

## **Title**

The Role of Interoception and Perceived Stress in Predicting Burnout Rates: A Spoon Theory Framework Examining Neurodivergent and Neurotypical University Students

## **Abstract**

This cross-sectional study explores how interoception (the awareness of internal bodily states) predicts burnout in students, with a focus on the moderating role of perceived stress, using Spoon Theory as a conceptual framework. Spoon Theory suggests that individuals have a limited amount of energy ("spoons") to manage daily demands, and this energy is depleted by stress and emotional strain, potentially leading to burnout. Previous studies have linked each of these variables in isolation, however, none have linked them together to the best of the author's knowledge. The project will involve a sample of a minimum of 90 university students who will complete a series of surveys. Data will be analysed using multiple linear regression analysis to test whether interoception predicts perceived stress, and if perceived stress moderates the relationship between interoception and burnout. Student's anxiety and depression levels will also be tested. Past research indicates that these variables need to be controlled for in an attempt to disentangle their effects from the key predictors of interest. The study will also compare neurodivergent and non-neurodivergent students to examine potential differences in these variables. It is expected that higher rates of burnout will be present in neurodivergent students as indicated in previous research. The relationships between all variables are expected to vary dependent on a student's neurodivergence/neurotypicality status. This research will provide insights into how students' awareness of their internal states influences stress management and vulnerability to burnout, with implications for improving well-being and academic performance across diverse student groups.

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