



Silent Burnout Behind the Rank: Emotional Numbing, Psychological Detachment, and Survival-Based Coping Among Competitive Entrance Exam Aspirants in India

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ABSTRACT

The culture surrounding competitive entrance examinations in India has increasingly become associated with chronic psychological strain, emotional exhaustion, and identity-based distress among students. While existing research has extensively examined anxiety, depression, stress, and burnout among aspirants preparing for examinations such as JEE, NEET, UPSC, and CUET, limited attention has been given to the phenomenon of emotional numbing, a psychological state characterized by reduced emotional responsiveness, detachment, restricted affect, and diminished capacity to experience pleasure, motivation, or interpersonal connection. The present study proposes to investigate emotional numbing as an adaptive yet psychologically costly coping mechanism emerging from prolonged academic pressure, social comparison. This study delves into how multiple attempts at the entrance examinations impact candidates' emotional numbing, hardness and motivation. These results highlight a stark contrast between the glorified perception of the entrance exams and the actual mental and emotional struggles of candidates. To bridge this gap, it's essential to implement specialized support systems and resilience building for aspirants. Future research should aim at creating targeted interventions to alleviate the psychological toll of extended preparation and foster a more supportive



environment for those navigating this demanding journey. Graduate adults preparing for competitive examinations often face significant psychological stress due to prolonged self-study, performance pressures, and uncertainty about outcomes. Thus, the study challenges the perception and how mentally entrance exams are considered a status symbol to achieve goals in India.

Introduction

In India, competitive exams have a central position in the lives of educated youth. Exams such as the Civil Services, Staff Selection Commission (SSC), National Eligibility Test (NET), banking, teaching eligibility tests and state-level services etc are widely regarded as gateways to secure employment and social respect. For many young people, clearing a competitive exam is not merely a career goal but a life goal which promises them stability of life, dignity in their society and recognition from society. From a young age, students are socialized into the belief that the hard work and dedication will eventually lead to success in these exams. Families, teachers, coaching institutes, and popular narratives support the idea that competitive exams reward merit, and talent. As a result, large numbers of youth invest years, and years of their lives in the preparation of these exams and postponing their employment, marriage, and financial independence. However, in the reality, aspirant face intense competition and limited opportunities. There is a fight of thousands aspirant for one position. Many aspirants have gone through repeated failures, long waiting periods between exam cycles and uncertainty about their future. This gap between expectations and outcomes creates emotional numbing in aspirants.

Competitive Exams as a Social and Cultural System

Competitive exams are not isolated academic or career events, they are now part of a broader social and cultural system. They reflect societal values related to success in life, merit, discipline, and achievement and many more. In Indian society, government jobs and academic positions obtained through competitive exams are associated with security, high prestige, and moral worth. Exam preparation demands a full-time commitment that requires discipline, sacrifice and self-control. Aspirant's daily routines revolve around libraries, study schedules, mock tests, and revision cycles. Leisure activities, social interactions and personal relationships are frequently postponed or remain minimised. Many aspirants live in shared accommodations, PG near their coaching hubs, libraries or remain confined to their study tables at their homes for years. For many aspirants, preparation is not a short phase but a decade-long journey.



Aspirants from marginalised communities often lack proper guidance and facing stigma of taking benefits of reservations. Aspirants from these communities lack cultural capital.

Despite these sacrifices and challenges, success in these exams are remains uncertain. The unpredictability of exam patterns, changing syllabi, frequent paper leaks, delays in results and limited vacancies exacerbate aspirant anxiety further. Yet, the dominant narrative continues to emphasize on the individual effort, meritocracy and resilience, leaving little room to acknowledging structural constraints. These contradiction between high social expectations and limited structural support creates a fertile ground for sociological analysis. In China, Zhang et al. (2020) investigated the National College Entrance Examination (Gaokao) and its effects on students' mental health. Their study found that the Gaokao induces significant stress and psychological distress, reflecting patterns observed in other high-stakes examinations. These international studies underscore the widespread nature of psychological issues related to competitive exams.

This paper tries to understand aspirants lived experiences with sociological perspectives. Instead of focusing on the motivational aspects of the individual, it uses the concept of emotional numbing, psychological detachment, and survival-based coping respectively to understand the impact of the social structure and cultural expectations on the lives of aspirants. It is also asserted that the culture of competitive exams in India creates conditions of normlessness and strain that impact the mental well-being of aspirants.

Objectives

1. To assess the relationship between academic burnout and emotional numbing among competitive examination aspirants.
2. To investigate the extent to which psychological detachment functions as a coping mechanism during prolonged exam preparation.
3. To identify the most commonly adopted survival-based coping strategies among aspirants preparing for highly competitive examinations (e.g., UPSC, NEET, JEE, CAT, CUET).
4. To explore differences in emotional numbing and psychological detachment based on demographic and preparation-related variables such as gender, age, duration of preparation, number of attempts, and residential status (hosteller/day scholar).



5. To understand the lived experiences of aspirants regarding emotional suppression, loss of interest, social withdrawal, and psychological disengagement during exam preparation.

Significance

The significance of this research is that the findings have the potential to broaden the understanding of the theory of burnout beyond its conventional meaning. In most of the existing literature, burnout is defined as emotional exhaustion, cynicism, and low personal accomplishment. Many students continue functioning even under severe psychological pressure through their disconnection emotionally not only from themselves but also from other people and their environment. The study will help to add another layer to the growing body of knowledge about hidden burnout among competitive examination aspirants. From the point of view of counselling psychology, the study is also very important. Practitioners specializing in the counselling of competitive examination aspirants will be able to differentiate between the symptoms of laziness, lack of interest, inability to work, and difficulty in expressing emotions caused by such reasons and those that arise because of the experience of psychological pressure. Emotional numbing as a survival tool may serve as an important concept in developing special counselling programs.

The results have practical significance for educational institutes, coaching institutes, parents, and policy makers. The cultural milieu that surrounds the competitive examination in India gives a lot of importance to perseverance, sacrifice, and hard work without considering the psychological impact that comes from long preparation for such exams. Through the emphasis on the hidden cost of psychological issues, the results will enable stakeholders to take a more holistic approach to ensure the mental health of the students. Another valuable aspect of the research is its emphasis on the lived experience of the aspirants. Instead of focusing on their academic success, which can be quantified, the research brings into focus the emotional struggle of the aspirants, thus increasing awareness on these matters.

Emotional numbness and psychological distancing in competitive examination aspirants are still under researched areas in Indian Social Psychology. Then by bringing these aspects into focus, the research adds to the current body of knowledge on the psychological struggles of the students.

Literature Review

Competitive examinations in India demand intense preparation, often leading students to live away from their families for extended periods. This separation from a familiar environment can trigger separation anxiety, a form of anxiety disorder recognized by the DSM-5, characterized by excessive fear of being



apart from loved ones. While commonly studied in children, recent literature highlights its prevalence among adolescents and young adults, especially students under academic stress. Understanding the level of knowledge regarding separation anxiety among students can help in the development of supportive educational and counselling interventions. India, pursuing higher education is a challenging process that is frequently characterized by fierce rivalry. Many students encounter the intimidating obstacle of competitive exams, especially those hoping to be enrolled in undergraduate programs at prominent universities. These tests, which are intended to identify the most deserving applicants, put a great deal of strain on students and raise their stress and anxiety levels. Although stress is a normal human experience, excessive and persistent stress can be harmful to one's physical and emotional well-being.

Depression, anxiety, and stress levels are considered important indicators for mental health, and the inability to detect and address these psychological disorders negatively affects individuals, according to the recent National Mental Health Survey carried out by NIMHANS, the prevalence of depression is estimated to be 1.5% and students who had suffered from depression any time in the past is estimated at 2.2%, aspirants of competitive examination work hard, study for longer period, students may also face challenges to their health, both physical and mental, that may have long-term effects, anxiety disorders are the most common mental illness among scholars who are preparing for examination (Pachole, N., Thakur, A., Menon, M., & Peepre, K. 2023). Stress is an inevitable aspect of competitive exam preparation due to the high stakes involved. For Indian students, these exams often determine access to prestigious undergraduate programs and, by extension, their future career opportunities. Factors contributing to this kind of stress are academic pressure, physical and mental health challenges, and several long-term effects. Aspirants tend to take on more workload than they can complete. This leads to frustration, disappointment, and an inability to complete any work (Waseem, A. 2023). This behaviour stems from the immense pressure to perform well, meet societal and personal expectations, and secure a spot in prestigious institutions. The imbalance between workload and coping capacity leads to frustration, decreased productivity, and willpower.

The purpose of this study is to look into how emotional numbing, psychological detachment, survival based coping mechanism affect Indian students taking competitive exams for the under graduation. This study aims to add to the body of information on the psychological impacts of stress by investigating its causes, students' coping strategies, and the role of resilience in reducing its negative effects. Understanding the relationship between stress and resilience in the lives of students preparing for competitive exams like the Joint Entrance Examination (JEE), National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET), CLAT (Common Law Admission Test) CUET, NET and many more, has gained attention in



recent years. Although these tests are essential for advancing in one's career, they are also stressful milestones that assess students' psychological fortitude in addition to their knowledge. The ramifications of this dynamic go beyond specific academic results; they also touch on more general social issues like student mental health, the function of educational systems in promoting wellbeing, and the resources accessible to students during times of extreme stress. Stress constitutes a state of threatened homeostasis triggered by intrinsic or extrinsic adverse forces (stressors) and is counteracted by an intricate repertoire of physiologic and behavioural responses aiming to maintain/reestablish the optimal body equilibrium (Tsigos, C., Kyrou, I., Kassi, E., & Chrousos, G. P. 2016). Stress disrupts the body's homeostasis, triggering physiological and psychological responses, and for Indian students preparing for competitive exams, this disruption is significant. Intrinsic stressors like fear of failure, high personal expectations, and cognitive overload combine with extrinsic factors such as parental pressure, societal expectations, and intense peer competition to create a high-pressure environment. On a physiological basis, stress activates the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal axis (HPA axis), leading to elevated cortisol levels, which can cause fatigue, sleep disturbances, and impaired cognitive functions.

In the digital age, social media platforms, have further amplified this idealized image. Influencers and aspirants share curated snippets of their study routines, success stories, and motivational content, contributing to a polished and often unrealistic portrayal of the examination process. The emphasis on glamorous lifestyles and effortless success creates a marketing-driven image of the CSE, which starkly contrasts with the reality faced by many candidates. Globally, high-stakes examinations similar to the UPSC CSE reveal a pattern of significant psychological pressures. In the United States, the bar examination for aspiring lawyers provides a parallel example. Research by Kleim and Hennig (2021) highlights that the bar exam induces substantial stress and anxiety among candidates. Their study found that candidates frequently experience high levels of burnout and emotional strain due to the rigorous demands and high stakes of the exam (Kleim & Hennig, 2021). Similarly, in China, the National College Entrance Examination (Gaokao) is notorious for its intense pressure and competitive environment. Zhang et al. (2020) reported that the Gaokao is associated with elevated levels of stress and psychological distress, which significantly impact students' mental health and overall well-being (Zhang et al., 2020).

Furthermore, recent instances of leaked and cancelled exams have further compounded the psychological strain on candidates. For example, the repeated cancellations and postponements of important exams, such as those for the SSC (Staff Selection Commission) and various state-level recruitments, have introduced additional uncertainties and frustrations for aspirants. These disruptions not only affect



candidates' preparation schedules but also contribute to heightened anxiety and uncertainty about their future prospects (Chopra, 2022).

Hypothesis

H1: There will be a significant association between the level of knowledge and selected demographic variables.

H2: There is no relationship between multiple attempts at preparation and emotional numbing among aspirants.

H3: There is no significant correlation between the number of entrance exams attempts and levels of hardiness among aspirants.

H4: There are no differences in hardiness, emotional intelligence, and motivation (intrinsic vs. extrinsic) between aspirants who have relocated for entrances preparation and those who have remained at home

Statement of the Problem: A descriptive study to assess the level of knowledge regarding emotional numbing, psychological detachment, and survival-based coping among students preparing for competitive examinations.

Operational Definitions

1. Emotional Separation: Emotional distress due to separation from home or loved ones.
2. Knowledge: Awareness about symptoms, causes, effects, and management of separation anxiety.
3. Students: Individuals enrolled in coaching centres preparing for competitive examinations.
4. Coaching Centres: Institutions providing academic training for competitive exams like NEET, JEE, UPSC, etc.

Assumptions

1. Students preparing for competitive exams are at risk of experiencing psychological stress.
2. Knowledge about emotional numbing may vary depending on the background and experience of students.



Scope

This research paper examines the phenomenon of emotional numbing and psychological detachment among the competitive examination aspirants. The study includes aspirants preparing for or who have previously prepared for competitive exams such as UPSC, CUET, JEE, NEET, SSC, Banking etc. While several studies provide information about the mental wellbeing and survival-based coping, limited attention has been given to emotional numbing as a result of prolonged examination preparation. The study includes responses collected from 63 respondents which focuses on guilt, suppressed emotions, disconnection and future uncertainty. The survey conducted through a questionnaire format through academic networks which includes several questions on how aspirants struggle within the journey to attain the glory that every student of India aspires for. Various aspects like comparison, mental exhaustion and emotional state were asked to understand the ground reality aspirants go through.

Research Methodology

In this study, a survey method was used. Convenience sampling techniques were used to select the participants. In this study, n= 63 students preparing have prepared for competitive exams were taken as samples. The study aimed to understand the emotional numbing, psychological detachment, and emotional exhaustion among aspirants. The sample were taken into proper analysis for measuring and ethical guidelines were maintained throughout the paper. The data was mainly obtained from students who are currently preparing for their entrance examination. The sample size was collected from different states of North India where come the majority of the students who aim to crack such exams. The sample size contained n= 47 male participants and n= 16 female participants were taken into account while collecting sample size. The interview sample of n= 5 teachers were taken for identifying teacher analysis on how exams can become an emotional numbing for the students and teachers. There were 3 case studies that were studied in detailed to analyse how students face innumerable challenges during these exams pressure. The secondary data focused on through several research papers and journals and case analysis for studying from a time frame period of 2015 to 2024 study were taken into consideration. The data was conserved with confidentiality and all sought of privacy of data was protected appropriately.

Tool: A self-structured supervised questionnaire was developed for the purpose of the study. A total of 16 questions were asked, including demographic and statement questions. The questions assessed the feelings of being emotionally numb, guilt while taking breaks, future uncertainty, a worsened sleep schedule, mental exhaustion, and self-comparison with others. Respondents were given a 5-point Likert



scale to answer from "Strongly agree to Strongly disagree. Subjective question was also kept at the end to understand the experience and pain of the aspirants.

Data Analysis / Findings

The competitive exams included in the research study are CUET, UPSC, JEE, NEET, and others. The majority of respondents belonged to other exams (52.4%), whereas CUET was the second largest (28.6%), and UPSC was third (20.6%).

1. Time Frame for preparation

Time Frame for Preparation	Less than 6 Months	6 months-1 year	1-2 years	2-3 years	More than 3 years
% of Respondents	42.9%	31.7%	22.2%	7.9%	1.6%

Table 1.1 Time frame for preparation

The data reveals that emotional difficulties begin early in the preparation rather than only in the long term, as 42.9% of the respondents had been preparing for less than 6 months, and 31.7% preparing 6 months to 1 year.

2. Variables

Variables	Agree	Strongly Agree
Emotionally Numb	42.9%	22.2%
Future Uncertainty	42.9%	36.5%
Mental Exhaustion	41.3%	19.0%



Self-comparison	31.7%	19.0%
Worsened sleep schedule	38.1%	31.7%

Table 1.2 Variables

Emotional suppression is one of the common coping mechanisms among respondents. Many aspirants have linked their self-worth with academic performance and feel a lack of excitement or enthusiasm. The findings show disconnection from hobbies and future uncertainty as common experiences that aspirants go through.

The below figures indicate graphs that helps to understand the analysis.

1. I feel guilty when I take breaks from studying

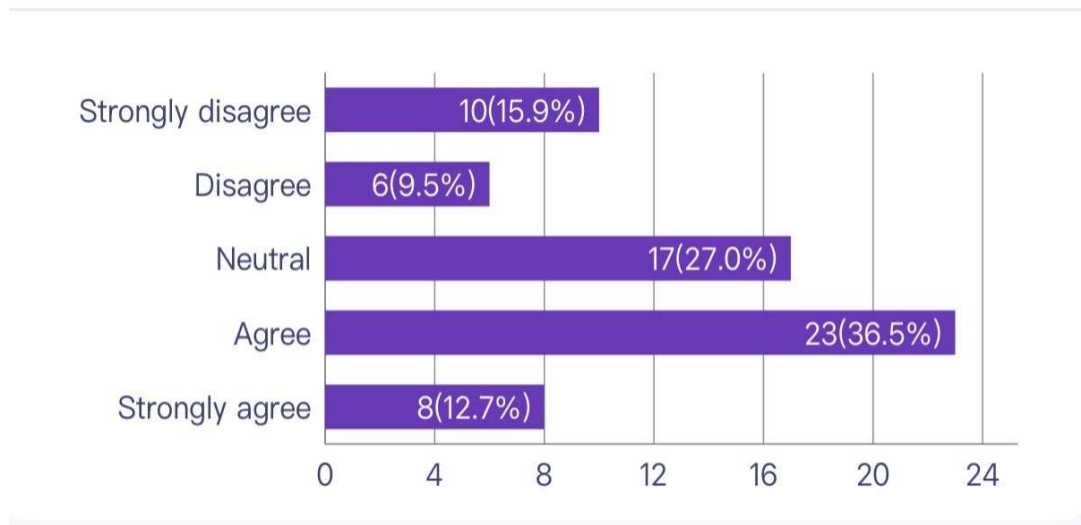


Figure 1.1: Distribution of the responses to the statement among competitive examination aspirants (N=63)

Interpretation: The findings suggest that a combined 49.2% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they feel guilt when they take breaks from studying. This reflects that many aspirants associate productivity with continuous studying. For many, a break is not a form of relaxation but rather a source of anxiety. The fact that 27% of respondents are neutral reflects that not all aspirants feel this, but this is common enough to be considered in the experience of competitive examinations.

2. I suppress emotions to continue studying

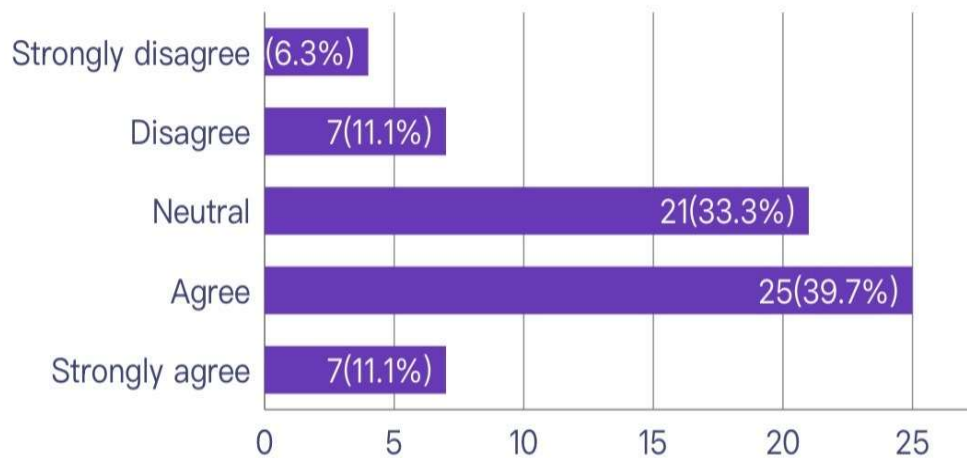


Figure 1.2: Distribution of the responses to the statement among competitive examination aspirants (N=63)

Interpretation: Many aspirants ignore their emotions during the preparation because they prioritize examination performance above their emotional needs. Continuous suppression of emotions may lead to emotional numbing and psychological detachment. Many aspirants may believe the conventional wisdom that emotions are a sign of weakness. The findings suggest that pressure does not come only from society and family but also from aspirants themselves. To crack the examination, they push themselves to continue despite emotional discomfort, which further leads to anxiety and depression.

3. My self-worth depends heavily on academic performance

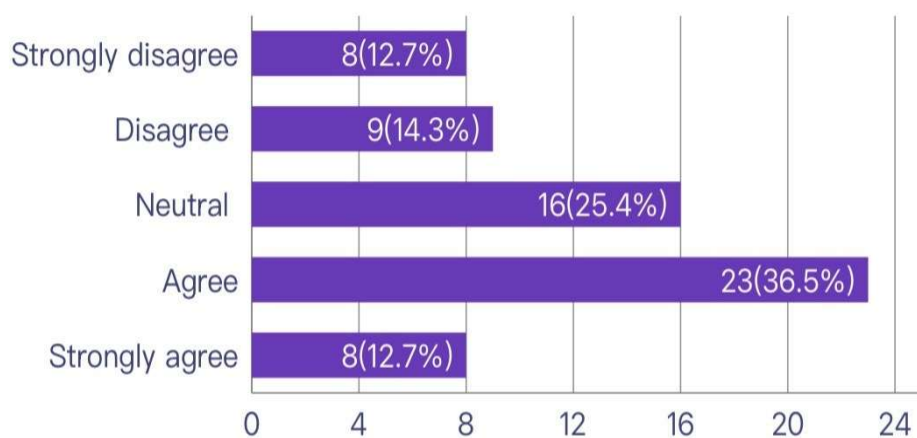


Figure 1.3: Distribution of the responses to the statement among competitive examination aspirants (N=63)

Interpretation: Nearly half of the aspirants believe that their self-worth depends heavily on academic performance. This creates a constant pressure of performance and self-comparison. Linking self-worth to academic performance may lead to emotional and psychological stress during the preparation. The fact that society rewards the winners and disrespects the failures is one of the reasons that aspirants often attach their self-worth.

4. I rarely feel excitement or enthusiasm nowadays

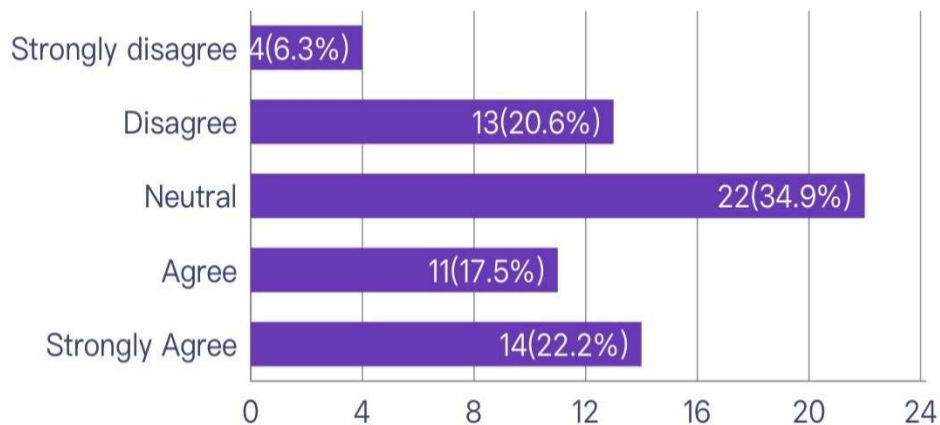


Figure 1.4: Distribution of the responses to the statement among competitive examination aspirants (N=63)

Interpretation: Examination preparation sometimes limits the positive elements, such as curiosity and excitement. A decline in excitement may hamper the well-being of a person. Long-term exposure to academic pressure may lead to emotional numbing, making aspirants less responsive to the activities they previously enjoyed. Highly competitive environments lead to emotional costs that aspirants have to suffer through because society prioritizes achievements.

5. I feel disconnected from hobbies or interests I previously enjoyed

Interpretation: The findings suggest that the majority of the respondents feel disconnected from hobbies or interests they previously enjoyed. One aspirant quoted, "Competitive exam preparation has made me feel mentally stressed, emotionally tired, and anxious about my future." Sometimes I feel pressured to study constantly and lose interest in things I previously enjoyed." This leads to a decline



of motivation and reduced life satisfaction, resulting in emotional numbing and psychological disengagement.



Figure 1.5: Distribution of the responses to the statement among competitive examination aspirants (N=63)

Thematic Analysis

The subjective responses provided by the respondents indicate 4 themes related to the experiences of competitive examination aspirants.

Theme A: Anxiety, Stress, and Uncertainty

- A dominant theme rising from the responses was anxiety and stress. As competitive exams come with future uncertainty, it generates stress and anxiety among aspirants. Some experiences get worse, leading to panic attacks and emotional numbness. The data findings show that aspirants find it difficult to emotionally connect with someone during the preparation, which leads to isolation, overthinking, and constant nervousness. Though for some, this preparation comes out as good for inculcating patience, for the majority, it results in negative emotions.

Theme B: Loss of Self, Disconnection, and Isolation

- Many aspirants go through the phase of isolation and disconnection from others. The preparation for any competitive exam requires discipline, determination, and perseverance. This results in fewer social interactions and more disconnection. The preparation of exams requires hours of preparation, which makes less time for hobbies/interests of the person, which is why the majority of aspirants start losing their interests in hobbies. Studying for a long duration has psychological as well as



sociological impact. According to the domain of psychology, it hampers the sleep schedule, constant pressure to be productive all the time, and loss of mental health and energy. Whereas in the sociological domain, the aspirants feel isolated and away from their loved ones. The future uncertainty, estrangement from oneself, and anxiety relate to the anomie condition by Emile Durkheim.

Theme C: Exhaustion, Emotional Breakdown, and Burnout

- Despite studying for hours, breaks between studies raise the feeling of guilt among aspirants. The intensity of preparation creates exhaustion and emotional breakdown. One cannot consistently study for more than a month; it eventually leads to burnout. The majority of aspirants agree that their self-worth depends heavily on academic performance. They link their practice test results with the productivity, which, once scored low, creates a negative impression in their mind. The aspirants feel mentally exhausted even after resting. The rest in between the study breaks feels more like a distraction rather than a mandatory component of well-being to them

Theme D: Discipline, Resilience, and Personal Growth

- Some respondents believe that this preparation has made them patient throughout their lives. It teaches them stability, perseverance, and how to live via work-life balance. It allows them to accept their mistakes in the form of failure and growth towards the journey of self-development. It pushes them to explore innovative methods beyond conventional ways of learning. The journey of competition exam preparation helps them become more focused, patient, and determined to achieve their goals.

While one aspirant believes that this preparation has affected them in a good way and has made them patient throughout the journey, the preparation pushes them to explore innovative methods beyond conventional ways of learning. Another aspirant believes that this was the worst decision of their life, as they have lost themselves entirely. The preparation has made them forget who they were before starting. This gave them the feeling of exhaustion, poor digestion, panic and anxiety, head cramps, etc.

One aspirant quoted, "Competitive exam preparation has made me feel mentally stressed, emotionally tired, and anxious about my future. Sometimes I feel pressured to study constantly and lose interest in things I previously enjoyed."



Case Studies

1. Case 1 The Aspirant Who Stopped Feeling Anything

Rahul" a 22-year-old guy getting ready for the JEE exam left his hometown to join a coaching centre in Kota. In his year of preparation, he was really pumped up kept in touch with his family and friends and made time for fun stuff. But after two tries that didn't go well and being around so much competition, he started to feel different.

Rahul said he didn't get that feeling anymore when he did well on practice tests and he didn't feel down when he messed up. His family noticed he wasn't as into things as he used to be. He rarely talked about how he was feeling. He slowly stopped celebrating holidays hanging out with people and just spent most of his time hitting the books or scrolling through media without really caring.

He didn't have blown depression or anything but he said he felt "empty" and like he was just going through the motions. He thought that if he didn't get too attached, he wouldn't get hurt by all the setbacks and not knowing what the future held. Over time just shutting off his emotions became his go-to way of dealing with things. It helped him keep studying. It also made it harder for him to feel happy, connected and motivated. This case illustrates how prolonged academic pressure and repeated failure can contribute to emotional numbing and psychological detachment as survival-oriented coping strategies among competitive examination aspirants.

2. Case 2 The NEET Aspirant Living in Survival Mode

Priya a 20-year-old girl who wants to be a doctor studied really hard for three years to get into a good medical college. Her family isn't rich. They helped her a lot with her studies so she felt a lot of pressure to do well. At first Priya was super stressed about her exams. What would happen to her career. After a few years of studying she started to feel differently. She didn't get so upset when she didn't do well as she wanted and she stopped talking to her friends and family about her fears. Her daily routine was just wake up study, eat, sleep and do it all again.

Priya said she didn't feel like herself anymore. Things she used to love, like painting and hanging out with friends didn't make her happy like they used to. She thought she had to ignore her feelings to focus on her goal. When she felt scared, disappointed or lonely she just pushed those feelings away. Kept studying. In a therapy session Priya said she was just trying to survive. Her way of dealing with stress helped her study hard. It made her feel exhausted, lonely and unhappy. This shows how some students



get used to feeling bad. Try to ignore their emotions to deal with the pressure to do well and not knowing what's going to happen next.

Future Scope

1. We should do research to see how people feel when they are getting ready for big competitions like how they stop feeling things and pull away from others and how this changes as they prepare for their exams.
2. It would be an idea to compare people who are studying for competitive exams with university students to see what kind of mental health problems are unique to people who are taking these high-stakes exams.
3. Future research can look at how people who are taking exams like the UPSC NEET JEE, CAT, GATE, SSC and Banking exams deal with not feeling things to see if there are any differences.
4. We can also do research in countries to see how people who are taking exams in different places deal with silent burnout and how the education system and what people expect from them affects their mental health.

Limitations

1. The study may be limited by its cross-sectional design, which restricts the ability to establish causal relationships between emotional numbing, psychological detachment, and survival-based coping.
2. Time constraints and resource limitations may restrict the sample size and geographical representation of participants.
3. The study focuses primarily on psychological variables and may not comprehensively assess biological, social, and environmental factors.
4. Participants may underreport emotional difficulties due to stigma surrounding mental health and fear of appearing weak or unmotivated.

Social Relevance

The present study, "Silent Burnout Behind the Rank: Emotional Numbing, Psychological Detachment and Survival-Based Coping Among Competitive Entrance Exam Aspirants in India " is very important for India now. India has a lot of students who take tough exams like UPSC, NEET JEE, CAT, SSC and other state-level tests. People think that doing well on these exams is the key to getting a life having money and making their families proud. These students often have to deal with a lot of pressure, uncertainty and stress about how they do on these exams. This can really hurt their health. Even though



people are talking more about how stressed students, they mostly focus on how well students are doing in school and if they have anxiety or depression. They do not pay attention to what students are going through on the inside. Some students feel really tired, empty and disconnected from their feelings. They still keep going. They find ways to cope that help them survive the time they have to study " looks at these hidden problems that students face and the present study.

The research is important for schools and colleges well as for people who make decisions. What we found out can help schools and colleges include services that take care of student mental health like counselling and stress management. This can make schools and colleges better places for students, where they can do well and also be happy. The study is also important because it talks about how young people in India doing mentally. In India it is very competitive to get into a college or get a good job. It is very important to understand how young people deal with a lot of pressure all the time. This study shows that it is not about doing well in exams but also about being happy and healthy. This study wants to talk about the feelings and emotions of students who are taking exams, which they often do not talk about. It wants to help create a society where people think that mental health is just as important, as doing in school. The study wants to make sure that people understand that to be successful you need to be happy and healthy not just do well in exams.

Conclusion

The study we did shows that people in India who are preparing for exams often go through tough times emotionally. They might feel numb detached and only focused on getting through each day. The pressure to do well in academics not knowing what will happen next and always having to perform can push them to keep going. It can also make them quietly burn out even if they seem productive. Understanding what these people go through is key to helping them feel better mentally creating counselling programs and making schools a supportive place. We should not just look at how someone does on an exam but also how they feel about themselves during the process. "The greatest tragedy is not when a person loses a competition. When they lose themselves while trying to win it". It is really sad when someone forgets who they are in the process of trying to succeed. These exam pressures and the stress that comes with it should not define a person worth. Thus, we need to make sure that students are not just academically successful but also emotionally healthy. Counselling and support systems, in schools can play a role in this. By focusing on both scores and emotional well-being we can help students achieve success without losing themselves.



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