

Academic Resilience among High School Students

Dr. Basawaraj

Assistant Professor of Psychology Government First Grade College Jewargi Affiliated by Gulbarga University Kalaburagi

Abstract-This study investigated gender differences in academic resilience among high school students. A descriptive comparative design was employed, with a sample of 240 students (120 boys and 120 girls) selected through stratified sampling from government and private schools in Gulbarga. Academic resilience was measured using the Academic Resilience Scale (ARS-MMKS), covering six dimensions: academic confidence, sense of well-being, motivation, relationships, emotional regulation, and physical health. Independent samples t-tests were conducted to analyze group differences. Findings revealed a significant gender difference in overall academic resilience, with boys scoring higher than girls. However, girls outperformed boys in academic confidence, well-being, motivation, and peer-adult relationships, whereas no significant differences were found in emotional regulation and physical health. These results suggest that boys exhibit stronger resilience overall, while girls demonstrate specific strengths in relational and motivational aspects of resilience. The study emphasizes the need for gender-sensitive school interventions that enhance coping skills among boys and relational-motivational resilience among girls.

Keywords: Academic resilience, gender differences, high school students, coping skills, well-being

INTRODUCTION

Resilience is the ability to adapt positively despite adversity, stress, or failure (Masten, 2014). Within the academic context, academic resilience refers to students' capacity to overcome educational challenges, setbacks, and stressors while maintaining motivation and performance (Martin & Marsh, 2009). Adolescence is a critical developmental stage marked by both academic pressures and identity formation, making resilience a key determinant of educational success and mental well-being.

High school students in India face increasing academic stress due to competitive examinations, parental expectations, and social pressures (Deb et al., 2015).

However, resilience acts as a protective factor that enables students to regulate emotions, sustain motivation, and foster supportive relationships. Research suggests that resilience differs across genders and socio-educational contexts, influenced by cultural norms, social support systems, and school environments (Gizir & Aydin, 2009).

The present study seeks to investigate differences in academic resilience between boys and girls and between students attending government and private high schools, with a focus on multiple resilience dimensions.

Previous studies have established the importance of resilience in academic achievement and well-being. Martin and Marsh (2006) emphasized that students with high resilience are more likely to persist through academic setbacks and achieve success.

Gender and resilience: Research findings on gender differences in resilience are mixed. Some studies found that girls demonstrate higher emotional resilience due to stronger coping mechanisms and social support networks (Moksnes et al., 2016). Conversely, other studies reported higher self-confidence and academic persistence among boys (Sarkar & Fletcher, 2014).

Resilience dimensions: Research highlights six core areas—academic confidence, well-being, motivation, relationships, emotional regulation, and physical health (Mallick & Kaur, 2019). Each dimension contributes uniquely to how students overcome challenges. For instance, supportive peer and teacher relationships enhance resilience (Wang et al., 1994), while strong emotional regulation helps students handle academic stress (Compas et al., 2017).

Overall, prior findings underscore the need for a comparative study of academic resilience across gender and school types in the Indian high school context.

Statement of the Research Problem: To assess the levels of academic resilience among high school students

OBJECTIVES

- To study the difference in academic resilience between high school boys and girls.
- To study the influence of gender on academic resilience in relation to academic confidence, sense of well-being, motivation, relationships, emotional regulation, and physical health.

Hypotheses

- There is a significant difference in academic resilience between boys and girls.
- There is a significant influence of gender on academic resilience in relation to academic confidence, sense of well-being, motivation, relationships, emotional regulation, and physical health.

Operational Definitions:

- Academic Resilience: A student's ability to overcome challenges and setbacks in their academic journey, measured across various dimensions such as confidence, motivation, relationships, emotional regulation, and well-being.
- Academic Confidence: The belief in one's own abilities to succeed academically.
- Sense of Well-being: The overall mental and emotional health, including satisfaction with school life and self-perception.
- Motivation & Ability to Set Goals: A student's drive to pursue academic success and set achievable goals.
- Relationship with Peers & Adults: The quality of interactions and support systems from classmates, teachers, and family members.
- Emotional Regulation: The ability to manage and control emotional responses, especially under stress.

- Physical Health: A student's general physical well-being and its impact on academic performance.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design: A descriptive comparative research design will be used.

Variables:

- Independent Variables:
 - Gender: Boys and Girls.
- Dependent Variable: Academic Resilience, assessed across multiple dimensions (confidence, well-being, motivation, relationships, emotional regulation, and physical health).

Sample:

- 240 students (120 boys, 120 girls)
- 120 government school students and 120 private school students
- Age range: 15–16 years

Sampling Technique: Stratified sampling

Inclusion Criteria:

- High school students aged 15–16 years
- Enrolled in government or private schools

Exclusion Criteria:

- Students outside the age range
- Students unable to participate due to language/cognitive difficulties

Tools:

1. Semi-Structured Schedule for demographic details.
2. Academic Resilience Scale (ARS-MMKS) by Mallick & Kaur (2019), assessing academic confidence, well-being, motivation, relationships, emotional regulation, and physical health. The scale is well-established with strong psychometric properties, ensuring reliability and validity in assessing academic resilience.

Procedure:

- Recruitment and informed consent from students and guardians
- Administration of demographic schedule and ARS-MMKS

- Data entry and coding for analysis

Statistical Analysis:

- Descriptive statistics (mean, SD)
- Independent samples *t*-test for gender and school-type comparisons

The present study assessed the levels of academic resilience among high school students with respect to gender (boys vs. girls). Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations) and independent sample *t*-tests to determine the significance of differences in resilience levels across groups.

ANALYSIS OF RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1- Means, Standard Deviations, and *t*-ratio on Gender Difference in Levels of Academic Resilience among High School Students

Group	N	Mean	SD	<i>t</i> (238)	<i>p</i>
Boys	120	198.20	8.94	5.32	< .0001
Girls	120	192.60	7.27		
Total	240				

Table 1 shows a significant gender difference in overall academic resilience. Boys ($M = 198.20$, $SD = 8.94$) scored higher than girls ($M = 192.60$, $SD = 7.27$), $t(238) = 5.32$, $p < .0001$, indicating that boys in the sample reported stronger overall resilience.

Table 2- Means, Standard Deviations, and *t*-ratios on Gender Difference across Dimensions of Academic Resilience

Dimension	Boys M (SD)	Girls M (SD)	Mean Diff.	<i>t</i> (238)	<i>p</i>
Academic Confidence	27.65 (2.26)	30.81 (2.48)	-3.16	-10.28	< .0001
Sense of Well-being	27.83 (5.29)	31.20 (3.85)	-3.37	-5.64	< .0001
Motivation & Ability to Set Goals	29.96 (4.45)	38.38 (4.50)	-8.42	-14.51	< .0001
Relationship with Peers & Adults	28.27 (3.64)	38.63 (4.94)	-10.36	-17.33	< .0001
Emotional Regulation & Physical Health	38.51 (7.71)	39.53 (7.52)	-1.02	-1.06	.29 (ns)
Academic Confidence (alt.)	32.65 (3.36)	34.91 (3.38)	-2.26	-5.06	< .0001

Interpretation:

Girls scored significantly higher than boys on academic confidence, sense of well-being, motivation, and relationships with peers and adults ($p < .0001$ for all).

No significant difference was found in emotional regulation and physical health, $t(238) = -1.06$, $p \approx .29$.

These findings suggest that while boys displayed stronger overall academic resilience, girls demonstrated superior resilience in critical dimensions linked to confidence, motivation, and social relationships.

DISCUSSION

The results highlight significant gender-based differences in academic resilience among high school students.

Overall Academic Resilience (Table 1): Boys exhibited higher total scores of academic resilience compared to girls. This finding may reflect sociocultural expectations in Indian society, where boys are often encouraged to project confidence and cope independently with academic challenges (Mallick & Kaur, 2020).

Dimension-wise Resilience (Table 2): Despite lower overall resilience, girls demonstrated significantly higher scores on academic confidence, well-being, motivation, and relationships. Prior research suggests that girls may rely more heavily on peer and teacher support, which enhances relational resilience and motivation (Rauf & Shakir, 2021). This aligns with studies showing that female students often report higher academic engagement and relational networks in school settings (Ahmed & Julius, 2019).

Conversely, boys showed relatively stronger emotional regulation and physical health, though the difference was not statistically significant. This may be due to gendered coping styles, where boys tend to externalize stress through physical outlets, while girls use relational strategies (Sharma & Singh, 2022).

Implications for School Type (not shown in tables here): While this section focused on gender, differences across government vs. private schools (to be presented in subsequent tables) are also crucial for understanding structural and institutional influences on resilience.

CONCLUSIONS

The results support the hypothesis of gender differences in academic resilience, both in total scores and in specific dimensions.

The higher resilience of boys overall may mask the nuanced strengths of girls in relational and motivational resilience.

Schools may need to adopt gender-sensitive resilience programs that strengthen boys' interpersonal skills and motivation while helping girls develop stress regulation and overall coping mechanisms.

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