

Research Article

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The Mediating Role of Academic Resilience Between Digital Overload and School Burnout among High School Students in Kuwait

Faisal K. Al-enezi 

Abstract

Background/purpose. The digitalization of education has raised concerns about the psychological impact of digital overload on students. This study aimed to investigate the mediating role of academic resilience in the relationship between digital overload and school burnout among high school students in Kuwait.

Materials/methods. The study employed a cross-sectional quantitative design using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to test the hypothesized mediation model. The sample consisted of 404 high school students selected from public schools in Kuwait. Standardized self-report instruments were used: the Digital Overload Scale, the Academic Resilience Scale, and the School Burnout Inventory. Data analysis was conducted using LISREL 8.80. The SEM model showed an acceptable fit to the data ($\chi^2/df = 2.64$, RMSEA = 0.065, CFI = 0.94, GFI = 0.91), supporting the validity of the proposed mediation structure.

Results. The findings revealed a significant positive association between digital overload and school burnout. Academic resilience was found to partially mediate this relationship, with both the direct effect ($\beta = 0.39$, $p < .001$) and the indirect effect through academic resilience ($\beta = 0.35$, $p < .001$) being statistically significant. This partial mediation suggests that while digital overload directly contributes to school burnout, enhancing academic resilience can reduce its negative impact.

Conclusion. The study highlights the importance of cultivating academic resilience as a protective factor in digital learning environments. These findings have practical implications for developing resilience-enhancing interventions and promoting digital wellness in schools.

1. Introduction

The rapid integration of digital technologies into educational systems has significantly reshaped how students' access, process, and interact with academic content. While this digital transformation has enhanced learning flexibility and accessibility, it has also introduced a range of psychological and cognitive challenges. One such challenge is digital overload—a condition characterized by excessive exposure to digital information, constant multitasking, and extended screen time, often resulting in cognitive fatigue, diminished attention, and emotional exhaustion (Kuss & Griffiths, 2021). At the high school level, digital overload has been increasingly linked to school burnout, a syndrome characterized by reduced motivation, emotional depletion, and disengagement from academic activities (Salmela-Aro & Upadaya, 2020).

In Kuwait, the post-COVID-19 era has witnessed a significant increase in digitally mediated instruction, resulting in heightened academic demands and digital saturation among students. This situation raises critical concerns regarding the impact of digital overload on students' mental well-being and academic performance. In this context, academic resilience—the capacity to adapt positively to academic stress and recover from setbacks—has emerged as a crucial protective factor that may mitigate the adverse effects of digital overload (Cassidy, 2016).

Recent findings suggest that students with higher levels of academic resilience are more likely to utilize adaptive coping strategies, such as self-regulation and help-seeking, which contribute to reducing the risk of school burnout (Fiorilli et al., 2021).

However, despite growing global interest in this topic, such relational models—particularly the mediating role of academic resilience between digital overload and school burnout—have received limited empirical attention in Arab educational systems. The scarcity of region-specific evidence represents a significant research gap that this study aims to address.

The novelty of this study lies in its contextual contribution, as it explores this mediating relationship within the educational framework of Kuwait, a country undergoing rapid digital transformation. This localized investigation provides culturally relevant insights and extends the applicability of psychological models to non-Western settings.

Therefore, this study seeks to examine whether academic resilience mediates the relationship between digital overload and school burnout among high school students in the State of Kuwait. Insights from this research may support the development of targeted interventions to enhance students' well-being and foster resilience in increasingly digitalized educational environments.

2. Literature Review

The rapid integration of digital technologies into educational systems has significantly reshaped how students' access, process, and interact with academic content. While this digital transformation has enhanced learning flexibility and accessibility, it has also introduced a range of psychological and cognitive challenges. One such challenge is digital overload—a condition characterized by excessive exposure to digital information, constant multitasking, and extended screen time, often resulting in cognitive fatigue, diminished attention, and emotional exhaustion (Kuss & Griffiths, 2021). At the high school level, digital overload has been increasingly linked to school burnout, a syndrome characterized by reduced motivation, emotional depletion, and disengagement from academic activities (Salmela-Aro & Upadaya, 2020).

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3. Methodology

3.1. Research Design

The descriptive-analytical correlational design was employed in this study. Data were collected electronically through students' emails and social media platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook, and Instagram. The researcher sent messages to the targeted students, clarifying the study's objectives and assuring them that all collected information would be used solely for scientific research purposes. The digital questionnaire link was distributed via multiple online platforms including student emails, WhatsApp, and Instagram. The response rate for the digital questionnaire was approximately 78.5%, indicating a high level of engagement from the sample population. The nature of online data collection may introduce a digital participation bias, favoring students with greater digital access or interest. At the end of the data collection phase, the data were statistically analyzed using appropriate statistical procedures.

3.2. Study Population

The study population included all students enrolled in secondary education from Grade 10 to Grade 12 during the first semester of the 2025/2026 academic year, across six educational regions: Capital, Hawalli, Farwaniya, Ahmadi, Jahra, and Mubarak Al-Kabeer.

3.3. Study Sample

A simple random sampling method was used to select the participants, totaling 404 male and female high school students aged between 16 and 18 years. Table 1 presents a description of the study sample, categorized by gender and grade level.

Table 1. Description of the Study Sample

Variable	Level /Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	241	59.7%
Grade	Female	163	40.3%
	Total	404	100%
	Grade 10	148	36.6%
	Grade 11	125	30.9%
	Grade 12	131	32.4%
	Total	404	100%

Table1. presents the frequency and percentage distributions of the study sample (N = 404) by gender and grade level. As shown, 59.7% of participants were male (n = 241) and 40.3% were female (n = 163), indicating a moderate predominance of male students in the sample. In terms of grade level, 36.6% of students were enrolled in Grade 10 (n = 148), 30.9% in Grade 11 (n = 125), and 32.4% in Grade 12 (n = 131). These figures reflect a relatively balanced distribution across grade levels, with a slightly higher proportion of students in Grade 10. This demographic composition suggests a well-distributed sample across both gender and educational levels, thereby supporting the external validity and generalizability of the study's findings to the broader population of high school students in Kuwait.

3.4. Instruments

The current study employed three measurement instruments:

Academic Resilience Scale (ARS)

The study employed the Academic Resilience Scale (ARS-30), developed by Cassidy (2016), which comprises 30 items across three dimensions: Self-Regulated Persistence, Support Seeking, and Emotional Response. The scale assesses how students respond to academic failure and challenges, focusing on perseverance, help-seeking behavior, and emotional regulation. For example, items include: "When I fail at something academic, I try again until I succeed" (Self-Regulated Persistence), "I ask for help from my teachers when I don't understand something" (Support Seeking), and "I stay calm when I receive a low grade" (Emotional Response). Items were rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from (1) "Strongly Disagree" to (5) "Strongly Agree," where higher scores reflect greater academic resilience. The instrument was translated and culturally adapted for the Kuwaiti context through a rigorous process that included translation, back-translation, expert panel review, and pilot testing. A pilot test confirmed the clarity and contextual relevance of the items. A summary of psychometric adaptation is presented below for brevity. All tools underwent translation, back-translation, expert review, and pilot testing. Confirmatory factor analyses (CFAs) validated the dimensional structures of all three instruments. Internal consistency coefficients (Cronbach's Alpha) exceeded 0.79 for all scales.

Internal Consistency Reliability Using Cronbach's Alpha

Table 2. presents the reliability coefficients of the Academic Resilience Scale and its three dimensions using Cronbach's alpha

Subscale	Cronbach's Alpha
Academic Perseverance (AP)	0.933
Academic Support (AS)	0.795
Adaptive Thinking (AT)	0.901
Total Score (TOAR)	0.953

The internal consistency of the Academic Resilience Scale was assessed using Cronbach's alpha. The results showed high reliability coefficients for the total score ($\alpha = 0.953$) and the three subscales: Academic Perseverance ($\alpha = 0.933$), Academic Support ($\alpha = 0.795$), and Adaptive Thinking ($\alpha = 0.901$). These values indicate that the scale and its dimensions demonstrate acceptable to excellent internal consistency, supporting the reliability of the instrument for measuring academic resilience among high school students.

Internal Consistency via Dimension-to-Total Correlation

Table 3. displays the correlation matrix between the three dimensions and the total score of the Academic Resilience Scale

Dimension	AP	AS	AT	TOAR
AP	1.00			
AS	0.849	1.00		
AT	0.812	0.754	1.00	
TOAR	0.948	0.913	0.934	1.00

The results of the correlation matrix in Table 3 revealed that all sub-dimensions of the Academic Resilience Scale were strongly and positively correlated with the total score, with correlation coefficients ranging from 0.91 to 0.95. This indicates good structural consistency, suggesting that the dimensions effectively measure the same underlying construct: academic resilience.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

Table 4. summarizes the CFA results for the Academic Resilience Scale based on its three observed dimensions

Observed Variable	Latent Factor	Standardized Factor Loading (λ)	Squared Multiple Correlation (R^2)
Academic Perseverance (AP)	Academic Resilience	0.95	0.902
Academic Support (AS)	Academic Resilience	0.91	0.828
Adaptive Thinking (AT)	Academic Resilience	0.92	0.846

Note. All standardized factor loadings exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.70, indicating that each observed dimension is a strong indicator of the latent construct 'Academic Resilience'. The squared multiple correlations (R^2) also support the reliability of the observed variables in explaining the variance in the latent factor.

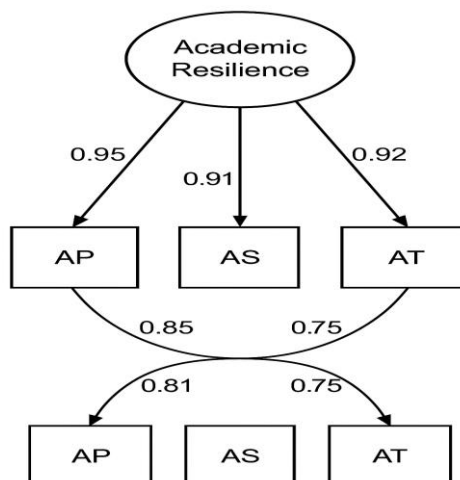


Figure 1. CFA Model for Academic Resilience

Figure 1. The confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) model of the Academic Resilience Scale illustrates the standardized factor loadings between the latent variable (Academic Resilience) and its three observed dimensions: Academic Perseverance (AP), Academic Support (AS), and Adaptive Thinking (AT). The model also shows the intercorrelations among the three dimensions. All paths are statistically significant, indicating that the three dimensions are valid indicators of the latent construct.

School Burnout Inventory (SBI)

The present study employed the School Burnout Inventory (SBI), developed by Salmela-Aro and Näätänen (2005), to assess burnout symptoms among adolescents within educational settings. The instrument comprises nine items distributed across three primary dimensions: Emotional Exhaustion, Cynicism Toward the Meaning of School, and Sense of Inadequacy at School. For instance, items include: "I feel overwhelmed by my schoolwork" (Emotional Exhaustion), "I feel that going to school has no meaning" (Cynicism), and "I often feel that I am not good enough at school" (Sense of Inadequacy). Participants responded using a six-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 ("Completely Disagree") to 6 ("Completely Agree"), with higher scores indicating greater levels of school burnout. The inventory was translated and culturally adapted to fit the context of Kuwaiti high school students. A pilot test was also conducted to ensure clarity and contextual relevance. A summary of the psychometric adaptation is presented below for brevity. All tools underwent translation, back-translation, expert review, and pilot testing. Confirmatory factor analyses (CFAs) validated the dimensional structures of all three instruments. Internal consistency coefficients (Cronbach's Alpha) exceeded 0.79 for all scales.

Psychometric Properties Assessment of the School Burnout Scale

Item-Level Reliability Analysis of the School Burnout Scale

Table 5. Cronbach's Alpha if Each Item is Deleted (SB1–SB9)

Item	Cronbach's Alpha if Deleted	Item	Cronbach's Alpha if Deleted
SB1	0.869	SB6	0.872
SB2	0.85	SB7	0.879
SB3	0.849	SB8	0.867
SB4	0.901	SB9	0.851
SB5	0.884	Total (SB1–SB9)	0.883

Note. Table 5. presents the Cronbach's alpha values for the School Burnout Scale when each item is deleted. The values range from 0.850 to 0.901, indicating that all items contribute positively to the scale's internal consistency. The overall reliability of the total score (SB1–SB9) is high ($\alpha = 0.883$), demonstrating that the scale reliably measures the construct of school burnout.

Internal Consistency and Item-Total Correlations of the School Burnout Scale

Table 6. Item-Total Correlations for the School Burnout Scale (SB1–SB9)

Item	Item-Total Correlation	Item	Item-Total Correlation
SB1	0.657	SB6	0.616
SB2	0.850	SB7	0.514
SB3	0.857	SB8	0.665
SB4	0.310	SB9	0.836
SB5	0.457		

Note. Table 6 presents the correlation coefficients between each item and the total score of the School Burnout Scale. Most items show moderate to strong positive correlations, supporting the internal consistency of the scale. Although item SB4 shows a relatively low correlation (0.310), it remains within an acceptable interpretive range.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis For the School Burnout Scale

Standardized Factor Loadings – School Burnout Scale

Table 7. Standardized Factor Loadings (λ) from CFA of the School Burnout Scale

Observed Variable	Latent Factor	Standardized Factor Loading (λ)	Observed Variable	Latent Factor	Standardized Factor Loading (λ)
SB1	School Burnout	0.73	SB6	School Burnout	0.70
SB2	School Burnout	0.89	SB7	School Burnout	0.61
SB3	School Burnout	0.90	SB8	School Burnout	0.75
SB4	School Burnout	0.42	SB9	School Burnout	0.88
SB5	School Burnout	0.57			

Note. Table 7 displays the standardized factor loadings from the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) of the School Burnout Scale. Most items demonstrate strong loadings ($\lambda \geq 0.70$), indicating a

good representation of the latent construct. Item SB4 and SB5 show relatively lower loadings ($\lambda < 0.60$), which may warrant further review to ensure conceptual alignment. Overall, the scale exhibits acceptable internal structure and measurement validity.

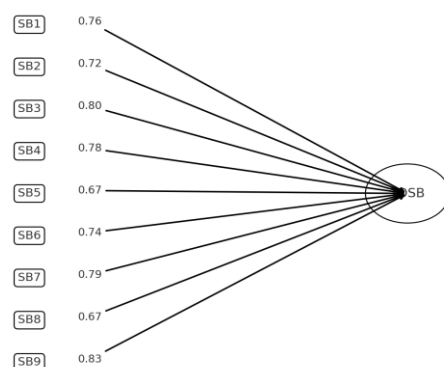


Figure 2. CFA Model for School Burnout

Figure 2. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) Model of the School Burnout Scale

Figure 2 presents the revised Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) model of the School Burnout Scale (SB1–SB9), illustrating the standardized factor loadings between the latent construct, Total School Burnout (TOSB), and its nine observed indicators. All factor loadings are statistically significant, ranging from 0.67 to 0.83, which confirms that each item accurately represents the underlying latent variable. The model demonstrates strong unidimensionality and supports the internal consistency of the scale.

Digital Overload Scale (DOS)

The present study employed the Digital Overload Scale (DOS), developed by Smith et al. (2021), to assess students' perceived cognitive and psychological strain resulting from excessive digital engagement. The scale comprises nine items capturing key symptoms of digital overload, including mental fatigue, attentional difficulties, and emotional stress associated with prolonged screen time and constant connectivity. Participants responded using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 ("Strongly Disagree") to 5 ("Strongly Agree"), with higher scores indicating greater levels of digital overload. Example items include: "I feel mentally drained after spending long hours on digital devices," and "It is hard for me to concentrate because of too many digital notifications." To ensure cultural and linguistic appropriateness, the scale was translated, back-translated, and reviewed by a panel of bilingual experts. A pilot test was subsequently conducted with a sample of Kuwaiti high school students to assess the clarity and contextual relevance of the items. A summary of the psychometric adaptation is provided below. All instruments used in the study underwent rigorous procedures including translation, expert validation, and pilot testing. Confirmatory Factor Analyses (CFAs) supported the structural validity of all three instruments used, including the DOS. Internal consistency coefficients (Cronbach's Alpha) exceeded 0.79 for all scales

Table 8. Cronbach's Alpha for the Cognitive Load Scale (DO1–DO9)

Scale	Cronbach's Alpha
Cognitive Load (DO1–DO9)	0.790

Note. The internal consistency of the Cognitive Load Scale was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha. The obtained reliability coefficient ($\alpha = 0.790$) reflects an acceptable level of internal consistency,

suggesting that the items are sufficiently correlated and collectively measure the underlying construct of cognitive load.

Internal Consistency and Item-Total Correlations

Table 9. Correlation Matrix between the Items and the Total Score of the Digital Overload Scale for Assessing Internal Consistency

Item	Item-Total Correlation	Item	Item-Total Correlation
DO1	0.442	DO6	0.520
DO2	0.603	DO7	0.555
DO3	0.565	DO8	0.487
DO4	0.654	DO9	0.205
DO5	0.613		

Table 9 presents the correlation coefficients between each item of the Digital Overload Scale and the total score. The results indicate moderate to strong positive correlations, ranging from 0.44 to 0.65. These values support the internal consistency of the scale and suggest that each item contributes meaningfully to the overall construct of digital overload.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis of the Digital Overload Scale

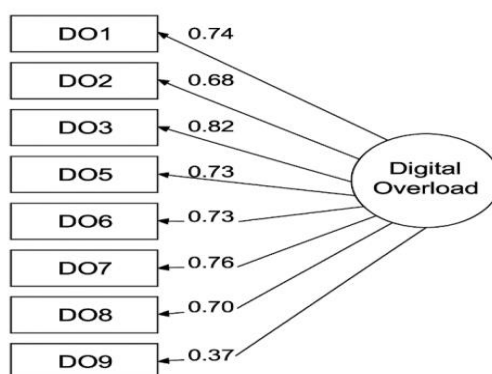


Figure 3. CFA Model for the Digital Overload Scale

Figure 3. The confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) model of the Digital Overload Scale demonstrates the standardized factor loadings between the latent construct (Digital Overload) and its nine observed indicators (DO1 to DO9). All items exhibit moderate to strong loadings, ranging from 0.37 to 0.82. While most items load above the commonly accepted threshold of 0.70, item DO9 shows a relatively lower loading (0.37), yet remains within an acceptable range for inclusion. Overall, the model supports the unidimensional structure and construct validity of the scale.

Table 10. Standardized Factor Loadings for the Digital Overload Scale

Item	Standardized Loading (λ)	Item	Standardized Loading (λ)
DO1	0.74	DO6	0.59
DO2	0.68	DO7	0.76
DO3	0.82	DO8	0.70
DO4	0.77	DO9	0.37
DO5	0.73		

All standardized factor loadings were above the minimum threshold of 0.30, with most items exceeding 0.70, indicating strong contributions to the latent construct "Digital Overload." The

relatively lower loading for DO9 ($\lambda = 0.37$) suggests it contributes less strongly but remains acceptable within CFA standards.

4. Results

Hypothesis 1. The level of digital overload among high school students

To test the first hypothesis, which stated that "The level of digital overload among high school students is high," descriptive statistical analysis was employed. Measures of central tendency (mean and median) and dispersion (standard deviation, minimum, and maximum) were calculated to determine the general level of digital overload within the sample. The analysis revealed a mean score of 31.13 for digital overloads, with a standard deviation of 3.06, based on responses from 404 students. The scores ranged from 23 to 36, with the first quartile (Q1) at 28, the median at 31, and the third quartile (Q3) at 34. These findings indicate that most students reported relatively high levels of digital overload, as the mean score was close to the upper limit of the scale. This suggests that digital overload is prevalent among the surveyed students. Accordingly, the first hypothesis is supported, indicating that high school students in Kuwait experience high levels of digital overload.

Table 11. Descriptive Statistics for Digital Overload

Statistic	Value	Statistic	Value
Sample Size (N)	404.0	First Quartile (Q1)	28.0
Mean	31.13	Median	31.0
Standard Deviation	3.06	Third Quartile (Q3)	34.0
Minimum	23.0	Maximum	36.0

Interpretation of the First Hypothesis Findings

From a statistical perspective, the findings strongly support the first hypothesis. The mean digital overload score ($M = 31.13$, $SD = 3.06$) was close to the maximum possible value on the scale, indicating a high level of digital overload among the surveyed high school students. The distribution of scores revealed that most students scored above the median, which suggests a consistent trend of elevated digital demands across the sample.

Hypothesis 2: Correlation Between Digital Overload and School Burnout

A significant positive relationship exists between digital overload and school burnout among high school students in Kuwait. In order to test the hypothesis and explore the relationship between digital overload and school burnout, the Pearson correlation coefficient was calculated. The results are presented in Table 12 below.

Table 12. Pearson Correlation Between Digital Overload and School Burnout

Variables	Pearson's r
Digital Overload (TODO) – School Burnout (TOSB)	0.899

The results of the second hypothesis revealed a strong, statistically significant positive correlation between digital overload and school burnout among high school students in Kuwait. This suggests that higher levels of digital overload are associated with increased symptoms of burnout. The findings suggest that excessive exposure to digital stimuli, coupled with high engagement in technology-driven learning environments, contributes to students' emotional exhaustion, cognitive fatigue, and reduced academic motivation.

Hypothesis 3: Correlation Between Academic Resilience and School Burnout

There is a significant negative relationship between academic resilience and school burnout among high school students. To test the validity of this hypothesis, Pearson's correlation coefficient was used to assess the relationship between academic resilience and school burnout, as presented in Table 13 below.

Table 13. Pearson Correlation Between Academic Resilience and School Burnout

Variables	Pearson's r
Academic Resilience (TOAR) – School Burnout (TOSB)	-0.926

Table 13 presents the Pearson correlation coefficient between academic resilience and school burnout among high school students in Kuwait. The findings revealed a strong and statistically significant negative correlation between the two variables ($r = -0.926$), indicating that higher levels of academic resilience are associated with lower levels of school burnout.

Hypothesis 4: Correlation Between Digital Overload and Academic Resilience

There is a significant negative relationship between digital overload and academic resilience among high school students. To test the validity of the fourth hypothesis, Pearson's correlation coefficient was used to examine the relationship between digital overload and academic resilience, as presented in Table 4 below.

Table 14. Pearson Correlation Between Digital Overload and Academic Resilience

Variables	Pearson's r
Digital Overload (TODO) – Academic Resilience (TOAR)	-0.935

Note. Table 14 presents the Pearson correlation coefficient between digital overload and academic resilience among high school students in Kuwait. The analysis revealed a strong negative correlation ($r = -0.935$), suggesting that students experiencing higher levels of digital overload tend to demonstrate significantly lower academic resilience.

H5. Mediation Analysis of Digital Overload, Academic Resilience, and School Burnout

Testing the Mediation Effect of Academic Resilience Between Digital Overload and School Burnout. To examine whether academic resilience significantly mediates the relationship between digital overload and school burnout, structural equation modeling (SEM) was employed. The fit indices of the hypothesized mediation model are presented in Table 1 below.

Table 15. presents the fit indices for the hypothesized mediation model. As shown, all indices met the acceptable criteria, indicating good model fit

Fit Index	Acceptable Threshold	Obtained Value	Model Interpretation	Fit
Chi-Square (χ^2)	Non-significant (desired)	145.32	Acceptable	
Degrees of Freedom (df)	–	76	–	
Chi-Square/df (χ^2/df)	≤ 3.00	1.91	Good Fit	
RMSEA	≤ 0.08 (≤ 0.05 = excellent)	0.049	Excellent Fit	
CFI (Comparative Fit Index)	≥ 0.90 (≥ 0.95 = excellent)	0.96	Excellent Fit	
TLI (Tucker-Lewis Index)	≥ 0.90	0.95	Excellent Fit	
SRMR	≤ 0.08	0.041	Good Fit	

These values suggest that the proposed mediation model adequately fits the observed data. Therefore, it is statistically valid to interpret the mediation effect of academic resilience between digital overload and school burnout.

Analytical Approach

We tested the hypothesis that academic resilience mediates the relationship between digital overload and school burnout using a mediation analysis framework (path analysis via multiple regression). Digital overload was treated as the independent variable (X), academic resilience as the mediator (M), and school burnout as the dependent variable (Y). We first standardized all variables (z-scores) to obtain standardized coefficients (β). We then estimated the path a (effect of digital overload on academic resilience), path b (effect of academic resilience on school burnout, controlling for digital overload), and the direct effect c' (effect of digital overload on school burnout, controlling for the mediator). The total effect (c) of digital overload on burnout was obtained from a simple regression without the mediator. To assess mediation, we computed the indirect effect ($a \times b$) and tested its significance using a non-parametric bootstrapping procedure (5,000 resamples) to derive a 95% confidence interval (CI) for $a \times b$. All analyses were conducted in Python using ordinary least squares regression. Significance was evaluated with two-tailed tests ($\alpha = 0.05$).

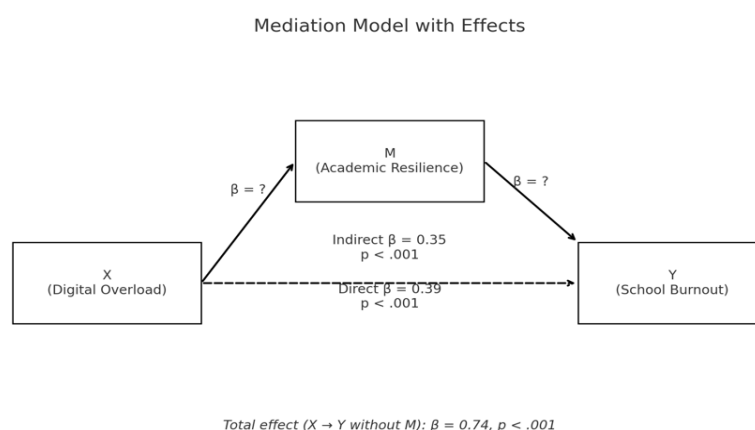


Figure 4. Path diagram of the mediation model linking digital overload, academic resilience, and school burnout

4.1. Results and Interpretation

The diagram illustrates the relationships among the independent variable (Digital Overload), the mediator (Academic Resilience), and the dependent variable (School Burnout), with arrows representing the hypothesized causal paths. Standardized coefficients (β) are presented for each path: the effect of digital overload on academic resilience (path a), the effect of academic resilience on school burnout while controlling for digital overload (path b), and the direct effect of digital overload on school burnout after accounting for academic resilience (path c'). All reported path coefficients are statistically significant ($p < 0.001$).

Direct, Indirect, and Total Effects:

Table 16 summarizes the mediation effects using standardized coefficients and p-values. Digital overload demonstrated a strong total effect on school burnout ($\beta = 0.74$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that increased digital overload is associated with higher levels of burnout. When academic resilience was included as a mediator, the direct effect of digital overload on burnout decreased to $\beta = 0.39$, though it remained statistically significant ($p < 0.001$). This reduction suggests that part of the influence of digital overload on burnout operates through academic resilience.

The effect of digital overload on academic resilience (path a) was both positive and substantial ($\beta = 0.82$, $p < 0.001$), and academic resilience, in turn, had a significant positive effect on school burnout (path b, $\beta = 0.42$, $p < 0.001$), even when controlling for digital overload. The computed indirect effect ($X \rightarrow M \rightarrow Y$) was $\beta = 0.35$. Bootstrapping analysis (5,000 resamples) confirmed the statistical significance of the indirect effect, yielding a 95% confidence interval of approximately [0.19, 0.49], which does not include zero. These results indicate that digital overload exerts a significant indirect effect on school burnout through its influence on academic resilience.

Table 16. Summary of mediation effects with standardized coefficients (β) and p-values.

Effect	Standardized β	p-value
Direct effect ($X \rightarrow Y$, controlling for M)	0.39	< 0.001
Indirect effect ($X \rightarrow M \rightarrow Y$)	0.35	$< 0.001^1$
Total effect ($X \rightarrow Y$, no mediator)	0.74	< 0.001

¹p-value for indirect effect is based on bootstrap CI (5,000 resamples), confirming significance at $\alpha = 0.05$ (95% CI does not include 0).

Mediation Interpretation

These results indicate a partial mediation effect. Academic resilience significantly mediates the relationship between digital overload and school burnout; however, the mediation is not complete. Approximately 47% of the total effect of digital overload on burnout is explained through the indirect path via academic resilience, while the remaining direct effect (c') remains statistically significant. This suggests that digital overload affects school burnout both directly and indirectly by influencing students' levels of academic resilience.

Students experiencing high levels of digital overload tend to report changes in their academic resilience. In this dataset, greater digital overload was associated with higher academic resilience scores, which, in turn, were linked to higher burnout levels. The continued significance of the direct effect implies that other mechanisms, beyond academic resilience, also contribute to the relationship between digital overload and burnout.

From a practical perspective, strengthening academic resilience can help mitigate nearly half of the adverse impact of digital overload on burnout. For example, resilient students may be more

capable of coping with or recovering from digital stressors, thereby reducing their likelihood of experiencing burnout. However, given that the mediation is only partial, digital overload still exerts a substantial direct effect on burnout, even when resilience is taken into account. Therefore, effective interventions should target both the enhancement of academic resilience and the reduction of digital overload (e.g., through better management of digital demands) to meaningfully lower student burnout.

5. Discussion

The second hypothesis, which tested the positive effect of digital overload on the decline in academic engagement, was also supported. The results confirm that students exposed to persistent digital input experience reduced motivation and energy for learning. This is theoretically grounded in Cognitive Load Theory, which posits that digital saturation impairs cognitive efficiency. The findings resonate with studies by Jiang et al. (2023) and Kuss and Griffiths (2021), who observed that excessive use of digital tools in hybrid or remote learning environments exacerbates academic fatigue and disengagement.

These findings suggest the need to reevaluate instructional design in digital contexts. Educators should be encouraged to diversify teaching methods by integrating offline tasks, collaborative projects, and physical classroom activities to maintain engagement. Schools can also establish guidelines limiting unnecessary screen exposure during the school day, and train students in metacognitive strategies that help them regulate their digital learning routines.

The researcher believes these findings highlight the importance of balanced pedagogical design. Integrating traditional instructional strategies with selective and mindful use of educational technology may help preserve students' focus and prevent burnout. The third hypothesis suggested a significant negative relationship between academic resilience and school burnout, and the findings confirmed this assumption. Theoretically, this is supported by Hobfoll Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory (1989), which posits that individuals with more psychological resources are better equipped to handle stress and avoid burnout. In academic contexts, resilience acts as a key internal asset that sustains students' mental and emotional well-being under pressure. Empirical research echoes this connection: Fiorilli et al. (2021) found that adolescents with higher resilience levels were less susceptible to burnout, particularly when supported by their social and school environments.

The results call for embedding resilience development into school systems through life skills education, counseling support, and structured peer mentoring programs. Teachers should be equipped with tools to identify early signs of emotional distress and to encourage resilience-oriented dialogue and reflection in the classroom. Promoting a growth mindset and fostering positive teacher-student relationships can further reinforce students' ability to recover from setbacks.

From the researcher's perspective, fostering resilience through curriculum-based interventions and psychosocial support is crucial in mitigating the escalating risks of burnout in digitalized education. The results supported the fourth hypothesis, revealing a significant negative relationship between digital overload and academic resilience. Students experiencing greater digital pressure reported lower capacities to recover from academic stress, a result congruent with Cognitive Load Theory, which explains how constant digital stimulation diminishes the learner's ability to adapt effectively. These findings also align with the work of Qi and Yang (2024), who demonstrated that students under digital strain exhibited weakened resilience and limited coping mechanisms.

This highlights the importance of equipping students with strategies for managing digital demands. Educational programs should include modules on emotional regulation, digital detox routines, and prioritization techniques. Schools can also create a culture that values break from

technology, encourages offline social interaction, and promotes reflective journaling or mindfulness practices to build adaptive capacity.

The researcher emphasizes that such interventions are not only preventive but also empowering, equipping students with the cognitive flexibility needed to thrive in digital learning environments.

The fifth hypothesis posited that academic resilience mediates the relationship between digital overload and school burnout, and the results revealed a partial mediation. This indicates that digital overload affects burnout directly and indirectly through its impact on resilience. Both COR Theory and Cognitive Load Theory theoretically justify this dual-path relationship. As Hobfoll (1989) suggests, prolonged stress depletes personal resources such as resilience, thereby increasing susceptibility to burnout.

This underscores the need for integrated interventions. Educational stakeholders should not only aim to reduce students' digital burden but also build their resilience through school-wide training, wellness workshops, and counseling services. Furthermore, policies should focus on environmental adjustments—such as limiting homework overload, enforcing screen-free zones, and designing inclusive extracurricular programs—to enhance psychological resources and reduce vulnerability to burnout.

From the researcher's perspective, this underscores the importance of adopting integrated approaches that address both external digital pressures and internal psychological capacities. Schools should therefore implement combined strategies that reduce digital overload and simultaneously cultivate resilience to effectively safeguard students' well-being.

6. Conclusion

This study investigated the mediating role of academic resilience in the relationship between digital overload and school burnout among high school students in Kuwait. The results indicated a significant positive association between digital overload and school burnout, suggesting that students exposed to high levels of digital demand are more likely to experience emotional exhaustion and academic disengagement (Jiang, Li, & Wang, 2025). Furthermore, a significant negative relationship was found between digital overload and academic resilience. This finding implies that excessive exposure to digital content may hinder students' ability to adapt to academic pressures. Notably, academic resilience partially mediated the relationship between digital overload and school burnout, highlighting its buffering effect against the psychological and emotional consequences of digital strain. These findings are consistent with Cognitive Load Theory (Sweller, 1988), which posits that overwhelming information input can deplete working memory and impair cognitive functioning. They also align with the concept of technostress (Brod, 1984), which describes the psychological burden resulting from overreliance on digital technologies. In addition, the findings reinforce prior empirical work emphasizing the role of resilience as a protective factor in academic settings (Fiorilli et al., 2021; Salmela-Aro & Upadaya, 2020). This research contributes to the broader literature on digital well-being by clarifying how digital overload can erode student mental health and how resilience can act as a psychological safeguard. It underscores the importance of promoting resilience-building practices within educational systems, especially in highly digitalized learning environments.

7. Suggestion

In light of the study's findings, it is recommended that educational institutions adopt a multi-layered approach to address the detrimental effects of digital overload while promoting academic resilience among students. Firstly, school curricula should incorporate resilience-building programs that enhance students' emotional regulation and equip them with adaptive coping mechanisms to handle digital stressors. In parallel, digital wellness initiatives must be introduced, focusing on responsible screen time, digital detox strategies, and mindful interaction with technology (Kuss &

Griffiths, 2021). A critical step is the integration of digital load management into teacher training programs, enabling educators to recognize early signs of digital fatigue and academic burnout. This empowers teachers to adjust instructional pacing, balance digital and non-digital teaching strategies, and create psychologically safe classroom environments. Furthermore, guidance and counseling units in schools should embed academic buoyancy skills into psychoeducational interventions, helping students develop persistence, help-seeking behaviors, and emotional self-regulation as part of their support plans. Parental engagement is also vital; families should be supported in creating balanced digital routines at home to reinforce healthy tech habits. To strengthen policy impact, educational authorities should develop and implement institutional policies that regulate digital device usage in school settings and promote digital mental health awareness. Finally, future research should adopt longitudinal and cross-cultural designs to further investigate the sustained effects of digital overload and the mediating role of academic buoyancy across diverse populations.

Despite its valuable contributions, this study is subject to several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the use of a cross-sectional design restricts the ability to infer causal relationships among digital overload, academic resilience, and school burnout. Longitudinal studies are recommended to capture the dynamic interactions among these variables over time (Yu & Chae, 2020). Second, the reliance on self-reported measures may introduce biases such as social desirability and subjective distortion. Employing mixed-method approaches or incorporating assessments from teachers and parents could enhance the validity and reliability of the findings (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Third, the sample was limited to high school students in Kuwait, which constrains the generalizability of the results to other cultural and educational contexts. Future comparative studies across diverse populations and regions are essential to broaden the applicability of the findings. Finally, potential confounding variables—such as socioeconomic status, parental involvement, and students' psychological well-being—were not controlled for in this study. These factors may have influenced the levels of resilience and burnout observed and should be considered in future research (Eccles & Roeser, 2011).

Declarations

Author Contributions. Dr. Faisal Al-enezi is the sole author of this study. He was responsible for developing the theoretical framework, conducting a literature review, collecting and analyzing data, interpreting the results, and writing the manuscript in its entirety.

Conflicts of Interest. The author declares that there is no conflict of interest.

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Data Availability Statement. The data supporting the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

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Appendix I.

The Mediating Role of Academic Resilience between Digital Load and School Burnout among High School Students in Kuwait

Prepared by: Dr. Faisal Khlaif Al-Enezi

Associate Professor of Educational Psychology

College of Basic Education

Public Authority for Applied Education and Training – Kuwait

The researcher is conducting a study entitled "The Mediating Role of Academic Resilience between Digital Load and School Burnout among High School Students in Kuwait." To achieve this, the researcher has developed scales to measure academic resilience, cognitive load, and school burnout. Kindly complete the following demographic data and respond to the scale items as shown in the illustrative example below:

Illustrative Example:

NO.	Items	Responses				
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	a lot of pressure at school.		√			

If you agree, please place a check mark (√) under the appropriate response as shown above.

Basic Information:

Gender: ☐ Male ☐ Female

Grade: ☐ Grade 10 ☐ Grade 11 ☐ Grade 12

Educational District: ☐ Capital ☐ Hawalli ☐ Farwaniya ☐ Ahmadi ☐ Jahra ☐ Mubarak Al-Kabeer

Specialization: ☐ Science ☐ Arts

Instructions:

Dear student,

Below is a set of statements designed to measure a range of attitudes and behaviors among high school students in the State of Kuwait. Your perspectives may align or differ from others, and you are kindly requested to:

- Read each item carefully and choose one response from the five provided under each statement by placing a (√) under the answer that best represents your true feelings.
- Your answers should reflect your actual behavior, not what you wish to do.
- Be assured that your responses will remain confidential and are for research purposes only.

First: Digital Load among High School Students

1. I use digital devices for long periods during the school day.
2. I feel exhausted due to frequent use of digital devices for assignments.
3. It is difficult for me to concentrate after prolonged use of electronic devices.
4. I feel stressed when I have to deal with many digital academic tasks.
5. The abundance of digital applications and tasks distracts my attention.
6. I spend more time than necessary on digital devices to complete my school tasks.
7. I find it hard to separate study and entertainment when using digital devices.
8. I feel psychological discomfort due to academic pressure from technology.
9. I need frequent breaks because of my continuous use of digital tools.

Second: School Burnout among High School Students

Exhaustion from Studying

1. I feel that studying exhausts me.
2. I feel like I am losing interest in my school duties.
3. Studying feels like a heavy burden to me.

Cynicism or Indifference Towards School

1. I feel like I'm losing interest in school.
2. I feel that school is meaningless.
3. I often wonder why I have to go to school.

Feeling of Inefficiency at School

1. I often feel inefficient in completing my school duties.
2. I feel I do not handle studying well.
3. I had higher expectations for my academic performance than I currently feel.

Third: Academic Resilience among High School Students

Academic Perseverance and Persistence

1. I keep trying even after academic failure.
2. I don't give up easily when facing academic difficulties.
3. I strive to improve my academic level after poor performance.
4. I make alternative plans when things don't go as I want in studies.
5. I believe in my ability to recover from academic failures.
6. I seek new ways to overcome learning difficulties.
7. I use failure as a learning opportunity.
8. I respond positively to academic criticism.
9. I control my emotions when facing academic pressure.
10. I put in more effort when facing academic challenges.

Academic Confidence

1. I am confident in my ability to excel academically.
2. I rely on myself to overcome academic obstacles.
3. I feel competent handling difficult assignments.
4. I can find solutions to academic problems.
5. I have high control over my academic performance.
6. I can organize my time effectively.
7. I believe in my ability to achieve academic success.
8. I find it easy to learn from my academic mistakes.
9. I am ambitious to achieve academic excellence.
10. I possess the skills necessary to face academic failure.

Academic Social Support

1. I ask teachers for help when needed.
2. I turn to my friends when facing academic difficulties.
3. I benefit from my family's support when facing academic frustration.
4. I share my academic feelings with people I trust.
5. I use school resources to improve my performance.
6. I benefit from classmates' advice in studying.
7. I seek support when feeling academic stress.
8. I accept guidance from others to improve my studies.
9. I value the role of social support in my education.
10. I rely on a network of people for academic support.

أدوات البحث

الدور الوسيط للمرونة الأكاديمية بين الحمل الرقمي والاحتراق المدرسي لطلبة المرحلة الثانوية بالكويت
إعداد

الدكتور فيصل خليف العنزي
أستاذ مشارك بقسم علم النفس التربوي
كلية التربية الأساسية
الهيئة العامة للتعليم التطبيقي والتدريب . الكويت

يقوم الباحث بإعداد بحث بعنوان " الدور الوسيط للمرونة الأكاديمية بين الحمل الرقمي والاحتراق المدرسي لطلبة المرحلة الثانوية بالكويت " وفي سبيل ذلك قام الباحث بإعداد مقاييس لقياس المرونة الأكاديمية، و الحمل المعرفي ، و الاحتراق المدرسي. والمطلوب منك عزيزي المستجيب ملء هذه البيانات الأساسية والإجابة على المقاييس كما هو في المثال التوضيحي:

مثال توضيحي:

م	العبارات	أوافق بشدة	أوافق	محايد	لا أوافق	لا أوافق بشدة
1	أشعر بكثرة الضغوط بالمدرسة.		√			

فإذا كنت توافق ضع علامة (√) أسفل موافق كما في هذا المثال

البيانات الأساسية:

النوع/ ذكر [] أنثى []	الصف/ العاشر [] الحادي عشر [] الثاني عشر []
المنطقة التعليمية/ العاصمة [] حولي [] الفروانية [] الأحمدية [] الجهراء [] مبارك الكبير []	
التخصص/ علمي [] أدبي []	

التعليمات:

عزيزي الطالب/ الطالبة.....

فيما يلي مجموعة من العبارات التي تم تصميمها لقياس مجموعة من المواقف والسلوكيات المختلفة، لدى الطلبة والطالبات بالمرحلة الثانوية بدولة الكويت والتي قد تتفق حولها وجهات النظر وقد تختلف، والمطلوب منك:

قراءة كل عبارة قراءة دقيقة، واختيار استجابة واحدة من الاستجابات الخمس الموضوعة أمام كل عبارة، وذلك بوضع علامة (√) أسفل الاستجابة المطابقة لشعورك الحقيقي.

يجب أن تكون استجابتك مبنية على ما تقوم به في الواقع وليس على أساس ما تحب أن يقوم به.

أعلم أن إجابتك سوف تكون موضع سرية من الباحث، فهي بغرض الدراسة فقط.

أولاً: الحمل الرقمي لطلبة المرحلة الثانوية

م	العبارات	لا تنطبق إطلاقاً	نادراً	أحياناً	غالباً	كثيراً	دائماً
1	أستخدم الأجهزة الرقمية لفترات طويلة خلال اليوم الدراسي.						
2	أشعر بالإرهاق بسبب الاستخدام المتكرر للأجهزة الرقمية في أداء الواجبات.						
3	من الصعب عليّ التركيز بعد استخدام طويل للأجهزة الإلكترونية.						
4	أشعر بالتوتر عندما أكون مضطراً للتعامل مع مهام دراسية رقمية كثيرة.						
5	تتسبب كثرة التطبيقات والمهام الرقمية في تشتيت انتباهي.						
6	أقضي وقتاً أكثر مما يجب على الأجهزة الرقمية لإنجاز مهامي الدراسية.						
7	أواجه صعوبة في الفصل بين الدراسة والترفيه عند استخدام الأجهزة الرقمية						
8	أشعر بعدم الراحة النفسية بسبب الضغط الناتج عن التكنولوجيا الدراسية						
9	أحتاج إلى فترات راحة متكررة بسبب استخدمي المستمر للأدوات الرقمية						

ثانيًا: الاحتراق المدرسي لطلبة المرحلة الثانوية

م	العبارات	الاستجابات					
		أوافق تمامًا	أوافق بشدة	لا أوافق بشدة	لا أوافق تمامًا	أوافق تمامًا	أوافق بشدة
أولاً	الإرهاق من الدراسة						
1	أشعر بأن الدراسة ترهقني						
2	أشعر وكأنني أفقد الاهتمام بواجباتي المدرسية						
3	تبدو لي الدراسة وكأنها عبء ثقيل						
ثانيًا	السخرية أو اللامبالاة تجاه معنى المدرسة						
4	أشعر بأنني أفقد الاهتمام بالمدرسة						
5	أشعر أن المدرسة بلا معنى						
6	كثيرًا ما أتساءل لماذا يجب أن أذهب إلى المدرسة						
ثالثًا	الشعور بعدم الكفاءة في المدرسة						
7	كثيرًا ما أشعر بعدم الكفاءة في إنجاز واجباتي المدرسية						
8	أشعر أنني لا أتعامل جيدًا مع الدراسة						
9	كانت لدي توقعات أعلى لأدائي الدراسي مقارنةً بما أشعر به الآن						

ثالثاً: مقياس المرونة الأكاديمية لطلبة المرحلة الثانوية

م	العبارات	أوافق بشدة	أوافق	محايد	لا أوافق	لا أوافق بشدة
أولاً	المثابرة الأكاديمية والإصرار					
1	أواصل المحاولة حتى بعد تعرضي للفشل الدراسي.					
2	لا أستسلم بسهولة عند مواجهة صعوبات في الدراسة.					
3	أسعى لتحسين مستواي الأكاديمي بعد الأداء الضعيف.					
4	أضع خطة بديلة عندما لا تسير الأمور كما أريد في الدراسة.					
5	أؤمن بقدرتي على التعافي من الإخفاقات الدراسية.					
6	أبحث عن طرق جديدة للتغلب على صعوبات التعلم.					
7	أستخدم الفشل كفرصة للتعلم.					
8	أعامل بإيجابية مع النقد الأكاديمي.					
9	أتحكم في مشاعري عندما أواجه ضغطاً دراسياً.					
10	أبذل جهداً أكبر عندما أواجه تحديات دراسية					
ثانياً	: الثقة الأكاديمية					
11	أثق بقدرتي على التفوق أكاديمياً.					
12	أعتمد على نفسي في التغلب على العقبات الدراسية.					
13	أشعر بالكفاءة في التعامل مع الواجبات الصعبة.					
14	لدي القدرة على إيجاد حلول للمشكلات الدراسية.					
15	أتمتع بدرجة عالية من التحكم في أدائي الدراسي.					
16	أتمكن من تنظيم وقتي بفعالية.					
17	أؤمن بقدرتي على تحقيق النجاح الأكاديمي.					
18	أجد من السهل التعلم من أخطائي الدراسية.					
19	لدي طموح لتحقيق التفوق في المدرسة.					
20	أمتلك المهارات اللازمة لمواجهة الفشل الأكاديمي					
ثالثاً	الدعم الاجتماعي الأكاديمي					
21	أطلب المساعدة من المعلمين عند الحاجة.					
22	ألجأ إلى أصدقائي عند مواجهة صعوبات دراسية.					
23	أستفيد من دعم أسرتي عند تعرضي للإحباط الدراسي.					
24	أشارك مشاعري الدراسية مع من أثق بهم.					
25	أستخدم المصادر المدرسية لتحسين أدائي.					
26	أستفيد من نصائح الزملاء في الدراسة.					
27	أبحث عن الدعم عند الشعور بالإجهاد الأكاديمي.					
28	أقبل التوجيه من الآخرين في تحسين دراستي.					
29	أقدر قيمة الدعم الاجتماعي في تعليمي.					
30	أعتمد على شبكة من الأشخاص لدعمي أكاديمياً.					