



# Social Media Lends Insight into the Adolescent Academic Burnout Experience: An In-Depth Content Analysis of Posts and Comments

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## INTRODUCTION

### Academic Stress Among Adolescents:

61% of high schoolers report feeling a great deal of pressure to get good grades.

87% of college students cite academics as their primary source of stress.

School-related burnout is associated with **increased anxiety, depression, suicidal thoughts, and decreased overall life satisfaction and academic performance.**

Little is known about the content of social media post regarding adolescent academic burnout and varying user interactions on social media platforms.

The goal of this study is to:

1. better understand how adolescents describe their academic burnout experience on Reddit
2. better understand how users respond to different academic related burnout posts on Reddit.

## METHODS

design and subjects

This study used **content analysis**. Posts were identified through searching “**high school burnt out Reddit**”, “**college burnout Reddit**”, and “**academic burnout Reddit**” on Google (to optimize results).

Posts were selected based on these criteria:

**Inclusion criteria:** posts must be directly from Reddit and describe a personal experience with academic related burnout, either past or present.

**Exclusion criteria:** posts that mention any indicator of age beyond the adolescent and young adult age range (13-25), explicitly or implicitly (such as reference to graduate school, worklife, and more).

The top twenty posts under each search term that met the above criteria were coded (however there were only 6 posts that met the criteria under “academic burnout Reddit”) for a combined total of **46 posts (N=46)**.

The first 10 parent comments under each post were coded (some posts did not have ten parent comments) for a total of **286 comments (N=286)**.

**Posts were coded for mentions of common causes of burnout** (workload, reward, community, values, fairness, and control), **common feelings associated with burnout** (tired, unmotivated, inadequate, and detached), and **requests for reliable experiences or advice from commenters.**

**Comments were coded for whether or not they related to academic burnout and if they gave direct advice.**

methods

Descriptive statistics, namely **mean calculations**, were used.

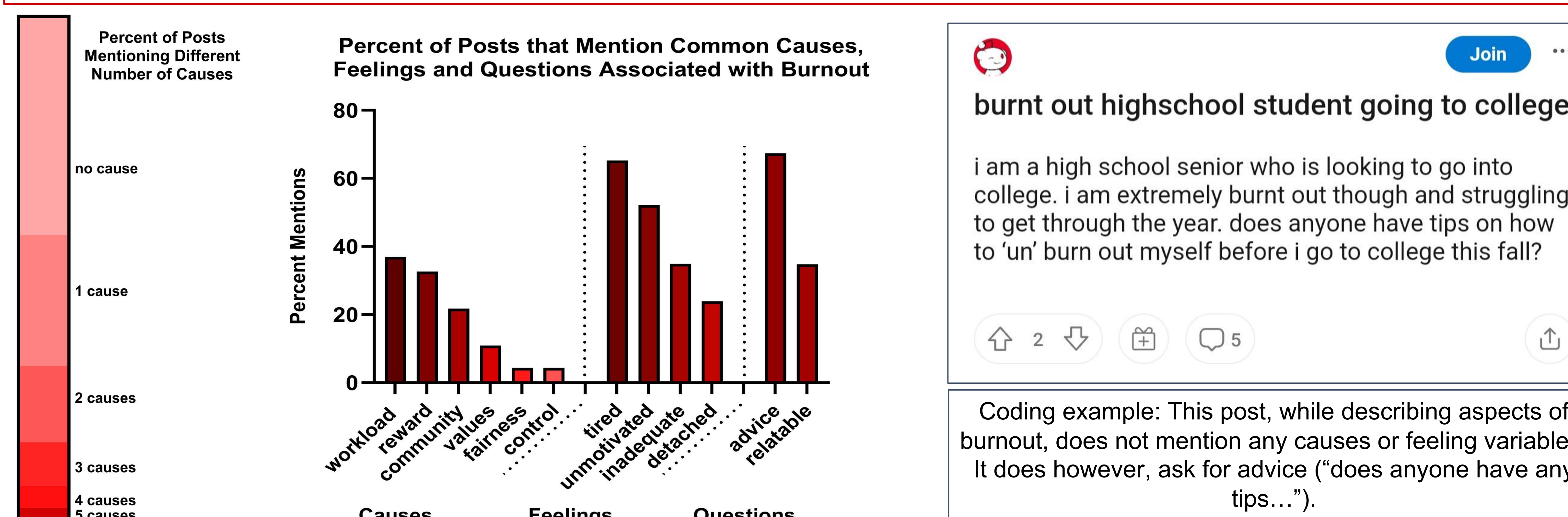


QR Code for complete codebook and citations:

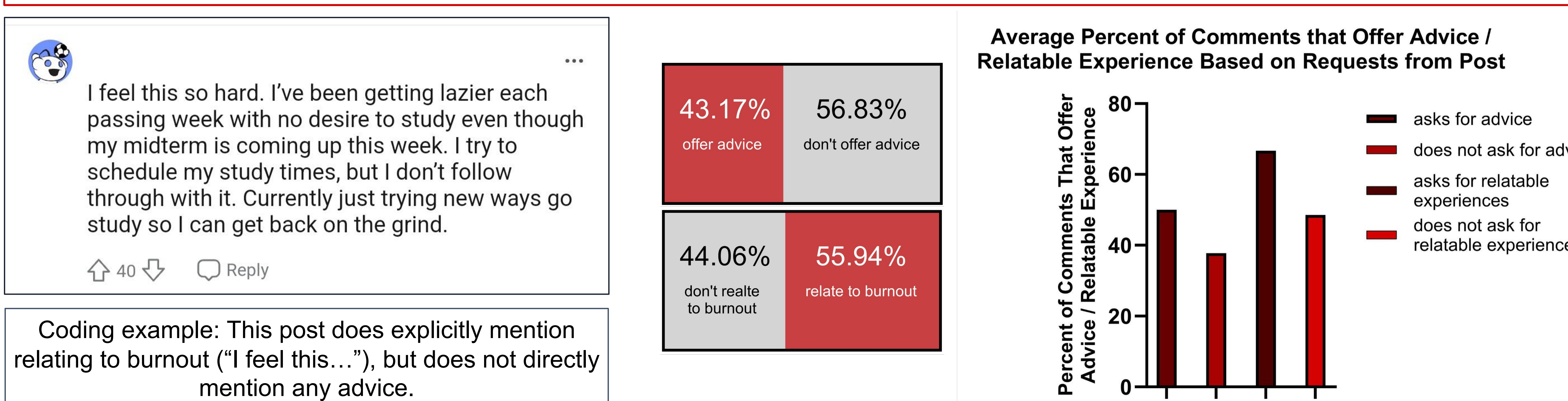
analysis

## RESULTS

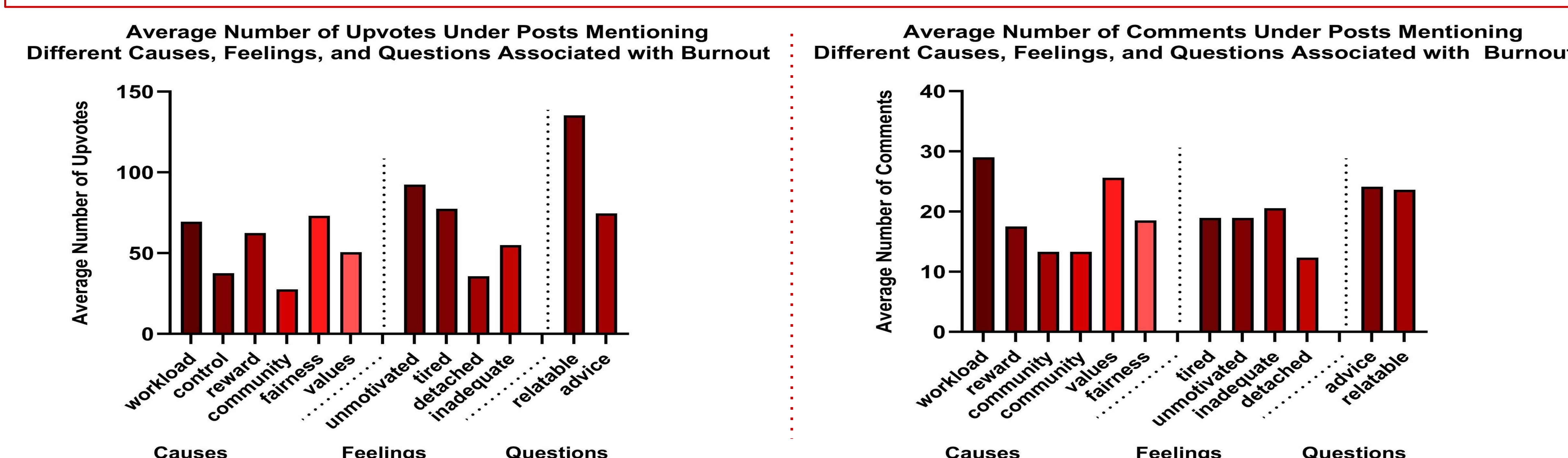
### POST LEVEL ANALYSIS:



### COMMENT LEVEL ANALYSIS:



### USER ENGAGEMENT ANALYSIS:



## CONCLUSION

While some causes of burnout were frequently mentioned, workload and reward being the top two, **others were seldom mentioned**, with fairness and control mentioned in less than five percent of posts. **There was also much variance among mentions of common feelings associated with burnout.** Feeling tired and feeling unmotivated were mentioned more than twice as many times as feeling detached. **These findings can help guide targeted interventions**, aimed at addressing and resolving these specific causes and feelings associated with burnout, for adolescents experiencing academic burnout.

**Among posts, well over half (67.39%) ask fellow users for advice. Over a quarter (34.78%) ask users about reliable experience.** This indicate that **social media can and is being used by adolescents to seek advice and similar experiences to help address their burnout.**

Moreover, this study found that **when users do ask for advice and for others to share reliable experiences, they receive this type of information in the comments**, suggesting that **social media can be used as a positive medium to address burnout by getting suggestions and support.**

**Among comments, over half explicitly mention relating to burnout and yet with less than half of commenters offering advice**, it appears that **individuals are more willing to share their personal experience and are less willing to provide recommendations to treat burnout.**

A **limitation of this study lies in the self reported nature of social media.** Individuals who experience the causes and feelings recorded in this study, may not describe so in their post. Similarly commenters who experience burnout may not wish to describe that personal struggle. Another limitation of this study is that some posts and comments mentioned multiple codebook variables, and since codebook variables were not mutually exclusive, **confounding variables may be present.**

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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