

University of Northern Iowa

UNI ScholarWorks

INSPIRE Student Research and Engagement
Conference

2024 INSPIRE Student Research and
Engagement Conference

Apr 8th, 10:00 AM - 10:50 AM

Red vs. Blue: Identifying Demands Among Faculty and Graduate Students

MacKenzie Grenko

University of Northern Iowa

Kieran Luedke

University of Northern Iowa

See next page for additional authors

Let us know how access to this document benefits you

Copyright ©2024 MacKenzie Grenko, Kieran Luedke, Tenzin Kalsang, and Helen C. Harton

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.uni.edu/csbsresearchconf>

Recommended Citation

Grenko, MacKenzie; Luedke, Kieran; Kalsang, Tenzin; and Harton, Helen C., "Red vs. Blue: Identifying Demands Among Faculty and Graduate Students" (2024). *INSPIRE Student Research and Engagement Conference*. 7.

<https://scholarworks.uni.edu/csbsresearchconf/2024/all/7>

This Open Access Poster Presentation is brought to you for free and open access by the CSBS Conferences/Events at UNI ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in INSPIRE Student Research and Engagement Conference by an authorized administrator of UNI ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact scholarworks@uni.edu.

Offensive Materials Statement: Materials located in UNI ScholarWorks come from a broad range of sources and time periods. Some of these materials may contain offensive stereotypes, ideas, visuals, or language.

Author

MacKenzie Grenko, Kieran Luedke, Tenzin Kalsang, and Helen C. Harton

PURPOSE

Recently enacted legislation and political climate may contribute to faculty dissatisfaction. For instance, 87% of faculty in Florida would not recommend faculty jobs in their state because of recent laws affecting higher education (e.g., DEI funding restrictions in institutions; Zahneis & June 2023). Those in Democratic states may also be impacted (e.g., White males feeling discriminated against; Isom Scott, 2018). These political climates related to higher education may also impact graduate students and contribute to their stress. In this study, we examined to what extent being in a “red,” “purple,” or “blue” state (e.g., conservative, moderate/centrist, or liberal) related to job/school stressors and burnout among faculty and graduate students.

METHOD

Participants and Procedure:

- 328 faculty, recruited through stratified cluster random sampling, and 238 graduate students, recruited through Prolific, completed an online survey.
- Faculty: 58% identified as female, 81% identified as White, 84% were from the U.S. (36 states plus DC)
- Graduate students: 70% aged 21-30 years, 50% identified as male, 61.8% identified as White, 99% were from the U.S. (43 states plus DC)

Measures:

Burnout: Three measures were standardized and averaged to create an overall *burnout* measure ($\alpha = .90$)

- Oldenburg Burnout Inventory ($\alpha = .89$; Bakker & Demerouti, 2008) e.g., “I always find new and interesting aspects in my work” on a 4-point Likert scale
- The Burnout Measure- Short Version ($\alpha = .92$; Malach-Pines, 2005) e.g., “When you think about your work overall, how often do you feel the following? “Tired” on a 7-point Likert scale
- Single item assessing agreement with the statement: “I feel burnout” on a 5-point Likert scale

Job Demands ($\alpha = .83$)

Author-generated; 19 items; how much each of the following is a problem for you. e.g., “low pay” on a 5-point Likert scale

Political Climate

Single item assessing to what extent the political climate related to education negatively contributed to their job/schooling on a 5-point Likert scale

State of Residence

We coded their state of residence as red (all three Republican), blue (all three Democratic), and purple (mixed) based on the party of the governor and the majority party of the State Senate and House members.

TAKEAWAY

Faculty in red states indicated that the political climate negatively contributed to their jobs more than those in other states. Graduate students reported more concern about discrimination in non-purple states than in purple states. These findings highlight the impact that state legislation can have on work and school environments.

Figure 1. Faculty burnout levels by state political party

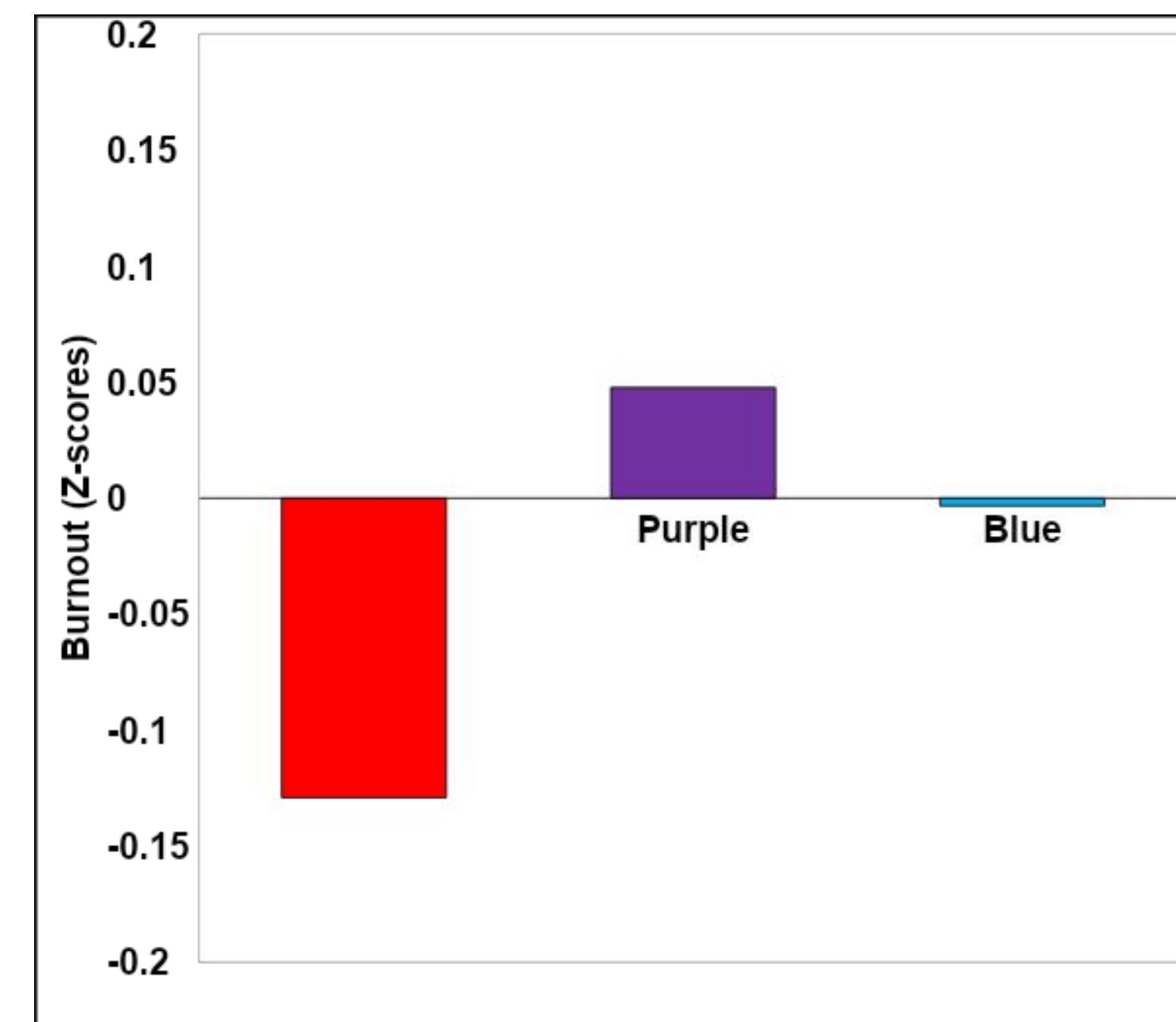
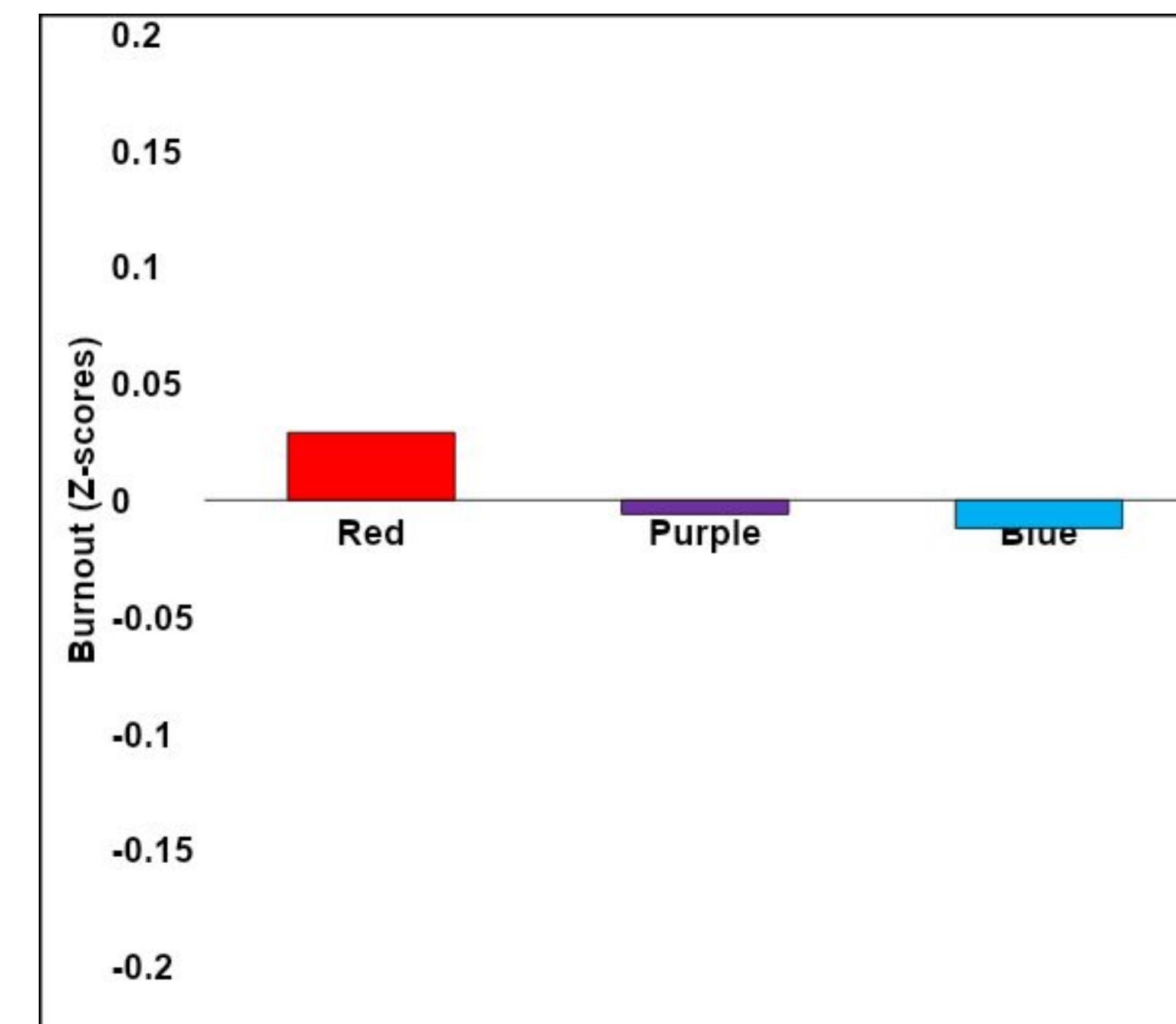


Figure 2. Graduate student burnout levels by state political party



DISCUSSION

- Faculty in conservative states noted increased job demands linked to the political climate, but they did not report greater levels of burnout.
- Graduate students in politically moderate states expressed the least worry about facing discrimination based on their identities, suggesting that the social and political atmosphere in purple states is perceived as more inclusive for graduate students compared to both red and blue states.

Recommendations

- Providing resources and support systems to help faculty members in the red states cope with the negative impact of the political climate on their jobs
- Promoting inclusive teaching environments
- Addressing concerns related to low pay among faculty and focusing on improving overall job satisfaction.
- Creating a more supportive and inclusive environment for all graduate students.

RESULTS

- Overall, 72% of faculty and 58% of graduate students reported being at least somewhat burned out. Burnout did not vary by state political party, p 's $> .60$; η^2 's $< .006$ (Figures 1 and 2).

The following analyses compared job demands by state type (Tables 1 and 2).

Faculty in Red States

- Reported that the political climate negatively contributed to their job more than those in blue and purple states, $p = .025$, $\eta^2 = .029$.
- Were more likely to indicate a lack of respect from politicians, $p = .038$, $\eta^2 = .025$.
- Were more likely to have concerns about teaching topics that may be politically charged (e.g., critical race theory) $p = .010$, $\eta^2 = .035$.

Faculty in Purple States

- Were least concerned about low pay, $p = .015$, $\eta^2 = .033$.

Graduate Students in Red and Blue States

- Indicated that being discriminated against for their identities (e.g., gender) caused them greater school stress, $p = .013$, $\eta^2 = .039$.

Table 1. Faculty Job Demands by Political Party

	N	Political climate negatively contributes to job stress	Lack of respect or support from politicians	Concerns about politically charged teaching topics	Concerned about low pay
		<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>
Red	127				
Blue	90				
Purple	41				

Note. Subscripts that differ within a column indicate significant differences at $p < .05$.

Table 2. Student Demands by Political Party

	N	Concerns about identity discrimination	Concerns about being political discrimination	Lack of support for your mental/physical health
		<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>
Red	77			
Blue	90			
Purple	52			

Note. Subscripts that differ within a column indicate significant differences at $p < .05$.

REFERENCES

- Bakker, A. B., & Demerouti, E. (2008). Towards a model of work engagement. *Career Development, 13*(3), 209–223. <https://doi.org/10.1108/13620430810870476>
- Isom Scott, D. A. (2018). Understanding White Americans' perceptions of “reverse” discrimination: An application of a new theory of status dissonance. *Advances in Group Processes, 35*, 129–157. <https://doi.org/10.1108/S0882-61452018000035006>
- Malach-Pines, A. (2005). The Burnout Measure, Short Version. *International Journal of Stress Management, 12*(1), 78–88. <https://doi.org/10.1037/1072-5245.12.1.78>
- Zahneis, M. (2023, June 14). Wisconsin Republicans take aim at funding for diversity. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. <https://www.chronicle.com/article/wisconsin-republicans-take-aim-at-funding-for-diversity>