



# Pandemic Burnout: An Investigation of College Music Major's Mental Health

Joshua Chism  
Joshua.g.chism-1@ou.edu  
University of Oklahoma



## Purpose

To investigate the level of burnout and COVID-19-related anxiety among undergraduate and graduate music majors in a large public university.

## Research Questions

1. What is the **profile** of students' lives regarding personal, professional, and academic involvement?
2. What is the current **level of burnout** in music students at one large university?
3. How have university **COVID-19 responses** impacted students' self-reported emotional outlook?
4. What **relationships** exist, if any, between burnout indicators and demographic variables?

## Methodology/Participants

- Survey Research Design
  - Voluntary Response Sampling
- Undergraduate and Graduate student music majors (full and part time). Approximately 506
- **N = 102**
  - Response rate of 20.15%.

## Survey Instrument

86 items in 4 parts

1. Modified Demographic Data Form (DDF) with 30-items
  - a) Demographics
  - b) Academic obligations
  - c) Employment obligations
  - d) Health/wellness practices
2. 22-item Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) to measure 3 components of burnout
  - a) Emotional Exhaustion
  - b) Depersonalization
  - c) Reduced Personal Accomplishment
3. COVID-19 Adaptation Emotional Impact (19 items)–designed to rate respondents' negative reactions to university COVID-19 adaptations
4. Likert-type Educational Quality (15 items)–designed to rate respondents' feelings and personal perceptions

## Academic Profile

| Demographic Characteristics | Bachelor Students<br>(n = 69) |      | Masters Students<br>(n = 19) |      | Doctoral Students<br>(n = 14) |       |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|------|------------------------------|------|-------------------------------|-------|
|                             | M                             | SD   | M                            | SD   | M                             | SD    |
| Credit hours                | 16.23                         | 2.43 | 8.42                         | 2.67 | 7.71                          | 2.55  |
| Number of ensembles         | 1.61                          | 1.0  | .92                          | .9   | 2.1                           | 2.74  |
| Hours in-person class/week  | 6.73                          | 5.45 | 2.6                          | 2.06 | 4.85                          | 4.2   |
| Hours virtual class/week    | 7.4                           | 4.23 | 4.44                         | 3.31 | 5.57                          | 7.0   |
| Hours lessons/week          | 2.04                          | 3.07 | 2.56                         | 2.45 | 2.67                          | 2.74  |
| Hours ensemble/week         | 5.5                           | 3.94 | 4.1                          | 3.3  | 4.55                          | 4.4   |
| Hours homework/week         | 11.0                          | 6.07 | 7.95                         | 5.89 | 14.1                          | 9.35  |
| Hours practicing/week       | 9.2                           | 5.66 | 12.0                         | 7.86 | 12.92                         | 8.31  |
| Hours volunteer/week        | 2.13                          | 6.70 | 1.88                         | 1.64 | 6.33                          | 11.32 |

## Health/Wellness

| Demographic Characteristics | Bachelor Students<br>(n = 69) |      | Masters Students<br>(n = 19) |      | Doctoral Students<br>(n = 14) |      |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|------|------------------------------|------|-------------------------------|------|
|                             | M                             | SD   | M                            | SD   | M                             | SD   |
| Hrs. relaxing/wk.           | 9.72                          | 5.12 | 8.88                         | 8.83 | 7.85                          | 4.14 |
| Hrs. sleep/night            | 6.43                          | .95  | 6.94                         | 1.13 | 6.14                          | 0.77 |
| Sleep quality <sup>a</sup>  | 5.62                          | 1.82 | 6.42                         | 2.04 | 5.0                           | 1.71 |
| Hrs. exercise/week          | 1.70                          | 1.71 | 2.73                         | 1.79 | 3.83                          | 2.69 |
| Ex. sessions/week           | 1.89                          | 1.78 | 3.27                         | 1.83 | 3.83                          | 2.04 |

## Burnout

| Burnout Subscale Levels     | n  | %    |
|-----------------------------|----|------|
| Emotional Exhaustion (0–54) |    |      |
| Low (0–16)                  | 7  | 6.9  |
| Moderate (17–26)            | 11 | 10.8 |
| High (27–54)                | 81 | 79.4 |
| Missing                     | 3  | 2.9  |
| Depersonalization (0–30)    |    |      |
| Low (0–8)                   | 46 | 45.1 |
| Moderate (9–13)             | 27 | 26.5 |
| High (14–30)                | 25 | 24.5 |
| Missing                     | 4  | 3.9  |
| Personal Accomplish. (0–48) |    |      |
| Low (0–30)                  | 10 | 10.0 |
| Moderate (31–36)            | 26 | 26.0 |
| High (37–48)                | 64 | 64.0 |
| Missing                     | 2  | 2.0  |

## Top Adaptation Stressors

| COVID-19 Adaptation                      | n  | M    | SD   | Skewness |
|--|----|------|------|----------|
| Virtual/online field experience          | 58 | 6.12 | 2.87 | -.56     |
| Virtual/online ensemble rehearsals       | 50 | 5.92 | 3.31 | -.45     |
| Virtual/online academic instruction      | 97 | 5.30 | 3.00 | -.08     |
| Virtual/online private lessons           | 81 | 5.25 | 3.01 | -.14     |
| Participating in virtual/online concerts | 63 | 5.09 | 3.30 | -.08     |

Rated on a 1–10 scale where 1 = no negative emotional impact and 10 = extremely negative emotional impact.

## Correlation Between

| Variable                   | n   | M(SD)        | 1     | 2     | 3     | 4     | 5    | 6    | 7     | 8      | 9    | 10    | 11   | 12 |
|----------------------------|-----|--------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|------|------|-------|--------|------|-------|------|----|
| 1. Age                     | 82  | 22.52(5.57)  | –     |       |       |       |      |      |       |        |      |       |      |    |
| 2. Employment <sup>a</sup> | 52  | 20.62(10.71) | .57** | –     |       |       |      |      |       |        |      |       |      |    |
| 3. Ensembles               | 85  | 1.58(1.35)   | -.04  | -.25  | –     |       |      |      |       |        |      |       |      |    |
| 4. 0-credit                | 68  | 1.24(1.56)   | -.32* | -.38* | .59** | –     |      |      |       |        |      |       |      |    |
| 5. Academics <sup>b</sup>  | 75  | 50.00(14.94) | -.05  | .02   | .44** | .49** | –    |      |       |        |      |       |      |    |
| 6. Relaxation <sup>a</sup> | 99  | 9.30(6.33)   | -.05  | -.12  | -.12  | .01   | -.12 | –    |       |        |      |       |      |    |
| 7. Sleep <sup>c</sup>      | 102 | 6.50(.98)    | -.08  | .12   | -.13  | .04   | -.18 | .15  | –     |        |      |       |      |    |
| 8. Sleep quality           | 102 | 5.69(1.88)   | .01   | .07   | -.10  | .00   | -.12 | .16  | .33** | –      |      |       |      |    |
| 9. Exercise <sup>a</sup>   | 84  | 2.19(2.02)   | .23   | .18   | -.22  | .03   | -.11 | .03  | -.08  | .16    | –    |       |      |    |
| 10. BO-EE                  | 99  | 35.31(9.66)  | -.17  | -.15  | .10   | .08   | .06  | -.13 | -.16  | -.40** | .01  | –     |      |    |
| 11. BO-DEP                 | 98  | 9.75(5.89)   | -.12  | -.14  | .41** | .36** | .30* | -.07 | -.01  | -.17   | .08  | .46** | –    |    |
| 12. BO-PA                  | 100 | 39.10(6.59)  | .35** | .31*  | -.06  | -.16  | .01  | -.11 | -.18  | .13    | .26* | -.19  | -.13 | –  |

<sup>a</sup>Measured in hours per week.

<sup>b</sup>Consisting of weekly in-person and virtual academic instruction, ensemble rehearsal, private studio/studio class instruction, homework, and practice time. Measured in hours per week.

<sup>c</sup>Measured in hours per night.

\*p < .05. \*\*p < .01.

## Discussion

- Students are **highly involved** both academically and musically.
- Students are receiving more hours of **virtual instruction** than in-person instruction.
- Students are not getting the required amount of **sleep**. Sleep is of only **moderate quality**.
- Most students are experiencing moderate and high levels of **emotional exhaustion** and **depersonalization**.
- However, the majority also report high levels of **personal accomplishment**.
- Of all COVID-19 adaptations, students are most negatively impacted by **virtual delivery** methods.
- Students feel as if their quality of education is **lower** during this time.
- Significant **correlations** exist between demographics and burnout subscales (in green).
- There was an interesting **lack of significant correlation** between factors indicated in red.

## Implications for MUED

- Develop best practices to mitigate virtual learning challenges
- Health/wellness efforts embedded into class curriculum
- Awareness and availability of campus support services
- Combat social stigma of seeking mental health professionals
- Curricular alterations systemically to streamline degree program

## For More Information

