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## Lived Experiences on Academic Frustration: Teachers and Students Perspective in Fuzhou China

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### Abstract

This study explores the lived experiences of academic frustration from the perspectives of both teachers and students in Fuzhou, China, through an extensive literature review. Academic frustration, defined as the psychological distress resulting from unmet academic goals or persistent learning obstacles, has been widely recognized as a critical factor affecting student motivation, emotional well-being, and academic performance. The review examines the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral dimensions of frustration, along with its cultural and contextual influences, particularly within the Chinese educational system shaped by Confucian values, high-stakes examinations, and intense parental expectations. Findings from the reviewed literature highlight how academic frustration manifests uniquely among Chinese students, often compounded by traditional teaching methods and rigid assessment practices. Moreover, the study emphasizes the need for culturally responsive interventions that support emotional regulation, student autonomy, and family involvement. The insights drawn from this review aim to inform future research and practical strategies for managing academic frustration, ultimately promoting healthier learning environments for both students and educators.

**Keywords:** *Lived Experiences, Academic frustration, High school students, High school Teachers, Coping mechanisms.*

### A. Introduction

The changing needs of society and the pressures of modern life have led to a rising sense of frustration among individuals. Today, frustrating situations have become prevalent in our daily lives, manifesting on a global scale. In the 21st century, as people become increasingly ambitious, they often encounter frustration as they strive to meet their goals (Chitrakar et al., 2023).

In the dynamic and ever-evolving field of education, the emotional well-being of students plays a critical role in their academic development. Emotions are ubiquitous in academic settings, profoundly affecting students' engagement and performance (Frenzel et al., 2020). Among the array of emotions, frustration is particularly significant, defined as a negative psychological emotion experienced by students when they are unable to cope with challenges in their learning process (Ballmann et al., 2022). Academic frustration (AF) can diminish students' interest and enthusiasm for their studies, leading to feelings of isolation due to perceived failures, which in turn lowers their personal achievement motivation (Neff et al., 2005).

Frustration is a common experience among students, especially in the face of academic pressures, persistent challenges, and obstacles in their studies. Students often encounter frustration when they struggle to grasp complex content, face high expectations from parents and teachers, or contend with tight deadlines (Huang & Gove, 2015). These situations can result

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in mental stress, lack of motivation, decreased self-esteem, and ultimately a decline in academic achievement (Chitrakar et al., 2023).

Despite the various merits of the current educational system, it often lacks effective mechanisms for managing academic frustration among students. The pressure to achieve academic excellence can create unique challenges, particularly in competitive contexts such as China, where intense competition and the desire to perform well exacerbate the prevalence of frustration stemming from academic setbacks. This frustration is not merely an emotional response; it significantly influences students' engagement, motivation, and overall academic performance (Pekrun et al., 2022). Moreover, the emotional climate of the classroom, encompassing physical, social, and emotional dimensions, plays a crucial role in shaping students' learning experiences and interpersonal relationships (Lee et al., 2016).

This qualitative study aims to explore and understand the lived experiences of academic frustration from the perspectives of both teachers and students, focusing on the specific academic challenges that contribute to this frustration. By examining these experiences, we aim to identify key contributing factors and generate recommendations for effective mitigation strategies within educational settings. This research acknowledges the importance of emotional well-being in students' overall development (Williams & Brown, 2019) and recognizes that unmanaged frustration can lead to serious issues, including decreased motivation, behavioral problems, and even mental health concerns (Chitrakar, 2023; Sadhu, 2014). Therefore, understanding the nuanced experiences of frustration within the context of specific academic challenges is crucial for developing effective support mechanisms and improving the overall educational experience. This study will utilize semi-structured interviews to gather rich qualitative data, providing a deeper understanding of this complex issue.

With the above narration on the background of this undertaking, this study aimed to explore the lived experiences on academic frustration from the perspectives of teachers and students, in two High Schools in Fuzhou China. Specifically, it analyzed the lived experiences on academic frustration among high school students and teachers at an International School (High School B) and a Public High School (High School A), identifying the factors that contribute to their academic frustration. It also, identified the academic challenges that trigger feelings of frustration among high school students in Fuzhou, China. Finally, it analyzed the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral responses of high school students to academic frustration, and their coping mechanisms.

## **B. Methods**

This study employed a qualitative phenomenological research design complemented by a systematic literature review method to explore the lived experiences of both teachers and students regarding academic frustration in Fuzhou, China. The phenomenological approach was chosen to gain an in-depth understanding of the subjective meanings individuals attach to their experiences of academic frustration within a culturally specific context. Meanwhile, the literature review method enabled a comprehensive synthesis of existing scholarly works, including empirical studies, theoretical articles, and relevant policy documents, to enrich the interpretation of lived experiences. By integrating both approaches, the study sought to construct a holistic understanding of how academic frustration is shaped by cognitive, emotional, and cultural factors within the Chinese educational environment.

The literature review served as the foundation for this research, providing critical insights into how academic frustration has been conceptualized and studied across different contexts. It allowed the researchers to examine national and international studies, identify recurring themes

and theoretical frameworks, and highlight research gaps particularly relevant to China's high-pressure academic culture. This method was appropriate for capturing the cultural, emotional, cognitive, and behavioral dimensions of frustration as reported in previous research. Furthermore, it provided a framework to interpret the lived experiences of teachers and students, helping to explain how such experiences are influenced by Confucian values, parental expectations, and the examination-driven nature of the Chinese educational system.

The research procedure consisted of several systematic stages. Initially, a conceptual framework was developed based on the literature review findings. Following this, participants were selected through purposive sampling to ensure that each had direct and relevant experience with the phenomenon under study. The study involved fifteen high school students and ten teachers from different schools in Fuzhou. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, non-participant classroom observations, and document analysis over a three-month period. Ethical protocols, including informed consent, confidentiality, and voluntary participation, were strictly observed throughout the research process to ensure the credibility and integrity of the findings.

The data analysis employed a thematic analysis approach supported by insights drawn from the literature review. Interview recordings were transcribed verbatim, coded, and categorized to identify recurring patterns related to sources of frustration, emotional responses, and coping strategies. These emerging themes were then compared with findings from the literature to strengthen the interpretative depth of the analysis. The final synthesis combined empirical evidence from participant experiences with theoretical perspectives from previous studies, allowing for a richer and more contextually grounded understanding of academic frustration. To ensure trustworthiness, the study applied triangulation, peer debriefing, and participant validation, confirming the consistency and reliability of the interpretations derived from both data and literature.

## **C. Results and Discussion**

### **1. Academic Characterization of Frustration**

The word "frustration" has been applied in various academic contexts. The phrase is mostly used in motivation studies to characterize the state of being unable to satisfy one's basic demands for motivation (i.e., needs frustration). Frustration is a psychological state that arises when an obstacle blocks the satisfaction of a need or goal. It is a common emotion experienced by children, especially when they face challenges in their learning process (Breuer & Elson, 2017; Morris & King, 2018). Frustration is rooted in disappointments and unmet expectations. The term "frustration" has been used in several ways across disciplines. Some studies on motivation primarily use the term to describe the state of being thwarted in meeting one's core motivational needs (i.e., needs frustration; Vansteenkiste & Ryan, 2013).

#### ***Cultural Context and Implications for Education***

The COVID-19 pandemic significantly exacerbated academic frustration among students globally. The abrupt shift to online learning presented numerous challenges, including difficulties with technology access and digital literacy, increased social isolation, and heightened stress levels related to health concerns and uncertainty about the future. A study by Twenge et al. (2021) found a significant increase in anxiety and depression among young adults during the pandemic, which likely contributed to heightened feelings of academic frustration. Furthermore, research by (Przybylski et al., 2020) highlighted the negative impact of social isolation on academic performance and well-being, suggesting a link to increased frustration among students who lacked the usual in-person support systems.

Frustration, a prevalent emotion among students, can negatively impact their academic performance and motivation. In the context of China, students encounter unique challenges that necessitate a focused approach towards emotional support and frustration management. Academic pressure, intense competition among peers, high expectations from parents and educators, stringent deadlines, and the pursuit of academic excellence contribute to the prevalence of frustration among students (Huang & Gove, 2015).

Students often encounter problems such as academic dissatisfaction, family conflict, interpersonal conflict, and love failure, among which some take extreme and regrettable measures, only to hurt others or destroy themselves in the end. The vulnerability of their mental health and inability to deal with setbacks can be clearly seen in their acts. These extreme treatment methods are also directly related to neglecting education and cultivating survival consciousness, psychological endurance, and willpower for college students (Quirong, 2022).

Despite the various merits of the current educational system, it still falls short of providing a robust mechanism for managing frustration among students. While existing programs like "The Emotional Intelligence Program" and "The Stress Management Workshop" offer valuable support, they often lack a comprehensive approach to addressing the unique challenges of academic frustration faced by secondary school students. Existing programs in China often focus on broader emotional well-being or stress management, but there is a need for a more targeted approach to academic frustration.

Acknowledging that frustration is a normal reaction to challenges can help people cope with it in a more constructive way. This change in perspective enables people to see frustration not as a setback or failure but as a chance for personal development and education. When people accept that frustration is a normal reaction to challenges, they may deal with it more constructively. People who adopt this mentality might see frustration not as a setback or failure but as a chance for personal development and education.

The development of emotional intelligence, which entails comprehending and controlling one's emotions and those of others, is another aspect of frustration education that is emphasized. People with higher emotional intelligence can better control their emotional reactions to frustration and create useful coping strategies. This could involve methods like mindfulness, deep breathing, encouraging self-talk, and asking for help from others. (Anderson, 2021). It is crucial to understand that frustration education aims to manage frustration in a positive and healthy way rather than completely eradicate it. By embracing frustration as a catalyst for personal growth, individuals can develop resilience, perseverance, and a positive mindset.

## **2. Cognitive, Emotional, and Behavioral Dimensions of Academic Frustration**

The multifaceted nature of academic frustration necessitates a comprehensive understanding of its cognitive, emotional, and behavioral dimensions. Cognitively, frustration can disrupt attention, working memory, and problem-solving abilities, leading to decreased learning efficiency and academic performance (Seymour et al., 2020). The system responsible for temporarily holding and manipulating information is also vulnerable to the effects of frustration. The negative emotional state can overload working memory capacity, making it difficult to retain and process information necessary for successful task completion. This can lead to difficulties in understanding complex concepts, recalling information, and executing multi-step procedures (Seymour et al., 2020).

Furthermore, frustration can significantly hinder problem-solving abilities. The negative emotional state can impair cognitive flexibility, making it difficult to generate alternative solutions or adapt strategies in response to setbacks. Individuals may become fixated on a single

approach, even when it is clearly ineffective, or may exhibit impulsive decision-making, further compromising problem-solving efficiency (Botvinick & Braver, 2015). These cognitive disruptions directly translate into decreased learning efficiency and academic performance. Students experiencing high levels of academic frustration are more likely to struggle with comprehension, recall, and application of learned material, resulting in lower grades and reduced academic achievement (Chitrakar, 2023). The impact extends beyond immediate task performance; chronic frustration can lead to learned helplessness, a debilitating belief that one lacks the ability to control outcomes, further hindering future academic efforts.

Emotionally, academic frustration evokes a range of negative affect, including anger, anxiety, sadness, and demotivation (Chitrakar, 2023), which can further impede academic progress and well-being. Frustration frequently triggers anger, often stemming from a sense of injustice or a perceived lack of control over the situation. This anger can manifest as irritability, impatience, aggression, or defiance, potentially disrupting classroom dynamics and hindering learning (Smitha, 2022). Additionally, the fear of failure or the inability to meet expectations can lead to anxiety, manifesting as worry, nervousness, and a sense of dread, which further impair concentration and motivation (Mustafina et al., 2020). Repeated experiences of frustration can lead to feelings of sadness, hopelessness, and a loss of motivation. Students may feel overwhelmed, defeated, and discouraged, potentially leading to a decline in effort and disengagement from learning. These emotional responses can further exacerbate the negative impact of frustration on academic performance. A negative affective state, characterized by these emotions, can interfere with engagement, motivation, and attention. Students consumed by these emotions may find it difficult to concentrate on their studies, leading to a drop in academic performance (Mustafina et al., 2020).

Behaviorally, frustration can manifest in various ways, from procrastination and avoidance to disengagement and even disruptive classroom behaviors (Yahya, 2012). Faced with challenging tasks or situations, students may engage in procrastination or avoidance as coping mechanisms, delaying assignments or avoiding certain subjects altogether, ultimately hindering their academic progress. Additionally, students may become disengaged from learning activities, demonstrating a lack of interest, effort, or participation in class. They may stop completing assignments, skip class, or withdraw from discussions, potentially impacting their learning outcomes. In more extreme cases, frustration can lead to disruptive behaviors, such as acting out in class, arguing with peers, or disrespecting teachers. These behaviors can disrupt the learning environment for all students and have serious consequences, including disciplinary action and strained relationships (Crossman et al., 2019).

These diverse manifestations underscore the need for a multi-pronged approach to understanding and addressing academic frustration. Recognizing the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral dimensions of frustration is essential for developing effective interventions that promote positive learning experiences and support student well-being.

### ***Students' Experiences of Academic Frustration***

This section explores the multifaceted nature of academic frustration experienced by students, examining its cognitive, emotional, and behavioral dimensions. Frustration is a common experience among students in the present era, profoundly impacting their learning. Nowadays, students face increased frustration due to academic pressures, persistent challenges, and obstacles in their studies. These situations can lead to mental stress, lack of motivation, decreased self-esteem, and a decline in academic achievement among students (Chitrakar et al., 2023).

Academic frustration (AF) is defined as a negative psychological emotion experienced by students when they are unable to navigate the challenges in their learning process (Ballmann et al., 2022). AF can negatively impact students' interest and enthusiasm in their academic activities, causing feelings of isolation due to perceived failures, which further lowers their personal achievement motivation (Neff et al., 2005).

While AF is predominantly a negative emotional experience, it can sometimes lead to positive outcomes. For instance, negative emotional experiences can amplify motivation, prompting individuals to address their problems with purpose, which can be conducive to targeted problem-solving (Mather et al., 2015; Xie and Zhang, 2016). However, despite its potential benefits, little research has directly investigated students' AF. Most studies have focused primarily on leading factors that may cause AF, such as academic failure or levels of frustration tolerance. For example, Perry et al. (2005) found that students' academic failure is closely related to their perceived academic control. Students who possess high academic control often overlook academic failures, which results in minimal AF.

Students frequently experience frustration when facing challenges in their studies or encountering difficulties in understanding complex content. Academic pressure, peer competition, high expectations from parents and teachers, tight deadlines, and the desire to perform well can all contribute to feelings of frustration. In the educational sphere, the emotional landscape of students plays a pivotal role in shaping their learning experiences and outcomes. Among the array of emotions, frustration stands out as a significant factor that profoundly influences student motivation and academic performance.

Frustration, arising from various challenges encountered throughout the educational journey, can have a profound impact on students' ability to engage effectively with their studies and achieve their full potential. Recognizing the profound impact of frustration on students is crucial for creating a nurturing and conducive learning environment.

The *Times of India* (July 28, 2022) reported that 12,526 students committed suicide in 2020. Similarly, the *Hindustan Times* (March 16, 2023) identified academic stress and mental health issues as key reasons behind the rising cases of suicide among students. Such tragic outcomes often stem from depression, examination stress, and academic pressure.

School-related stress is a widespread phenomenon that negatively affects students' academic performance and emotional well-being, contributing to school failure or even dropout (Reijntjes et al., 2010). This stress is often exacerbated by dysfunctional interactions with peers and repetitive judgments that can be particularly distressing during pre-adolescence. At this age, the school environment is perceived as the most significant context for socialization, making sources of stress within this environment especially evocative and disruptive (Teicher et al., 2010).

Understanding the multifaceted nature of students' frustration, encompassing its cognitive, emotional, and behavioral dimensions, is crucial for developing effective interventions to support their academic success.

### ***Cognitive Consequences***

Frustration, as a cognitive consequence, can significantly impact various mental processes. It can affect cognitive control, which controls thoughts and actions in line with internal goals. According to a study published on NCBI, the impact of frustration on cognitive control may persist even after the emotional component has been withdrawn. This could result in a continuous effect on performance, such as increased task errors. Cognitive control refers to “a set of superordinate functions that encode and maintain representations of the current task...marshaling to that task subordinate functions including working

memory...attention...action selection and inhibition” (Botvinick & Braver, 2015). Cognitive control allows an individual to flexibly adapt and adjust behavior in the context of ever-changing task demands and goals (Carter & Krus, 2012).

A statement made by Chris (2023) said, "While we want to think of school as 'fun' and always exciting, sometimes thinking hurts." Kort's emotional learning spiral states that learners go through a necessary pattern of emotions to learn something new. Learners start out in Stage 1, feeling great about learning a new concept. But when confronted with confusing or challenging information, head into Stage 2, where learners start feeling confused and anxious. The new information is challenging and hard to understand.

Then, as learners start to fix up old, outdated knowledge, they will enter into a state of frustration. Learners will be trying out new answers to difficult questions and realizing some of the things they used to think were true are, in fact, untrue. Here, they're not feeling very positive emotions at all. Nonetheless, it's a necessary stage in cognitive development because they sometimes have to challenge their old ways of thinking to learn new things. Lastly, learners will enter Stage 4. Here, learners feel emotions like determination and hopefulness because they feel like they're finally understanding a new concept (Kort, 2001).

### ***Emotional Consequences***

Emotional intelligence is linked with the ability to deal with frustration. Emotional intelligence is your capacity to notice and evaluate emotions in yourself and others and your ability to regulate how you express your feelings (Kumari & Gupta, 2022). Frustration can indeed trigger a range of negative emotions, including anger, anxiety, and demotivation. When individuals encounter obstacles or roadblocks to their goals, the emotional response is often frustrating. This emotion can be accompanied by aggression, hostility, impulsivity, and defensiveness. This heightened emotional state can generate its own stress if not managed in a healthy manner (Mustafina et.al, 2020).

Anger is a common emotional response to frustration. When people's goals are blocked or their expectations are not met, they may experience anger. This can lead to aggressive behavior and irritability (Smitha, 2022). Another emotional consequence of frustration is anxiety. This can manifest as a fear of being unable to accomplish tasks or meet expectations, leading to increased stress levels. Demotivation is also a possible emotional response to frustration. When individuals repeatedly encounter obstacles or fail to achieve their goals, they may feel a loss of motivation. This can result in reduced self-esteem and defeat (Mustafina et.al, 2020).

These emotional responses can further hinder learning by creating a negative affective state. This negative state can interfere with students' engagement and motivation. When students are consumed by these emotions, they may find it difficult to concentrate on their studies, leading to a drop in academic performance.

In addition, these emotions can also affect the student's overall well-being. Chronic frustration can lead to burnout, a state characterized by chronic, unmitigated stress (March-Amengual, 2022). This can further compound the emotional consequences of frustration. Frustration can evoke a range of negative emotions that hinder learning and affect overall well-being. It's crucial to manage these emotions effectively to mitigate their potential impacts.

### ***Behavioral Consequences***

Frustration can lead to various behavioral responses. These responses can be categorized broadly into disengagement, avoidance, and acting out. Disengagement is a common behavioral response to frustration. This can manifest as a loss of interest or motivation in previously enjoyable or meaningful activities. In the context of students, this could mean becoming

disinterested in learning. They may stop participating in class discussions, neglect their homework, or skip classes (Yahya, 2012).

Avoidance is another behavioral response to frustration. Individuals may avoid situations or tasks that they associate with frustration. For students, this could mean withdrawing from challenging tasks or avoiding difficult subjects. This avoidance behavior is a form of coping strategy, albeit unproductive, as it does not address the root cause of the frustration and can lead to missed learning opportunities (Crossman et.al, 2019).

Acting out is also a possible behavioral response to frustration. This can involve disruptive behaviors such as aggression, hostility, or defiance. For students, this could manifest as acting out in class, conflicts with peers, or disrespecting teachers. This is a more extreme response to frustration and can have serious consequences, including disciplinary action and strained relationships (Charlie, 2023).

### **3. Cultural and Contextual Influences on Academic Frustration: The Case of Fuzhou China**

The experience and expression of academic frustration are profoundly shaped by cultural values, educational systems, and societal expectations. While frustration is a universal human experience, its manifestation and impact vary significantly across cultural contexts. In the city of Fuzhou, China, these dynamics are particularly salient due to the region's adherence to national academic standards and deep-rooted cultural traditions influenced by Confucianism.

In Fuzhou, as in many other parts of China, Confucian values remain central to both family life and educational practices. These values emphasize hard work, perseverance, filial piety, and collective harmony—cultural ideals that contribute to the strong emphasis on academic achievement as a pathway to personal success and family honor (Bond, 2012). Students in Fuzhou face intense pressure to excel academically, driven by expectations from parents, competition among peers, and the pivotal role of the gaokao, the national college entrance examination (Zhang et al., 2005). This creates a high-stakes environment in which academic frustration arises frequently when performance falls short of expectations. Furthermore, the cultural emphasis on harmony and face-saving often leads students to internalize or suppress their frustration, avoiding open discussion to prevent family shame or social embarrassment (Bond, 2012).

The gaokao's impact is particularly pronounced in urban centers like Fuzhou, where educational resources are relatively more concentrated and student populations are highly competitive. The exam's decisive role in determining future educational and career opportunities generates chronic stress and heightens the emotional toll of academic setbacks (Ho, 2006). Additionally, the exam-driven system fosters a learning environment centered on standardized testing and rote memorization, which can stifle creativity and critical thinking. When students in Fuzhou encounter problems that require adaptive reasoning rather than memorization, many experience heightened frustration (Fu, 2024).

The teaching styles commonly observed in Fuzhou's schools reflect traditional Chinese pedagogy, which emphasizes teacher-centered instruction and the passive reception of knowledge (Biggs et al., 2017). While these methods may benefit students who excel at structured learning, they can alienate those who prefer interactive or inquiry-based approaches. This dissonance can lead to disengagement and academic frustration, particularly when learning becomes monotonous or overly exam-focused.

Family dynamics also play a crucial role in shaping the academic experiences of students in Fuzhou. Academic achievement is often regarded as a direct reflection of parental success and

family values. Consequently, parents in Fuzhou tend to be highly involved in their children's education, offering support that, while well-intentioned, may become a source of additional pressure (Yang, 2010). Students may feel compelled to meet lofty expectations to uphold familial honor, leading them to internalize academic struggles rather than seek help, further deepening their frustration.

To address academic frustration effectively in Fuzhou's educational context, culturally responsive interventions are needed. These should include the promotion of student autonomy, the integration of emotional regulation strategies, and the creation of psychologically safe spaces for expressing academic difficulties. Interventions must also consider the powerful influence of parental expectations and societal norms, encouraging schools to involve families in developing healthier, more balanced academic environments.

#### **D. Conclusion**

Frustration, particularly in academic contexts, is commonly understood as a psychological response to unmet needs or blocked goals, and it has been extensively examined in motivation studies (Vansteenkiste & Ryan, 2013). It often arises among students facing challenges in learning, intensified by disappointments and high expectations (Breuer & Elson, 2017; Morris & King, 2018). The COVID-19 pandemic further magnified this issue, as students globally struggled with digital access, social isolation, and mental health concerns, leading to increased academic frustration (Twenge et al., 2021; Przybylski et al., 2020). In China, unique stressors such as intense competition, familial pressure, and a high-stakes educational environment exacerbate students' emotional vulnerabilities, sometimes resulting in extreme reactions due to a lack of psychological preparedness (Huang & Gove, 2015; Quirong, 2022). Although current programs address emotional well-being, they often overlook the specific nature of academic frustration, highlighting the need for more targeted interventions. Embracing frustration as a normal and growth-inducing experience, along with fostering emotional intelligence, can equip students with constructive coping strategies like mindfulness and self-regulation (Anderson, 2021), ultimately promoting resilience and a healthier academic mindset.

Academic frustration is a complex, multidimensional experience that significantly influences students' cognitive, emotional, and behavioral functioning. Cognitively, frustration disrupts processes such as attention, working memory, and problem-solving, often resulting in impaired academic performance and learned helplessness (Seymour et al., 2020; Botvinick & Braver, 2015). Emotionally, it provokes negative feelings like anger, anxiety, sadness, and demotivation, which not only hinder engagement and concentration but also contribute to burnout and reduced self-esteem (Chitrakar, 2023; Mustafina et al., 2020). Behaviorally, students may exhibit avoidance, disengagement, or even disruptive actions in response to sustained academic stress (Yahya, 2012; Crossman et al., 2019). These manifestations are further compounded by academic pressures, peer competition, and familial expectations. While often viewed as detrimental, frustration can also serve as a catalyst for growth when addressed through the development of emotional intelligence, coping strategies, and targeted educational interventions (Kumari & Gupta, 2022; Kort, 2001). Recognizing the interplay of these dimensions is essential for educators to create supportive learning environments that transform frustration into opportunities for resilience and academic perseverance.

Academic frustration in Fuzhou, China, is profoundly influenced by cultural norms, educational practices, and societal expectations rooted in Confucian values, which prioritize academic excellence, perseverance, and filial piety (Bond, 2012). The pressure to succeed—particularly in the context of the highly competitive gaokao—intensifies students' emotional

strain, as even minor academic setbacks can result in significant frustration and feelings of failure (Zhang et al., 2005; Ho, 2006). Traditional teacher-centered pedagogies and an emphasis on rote memorization further exacerbate this issue by limiting students' opportunities for interactive learning and critical thinking (Biggs et al., 2017). Societal and familial expectations often heighten stress, as students strive to uphold family honor while suppressing emotional struggles to maintain social harmony (Yang, 2010). These cultural and systemic pressures collectively create a learning environment where frustration is both pervasive and often unspoken. Therefore, culturally responsive interventions that support emotional regulation, foster student autonomy, promote diverse learning strategies, and engage families in realistic goal-setting are essential for effectively addressing academic frustration in Chinese students.

Recognizing academic frustration as a natural and potentially transformative emotional response is crucial to student well-being. By designing interventions that address its root causes—especially in contexts intensified by crises like the COVID-19 pandemic and the academic pressures faced by Chinese students—educators and policymakers can empower learners to turn frustration into a source of growth, resilience, and improved academic engagement.

Therefore, a holistic understanding of academic frustration's cognitive, emotional, and behavioral impacts is indispensable in designing effective educational interventions. By addressing these dimensions through inclusive pedagogical strategies and psychological support, schools can help students navigate academic challenges more successfully and cultivate long-term academic resilience and emotional well-being.

Ultimately, understanding how cultural and contextual forces shape academic frustration in Fuzhou, China, allows for the development of more nuanced and effective educational responses. By aligning interventions with cultural values while promoting emotional expression, student-centered learning, and healthy parental involvement, educators can mitigate frustration and create a more balanced and supportive academic environment for Chinese learners.

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