



Research Paper

Academic Resilience and Academic Achievement among School Students: A Systematic Review of Empirical Studies

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Abstract

Academic success among school students is influenced by multiple psychological, social and institutional factors among which academic resilience has emerged as an important construct in contemporary educational research. Academic resilience refers to students' capacity to maintain or achieve positive academic outcomes despite facing various challenges such as academic pressure, socio-economic disadvantage, learning difficulties or personal stress. In recent years, scholars in educational psychology and sociology of education have increasingly emphasized the role of resilience in shaping students' ability to cope with adversity and sustain engagement with learning. The present study provides a systematic review of empirical studies examining the relationship between academic resilience and academic achievement among school students. The review draws upon research published between 2000 and 2024 and utilizes secondary data obtained from major academic databases including Google Scholar, ERIC, Scopus-indexed journals and other peer-reviewed education research sources. Selected studies were analysed using a thematic approach in order to identify recurring patterns and key explanatory factors associated with resilient academic behaviour. The findings of the review indicate a consistent positive relationship between academic resilience and academic achievement. Resilient students tend to demonstrate stronger motivation, persistence, effective coping strategies when confronted with academic stress or failure. The review also highlights the significant influence of contextual factors such as teacher support, family encouragement and positive school environments in fostering resilience among learners. Furthermore, resilience appears to be particularly important for students from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds where it functions as a protective factor supporting academic progress. In the end the study underscores the importance of integrating resilience based strategies within educational practices and policies to enhance students' academic performance and long term educational development.

Keywords: Academic Resilience, Academic Achievement, School Students, Educational Psychology, Systematic Review, Student Motivation.

I. Introduction

Education has long been regarded as one of the most significant institutions shaping the life chances of individuals in modern societies not only because it transmits knowledge and skills but also because it functions as a crucial mechanism of social mobility, opportunity creation and personal development. Yet the educational experiences of students are far from uniform; rather, they are deeply embedded within broader social, economic, cultural contexts that shape both access to resources and the capacity to succeed academically. Across many countries students encounter a wide range of adversities during their schooling year economic deprivation, unstable family environments, social marginalization, academic stress and institutional inequalities factors that often undermine learning outcomes and reduce educational attainment. Although, an intriguing pattern repeatedly appears in educational research like some students manage to perform well academically even when they are exposed to significant risk factors or challenging circumstances. This observation has led scholars to explore the processes that enable certain learners to persist, adapt and ultimately succeed despite adversity and it is within this intellectual context that the concept of academic resilience has gained increasing attention in educational psychology and sociology (Masten, 2014; Martin & Marsh, 2006). In simple terms, resilience refers to the capacity of individuals to adapt positively in the face of stress, adversity or failure but when applied to the educational context, academic resilience specifically denotes the ability of students to maintain or achieve high levels of academic performance despite experiencing obstacles that would typically hinder learning outcomes (Martin & Marsh, 2006). This idea subtly shifts the focus of educational inquiry as instead of concentrating only on deficits, failures or risk factors, researchers begin to examine the strengths, coping strategies and supportive

conditions that allow students to navigate difficulties and remain engaged in learning. Contemporary research increasingly suggests that academic success cannot be explained solely through cognitive ability or intelligence; rather, it emerges from a complex interaction of psychological dispositions, motivational orientations, social relationships and institutional environments that collectively shape students' educational trajectories (Duckworth & Seligman, 2005). In this regard attributes such as self-efficacy, perseverance, emotional regulation, optimism and intrinsic motivation have been widely recognized as key psychological resources that contribute to resilient academic behaviour. Students who possess these qualities tend to interpret academic setbacks not as signs of personal inadequacy but as temporary challenges that can be overcome through sustained effort and adaptive strategies. Moreover, resilience is rarely an isolated individual trait; it is also supported by protective factors within the student's social environment, including supportive teachers, encouraging family relationships, positive peer networks and inclusive school climates that foster confidence and persistence (Masten, 2014; Ungar, 2012). Over the past two decades, a growing body of empirical research has explored the relationship between academic resilience and academic achievement across diverse educational settings, ranging from primary schools to higher secondary institutions, and across different cultural and socio-economic contexts. Many of these studies report a consistent finding like students who demonstrate higher levels of resilience are more likely to exhibit stronger academic performance, greater engagement with learning tasks, and higher levels of educational aspiration (Martin, 2013). At the same time, the evidence is dispersed across multiple disciplines like educational psychology, sociology of education, and developmental studies resulting in a fragmented body of knowledge that can be difficult to interpret collectively. Individual studies often focus on specific populations, methodological approaches, or contextual variables, which means that the broader patterns and implications of academic resilience remain somewhat scattered in the literature. Consequently, there is a clear need for systematic scholarly synthesis that brings together these empirical findings in order to identify recurring themes, conceptual frameworks and methodological trends. A systematic review approach becomes particularly valuable in this regard because it allows researchers to critically examine existing studies, compare their findings and draw more comprehensive conclusions about the role of resilience in shaping students' academic outcomes. The present article therefore aims to provide a systematic review of empirical studies examining the relationship between academic resilience and academic achievement among school students, with particular attention to the psychological, social, and institutional factors that contribute to resilient academic behaviour. By synthesizing the insights generated by previous research, the study seeks to deepen our understanding of how resilience operates within educational contexts and how schools, teachers and policymakers might foster learning environments that enable students not merely to survive academic challenges but to transform them into opportunities for growth and achievement.

II. Conceptual Framework

The concept of academic resilience emerges from the broader theoretical tradition of resilience research that initially developed within developmental psychology where scholars sought to understand why some children exposed to adverse social and familial circumstances nevertheless demonstrated healthy psychological development and successful life outcomes. Early resilience studies revealed that positive adaptation in the face of adversity is not a rare or extraordinary phenomenon but rather a dynamic process shaped by interactions between individual capacities and supportive environmental conditions (Masten, 2014). Over time, this perspective was gradually incorporated into educational research giving rise to the idea of academic resilience which refers to students' ability to achieve satisfactory or even high levels of academic performance despite encountering significant educational challenges such as socioeconomic disadvantage, academic pressure, learning difficulties or emotional stress (Martin & Marsh, 2006). In the context of schooling, resilience is therefore not simply about recovering from failure but about maintaining engagement, persistence and achievement even when learning conditions are difficult. Scholars have identified several key psychological and behavioural dimensions that contribute to the development of academic resilience among students. One of the most widely discussed components is self-efficacy, a concept introduced by Bandura which refers to an individual's belief in their ability to successfully perform tasks and overcome obstacles; students with high academic self-efficacy tend to approach challenging academic tasks with greater confidence and persistence (Bandura, 1997). Closely related to this is motivation, particularly intrinsic motivation, which drives students to engage in learning activities because of genuine interest and personal satisfaction rather than external rewards or pressures. Another crucial dimension is emotional regulation, the capacity to manage stress, frustration, anxiety that often accompany demanding academic environments enabling students to maintain focus and psychological stability during periods of difficulty (Martin, 2013). Alongside these psychological resources, persistence sometimes described as academic buoyancy or perseverance plays a significant role in resilient learning behaviour, as resilient students tend to continue working toward their academic goals even when confronted with setbacks or temporary failures. Importantly contemporary research emphasizes that academic resilience should not be viewed solely as an internal personality trait; rather, it is increasingly understood as a

multidimensional socio-psychological process shaped by interactions between individual characteristics and environmental supports such as teacher encouragement, family expectations, peer relationships and the broader school climate (Ungar, 2012). Thus, academic resilience represents a complex framework through which researchers can examine how students mobilize personal strengths and social resources to sustain academic achievement in challenging educational contexts.

III. Literature Review

The scholarly exploration of academic resilience has evolved gradually over several decades beginning with early developmental and educational research that attempted to explain why some children were able to adapt successfully despite facing significant social, economic, or psychological adversity. Early resilience studies, particularly those conducted during the 1970s - 1980s focused on children growing up in high-risk environments such as poverty, family instability, or community disadvantage, yet who nonetheless demonstrated positive developmental outcomes. Researchers observed that while adverse circumstances often increased the likelihood of academic difficulties, a considerable number of children managed to perform well in school and maintain psychological wellbeing. This paradox drew attention to the protective mechanisms that allow individuals to cope effectively with adversity. One of the pioneering longitudinal investigations in this field conducted by Werner and Smith, followed children from disadvantaged backgrounds and found that a significant proportion displayed competence and success in adulthood despite early life risks, highlighting the role of supportive relationships, personal determination, and adaptive coping strategies (Werner & Smith, 1992). Similarly, Rutter's influential work on resilience emphasized that resilience should not be viewed simply as an extraordinary trait possessed by a few individuals but rather as a dynamic developmental process shaped by interactions between personal characteristics and environmental supports (Rutter, 1987). These early insights laid the conceptual foundation for later educational research that began to focus more explicitly on academic resilience, a concept referring to students' ability to sustain academic engagement and achievement despite the presence of learning difficulties or social disadvantage. As resilience research entered the field of education, scholars increasingly sought to examine how psychological strengths and social resources interact to influence students' academic trajectories. Within this emerging body of research, several empirical studies have documented a positive association between academic resilience and academic achievement among school students across diverse educational contexts. For instance, Martin and Marsh (2006) conceptualized academic resilience as students' capacity to effectively deal with everyday academic setbacks such as poor grades, exam stressor learning challenges, and their research demonstrated that resilient students typically display higher levels of motivation, persistence and engagement in learning tasks. These students tend to interpret academic obstacles not as insurmountable failures but as opportunities for growth, thereby maintaining a constructive approach toward learning even when confronted with setbacks. Similarly, studies in educational psychology have shown that resilience is closely associated with motivational processes such as goal orientation, self-regulation and academic self-efficacy, all of which contribute to improved academic outcomes (Martin, 2013). Students who exhibit higher levels of resilience often possess stronger intrinsic motivation and greater confidence in their abilities, enabling them to remain focused and committed to their academic goals despite temporary difficulties or stressful situations. Empirical evidence also suggests that resilient students are more likely to adopt adaptive coping strategies including problem-solving approaches, help-seeking behaviours and reflective learning practices which collectively enhance their academic performance over time. Furthermore, a number of studies have highlighted the importance of academic resilience for students from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds, where structural inequalities such as limited educational resources, financial constraints or restricted access to supportive learning environments can negatively affect educational attainment. In such contexts, resilience functions as a protective factor that enables students to overcome barriers and sustain academic progress (Masten, 2014). Importantly, contemporary research increasingly emphasizes that academic resilience cannot be understood solely in terms of individual psychological traits; rather it is shaped by a network of social and institutional influences that either support or constrain students' educational development. Among the most significant factors identified in the literature is family support, which provides emotional encouragement, academic guidance and stability that help students remain committed to their educational goals. Parental expectations and involvement in schooling have repeatedly been shown to strengthen students' confidence and motivation, thereby contributing to resilient academic behaviour. Equally important is the role of teachers, whose encouragement, feedback, and pedagogical support can significantly influence students' sense of competence and belonging within the classroom. Positive teacher-student relationships often create an environment in which students feel valued and supported making them more willing to persevere through academic challenges. In addition, the broader school climate, including the availability of supportive peer networks and inclusive learning environments, has been identified as a key contextual factor in the development of resilience. When schools foster collaboration, respect, and encouragement, students are more likely to develop a sense of agency and self-belief that sustains their academic efforts. Peer relationships also

play an important role, as supportive friendships can provide emotional reassurance and shared learning experiences that reduce academic stress and reinforce positive study behaviours. Finally, internal psychological resources such as self-motivation, confidence, and optimism further strengthen resilience by enabling students to approach academic tasks with determination and hope for success. Taken together, the existing literature suggests that academic resilience emerges from the interaction of personal capacities and supportive social environments, and this interaction ultimately contributes to improved academic achievement among school students.

IV. Methodology

The present study adopts a systematic review methodology in order to synthesize existing empirical research on the relationship between academic resilience and academic achievement among school students. A systematic review approach is particularly suitable for studies that aim to examine, organize, and critically evaluate findings from previously published research rather than collecting primary field data. Unlike traditional narrative reviews, systematic reviews follow a structured and transparent process for identifying, selecting, and analysing relevant scholarly literature thereby improving the reliability and comprehensiveness of the conclusions drawn from existing evidence (Snyder, 2019). In the context of the present study, the systematic review method was employed to bring together diverse empirical findings from different educational settings and research traditions allowing a broader understanding of how academic resilience contributes to students' academic outcomes. The research design of the study is therefore based on the analysis of secondary data derived from previously published empirical studies. The primary objective is to examine patterns, relationships and theoretical insights emerging from the literature on academic resilience and academic achievement. By comparing findings across multiple studies, the review seeks to identify consistent themes, explanatory factors and emerging trends in the research field. To ensure comprehensive coverage of relevant literature, data were collected from several widely recognized academic databases and scholarly platforms. These included Google Scholar, ERIC (Education Resources Information Centre), Scopus-indexed journals, ResearchGate and other peer-reviewed education research journals. These databases were selected because they provide access to a large body of international research in education, psychology and related social sciences. Keywords such as academic resilience, student resilience, academic achievement, school students, and educational outcomes were used in different combinations to locate relevant studies. The inclusion criteria for selecting studies were clearly defined in order to maintain methodological consistency. First, only studies published between 2000 - 2024 were considered as this period reflects the growing scholarly attention to academic resilience in contemporary educational research. Second, the review focused specifically on studies involving schoollevel students particularly those in secondary or higher secondary education. Third, only those empirical studies that explicitly examined the relationship between academic resilience and academic achievement were included in the analysis. Studies that did not directly address this relationship or that focused solely on psychological resilience without educational outcomes were excluded. After identifying relevant studies, the selected literature was analysed using a thematic analysis approach. This method involves systematically reviewing research findings to identify recurring concepts, patterns, and explanatory themes across different studies (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Through this analytical process, key themes related to motivational factors, psychological traits and institutional influences shaping academic resilience were identified and synthesized. This thematic synthesis allowed the study to develop a coherent understanding of how academic resilience contributes to academic success among school students across diverse educational contexts.

V. Major Findings

The systematic review of empirical studies on academic resilience and academic achievement reveals several consistent patterns that illuminate how students manage educational challenges and sustain academic performance in demanding circumstances. Across diverse educational settings and methodological approaches, a recurring finding in the literature is the positive relationship between academic resilience and academic achievement. Numerous studies suggest that students who demonstrate higher levels of resilience tend to perform better academically maintain stronger engagement with learning activities and exhibit greater persistence in completing academic tasks. Academic resilience enables students to interpret setbacks such as low grades, examination pressure or learning difficulties not as final failures but as temporary challenges that can be overcome through effort and strategic learning behaviours (Martin & Marsh, 2006; Martin, 2013). As a result, resilient students are more likely to maintain consistent academic performance over time even in the presence of adversity. Another significant finding emerging from the reviewed studies is that resilience plays a crucial role in helping students cope with academic stress and failure. School environments frequently expose students to multiple sources of pressure, including competitive examinations, performance expectations from teachers and parents and concerns about future educational opportunities. Research indicates that students who possess strong resilience skills are better equipped to manage these pressures because they employ adaptive coping strategies

such as problem-solving, emotional regulation and positive self-reflection. Rather than withdrawing from academic challenges, resilient learners tend to re-engage with their studies and continue striving toward academic goals, thereby reducing the long-term negative impact of stress and failure (Masten, 2014). The review also highlights the importance of teachers and the broader school environment in shaping academic resilience. Educational research increasingly emphasizes that resilience is not merely an individual psychological attribute but a socially embedded process influenced by institutional contexts. Supportive teacher–student relationships, constructive feedback and encouraging classroom climates can significantly strengthen students’ sense of competence and belonging. When teachers create learning environments characterized by empathy, fairness, and encouragement, students are more likely to develop confidence in their abilities and remain motivated in the face of academic difficulties. Similarly, schools that promote collaborative learning, peer support, inclusive educational practices contribute to the development of resilience by fostering a culture in which challenges are viewed as opportunities for growth rather than obstacles to success. Another important insight emerging from the literature is that academic resilience is particularly significant for students from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds. Students facing economic hardship, limited educational resources or unstable family circumstances often encounter additional barriers to academic success. However, several studies indicate that resilience can function as a protective factor that helps such students overcome structural disadvantages and maintain educational aspirations. Resilient students in disadvantaged contexts often display strong determination, goal orientation and adaptive coping strategies that allow them to navigate constraints and sustain academic progress (Masten, 2014). This finding underscores the broader social relevance of resilience research, as it highlights the potential of psychological and institutional support systems to reduce educational inequalities. Finally, the review identifies self-efficacy and motivation as central psychological components of academic resilience. Self-efficacy, defined as students’ belief in their ability to successfully complete academic tasks, plays a critical role in shaping their persistence and willingness to confront challenging learning situations. Students with higher self-efficacy are more likely to invest effort in difficult tasks and remain optimistic about their chances of success. Similarly, intrinsic motivation encourages students to engage in learning for personal satisfaction and intellectual curiosity rather than external rewards alone. Together, these psychological factors contribute to resilient academic behaviour by reinforcing perseverance, confidence and commitment to long-term educational goals. In combination, the findings of the systematic review suggest that academic resilience represents a complex interplay of psychological strengths, social support systems, and institutional environments that collectively shape students’ academic achievement and educational trajectories.

VI. Discussion

The findings of the present systematic review provide important insights into the complex relationship between academic resilience and academic achievement among school students. One of the most significant interpretations emerging from the reviewed studies is that academic resilience should not be understood merely as an individual psychological trait or personal strength. Rather, resilience appears to develop through a dynamic interaction between personal characteristics and the broader social and institutional environments in which students learn and grow. While individual qualities such as motivation, perseverance, and self-efficacy certainly contribute to resilient academic behaviour, these qualities are often nurtured and reinforced by supportive educational contexts and social relationships. The literature examined in this review indicates that students who experience positive relationships with teachers, supportive peer networks, and encouraging family environments are more likely to develop the confidence and persistence required to overcome academic challenges. In this sense, academic resilience reflects not only a student’s internal coping capacity but also the availability of external resources that enable them to remain engaged in learning despite difficulties. Educational institutions therefore play a critical role in shaping resilience by creating learning environments that promote psychological safety, academic encouragement, and inclusive participation. When schools cultivate a classroom climate characterized by empathy, constructive feedback, and recognition of students’ efforts learners are more likely to perceive challenges as manageable rather than overwhelming. Furthermore, the findings highlight the need for educators and policymakers to integrate resilience-building strategies into educational practices. Programs that focus on developing self-regulation skills, growth mindsets, emotional stability and collaborative learning can significantly strengthen students’ ability to cope with academic pressures. By fostering supportive teacher-student relationships and promoting positive school climates, educational institutions can help students transform academic adversity into opportunities for growth and achievement. Thus, academic resilience should be viewed not only as a personal competency but also as a collective educational responsibility that requires institutional commitment and supportive pedagogical practices.

VII. Conclusion

The present systematic review highlights the significant role of academic resilience in shaping the academic success of school students across diverse educational contexts. The findings drawn from previous

empirical studies clearly indicate that resilience functions as an important psychological and educational resource that enables students to cope with academic challenges, overcome setbacks and maintain consistent engagement with learning. Students who demonstrate higher levels of resilience are generally more capable of managing stress, responding constructively to failure and sustaining motivation toward their educational goals. In this sense, academic resilience contributes not only to improved academic performance but also to the development of positive learning attitudes and long-term educational persistence. Another important implication emerging from this review is that resilience is not merely an inherent individual trait but a developmental process that can be nurtured through supportive educational environments and institutional practices. Schools, teachers, educational policymakers therefore have a critical role in fostering resilience by creating learning contexts that encourage confidence, perseverance, and adaptive coping strategies among students. Integrating resilience-focused educational interventions such as programs promoting self-efficacy, emotional regulation and positive teacher-student relationships can significantly enhance students' ability to deal with academic adversity. Consequently, strengthening academic resilience should be considered an essential component of contemporary educational policy and school-based development initiatives aimed at improving students' academic achievement and overall well-being.

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