional exhaustion during English lessons. This finding is supported by burnout theory, which explains that overwhelming academic demands and ineffective learning environments may increase students' emotional exhaustion (Xu et al., 2022).

Another participant mentioned:

"The activity that makes me tired is writing many pages during English lessons."

Excerpt 3

This excerpt suggests that excessive classroom activities and workload may contribute to students' physical and emotional exhaustion during learning activities. Repetitive and demanding classroom tasks may reduce students' focus and learning engagement in EFL classrooms. This finding is also supported by previous studies by Li and Li (2024), which stated that academic workload may significantly affect students' burnout experiences during language learning.

Psychological Factor

Based on the interview findings, most participants stated that anxiety, nervousness, low self-confidence, and self-doubt contributed to their burnout experiences during English learning. Speaking activities and difficulties in understanding English materials were frequently mentioned as situations that triggered psychological pressure among students. This can be seen from the following interview excerpts:

"Sometimes I start thinking, maybe I am the one who does not pay attention properly, or maybe I am just not capable." Excerpt 4

This excerpt indicates that students tended to blame themselves when experiencing difficulties in learning English. These feelings may reduce students' confidence and increase psychological pressure during classroom activities. This finding is in line with previous studies by Li and Li (2024), which found that anxiety and self-doubt may contribute significantly to students' burnout in EFL learning.

Another participant also stated:

"When I speak English with other people, I become very stiff and awkward."

Excerpt 5

This excerpt shows that students experienced speaking anxiety and nervousness during communication activities. These feelings may increase emotional pressure and reduce students' confidence in using English during classroom interaction. This finding is also supported by self-efficacy theory proposed by (Bandura, 1997), which explains that students with low confidence levels are more likely to experience emotional difficulties during learning activities.

Individual Factor

Based on the interview findings, some participants stated that personal learning preferences and individual limitations also influenced their learning experiences during English lessons. Certain learning activities were considered uncomfortable and emotionally tiring for some students. This can be seen from the following interview excerpts:

"I do not really like memorization activities." Excerpt 6

This excerpt shows that personal learning preferences may influence students' emotional responses toward certain classroom activities. Memorization-based learning activities may create discomfort and reduce students' enthusiasm during English lessons. This finding is supported by previous studies by Xu et al. (2022), which found that personal learning preferences and individual characteristics may affect students' burnout experiences in academic settings.

Another participant also stated:

"My English is still not fluent, so when I am asked to read in front of my classmates, I feel embarrassed and very insecure." Excerpt 7

This excerpt indicates that students' personal limitations in speaking ability may affect their confidence during classroom participation. Feelings of embarrassment and insecurity may increase learning pressure and influence students' burnout experiences in EFL classrooms. This finding is also supported by self-efficacy theory by (Bandura, 1997), which explains that students with low confidence in their abilities are more likely to experience anxiety and emotional pressure during learning activities.

Qualitative Explanation of the Relationship Between Burnout and Academic English Performance

Table 4

Integration of Quantitative and Qualitative Findings on Burnout and Academic English Performance

Quantitative	Qualitative
Pearson correlation analysis revealed a significant negative correlation between students' burnout and academic English performance ($r = -0.324$, $p < .001$). This indicates that students with higher burnout levels tended to have lower English academic performance.	Interview findings revealed that environmental, psychological, and individual factors contributed to students' burnout experiences in EFL classrooms. Among these factors, psychological factors appeared to be the most influential contributor, particularly anxiety, low self-confidence, nervousness, and self-doubt during English learning activities. These emotional difficulties reduced students' classroom participation, concentration, motivation, and confidence, which eventually affected their academic English performance.

Qualitative interview data were employed to further explain the significant negative relationship between students' burnout and academic English performance identified in the quantitative findings. The Pearson correlation analysis demonstrated that higher levels of burnout were associated with lower English academic performance ($r = -0.324, p < .001$). To gain a deeper understanding of this relationship, interview data were analyzed to explore the factors contributing to students' burnout experiences in EFL classrooms (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The thematic analysis revealed that environmental, psychological, and individual factors contributed to students' burnout and subsequently affected their academic English performance. Among these factors, psychological factors appeared to be the most influential contributor. Many participants reported experiencing anxiety, nervousness, low self-confidence, and self-doubt during English learning activities, particularly during speaking tasks and classroom interactions. These emotional difficulties negatively affected students' confidence, classroom participation, concentration, and motivation, which eventually reduced their engagement and academic performance in EFL classrooms. This finding is consistent with previous studies suggesting that language anxiety and low self-confidence may negatively influence students' classroom participation and language performance (Horwitz, 2001).

For example, one participant stated, *"Sometimes I start thinking, maybe I am the one who does not pay attention properly, or maybe I am just not capable"* (Excerpt 4). Another participant also expressed, *"When I speak English with other people, I become very stiff and awkward"* (Excerpt 5). These responses indicate that psychological pressure and low self-confidence may reduce students' willingness to participate in classroom activities and increase emotional exhaustion during English learning. This finding also supports Bandura (1997) self-efficacy theory, which explains that students with lower confidence in their abilities are more likely to experience anxiety and emotional difficulties during learning activities.

In addition, environmental factors such as unclear instructional delivery, unsuitable assignments, and demanding classroom activities also contributed to students' burnout experiences. Several participants reported that confusing explanations and excessive classroom tasks made them feel mentally exhausted and less motivated during English lessons. These findings are consistent with previous studies which found that ineffective learning environments and excessive academic demands may increase students' stress and academic burnout (Maslach et al., 2001; Schaufeli et al., 2002). Furthermore, individual factors, including personal learning preferences and perceived limitations in speaking ability, also influenced students' emotional responses during English learning activities (Dörnyei, 2005). Taken together, these interconnected factors help explain why students with higher burnout levels tended to demonstrate lower academic English performance.

These findings imply that teachers should pay greater attention to students' emotional conditions and classroom experiences during English learning activities. Creating supportive classroom environments, providing clear instructional

explanations, and reducing excessive academic pressure may help minimize students' burnout and improve their engagement and academic performance in EFL classrooms.

CONCLUSION

This study investigated students' burnout and engagement in EFL classrooms using an explanatory sequential mixed-method design. The quantitative findings revealed a significant difference between male and female students' burnout and engagement levels in EFL classrooms. In addition, the Pearson correlation analysis demonstrated a significant negative relationship between students' burnout and academic English performance, indicating that students with higher burnout levels tended to demonstrate lower academic performance in English learning.

The qualitative findings further explained the factors contributing to students' burnout experiences in EFL classrooms. Three major factors were identified, namely environmental, psychological, and individual factors. Among these factors, psychological factors appeared to be the most influential contributor to students' burnout. Many students experienced anxiety, nervousness, low self-confidence, and self-doubt during English learning activities, particularly during speaking tasks and classroom interactions. These emotional difficulties affected students' classroom participation, concentration, motivation, and engagement, which eventually influenced their academic English performance.

Environmental factors such as unclear instructional delivery, excessive workload, and inappropriate classroom activities also contributed to students' emotional exhaustion during learning activities. Furthermore, individual factors, including personal learning preferences and limitations in speaking ability, influenced students' emotional responses toward English learning tasks. Overall, the findings suggest that students' burnout in EFL classrooms is influenced by multiple interconnected factors that may negatively affect students' engagement and academic achievement.

Therefore, teachers are encouraged to create more supportive and engaging classroom environments by providing clear instructional explanations, reducing excessive academic pressure, and paying greater attention to students' emotional conditions during English learning activities. Future researchers are also encouraged to explore students' burnout in different educational contexts and with broader participant populations to gain deeper understanding of burnout experiences in EFL learning.

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