

# The Impact of Psychological Hardiness on Academic Achievement Among Higher Secondary School Students in District Poonch

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**Abstract**—Academic achievement plays a crucial role in shaping students' future opportunities and career trajectories. Various psychological, environmental, and socio-cultural factors contribute to academic success, with psychological hardiness emerging as a significant determinant of students' resilience against academic stress. This study examines the relationship between psychological hardiness and academic achievement among higher secondary school students in District Poonch. A quantitative correlational research design was used, with data collected from 96 students (48 males, 48 females) through the Psychological Hardiness Scale (Nowack, 1990). Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation analysis revealed a strong positive correlation between psychological hardiness and academic achievement among male students ( $r = 0.83$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), while no significant correlation was found for female students ( $r = 0.18$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ). These findings suggest that while psychological hardiness may enhance academic performance in male students, additional socio-cultural and environmental factors may influence female students' academic outcomes. This study highlights the importance of integrating psychological resilience programs in educational settings and suggests further research into gender-based differences in academic resilience.

**Index Terms**—Psychological Hardiness, Academic Achievement, Higher Secondary Education, Resilience, Personality Traits

## I. INTRODUCTION

Academic achievement is widely regarded as a measure of students' cognitive abilities, motivation, and personal development. It influences future career prospects and societal contributions. However, academic success is not solely dependent on intellectual capabilities; psychological attributes play

a pivotal role in shaping students' ability to cope with stress and challenges (Maddi, 2005).

Psychological hardiness, a personality trait defined by commitment, control, and challenge, has been identified as a key factor influencing students' resilience in academic settings (Kobasa, 1979). Hardiness allows individuals to navigate academic pressures effectively, maintain motivation, and develop adaptive coping strategies in the face of stressors (Benishek & Lopez, 2001).

While various studies have examined the relationship between psychological traits and academic success, limited research exists on the role of psychological hardiness in secondary school students, particularly within the socio-cultural context of District Poonch, India. This study aims to explore this relationship, focusing on gender differences in psychological hardiness and academic performance.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Psychological Hardiness and Academic Achievement

Psychological hardiness, first introduced by Kobasa (1979), is a resilience-based personality trait comprising three dimensions:

- Commitment – Engaging actively in academic and personal challenges.
- Control – Belief in one's ability to influence academic success.
- Challenge – Viewing difficulties as growth opportunities rather than threats.

Research suggests that students with high levels of hardiness tend to perform better academically due to their ability to manage stress, stay motivated, and persevere in challenging situations (Maddi, 2005). Creed et al. (2013) found that university students with

strong psychological hardiness exhibited higher engagement, problem-solving abilities, and better academic performance compared to students with lower hardiness levels.

Similarly, Dillard (1990) conducted a study among BSN students and found a significant correlation between psychological hardiness and grade point average (GPA), supporting the idea that hardiness is a predictor of academic resilience.

## 2.2 Gender Differences in Psychological Hardiness

The role of gender in psychological hardiness remains a debated topic. Some studies suggest that male students exhibit higher levels of hardiness, particularly in academic and professional settings, whereas others argue that female students demonstrate greater emotional resilience (Husain & Khan, 2015).

Kammerman & Kesler (2008) reported that male students tend to exhibit higher levels of control and challenge, allowing them to adapt to academic stress more effectively. Conversely, Singh et al. (2008) found that female students exhibit greater emotional intelligence and coping skills, potentially influencing their academic performance in different ways.

However, limited research has explored gender-based variations in psychological hardiness among higher secondary school students, making this study an essential contribution to the field.

## III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 Research Design and Sample

This study employs a quantitative correlational research design to analyze the relationship between psychological hardiness and academic achievement. A random sample of 96 higher secondary school students (48 males, 48 females) was selected from various schools in District Poonch.

### 3.2 Data Collection and Instrumentation

The Psychological Hardiness Scale (Nowack, 1990) was used to measure students' hardiness levels. The scale consists of 30 items assessing:

- Commitment – Engagement with academic and personal responsibilities.
- Control – Sense of personal influence over academic success.
- Challenge – Viewing academic struggles as opportunities for growth.

Academic achievement was measured using students' previous semester grades as an objective indicator of performance.

### 3.3 Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation to assess the strength and significance of the relationship between psychological hardiness and academic achievement.

## IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 4.1 Relationship Between Psychological Hardiness and Academic Achievement

Table 1 presents the correlation analysis results for male and female students.

Variable	Pearson's r	Significance (p)
Male Hardiness & Academic Achievement	0.83	$p < 0.01$ (Significant)
Female Hardiness & Academic Achievement	0.18	Not Significant

Findings indicate a strong positive correlation between psychological hardiness and academic achievement in male students ( $r = 0.83$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), supporting previous research suggesting that male students with high hardiness levels perform better academically (Dillard, 1990).

For female students, no significant correlation ( $r = 0.18$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ) was found, indicating that psychological hardiness may not be the primary factor influencing their academic performance. Factors such as teaching methods, family support, and socio-cultural expectations may play a more substantial role.

### 4.2 Implications of Findings

These findings have important implications for educators, policymakers, and mental health professionals:

1. Resilience training programs should be incorporated into school curriculums.
2. Gender-sensitive academic support strategies should be implemented.
3. Counseling services should focus on enhancing students' coping skills to improve academic performance.

## V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study highlights the significant relationship between psychological hardiness and academic achievement among male students, while suggesting that other factors influence female students' performance.

## VI. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

- Expanding the sample size to include students from diverse socio-economic backgrounds.
- Examining additional psychological constructs, such as self-efficacy and motivation.
- Conducting qualitative studies to explore students' experiences with academic stress.

By addressing these areas, future research can provide a comprehensive understanding of psychological resilience and academic success.

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