

**The Interplay between Academic Resilience and Academic Performance Among
Undergraduate Business Students in Bangladesh**

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the interplay between academic resilience and its relationship with academic performance among undergraduate business students. A cross-sectional survey research design was employed, involving a sample of undergraduate business students from a private university in Bangladesh. Data were collected through a paper-based questionnaire survey, which included an adapted and pretested Academic Resilience Scale, as well as demographic information and measures of academic performance. The survey data were then analyzed to measure the significance of different variables within the datasets. Participants completed a questionnaire comprising 30 items from the Academic Resilience Scale (ARS-30) and Standard Demographic Questions (SDQ-5), complemented by the Academic Performance Scale (APS-8). The data were drawn from a School of Business Studies at a university in Bangladesh. A total of 400 students were targeted, and 316 students participated in the survey, reflecting a response rate of 79%. The results revealed a moderate overall level of academic resilience among students, with gender and year of study influencing scores. Female students showed significantly higher perseverance scores compared to males, and first-year students exhibited the highest academic resilience. A positive correlation was identified between academic resilience and cumulative GPA (CGPA), suggesting that students with greater resilience performed better academically. Additionally, household income was associated with students' help-seeking behaviours, highlighting the influence of socioeconomic factors on academic resilience. This study recommends the implementation of initiatives to build academic resilience among students in highly competitive settings in Bangladesh.

Keywords: academic resilience; academic performance; tertiary students; business education; Bangladesh

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research background

Academic resilience pertains to resilience within the realm of education and signifies a student's capacity to enhance their academic achievements after facing adversity, such as experiencing failure in a specific assessment like a test or a course and subsequently improving their performance (Abubakar et al., 2021). Students highlighted various academic hurdles as reasons for leaving college, including conflicts, financial strain, isolation, stress, heavy workloads, and mental health issues (Carton & Goodboy, 2015; Nicpon et al., 2007; Reynolds, 2013). When confronted with these challenges, students can either endure, excel, or opt to abandon their university education. While there's a constant possibility to perceive these academic obstacles negatively, possibly leading to dropping out, numerous students demonstrate resilience and optimism by persevering through these difficulties.

As far as resilience in students in academic settings is concerned, they are characterized as those who achieve success despite facing stressful circumstances that might otherwise hinder their performance (Tudor & Spray, 2018). There has been a notable increase in research on resilience in recent decades, drawing more attention from policymakers and scholars. There's a growing demand to incorporate programs aimed at fostering resilience into the national curriculum globally (Furu et al, 2023; Hart & Heaver, 2015).

Academic success plays a significant role in educational institutions (Alyahyan and Dustegor, 2020) and academic success is an important issue as employers look for candidates with postsecondary education (Goegan and Daniels, 2021). Academic success is one of the widely applied concepts in educational research and assessment within higher education (York, Gibson and Rankin, 2015) and the examination of academic success mostly refers to grades as measures of success (Guterman, 2021). Student success is often used as a metric for the institution's performance (Alyahyan and Dustegor, 2020).

Academic resilience research investigates the phenomenon of educational achievement in the face of various risk factors that typically lead to diminished academic performance (Morales, 2008). Resilience provides the psychological strength to cope with stress and hardship (Radhamani and Kalaivani, 2021) and it propels students to continue moving forward under difficult learning conditions (DiTullio, 2014). Academic resilience refers to students' capacity to perform highly despite a disadvantaged background and academic resilience is stated to be an important aspect of resilience (Aliyev, Akbas and Ozbay, 2021). Stress and adversity are an unavoidable part of the human experience (Fullerton, Zhang and Kleitman, 2021) and universities have a key role in developing resilience among students (Holdsworth, Turner and Scott-Young, 2018). Stress and stress-related struggles are of escalating attention within global academic institutions (Nurius et al., 2023).

1.2 Research gap

In Bangladesh, resilience has become critical in assisting undergraduate business students in overcoming difficulties such as the learning loss and psychological impact caused by the COVID-19 pandemic (Kabir et al., 2023) and the aftermath of the transition to post-pandemic learning. Existing research has explored the importance of understanding academic resilience in pharmacy education. In Bangladesh, an overall academic resilience score (ARS-30) of 1968.50 was reported by students, contributing to a broader analysis of pharmacy students' resilience and coping strategies in a cross-national study (Elnaem et al., 2024). Additionally, the relationship between academic burnout and resilience among secondary school students was identified (Khatun et al., 2024). However, there is a paucity of studies to explore the interplay between academic resilience and academic performance in the context of tertiary education focusing on private universities in Bangladesh. Therefore, the present study aims to elucidate the correlation between academic resilience and academic performance among undergraduate business students within the tertiary educational context of private universities in Bangladesh. The primary objective of this research is to assess the level of academic resilience among this demographic context and to investigate its association with academic performance, while also considering the influence of demographic factors within the context of higher education in Bangladesh.

1.3 Research objective

This study addressed a gap in the literature regarding academic resilience in private Bangladeshi universities. It aimed to correlate the Academic Resilience Scale (ARS-30), Standard Demographic Questions (SDQ-5), and Academic Performance Scale (APS-8), and examine statistical significance across these instruments.

1.4 Research questions

RQ1: What is the level of academic resilience among undergraduate business students in private universities in Bangladesh?

RQ2: How does academic resilience correlate with academic performance among undergraduate business students in private universities in Bangladesh?

RQ3: What are the key factors contributing to academic resilience among students facing significant academic challenges in Bangladeshi universities?

RQ4: What demographic factors (such as age, gender, socioeconomic status) influence academic resilience and academic performance in undergraduate business students in private universities in Bangladesh?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The consequences of the COVID-19 global pandemic renewed the significance of academic resilience (Cohrsen et al., 2022) and presented significant adversity for students (Ang et al., 2022). Undergraduate students dealt with many life and academic challenges (Martinez et al., 2019), and resilience had become widely recognized as a vital capability for a successful university experience (Holdsworth, Turner, & Scott-Young, 2019). Students who encountered various challenges often experienced anxiety, stress, and psychological distress (Haktanir et al., 2021). The health, well-being, and employability of university students were key considerations in higher education (Brewer et al., 2019), and higher education students began experiencing anxiety rates higher than those found in the general population. Social and test anxiety were two of the most common types of anxiety among university students (Ladejo, 2023), while stress remained widespread among postgraduate students (Chi, Cheng, & Zhang, 2023).

Resilience, conceptualized as the capacity to overcome challenges in pursuit of personal, professional, or academic objectives, constituted a significant area of inquiry within the social sciences (Coronado-Hijon, 2017). It was understood as an individual's adaptive process in navigating and enduring circumstances that induced feelings of depression or trauma (Eva et al., 2020). Academic performance and resilience had been explored extensively (Kotze & Kleynhans, 2013; Ayala & Manzano, 2018; Meneghel et al., 2019; Sukup & Clayton, 2021). Many students lacked the competencies and necessary skills to cope with academic demands (Supervia, Bordas, & Robres, 2022). Academic resilience research had the potential to improve learning outcomes for students at risk of failure, yet there was no standard approach to its measurement (Rudd, Meissel, & Meyer, 2021).

Academic resilience had been posited as a context-specific form of resilience appropriate for academic study (Beale, 2020). It had been examined across various disciplines (Winters, 2022; Yang & Wang, 2022; Cassidy et al., 2023; Delshad et al., 2023) and was established as a benchmark for academic performance (Emerson, Hair Jr., & Smith, 2023). While the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the importance of resilience in education systems (Naidu, 2021), it also renewed the focus on academic resilience as a key factor in student success across institutions (Martono et al., 2022). However, universities continued to face the challenge of enhancing students' academic performance (Egan et al., 2023).

Despite the literature supporting the importance of academic resilience, a lack of standard measurement methods persisted (Cassidy, 2016; Van Agteren et al., 2019; Chua et al., 2023). Although some researchers had adopted tools like Cassidy's (2016) Academic Resilience Scale (ARS)—later adapted in Spain (Trigueros et al., 2020) and the Netherlands (Versteeg & Kappe, 2021)—uniform approaches remained scarce. Cassidy (2015) also noted that academic resilience research had developed several distinct but related constructs aimed at addressing similar challenges.

Further empirical studies were necessary to explore how relational frameworks within institutions influenced resilience (Frisby, Hosek, & Beck, 2020). These efforts could deepen the understanding of academic resilience and help identify intervention targets to foster it (Wang et al., 2023). Although research into resilience in education was relatively new (Alhawsawi, Alhawsawi, & Sadeck, 2023), its significance was widely recognized. Given the global uncertainty, risk management had become crucial in many sectors, including higher education (Khaw & Teoh, 2023). In this context, academic resilience research held increasing relevance.

By addressing these gaps, further research could enhance understanding of academic resilience and inform practices to boost student success in higher education—particularly among undergraduate business students in Bangladesh.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study utilizes a quantitative approach based on a cross-sectional survey research design. Cross-sectional survey research is among the most commonly used methodologies in the social sciences, referring to the set of methods employed to systematically gather data from a range of individuals, organizations, or other units of interest at a specific point in time (Given, 2008). Following approval from the Institutional Review Board, data were collected through a survey questionnaire administered during the last week of the Fall semester of 2024 as part of ongoing business courses for students. 316 undergraduate students were surveyed from a private university in Bangladesh. Participants were selected through convenience sampling based on their availability and willingness to participate.

Through the survey questionnaire, participants recounted experiences perceived as academically demanding and subsequently completed assessments while reflecting on these specific situations, the associated coursework, and the resultant stressors. Data collection occurred throughout the semester to allow participants to confront and navigate these challenges. The data was analysed using SPSS

software with descriptive and inferential statistics to explore socio-demographic characteristics, academic performance, and academic resilience.

4. Results and discussion

Table 1 shows the characteristics of the study sample. We found that many of the respondents were male (52.4%) and were 21-33 years (55.6%). First- and second-year students constitute 48.9% and 26.0% of the total respondents, respectively. The majority of the students (36.5%) have monthly household incomes ranging from 50,000 Bangladeshi Taka to 99,999 Bangladeshi Taka. The average CGPA of these students was 3.21 ($SD = 0.40$).

Independent sample t-tests and one-way ANOVA were used to determine the associations of different demographic variables with the scores of the three scales: perseverance, reflection and help-seeking, and negative affect and emotional response. Table 2 shows a strong association between student gender and perseverance score. Female students had higher perseverance scores ($M = 34.70$; $SD = 3.0$) than male students, which was statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). Additionally, household income levels were strongly associated with reflection and help-seeking scores ($p < 0.05$), and students with the highest household monthly income had the highest scores ($M = 32.67$; $SD = 3.9$) in reflection and help-seeking behaviour.

Table 1: *Characteristics of the study population*

Characteristics	Frequency (%)
Student's gender	
Male	165 (52.4)
Female	150 (47.6)
Age Group	
18- 20 years	45 (14.3)
21-23 years	175 (55.6)
23-25 years	72 (22.9)
26-28 years	6 (5.1)
28 > years	7 (2.2)
Household Income	
Less than 50,000 BDT	55 (17.5)
50,000 - 99,999 BDT	115 (36.5)
1,00,000 – 1,49,000 BDT	79 (25.1)
1,50,000 – 1,99,999 BDT	17 (5.4)
2,00,000 - 2,49,999 BDT	14 (4.4)
2,50,000 – 2,99,999 BDT	11 (3.5)
3,00,000 BDT>	24 (7.6)
Year of undergraduate studies	
First Year	154 (48.9)
Second Year	82 (26.0)
Third Year	37 (11.7)
Fourth Year	42 (13.3)

Table 2: Socioeconomic characteristics and mean development scores by domains

Characteristics		Perseverance		Reflection and help-seeking		Negative affect and emotional response	
		Mean (SD)	<i>p</i> -value	Mean (SD)	<i>p</i> -value	Mean (SD)	<i>p</i> -value
Student's gender	Male	33.48 (4.3)	0.003	31.19 (4.4)	0.745	19.95 (2.6)	0.518
	Female	34.75 (3.0)		31.35 (3.7)		20.15 (2.8)	
Age group	18-20	34.27 (3.3)	0.640	31.73 (3.7)	0.092	20.24 (3.4)	0.878
	21-23	33.92 (3.8)		31.31 (3.9)		19.91 (2.5)	
	23-25	34.49 (3.6)		31.60 (4.4)		20.14 (3.0)	
	26-28	33.19 (4.8)		29.13 (5.5)		20.25 (2.3)	
	28>	35.00 (3.2)		28.71 (2.3)		20.71 (2.1)	
Year of studies	First-year	34.03 (4.2)	0.964	30.95 (4.2)	0.060	19.92 (2.7)	0.227
	Second-year	34.18 (3.2)		32.09 (4.0)		20.51 (3.0)	
	Third-year	34.30 (3.4)		31.89 (3.6)		20.16 (1.9)	
	Fourth-year	33.93 (3.4)		30.26 (4.3)		19.50 (2.7)	
Household Income	Less than 50,000 BDT	33.58 (4.4)	0.680	31.31 (3.8)	0.007	19.80 (2.3)	0.213
	50,000-99,999 BDT	34.34 (3.6)		31.90 (4.0)		20.02 (2.6)	
	1,00,000-1,49,999 BDT	33.91 (3.9)		30.59 (4.4)		20.24 (3.2)	
	1,50,000 – 1,99,999 BDT	33.65 (3.3)		31.47 (3.1)		20.47 (2.1)	
	2,00,000-2,49,000 BDT	33.43 (3.3)		27.93 (3.9)		18.29 (2.2)	
	2,50,000-2,99,999 BDT	34.73 (3.6)		30.09 (4.2)		20.73 (3.0)	

Characteristics	Perseverance		Reflection and help-seeking		Negative affect and emotional response	
	Mean (SD)	<i>p</i> -value	Mean (SD)	<i>p</i> -value	Mean (SD)	<i>p</i> -value
3,00,000 BDT>	35.00 (3.3)		32.67 (3.9)		20.54 (2.9)	

We also found the correlation coefficient among these three scaled scores, and we found that the factor perseverance is strongly correlated with reflection and help-seeking behaviour $r(315) = 0.247, p < 0.05$ and negative affect and emotional response $r(315) = 0.291, p < 0.05$ (Table 3). On the other hand, reflection and help-seeking behaviour were also found to be strongly correlated with negative affect and emotional response scores, $r(315) = 0.211, p < 0.05$.

Table 3: Correlation of perseverance, reflection and help-seeking and negative affect and emotional response

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3
1. Perseverance	34.09	3.7	-		
2. Reflection and help-seeking	31.27	4.1	0.24**	-	
3. Negative affect and emotional response	20.05	2.7	0.29**	0.21**	-

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

We also explored the association of students' CGPA with different demographic variables and interestingly we found that students' gender had a strong association with the obtained CGPA as female students had higher scores in CGPA irrespective of whatever year of education they were studying (Table 4).

Table 4: CGPA of male and female students in different years of education

Semester	Gender	N	Mean	SD
First Year	Male	56	3.1684	.37139
	Female	44	3.2475	.41893
Second Year	Male	34	3.2165	.39210
	Female	48	3.2849	.36909
Third Year	Male	21	2.9890	.50792
	Female	16	3.4094	.34134
Fourth Year	Male	28	3.0996	.41994
	Female	14	3.3171	.36039

The average CGPA of female students was 3.29 ($SD = 0.38$) which was higher than male students and was statistically significant ($F = 9.49, p < 0.05$). From these findings, we could summarize those female students had shown higher level perseverance scores in their academic life, which is relatable to the higher-level performance in academic exams than the male students.

The current study investigates academic resilience among undergraduate business students and its relationship with academic performance. The results reveal that demographic data of the studied population are diverse. The findings in this study provide valuable insights into the demographic characteristics of the student population surveyed. The data reveals a balanced gender distribution, with a slight predominance of male students (52.4%) over female students (47.6%).

The age distribution of the respondents shows a significant concentration of students in the 21-23 years age group (55.6%), followed by those aged 23-25 years (22.9%). This trend aligns with the typical age range for undergraduate students, suggesting that the majority of participants are within the expected age bracket for higher education.

In terms of household income, the data indicates that a significant portion of students (36.5%) come from households earning between 50,000 and 99,999 BDT. This finding suggests that a considerable number of students may face financial constraints that could impact their educational experience.

The year of undergraduate studies data reveals that nearly half of the respondents are in their first year (48.9%), with fewer students in subsequent years. This finding may indicate a high level of interest among new students in the institution's programs, but it also raises concerns about retention rates. Moreover, the relatively lower percentages of students in their third (11.7%) and fourth (13.3%) years suggest that there may be significant attrition rates as students' progress through their studies.

The data shows that those who have high income possess significant correlation to reflection and help-seeking characteristics (Table 2). The findings from our analysis shed light on the psychological characteristics of students relating to perseverance, reflection and help-seeking behaviours, as well as their emotional responses under varying conditions, particularly across demographic segments such as gender, age group, year of study, and household income. Our results revealed significant variation in perseverance scores based on gender, but not in the other measures, pointing to nuanced differences in how male and female students approach challenges in their academic environments.

Firstly, the data indicated that male students demonstrated significantly lower perseverance scores (mean = 33.48, $SD = 4.3$) compared to their female counterparts (mean = 34.75, $SD = 3.0$), with a p -value of 0.003, showing a statistically significant relationship. This finding aligns with previous literature that suggests females may exhibit higher levels of perseverance in academic settings, potentially due to differences in motivational influences or societal expectations that shape their academic endeavours (Amoadu et al., 2024). On the other hand, the measure of emotional responses in

terms of negative affect did not yield significant gender-related differences, suggesting that while females may persevere more in academic settings, this perseverance does not necessarily correlate with lower emotional distress or negative affect.

The year of study produced mixed findings. There were no significant differences in perseverance or negative emotional responses, although help-seeking behaviours showed near-significance ($p = 0.060$). First-year students (mean = 30.95, SD = 4.2) had the lowest help-seeking scores compared to senior peers, possibly reflecting transitional challenges and unfamiliarity with support systems. As students progressed, their ability to seek help likely improved, aligning with educational theories on self-efficacy and proactive learning behaviours.

Household income analysis suggested intriguing trends, particularly concerning help-seeking behaviour, with a significant p -value of 0.007 showing differences across income brackets. Students from households earning between 50,000–99,999 BDT demonstrated the highest help-seeking scores (mean = 31.90, SD = 4.0) compared to lower and higher income brackets. This result could indicate that students from middle-income households might feel more comfortable accessing resources or support systems, possibly due to a greater awareness of the opportunities available to them. Furthermore, it raises important questions regarding accessibility and the social capital necessary to cultivate help-seeking behaviours.

The interrelatedness of perseverance, reflection and help-seeking, and negative affect and emotional response found significant within our study population. Firstly, the reported mean scores suggest that participants exhibit relatively high levels of perseverance ($M = 34.09$, $SD = 3.7$) and reflection and help-seeking behaviours ($M = 31.27$, $SD = 4.1$), alongside a moderately low mean score for negative affect and emotional responses ($M = 20.05$, $SD = 2.7$). These descriptive trends provide a foundational understanding of the psychological profiles of participants engaged in learning or problem-solving contexts.

The observed correlations among the variables, specifically between perseverance and both reflection and help-seeking ($r = 0.24$, $p < 0.01$), as well as between perseverance and negative affect ($r = 0.29$, $p < 0.01$), indicate intriguing patterns that merit a deeper exploration. The positive correlation between perseverance and help-seeking behaviours emphasizes the notion that individuals who persist in the face of challenges are more likely to engage in reflection and seek assistance, perhaps as a means to enhance their understanding and tackle obstacles effectively. This aligns with existing literature that posits that perseverance is not merely about enduring challenges in isolation but also involves the active solicitation of resources and support to facilitate success (Hattie & Timperley, 2007).

Conversely, the correlation between perseverance and negative affect suggests more nuanced dynamics. While one might expect that higher levels of perseverance would correlate with lower negative affect, our findings seem to suggest otherwise. This could imply that individuals who are more perseverant

may also experience a higher frequency of negative emotions as they navigate through their challenges. This phenomenon can be interpreted through the lens of resilience, where persistence in overcoming difficulties can lead to emotional stress, yet simultaneously foster coping skills and adaptive strategies (Fletcher & Sarkar, 2013).

The positive correlation identified between reflection and help-seeking ($r = 0.21, p < 0.01$) reinforces the strength of metacognitive processes in facilitating adaptive behaviours among learners. Individuals who reflect on their experiences and learning strategies are more likely to recognize the need for assistance and actively seek it out. This underscores the importance of cultivating an environment that encourages reflection and the normalization of help-seeking behaviours, especially in educational settings. Petty et al. (2012) argue that such an environment can significantly impact learning outcomes by promoting a culture of inquiry and collaboration.

The dynamic interplay among these variables raises essential implications for interventions aimed at enhancing student resilience and emotional well-being. Given that negative affect correlates with both perseverance and reflection, it might be beneficial to develop programs that equip students with emotional regulation strategies that could mitigate negative emotional experiences during challenging tasks. Training in emotional intelligence, including skills such as positive reframing, mindfulness, and stress management, could be an integral part of educational curricula (Brackett et al., 2019).

5. CONCLUSION

The present study provided a comprehensive examination of academic resilience among undergraduate business students and its relationship with academic performance. It revealed nuanced insights into the demographic and psychological characteristics of the student population surveyed. By elucidating specific trends related to gender, year of study, and household income, this research contributes significantly to the understanding of how these factors interplay to shape student experiences and academic outcomes. For example, women who showed higher levels of perseverance might have been more motivated by personal goals, valued education more highly, or received more social support from friends and family. They might also have developed strengths in areas such as time management and organization, which helped them remain committed to their academic pursuits. The findings emphasize the importance of recognizing and addressing the diverse needs of students in higher education settings, particularly as they navigate the complex landscape of academic demands.

This study contributes valuable insights into the role of academic resilience in student performance within the unique context of Bangladesh. The findings underscore the necessity for educational institutions to implement targeted resilience-building initiatives. By identifying demographic factors influencing resilience, this research offers a foundation for future interventions aimed at enhancing academic outcomes among undergraduate students in competitive environments.

5.2 Limitations

The study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. Firstly, the reliance on a quantitative approach and survey research may restrict the depth of understanding regarding the complexities of academic resilience, as it does not capture qualitative nuances that could provide richer insights into students' experiences. The study also focuses primarily on undergraduate business students in Bangladesh, which may limit the applicability of the results to other disciplines or educational contexts.

6. Future Research

Future research should explore the cultural dimensions of academic resilience by examining how various cultural backgrounds influenced resilience strategies and outcomes. Qualitative methodologies may also be employed to gain deeper insights into students' lived experiences and the factors contributing to their resilience. Longitudinal studies could be valuable in understanding how resilience developed over time and in response to changing academic demands.

Expanding the research to encompass diverse student populations and educational settings may enhance the generalizability of findings and contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of academic resilience in higher education. The findings indicate a need for further exploration of the cultural dimensions of academic resilience to comprehend how different cultural backgrounds affect resilience strategies and outcomes in higher education settings. This endeavour is expected to inform the impact of various resilience-building interventions and programs within higher education institutions, particularly in under-researched regions such as Bangladesh, to identify effective strategies for enhancing academic resilience among students.

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