

Academic Resilience of Higher Secondary School Students

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Abstract

Resilience is a psychological notion found in some people that accounts for achievement in the adverse circumstances. Academic resilience contextualizes the resilience construct and reflects an increased condition of success in academics despite adversity. Academic resilience includes academic confidence, well-being, motivation, and the capability to achieve goals, relationships with peers and adults, and also emotional regulation and physical health. This paper tries to investigate the academic resilience of higher secondary school students in relation to specific demographic variables. Employing a descriptive survey method, the research focused on 184 high school students from the Varanasi district of Uttar Pradesh. Using the ARS-MMKS (2016) scale developed by Mallik and Kaur, the investigation revealed no significant relationship between gender, location, and academic performance among the students.

Keywords: *Academic resilience, Risk Factor and Protective factor, Higher Secondary School students.*

Introduction

The world where we live in has seen rapid changes at fast speed, and these changes have far reached consequences on child development too. The youth of today is exposed to more information than in earlier periods. A child must face all the adverse circumstances. Despite that they must handle their entire daily task effectively to live a happy and satisfactory life. Academic, social, and emotional resilience are only some categories that resilience encompasses. Resilience is not something whether a person have or have not. Resilience is comprised of behaviors and attitudes that can be learnt and developed in person at a time. Children who are born with gifted brain and despite the most difficult circumstances they do well in school. Rutter (1987) defined resilience as a positive response to situations of stress and adversity. From this view, Resilience can be explained as a protective mechanism that

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originates from specific personality traits such as self-esteem or familial cohesion, as well as the availability of external support networks meant to encourage coping efforts.

Bandura's **self-efficacy mechanism theory** has served as the foundation for a related theory to understand resilience. It refers to a person's ability to react and think effectively in difficult conditions. When the word *resilience* is interpreted from a psychological perspective, three key phenomena are commonly referenced:

I Good outcomes despite the high-risk status

II Sustained under threat,

III Recovery from trauma

The term academic resilience is made from the term resilience ‘which comes from the Latin word ‘*resilire*’, meaning "to jump back" or "to recoil." Resilience is a pattern of psychological activity consisting of the motive to be strong in the face of inordinate demands and the energy to produce goal directed behavior, emotions and cognition. (Jowkar et al., 2011) Resilience is the process “Individuals attain adaptive functioning in the face of adversity.” (Hines et al., 2005). Then, on this ground Academic resilience is specifically, is a concept linked to positive anomalies in educational performance for students identified as at-risk. (Morales, 2008). The premise is that goals and academic success represent highly meaningful accomplishments for adolescents who must overcome a myriad of challenges to achieve them. These youth are termed academically resilient. (Finn & Rock, 1997; Morales, 2008).

Main Attribute of Risk and Protective Factors

The theory of resiliency discusses two major variables. The first is the Risk factor which can be characterized as the biological, psychological, familial, community, or cultural level that are associated with a higher risk of adverse results.

The academic success of students in school is influenced by a wide range of variables. Several factors put students at risk for academic failure, including unfavorable conditions such as poverty, poor school environments, and certain parenting styles. Without having experienced any serious risk, such youngsters can be described as -well adjusted, competent or normal, but they cannot be considered resilient. (Masten and Reed,

2002). Schools that serve racial minority and impoverished students may introduce risk factors such as less supportive school atmosphere, institutionalizing low academic expectations, or insufficient educational resources. (Borman and Overman, 2004) Children's educational and behavioral issues are not inevitable, but risk factors certainly increase the likelihood that they will occur.

Resilience is an ever-changing trait that shifts depending on the social situations of the child, this is not a personality attribute. The second key variable is protective factors, which are connected with a lower likelihood of unfavourable outcomes or reduce the influence of a risk factor. Protective factors can be viewed as positive counter-events.

The main drivers of an individual's success are protective factors, which include personal attributes, institutions, resources and other supports that enable someone to defy the consequences of risk factors. In a study of urban students, Wasonga et al. (2003) suggested that schools, parents, communities, and peers should promote protective factors by providing supportive environments and opportunities for participation in activities that promote social bonding and life skills. According to research, protective factors that support young people's growth and success in school are largely rooted in interactions across three key systems: family, community, and school.

Certain risk and protective factors are stable, remaining unchanged over time, while others are considered variable and subject to change. Variable risk factors include aspects such as peer group, income level, adverse childhood experiences, and employment status. At the individual level, risk factors may involve a genetic predisposition to addiction or prenatal exposure to alcohol. On the other hand, individual-level protective factors can include positive self-image, self-control, and social competence.



Source: <https://www.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/20190718-samhsa-risk-protective-factors.pdf>

When some undesirable incident takes place in a person's life, it's the situation when they show strong determination and strength of character, which can pull them out of the situation and help them make a comeback with inner capacity to face the new challenges of life. Resilience is a strength-based concept that helps students to negate, inhibit or moderate the impact of at-risk situations that could cause them psychosocial harm. It can be fostered in children through protective factors such as caring guardians, opportunities for involvement and high expectations. Resilience is also explained as the ability to bounce back from difficult situations and adapt well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats, stressors and health problems. Resilience helps a child adjust to adverse situations and thrive despite grief, hurt and disadvantage (Cameron & Maginn, 2009). Resilience emerges from a blend of protective factors and risk factors. Risk factors are attributes at the biological, psychological, familial, communal, or cultural levels that precede and associated with a heightened probability of adverse consequences. In contrast, protective factors are traits linked with a reduced likelihood of negative outcomes or those that buffer the impact of a risk factors. Protective factors can be seen as positive, counteractive occurrences.

The concept of resilience started with Michael Rutter in 1993 and Edith Grotberg in 1995. Rutter spoke about protective mechanisms- the ways individuals actively respond to their environment to recover from tough times. Grotberg added that resilience stems from three key elements: having support, having skills, and having inner strength. According to her, resilience is about how people deal with tough situations and emerge stronger. This concept is valuable in education because it helps students manage challenges more effectively. It also informs how we design teaching methods and support systems for students. Resilient

competence refers to the ability to handle difficult situations that could significantly impact a student's educational journey.

According to Wang et al. (1994), academic resilience is the heightened likelihood of educational success despite personal vulnerabilities and adversities. This resilience is influenced by environmental conditions, experiences, and an understanding of motivation - factors closely linked to academic performance. Academic resilience is viewed as an ever-evolving developmental process that includes both the protective qualities within individual students (internal protective factors) and those with their environments (external protective factors), which support the adjustment and educational achievement of at-risk students (Luthar et al., 2000). Among external protective factors, the family plays a crucial role in fostering academic resilience. Solberg et al. (1998) identified six key skills as foundational to academic resilience: building confidence, making connections, setting goals, managing stress, increasing well-being, and understanding motivation. These elements are strongly associated with academic performance.

Academically resilient students need a strong sense of self-regulation to maintain a positive attitude, especially when facing frustration with academic challenges (McTigue Washburn and Liew, 2009). Academic resilience is positively related to the active participation in school activities and the school environment, good relationships with peers and teachers, and satisfaction with school management; it is negatively associated with anxiety in the school setting, feelings of lack of control, and a tendency toward failure avoidance.

Significance of the study

This article is important for both pupils and educators who aim to succeed and grow in the future. This paper seeks to assess the academic resilience of higher secondary school students—specifically focusing on academic confidence, sense of well-being, motivation and goal recognition, relationships with peers and adults, emotional regulation and physical health- across different demographic variables. There are many researches which have been done on students but this area is not properly explored with these variables and sample. The findings suggest that academic resilience plays a crucial role in helping students cope with adverse situations and perform well. It is essential to understand students' resilience in relation to their academics, as they are on the verge of choosing careers that will shape their

futures. Additionally, the college environment is quite different from school, and students face various challenges as they navigate relationships with friends and teachers.

Literature Review

Academic resilience refers to the ability to overcome setbacks and chronic difficulties in academic settings. Many authors consider academic resilience to be a crucial characteristic, especially for students from low socioeconomic backgrounds or those who have experienced extremely traumatic life events. Research conducted by Noora Abdul Kader and Mohd Abad (2017) revealed a notable positive correlation between academic resilience and protective factors among senior secondary students. Additionally, their study indicated that girls demonstrate greater resilience compared to boys. Mwangi et al. (2015), focused on examining the connection between academic resilience and academic achievement among secondary school students in Kiambu County, Kenya. Using a descriptive correlational design, they investigated the relationship among a sample of 390 students and found a positive and significant relationship between academic resilience and academic achievement. A study by Li and colleagues (2018) found that academic resilience is positively correlated with academic achievement among university students. Similarly, in 2017, Rao and Krishnamurthi conducted research exploring the relationship between students' resilience and their academic performance, using a sample of 125 students from North Bangalore, India. Their findings revealed a significant positive correlation between resilience and scholastic performance. In a 2019 study, Tamannaeifar and Shahmirzaei discovered that academic resilience exhibited a noteworthy positive relation with problem-focused coping style, while showing negative correlations with avoidance coping and emotion-focused coping style.

Statement of the Problem

The study is entitled as-

“Academic Resilience of Higher Secondary school Students”.

Research Questions

The objective of this study was to examine the academic resilience of Higher Secondary students on the basis of different demographic variables.

Objective

- To study the academic resilience among higher secondary school students.
- To find out the significance difference between the academic resilience of higher secondary school students on the following grounds-
 - a- Gender
 - b- Locality
- To study the correlation between the students' academic resilience and academic performance at higher secondary level.

Delimitations

- 1- Only one academic session is taken in the study.
- 2- The study is confined to the Varanasi district only.

Defining Terms

Academic Resilience - Academic resilience is related to the capability of individuals to effectively navigate and overcome challenges and setbacks in their educational pursuits. It involves the capacity to adapt, persist and perform well academically despite facing difficulties, setbacks, or adverse circumstances. Academic resilience is crucial for success in education, as it helps students develop the necessary skills and attitudes to flourish in challenging circumstances.

Hypotheses

- There is no significant difference between the academic resilience of higher secondary school students with respect to their gender.
- There is no significant difference between the academic resilience of higher secondary school students with respect to their locality.
- There is no significant relationship between the academic resilience of higher secondary school students with respect to their academic performance.

Method and procedure

The data in this study were collected using a descriptive survey method, employing simple random sampling techniques. The sample consisted of 184 higher secondary school students.

Tool

The tool used in this study was the Academic Resilience Scale, developed by Mihir Kumar Singh and Simranjeet Kaur, designed to assess the level of academic resilience among adolescents studying in higher secondary classes. This scale contains 52 items covering five domains of academic resilience. It uses a 5-point Likert-type scale, with 5 response options namely: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Undecided (U), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD). To obtain the score for each item, a numerical value is assigned to each response option. The scoring procedure for academic resilience is given in Table 1:

Items	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Positive	5	4	3	2	1
Negative	1	2	3	4	5

Table: 1

The scale's internal consistency, measured using Cronbach's alpha, is found to be high at 0.78 and the Content Validity of the scale is 0.83 and Intrinsic Validity is 0.92.

Analysis and Interpretation of Data

Description and Inferential Analysis of Data (overall)

A total of 184 students of higher secondary school took part in the study. The mean of total students is 207.39 and the standard deviation is 18.76.(Table-2)

Variable	Mean	SD	df	Level of significance
Students	207.39	18.76	182	0.5

Table: 2

Result 1

The table 3 shows that the mean score of academic resilience of boys and girls is 207.71 and 207.01 respectively with mean difference of 0.7. The standard deviations are 22.23 and 15.23 respectively. The calculated value of 't', is less than table value of 't', so it can be interpreted that no significant difference exists between mean scores of boys and girls. So, the null hypothesis is accepted. suggesting that academic resilience remains unaffected by the gender of the students.

In their study, Padmashri S. Rao and Krishnamurthy (2018) as well as Al-Meligy (2018) found no statistically significant difference between males and females concerning academic resilience. Similarly, Tefera and Mulatie (2014) observed a minimal disparity in resilience between males and females. Based on these findings, it is recommended that teachers and parents actively promote resilience in students, as it has numerous positive consequences for their future endeavors.

The implication of these findings suggest that gender may not be a significant factor influencing academic resilience levels. Instead, other variables such as individual traits, environmental factors, and support systems may play a more substantial role in fostering resilience among students. Therefore, efforts should focus on cultivating resilience-building strategies that are inclusive and accessible to all students, regardless of gender.

Variable	N	Mean	SD	df	t value	Remark
Boys	80	207.71	22.23	182	0.80	Not significant at 0.05 level
Girls	104	207.01	15.23			

Table: 3

Result 2 Table 4 shows that the mean score of academic resilience of rural and urban students is 206.52 and 207.77 respectively with mean difference 1.25. The standard deviations are 21.67 and 16.58 respectively. The calculated 't' value of 0.65 falls below the critical value in the table for the degree of freedom, which is 182. As a result, the calculated 't' value is not statistically significant at the 0.05 level of significance. This indicates that there is no significant difference in academic resilience between rural and urban high school students.

Similarly, in the study conducted by Dipali Mahato et al. (2023), it was found that the locality, whether rural or urban, did not have a significant impact on undergraduate students in the Purulia district of West Bengal. Although urban students exhibited higher levels of academic resilience compared to their rural counterparts, the difference was not statistically significant.

These findings suggest that the geographic location, whether rural or urban, may not necessarily determine the level of academic resilience among students. While previous assumptions might have suggested otherwise, the evidence indicates that other factors beyond locality may play a more influential in shaping students' resilience levels.

It underscores the complexity of factors contributing to academic resilience and highlights the need for further research to explore the dynamics involved in rural and urban contexts. Additionally, interventions aimed at enhancing academic resilience should account for the multifaceted nature of student experiences and the diverse challenges they face across different environments.

Variable	N	Mean	SD	Df	“t” Value	Remark
Urban	117	207.77	16.58	182	0.65	Not significant at 0.05 level
Rural	67	206.52	21.67			

Table: 4

Result 3

To find out the relationship between the academic resilience and academic performance, Pearson correlation is used. The Correlation between Academic resilience and academic performance is – 0.17. Muhammad Sarwar et al. (2010) discovered in their study that there was no significant correlation between academic resilience and academic achievement among secondary school students in Gujranwala, Pakistan. This finding is mirrored in the research of Marie et al. (2021), where they identified a non- significant association between the academic performance of pharmacy learners in mathematics and their level of academic resilience.

In the case of secondary school students in Gujranwala and pharmacy learners studying mathematics, the absence of a significant relationship between academic resilience and academic achievement implies that factors beyond resilience alone may influence academic

outcomes. These may include a range of individual, environmental, and systemic factors that contribute to students' academic success or challenges.

Therefore, these studies highlight the need for further exploration into the complex interplay between academic resilience and academic achievement, taking into account the unique circumstances and characteristics of different student populations and academic domains.

Conclusion

Masten (2001) emphasized that resilience is not about possessing extraordinary traits, but rather about drawing on the ordinary human strengths present in children's minds, families, and communities. In simpler terms, a child's resilience emerges from their everyday environment, including home, school, and peer relationships. Previous studies have shown that factors such as school policies and practices, physical conditions, home environment, neighbourhood conditions, parents' involvement, academic achievement and educational aspirations all influence students' resilience.

This study suggests that schools hold significant potential in fostering student resilience. Efforts should focus on strengthening both the school and home learning environments through proactive policies and supportive practices. Teachers can facilitate this process by providing students with opportunities to actively engage in teaching and learning activities. Such opportunities not only enhance students' intrinsic motivation but also reinforce their natural capacity to learn and adapt.

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