



OVERCOMING OBSTACLES: A STUDY OF ACADEMIC RESILIENCE AMONG MALE AND FEMALE SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

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Abstract

Academic Resilience embodies a student's aptitude to adeptly navigate impediments, pressure and challenges inherent in the school environment. This research explores the academic resilience of secondary school students and compares male and female students in this regard. The study aimed to test the hypothesis that there is no significant difference in academic resilience between male and female secondary school students. A sample of 140 secondary school students (70 male and 70 female) was randomly selected for the study. Data collection employed the Academic Resilience Scale developed by Dr. Mihir Kumar Mallick and Ms. Simranjit Kaur. Statistical analysis included percentage statistics, Mean, Standard Deviation, and a t-test to assess mean differences in academic resilience between genders. Results showed that among the 140 secondary students, 12.1% exhibited extremely high, 5% high, 28.6% above average, 33.6% average, 19.3% below average, and 1.4% low levels of academic resilience. None of the students displayed an extremely low level of resilience. The findings revealed that 5.7% of male students and 18.6% of female students demonstrated extremely high resilience, 5.7% of male students and 4.3% of female students showed high resilience, 24.3% of male students and 32.9% of female students possessed above-average resilience, 37.1% of male students and 30.0% of female students displayed moderate resilience, 24.3% of male students and 14.3% of female students exhibited below-average resilience, and 2.9% of male students and no female students showed low levels of academic resilience. None of the students displayed an extremely low level of academic resilience. The calculated t-value of 3.32 is significant at the 0.01 level, indicating a notable difference in academic resilience between male and female secondary school students. The findings of this study suggest that female secondary school students tend to be more resilient than their male counterparts.

KEYWORDS: Academic Resilience, Academic Stress, Academic Challenges, Academic Achievement, Mental Health



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INTRODUCTION

The concept of academic resilience stands as a crucial pillar within the realm of education, encompassing a student's ability to navigate and surmount academic challenges, stress, and

pressures inherent to the school environment. Rooted in the manifestation of internal and external protective factors, academic resilience empowers learners to overcome setbacks and thrive in their educational journey. While schools are posited as potential sources for fostering the skills, opportunities, and relationships conducive to resilience, a body of research underscores its profound impact on students, with implications extending to both academic and broader life outcomes. Schoon (2006) characterizes resilience as a dynamic process marked by adaptive responses in the face of formidable adversity. This phenomenon is closely intertwined with the notion of adversity, referring to environmental conditions that disrupt or jeopardize the accomplishment of age-appropriate developmental tasks. Consequently, resilience engenders an individual's ability to effectively confront life's challenges, culminating in the acquisition of competence and skills through the process of overcoming obstacles (Chung, 2008). Numerous studies have delved into the factors that contribute to rendering susceptible learners more resilient. This knowledge is foundational to the formulation of preventive measures, parental and school support methods, and initiatives aimed at fostering resilience. Johnson (1997) asserts that human relationships are paramount in bolstering student resiliency, with student characteristics, family dynamics, community factors, and school programs following as key determinants. Academic resilience, as defined by Martin (2013), encapsulates the capacity to triumph over acute or chronic adversity that threatens a student's educational journey. Wang et al. (1994) depict it as a heightened likelihood of academic success amidst environmental challenges. Alva (1991) characterizes resilient students as those who sustain high motivational achievement and performance, even when confronted with stressors and conditions that place their academic prowess at risk.

In essence, academic resilience fortifies individuals with the psychological fortitude to confront stress and adversity, enabling them to maintain composure and navigate through trying circumstances. This trait serves as a beacon guiding individuals through challenges, instilling the capacity to manage hardships and reconstruct their lives following adversity. Richardson et al. (1990) emphasize resilience as a process that equips individuals with enhanced protective and coping skills when confronted with disruptive, stressful, or challenging life events. Within the educational realm, academic resilience denotes students' ability to attain favorable academic outcomes despite adversity, encompassing challenging circumstances. This resilience enables students to excel academically, irrespective of obstacles, as underscored by Mihir K. Mallick and Kaur (2016).

In broader terms, academic resilience embodies a student's aptitude to adeptly navigate impediments, pressure, and challenges inherent in the school environment. This capacity heightens the probability of triumph in various life pursuits, even in the presence of adverse circumstances arising from early traits, experiences, and conditions. Students exhibiting academic resilience showcase improved performance, even when confronted with stressors or events that may otherwise jeopardize their academic journey (Alva 1991). Indeed, resilience is a malleable attribute that can be cultivated and imparted to students, thus enhancing their socio-emotional well-being. Problem-solving skills, as a vehicle for learning resilience, play a pivotal role in nurturing a student's ability to effectively confront challenges and adapt to evolving circumstances.

In summation, the multifaceted nature of academic resilience underscores its significance as a fundamental determinant of student's ability to navigate and thrive amidst challenges. This introductory exploration sets the stage for delving deeper into the diverse dimensions of academic resilience, thereby paving the way for comprehensive insights into its implications and applications within the educational landscape.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The concept of academic resilience has garnered considerable attention in educational research, as it addresses student's capacity to overcome challenges and thrive academically. In an ever-evolving educational landscape, understanding the factors that contribute to academic resilience has become imperative for educators and policymakers. This comprehensive review of literature delves into a diverse array of studies that investigate the intricate interplay between various factors and academic resilience among students. Many studies have been conducted on academic resilience among secondary school students. A few relevant researches have been summarized as under:

Lady Grace (2021) investigated the utilization of social support among undergraduate students during academic difficulties, particularly amid the COVID-19 pandemic and the transition to college. The study, involving 189 participants from southeastern universities in the United States, revealed a positive relationship between social support and academic resilience, with friends being the primary source of support. The transition to online learning due to COVID-19 was reported to impact access to social support. **Wulandari and Istiani** (2021) explored the impact of self-esteem and self-efficacy on academic resilience among Jakarta undergraduate students. The study demonstrated significant effects of self-esteem and self-

efficacy on academic resilience, suggesting the importance of fostering these attributes through skills improvement programs. **Davoodi and Baniani** (2021) analyzed the predictive role of metacognitive beliefs and achievement motivation on academic resilience in Iranian high school students. Metacognitive beliefs and motivation significantly predicted students' academic resilience, emphasizing the significance of cognitive strategies and motivation in enhancing resilience. **Mohan and Kaur** (2021) explored the correlation between grit and academic resilience among school students in India. The study demonstrated a positive correlation between self-belief and persistence components of academic resilience and grit, suggesting that perseverance and self-confidence contribute to both constructs. **Romano et al.** (2021) investigated the interplay between academic resilience, perceived teacher emotional support, and school engagement among Italian high school students. The study revealed associations between academic resilience, perceived teacher support, and school engagement, with teacher emotional support partially mediating the relationship between resilience and engagement. **Iyanu and Omolola** (2020) conducted a study on self-efficacy as a determinant of academic resilience among postgraduate students. The study indicated that self-efficacy significantly influenced academic resilience among postgraduate students, underscoring the role of self-beliefs in promoting resilience. **Kaur and Singh** (2020) explored the resilience strategies adopted by international postgraduate students to overcome academic challenges. Findings indicated that students developed resilience through group assignments, classroom interactions, and seeking support services, emphasizing the importance of various strategies in enhancing resilience. **Preeti Bala** (2020) revealed differences in academic resilience between the two groups, attributing the variations to differences in academic conditioning and levels of seriousness towards studies. **Kong** (2020) investigated risk and protective factors predicting academic achievement among low socioeconomic status (SES) pupils in Ireland. Educational aspirations, attention skills, and rural area residence were found to positively influence academic achievement, highlighting the significance of these factors for academic resilience. **Preeti Bala and Verma** (2019) explored the relationship between academic resilience and educational aspirations among international students. The study found a strong positive correlation between academic resilience and educational aspirations, indicating that higher aspirations are associated with greater academic resilience. **Umran** (2019) revealed a positive influence of academic efficacy and academic resilience on student engagement, underscoring the importance of these factors for promoting engagement. **Qamar and Akhter** (2019)

investigated risk factors affecting academic resilience among elementary students in Pakistan. Findings identified various risk factors, including family background, peer pressure, and excessive use of social media, that negatively affected academic resilience among students. **Tamannaefar and Shahmirzaei** (2019) studied the prediction of academic resilience based on coping styles and personality traits among Iranian university students. The study highlighted the significance of problem-focused coping and avoidance coping styles in predicting academic resilience. **Sulong et al.** (2019) examined academic resilience among Malaysian secondary school students using Confirmatory Factor Analysis. The study validated a measurement model incorporating school external protective factors, resilience traits, and academic achievement, revealing their significant relationships with academic resilience. **Casey** (2018) analyzed the relationship between perceptions of resiliency-building strategies and academic resilience among African-American male secondary students. The study demonstrated a positive association between academic resiliency and the perception of such strategies. **Oyoo et al.** (2018) investigated academic resilience as a predictor of academic burnout among Kenyan secondary school students. The study found a negative relationship between academic resilience and burnout, suggesting that higher resilience may mitigate academic burnout. **Rao and Krishnamurthy** (2018) explored the influence of locus of control, academic engagement, and self-efficacy on academic resilience among Indian high school students. The study revealed a significant correlation between academic resilience and self-efficacy. **Kader and Mohd Abad** (2017) examined the relationship between academic resilience and protective factors among Indian secondary students. The study found a strong positive correlation between academic resilience and protective factors. **Mallick and Kaur** (2016) studied the association between learning environment and academic resilience among Indian secondary school students. The study highlighted the positive correlation between learning environment and academic resilience. **Zuill** (2016) investigated the relationship between resilience and academic success among Bermudian foster care adolescents. The study found a significant positive relationship between resiliency and reading achievement. **Cassidy** (2015) explored the association between academic self-efficacy and academic resilience among British undergraduate students. The study revealed that academic self-efficacy was correlated with and predictive of academic resilience. **Schelble et al.** (2010) studied emotion dysregulation and its connection with academic performance among maltreated children. The study found a significant relationship between the absence of emotion dysregulation and academic resilience.

Sarwar et al. (2010) explored the relationship between resilience and academic achievement among Pakistani secondary students. The study found no significant correlation between academic resilience and academic achievement, with females exhibiting higher resilience.

After reviewing the related literature, it has been found that there are very few number of studies conducted on secondary school students particularly on Academic Resilience that too on the basis of Gender. There are some studies on these variables, but they are narrowly conceived, highly localized or we can say quite superficial. Hence, it was considered important to undertake the present study, which is very in-depth and comprehensive.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To study the Academic Resilience of secondary school students.
2. To compare male and female secondary school students on Academic Resilience.

HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

H₀ There is no significant difference between male and female secondary school students on Academic Resilience.

DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The study was delimited to zone Eidgah of district Srinagar, J&K. The study was further delimited to class X students only in order to avoid any intervention in the results.

OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF VARIABLES

Academic Resilience: Academic resilience for the present study refers to the scores obtained by the students on Academic resilience scale by Dr. Mihir Kumar Mallick and Simranjit Kaur.

Secondary School Students: Secondary school students for the present study meant those students who were studying in class X.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The aim of the present investigation was to study and compare Academic Resilience among Secondary School Students. A descriptive study design was employed for this contemporary exploration. The study included a sample of 140 students (70 male and 70 female students) from the 10th grade, randomly selected from the Eidgah zone of District Srinagar. Data collection was conducted using the Academic Resilience Scale, a tool designed to assess the level of resilience among adolescents attending high schools. The Academic Resilience Scale was developed by Dr. Mihir Kumar Mallick and Ms. Simranjit Kaur. The collected data underwent statistical treatments, including Percentage, Mean, Standard Deviation, and t-test analyses.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

The analysis of the present study can be divided into two sections:

Section A: **Descriptive Analysis**

1) Percentage of male and female secondary school students on various levels of “Academic Resilience”.

Section B: **Comparative Analysis**

2) Mean comparison of Academic Resilience between male and female secondary school students

Descriptive Analysis

The initial step in the analysis process involved calculating the scores for the five dimensions of academic resilience. Subsequently, the cumulative score for all five components was computed, representing the overall academic resilience of each student. Higher scores across these components indicate a greater presence of academic resilience, while lower scores suggest a lower level of academic resilience. Refer to Table 1.0 for a comprehensive overview of the academic resilience levels among secondary school students.

Table 4.1: Overview of Academic Resilience Levels among Secondary School Students

Levels	N	Percentage
<i>Extremely High</i>	17	12.1
<i>High</i>	7	5.0
<i>Above Average</i>	40	28.6
<i>Average / Moderate</i>	47	33.6
<i>Below Average</i>	27	19.3
<i>Low</i>	2	1.4
<i>Extremely Low</i>	0	0.0
Total	140	100.0

A brief overview of Table 1.0 reveals the distribution of overall academic resilience levels among secondary school students, with percentages calculated based on a total of 140 participants. The findings are as follows: 12.1% (17 out of 140) of students demonstrated an extremely high level of academic resilience, 5% (7 out of 140) of students exhibited a high level of academic resilience, 28.6% (40 out of 140) of students displayed an above average level of academic resilience, 33.6% (47 out of 140) of students showcased an average or

moderate level of academic resilience, 19.3% (27 out of 140) of students presented a below average level of academic resilience, 1.4% (2 out of 140) of students demonstrated a low level of academic resilience. Notably, none of the students fell into the category of extremely low academic resilience.



Figure 1.0: Percentage Distribution of Overall Level of Academic Resilience Among Secondary School Students.

Table 2.0: Levels of Academic Resilience Among Male and Female Secondary School Students

Levels	Male		Female	
	N	Percentage	N	Percentage
<i>Extremely High</i>	4	5.7	13	18.6
<i>High</i>	4	5.7	3	4.3
<i>Above Average</i>	17	24.3	23	32.9
<i>Average / Moderate</i>	26	37.1	21	30.0
<i>Below Average</i>	17	24.3	10	14.3
<i>Low</i>	2	2.9	0	0.0
<i>Extremely Low</i>	0	0.0	0	0.0
Total	70	100.0	70	100.0

The above table shows the distribution of academic resilience levels among secondary school students based on gender. Upon examination of the data, it is evident that 5.7% of male students and 18.6% of female students exhibit an extremely high level of academic resilience. Additionally, 5.7% of male students and 4.3% of female students possess a high level of academic resilience. Moreover, 24.3% of male students and 32.9% of female students demonstrate an above-average level of academic resilience. Furthermore, 37.1% of male students and 30.0% of female students display a moderate level of academic resilience. In contrast, 24.3% of male students and 14.3% of female students indicate a below-average level of academic resilience. A lower level of academic resilience is observed in 2.9% of male

students, while none of the female students fall into this category. Notably, no students, regardless of gender, exhibit an extremely low level of academic resilience.

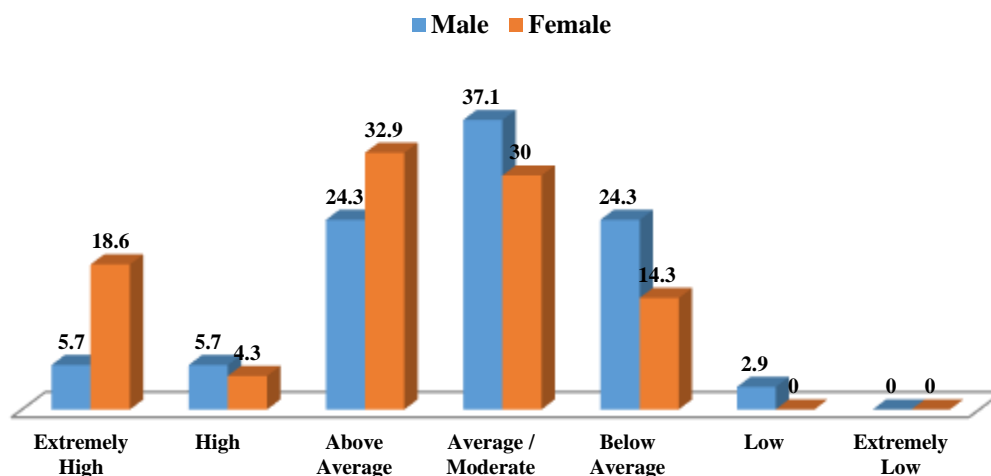


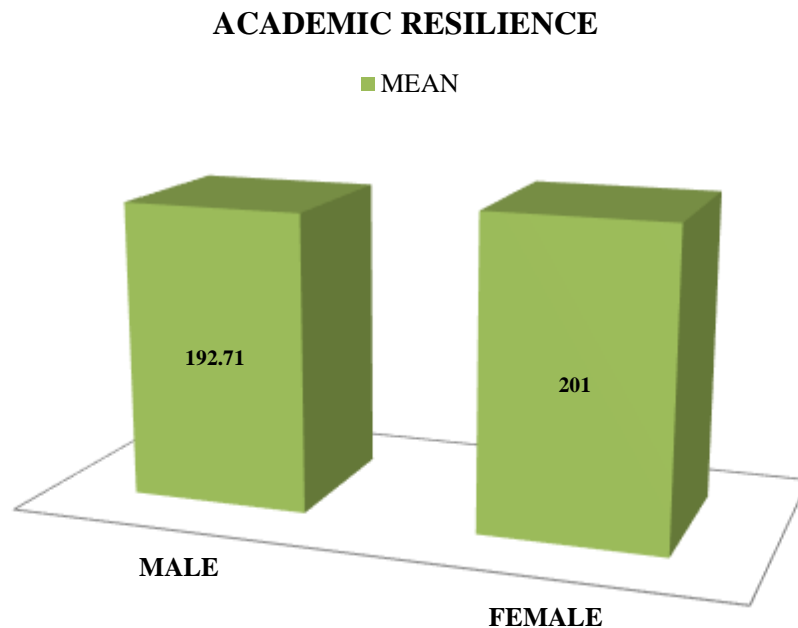
Figure 2.0: Percentage Distribution of Academic Resilience Levels Among Male and Female Secondary School Students

Comparative Analysis

Table 3.0: Mean Comparison of Academic Resilience Between Male and Female Secondary School Students

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	S.D.	t-value	Level of Significance
Academic Resilience	Female	70	201.00	13.34	3.32	Significant at 0.01 Level
	Male	70	192.71	16.09		

The analysis of the aforementioned table presents a comparison of the mean Academic Resilience between male and female secondary school students. The calculated t-value of 3.32 holds significance at the 0.01 level. This statistical outcome signifies a noteworthy distinction in the academic resilience of male and female secondary school students. Notably, it indicates that female students exhibit a higher level of resilience compared to their male counterparts. This could be attributed to their conscientious approach towards their responsibilities, as well as their active participation in recreational activities they enjoy. Additionally, female students display a strong belief in their ability to excel in examinations through diligent effort. Consequently, the initial hypothesis, which posited that "There is no significant difference between male and female secondary school students on Academic Resilience," is rejected based on the empirical findings.



**Fig. 3.0: Mean Comparison of Academic Resilience Between Male and Female
Secondary School Students**

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS AND CONCLUSION

The findings of this study shed light on the diverse landscape of academic resilience among secondary school students, revealing variations in resilience levels across different dimensions. The examination of these results presents an opportunity to contextualize them within the existing research landscape while also exploring their implications for educational practice and further inquiry. The identification of distinct levels of academic resilience, ranging from extremely high to low, echoes established definitions and conceptualizations of resilience within the educational context. This alignment with prior research, such as Martin's (2013) definition of academic resilience as the capacity to overcome adversity and excel academically, underscores the validity and relevance of the study's categorizations. The varying proportions of students at each resilience level highlight the multifaceted nature of student responses to academic setbacks and challenges. The significant gender difference in academic resilience, as evidenced by the calculated t-value of 3.32 at the 0.01 level, brings attention to an intriguing dimension of resilience research. The findings indicate that female secondary school students exhibit higher levels of academic resilience compared to their male counterparts. This is consistent with studies by Nettles, Mucherach, and Jones (as cited in Waxman, Grey, & Padron, 2003) that emphasize the influence of protective factors such as supportive family environments, participation in extracurricular activities, and positive teacher-student relationships on resilience levels. Female students' conscientious approach to responsibilities and active engagement in enjoyable activities might contribute to their enhanced resilience.

The implications of these findings for educational practice are substantial. Recognizing the presence of varying resilience levels among students can inform targeted interventions aimed at bolstering academic resilience. Strategies focused on nurturing protective factors such as positive relationships with parents and teachers, engagement in extracurricular activities, and the cultivation of a growth mindset could contribute to enhancing students' ability to navigate academic challenges.

In conclusion, this study's investigation into academic resilience among secondary school students highlights the intricacies of this critical concept in education. The alignment of some findings with existing literature underscores the robustness of the study's approach, while the divergence from certain perspectives adds depth to the ongoing discourse on resilience. The significant gender difference prompts further exploration into the factors influencing this contrast, and the rejection of the initial hypothesis emphasizes the dynamic and context-dependent nature of academic resilience. Ultimately, these findings open avenues for future research aimed at unraveling the intricate web of factors that contribute to students' ability to thrive academically in the face of challenges.

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