

TO IDENTIFY THE LEVELS OF ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT, RESILIENCE AND SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING AMONGST YOUNG ADULTS: A COMPARATIVE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

A constant trigger for any student in their life is always related to their academic achievement. They face many challenges and highs and lows during their journey in education. A factor that helps every individual deal with struggles is resilience. And how successfully we face these struggles can shape our view on life leading to impact in our subjective well-being. This proposed study aims to understand if resilience has any impact on an individual's academic achievement and in shaping their subjective well being. To expand the exploration, the study will compare academic achievement, resilience, and subjective well-being data from two consecutive batches of first-year engineering students. It will help us understand whether the relation between these concepts is a recurrent occurrence and whether the levels of resilience and subjective well-being have changed over the course of a year. The proposed tools to be used are Brief Resilience Scale and Satisfaction with Life Scale. We hypothesize that a higher level of resilience will be associated with higher academic achievement and better subjective well-being and the trend in the association is the same for the set of participants. The findings will have practical implications for developing targeted interventions to foster resilience and improve the overall well-being of engineering students during their transition to university life.

KEYWORDS Resilience, Subjective Well-Being, Academic Achievement, Adolescents, Comparative Study, Implication for Intervention Strategies

INTRODUCTION

There is no life that exists without struggle whether it be that of a human being or animals. Since the moment we are born, we have struggled. First we struggle to adjust to the world outside of the womb, then we struggle to move around and talk like our parents and then the struggles that arise in each phase of our life. One factor that helps us through the various struggles of our life is what we call resilience. When an individual experiences failure, they are left with two options, let fate take its course or learn from the failure and prepare themselves to cope with the struggle better. The aspect in all of us, which helps us handle failure, cope and adapt with the challenges is resilience (Benard,1993).

This is the ability which enables us to succeed despite various risk factors (Masten,2001). For example, the study done by Dass-Brailsford (2005) on black youth in South Africa, who, despite experiencing the struggles of poverty, achieved academic success. Resilience of an individual can be influenced by many factors. As Larson (2011) and Masten (2001) reported, supportive families, positive school atmosphere and caring mentors through which students gain direction and encouragement to make decisions impact the resilience of young adults.

The students who are resilient, have found to be experiencing more difficult life situations but with their resilient nature, they are overcoming its impact and flourishing in academics (Bryan,2005). A constant trigger for any student in their life is always related to their academic achievement. They face many challenges and highs and lows during their journey in education. In this case, being resilient can be very useful for the students to overcome the challenges of academia. As it was found in a study conducted by Driscoll (2006), many American students from lower socioeconomic status, who were assumed to have more chances of dropping out of schools, unexpectedly displayed high academic resilience.

Facing challenges and bouncing back on our feet becomes easier when we view life to be meaningful and worth living. A person who is satisfied and content in their life experiences with the will to live happily has more chances to be resilient than a person who is unable to find any hope or satisfaction in their life. The manner in which we experience our situations and life in general is our subjective well being. According to Carr (2013), subjective well-being is “A positive psychological state characterized by a high level of satisfaction with life, a high level of positive affect and a low level of negative affect”.

Well being is the blend of intellectual assessment and emotional responses that an individual gives in various situations of their life (Campbell et al., 1976). According to Ryan and Delci, (2000) well-

being has two major components, hedonic well being, where happiness and satisfaction is defined in terms of attaining pleasure and avoiding pain, and eudaimonic well being which focuses on the degree to which an individual is fully functioning. In simpler terms, hedonic is all about feeling good about one's life and eudaimonic is the meaning of life and self-realization aspect of life (Henderson and Knight, 2012). Subjective well-being is the measure of hedonic well being. Subjective well-being has three major components, life satisfaction, positive affect and negative affect (Diener, 1984). And these components together form the perspective of how an individual views their life and well being. Subjective well being and its evolution with time has been related to an individual's personality traits as well (Diener, 1998).

Now, relating this understanding of subjective well being to the life of students, when a student is satisfied in their life, is enjoying their experiences and views the obstacles as challenges to improve their skills, subjective well-being can trigger higher academic achievement. According to Gilman and Huebner (2006), when there is high life satisfaction among the children, they are found to be more intelligent and get high grades as compared to the ones who have more negative thoughts and are not very satisfied with their lives. Various studies have found that there is a positive association between subjective well being and academic achievement (Manzoor et.al., 2014).

As many studies show, there is a significant positive relationship between subjective well being and resilience (Kirmani et al., 2015). When we view life as worth living, there are more chances for us to overcome the struggles that arise. More positive outlook on life can make people more resilient. When there is satisfaction with life the urge to face challenges and become a winner is more. Conversely, when we are able to tackle hardships, we tend to be more content with life.

The purpose of this study is to identify the level of academic achievement, resilience and subjective well being among two groups of first year students, one enrolled in the year 2023 and another enrolled in the year 2024. It is to explore if the trends in response are recurrent or if there is any considerable change in this occurrence. The study will also be delving into the gender differences, if any, between the level of resilience and subjective well being, of the respondents of the two groups.

AIM: To identify and compare the level of academic achievement, resilience and subjective well being of the first year college students of year 2023 and first year college students of year 2024.

OBJECTIVES:

1. To identify the levels of academic achievement, resilience and subjective well being among the first year college students of 2023.
2. To identify the levels of academic achievement, resilience and subjective well being among the first year college students of 2024.
3. To examine and compare the relationship between academic achievement, resilience and subjective well being between the first year college students of year 2023 and 2024.
4. To examine and compare the gender differences in the level of academic achievement, resilience and subjective well being between the first year college students of year 2023 and 2024.

HYPOTHESIS :

1. There will be a significant relationship between academic achievement, resilience and subjective well-being for both the first year student groups.
2. There will be no significant difference between the levels of resilience for males and females among the first year students of 2023 and 2024.
3. There will be no significant difference between the levels of subjective well being for males and females among the first year students of 2023 and 2024.

METHODS:

In this descriptive survey research, the first year college students enrolled in the year 2023 and 2024 were the participants. The participants were from the age group of 17 to 20 years of age. by using purposive sampling technique, a sample of 600 respondents were selected, 300 of the respondents were first year college students from the year 2023 and 300 of the respondents were first year college students from the year 2024.

INSTRUMENTS

Resilience: The Brief Resilience Scale by Bruce et.al.,(2008) was administered to identify the level of resilience amongst the respondents. The scale is a six-item scale aimed to measure an individual's ability to handle and recover from setbacks. The responses are scored through a five-point Likert scale and the final score is interpreted as low, normal or high level of resilience.

Subjective well-being: The Satisfaction with Life Scale by Emmons et.al., (1985) was administered to identify the level of life satisfaction and subjective well-being of the respondents. The scale is a five-item scale aimed to measure an individual's life satisfaction, a cognitive component of subjective well-being. The responses are scored using a seven-point Liker scale and the final score is interpreted between the range of extremely satisfied to extremely dissatisfied.

Academic achievement: The score of the respondent's intermediate examination was considered for the academic achievement.

A demographic questionnaire was also administered to collect the age, gender and other demographics of the respondents.

PROCEDURE

A google form was created which had the questions from all the instruments along with the demographic questionnaire. This google form was circulated amongst all the first year college students of the year 2023 and year 2024.

DATA ANALYSIS

Statistical techniques such as bivariate correlation and independent Mann-Whitney test were employed on the data using SPSS version 21 (Statistical Package for Social Sciences).

RESULTS

In this study, Saphiro - Wilk Normality test was administered, which revealed that the data to be significantly deviated from the normal, it is assumed that the data is not normally distributed. Hence, non parametric data analysis was performed.

TABLE 1: SHOWS THE FREQUENCIES AND PERCENT OF MALE AND FEMALE RESPONDENTS AMONG THE FIRST YEAR COLLEGE STUDENTS OF YEAR 2023..

Demographic Variables	Category	Frequencies	Percent
Gender	Male	56	18.7%
	Female	244	81.3%

TABLE 2: SHOWS THE AGE WISE FREQUENCIES AND PERCENT OF RESPONDERS AMONG THE FIRST YEAR COLLEGE STUDENTS OF YEAR 2023

Demographic Variables	Category	Frequencies	Percent
Age	17 years	165	55%
	18 years	103	34.3%
	19 years	19	6.3%
	20 years	13	4.3%

As Table 1 and Table 2 represent, amongst the respondents of first year college students of the year 2023, 81.3% were females and 18.7% were males. The age group for this group was 17 years to 20 years, where 55% were 17 years old, 34.3% were 18 years old, 6.3% were 19 years old and 4.3% were 20 years old.

TABLE 3: SHOWS THE FREQUENCIES AND PERCENT OF MALE AND FEMALE RESPONDENTS AMONG THE FIRST YEAR COLLEGE STUDENTS OF YEAR 2024.

Demographic Variables	Category	Frequencies	Percent
Gender	Male	187	62.3%
	Female	113	37.3%

TABLE 4: SHOWS THE AGE WISE FREQUENCIES AND PERCENT OF RESPONDENTS AMONG THE FIRST YEAR COLLEGE STUDENTS OF YEAR 2024.

Demographic variables	Category	Frequencies	Percent
Age	17 years	139	46.3%
	18 years	123	41%
	19 years	33	11%
	20 years	5	1.7%

As is represented in Table 3 and Table 4, amongst the first year college students of the year 2024, 37.3% were females and 62.3% were males. In this group, 46.3% were of the age 17 years, 41% were of age 18 years, 11% were of age 19 years and 1.7% were of the age 20 years.

TABLE 5: CORRELATION BETWEEN ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT, RESILIENCE AND SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING FOR THE FIRST YEARS COLLEGE STUDENTS OF YEAR 2023.

Variables	Academic Achievement	Resilience	Subjective well being
Academic Achievement	1.00	-0.15	0.44
Resilience	-0.15	1.00	0.21
Subjective well being	0.44	0.21	1.00

TABLE 6: CORRELATION BETWEEN ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT, RESILIENCE AND SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING FOR THE FIRST YEAR COLLEGE STUDENTS OF THE YEAR 2024.

Variables	Academic achievement	Resilience	Subjective well being
Academic Achievement	1.00	0.56	0.69
Resilience	0.56	1.00	-0.007
Subjective well being	0.69	-0.007	1

Table 5 represents the correlation between academic performance, resilience and subjective well being for the first year students in the year 2023. As the p-value (0.789) indicates, the correlation between academic performance and resilience is negative and not statistically significant. The same can be observed between academic performance and subjective well-being, where the p-value (0.450) suggests a

The same trend in results can be observed in the first year students of the year 2024 (Table 6). Here the relationship between academic performance and resilience (0.333) and academic performance and subjective well being (0.233), observed as weak and not statistically significant. Even the relationship

between resilience and subjective well-being showed the same results as the p-value (0.899) shows that there is almost zero correlation between the variables.

TABLE 7: MEAN DIFFERENCES OF THE LEVEL OF RESILIENCE OF FIRST YEAR COLLEGE STUDENTS OF YEAR 2023, ON THE BASIS OF GENDER.

Variables	Category	Frequencies	Percent	Mann-Whitney U	Sig
Gender	Male	56	18.7%	5441.000	0.017
	Female	244	81.3%		

TABLE 8: MEAN DIFFERENCES OF THE LEVEL OF SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING OF FIRST YEAR COLLEGE STUDENTS OF THE YEAR 2023, ON THE BASIS OF GENDER.

Variables	Category	Frequencies	Percent	Mann-Whitney U	Sig
Gender	Male	56	18.7%	6346.500	0.406
	Female	244	81.3%		

Table 7 and 8, shows us whether there is any difference between the level of resilience and subjective well-being among the two genders, for the first year students of the year 2023. As the p-value (0.017) suggests, there is a statistically significant difference of level of resilience between males and females. Further the mean rank values shows that the resilience level is higher among the males as compared to the females. But in terms of subjective well-being there is no such difference observed among males and females as the p-value (0.406) is greater than 0.05.

TABLE 9: MEAN DIFFERENCES OF THE LEVEL OF RESILIENCE OF FIRST YEAR COLLEGE STUDENTS OF YEAR 2024, ON THE BASIS OF GENDER.

Variables	Category	Frequencies	Percent	Mann-Whitney U	Sig
Gender	Male	187	62.3%	9644.500	0.250
	Female	112	37.3%		

TABLE 10: MEAN DIFFERENCES OF THE LEVEL OF SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING OF FIRST YEAR COLLEGE STUDENTS OF YEAR 2024, ON THE BASIS OF GENDER.

Variables	Category	Frequencies	Percent	Mann-Whitney U	Sig
Gender	Male	187	62.3%	10001.500	0.515
	Female	112	37.3%		

Table 9 and Table 10, shows us whether there is any difference between the level of resilience and subjective well-being among the two genders, for the first year students of the year 2024. In this, there was no significant difference observed between the two genders either for resilience or for subjective well-being.

DISCUSSION

The main goal of this study was to identify the levels of academic achievement, resilience and subjective well-being for the first year students of 2023 batch and first year students of 2024 batch, and then draw a comparison between these levels to see if there is any difference in the trends of results. Any possible change in results between these two batches of first year students will open an area of further research to explore the reasons behind these shifts in levels and will help to understand the relevance of these variables in context to the particular population.

As the results suggest, there is no significant correlation between academic achievement and resilience among the first year students of 2023. The same trend was found among the first year students of the year 2024. It is clear that there has been no shift in this trend between the two groups. Similar results were found in a study done in the year 2010, where the researchers found that there was no significant correlation between academic achievement and resilience scores among the participants (Sarwar,2010). This finding is contradictory to previous research which has reported that there is a strong correlation between academic achievement and resilience (Sakiz & Aftab, 2019; Allan, McKenna & Dominey, 2014; Borman & Overman, 2004).

Another study however, found that there was no relationship between academic success and resilience and postgraduate students (Uzma, unpublished). This complex situation demands the other factors which influence resilience level and academic achievement to be considered. There are several personal attributes such as securing early attachments, temperament, intelligence, health, self-awareness, compartmentalization, optimism etc., which influence an individual's level of resilience from a personal

perspective (Levine, 2003). These factors can be considered as positive personal attributes, i.e., they have a positive effect on the resilience level. Even when these factors are not entirely predictive of higher resilience levels, they give a clear picture of personal attributes which can influence resilience.

The results also revealed that there is no significant relationship between subjective well-being and academic achievement of the first year students of 2023 and the first year students of 2024. The comparison of data between the two groups shows that the results have a similar trend. This is contradictory to the previous studies which reported that subjective well-being has a positive association with academic achievement, such as this study conducted by Manzoor et.al. (2014). But a meta-analysis done on understanding the relationship between subjective well-being and academic achievement, which reviewed 47 studies on this relationship, found that, even though there is a statistically significant relationship between subjective well-being and academic achievement, it is relatively weak. The suggestion from the results of this study was that the low academic achievement of students does not predetermine a low subjective well-being and it cannot be assumed that high-achieving students have a high level of subjective well-being. (Bucker et.al., 2018). This leads us to conclude that there is a need for evaluation and consideration of other factors which can influence the academic performance and subjective well-being of students.

As a very unexpected result, this study found that there is no significant relationship between resilience and subjective well-being in both the groups of first year students. This finding is in contrast to the previous studies which have shown that there is a positive relationship between resilience and subjective well-being. Where there is no study as such to account for this unusual result, there are studies which explore the contextual and methodological factors to explain no or weak relationship between resilience and subjective well-being.

The study conducted on expressing emotions, resilience and subjective well-being, found that even when resilience and subjective well-being have a significant correlation, the strength of the relation varies and other external factors which can impact subjective well-being despite there being an high level of resilience (Eldelekiloglu and Yildiz, 2020). Another aspect which can account for this discrepancy is the personality traits embodied by the individuals. Various studies have shown that certain traits of personality such as openness to experience, extraversion and conscientiousness to be predictors of resilience and allow people to have higher life satisfaction (Crnkovic et.al., 2023; Ercan, 2017; Findyartini, 2021).

Based on the results of this study, the p value is less than 0.05 for all the correlations between the variables, which leads us to rejecting the null hypothesis (H1) which hypothesized that, there will be a significant relationship between academic achievement, resilience and subjective well-being for both the

first year student groups.

The results of the first year students of 2023 show that there is significant difference in the level of resilience between males and females with the males being more resilient than females in this population. This finding is in line with the previous study which also reported that the male participants have higher resilience scores than the female participants (Sarwar, 2010). Another meta-analysis conducted on gender differences in psychological resilience levels also revealed that the psychological resilience levels were higher among men as compared to women (Gok and Kogar, 2021). This difference can be attributed to the difference in cultural norms, support from families and friends, mentoring systems that are experienced by both the genders (Chye et.al., 2024).

The same trend was not followed by the first year students of 2024, where the results reported that there was no significant difference in the level of resilience between males and females. This is in par with the findings of the meta-analysis aimed at investigating resilience in terms of gender, which showed that the resilience levels of women and men were equal and hence did not have significant differences (Ari & Carkit, 2020). This can be understood better when we look into the other factors which influence resilience such as poverty, abuse/neglect, family dysfunction/discord etc. These factors are referred to as risk factors which can become the negative environmental factors for resilience (Levine, 2003). It is not necessary that every individual experiences these risk factors and hence the impact of these on resilience is not constant.

Hence, the null hypothesis (H₂) which hypothesized that there will be no significant difference between the levels of resilience for males and females among the first year students of 2023 and 2024, is partially rejected. This is because the group of students from the year 2023 showed a significant difference between resilience and gender but no such difference was found among the students from year 2024.

On the other hand, there was no significant difference found in the level of subjective well-being of the two genders, for both the groups of first year students. This is in parallel with the findings of a study done to understand subjective well-being by gender, where it was found that gender is not a determinant of subjective well-being and that both the genders either perceive or evaluate their life and experiences in the same manner (Joshi, 2010). This finding is contradictory with the findings of the study by Manzoor et.al., 2014, which found that gender has an effect on subjective well-being and that male and female (George (1984) reported that there was no difference between the level of subjective well-being among the different genders.

This inconsistency in the findings of relation between gender and subjective well-being can be accounted for by the factors which influence them. There are many factors which influence the subjective

well-being of college students as mentioned in the study by Zhang and Jiang (2023). The factors were categorised into objective and subjective where the demographic variables such as the gender, age, economic status, urban-rural differences etc., social support and life events of an individual were the objective factors. The personality characteristics and attribution methods of an individual made up the subjective factors.

Due to the implication of the results, the null hypothesis (H3) which hypothesized that there will be no significant difference between the levels of subjective well being for males and females among the first year students of 2023 and 2024, is accepted.

The present study was aimed at identifying the levels of academic achievement, resilience and subjective well being among the two groups of first year college students enrolled in the year 2023 and 2024. The results found that there was no significant relationship between the variables, academic achievement, resilience and subjective well being and this trend was consistent between both the groups. This finding is in complete contradiction to all the previous studies done with the same variables which showed that there exists a positive relationship between the three variables. There were a few studies which revealed that high resilience is not always a predictor for academic achievement and low level of life satisfaction can not always be related to low academic achievement (Elizondo-Omana, 2010; Zuill, 2016). But it has not been discovered before that resilience and subjective well being have no significant relationship. These unusual findings of this research shows that there is a need for in-depth investigation on all the external and personal factors which influence an individual's academic achievement, resilience and subjective well being.

The results also reveal that there is a significant difference between the level of resilience among the two genders in the first year college students of the year 2023. There are studies which are both in alignment and contrast to this finding. However, this trend was not found in the first year college students of the year 2024, where there was no significant difference between the level of resilience among the two genders. This might be due to the difference in implication of gender norms, cultural norms, family background, social circle etc., which influence an individual's resilience (Sarwar et.al., 2010). Also the presence or absence of risk factors play an important role in building our resilience (Chye et.al., 2024).. On the other hand, subjective well-being had no significant difference among the two genders either in 2023 first year college students or 2024 first year college students. This finding is similar to the ones done previously which found that there is no difference in the level of subjective well-being between the genders and that both the genders experience and evaluate these experiences of life in the same manner (Joshi, 2010; Okun and George, 1984). An explanation to this can be due to the fact that most of the real life struggles have become common for both the genders. There are very few areas that exist in today's

time which are different based on gender. The females have the stress from the workplace and the males deal with the nuances of household chores. The blend in the gender norms that society had set previously can help understand why men and women are viewing and evaluating their life experiences in the same manner.

CONCLUSION

The present study found that there was no significant relationship between academic achievement, resilience and subjective well being for the first year college students enrolled in the year 2023 and 2024. Previous studies have established that higher resilience is not always a predictor for higher academic achievement and low subjective well being does not always predict low academic achievement. The occurrence of no significant relationship between resilience and subjective well being between both the groups of first year college students, opens discussions on the external factors which influence the resilience and subjective well being of an individual. There are many other personal and external factors such as personality, temperament, abuse/neglect, environment, which has a strong influence on our resilience. Community, support from families, life events, attribution methods are aspects that influence subjective well being.

Resilience among the first year college students of 2023 found significant differences between the two genders. There are both supportive and contradictory studies for these findings and as is evident in this study, this trend of results was not repeated among the first year college students of 2024. Subjective well-being had no significant differences between the two genders for either of the group of first year college students.

There is a need to study in-depth the concepts of resilience and subjective well being and factors which influence them with relation to academic achievement of students to get a better understanding of the underlying causes of these results. This study can be further explored with the addition of more culture specific and self-related concepts.

SUGGESTIONS AND LIMITATIONS

One of the major limitations of this study is the deviation of scores from normal distribution of scores. There is a need to study these variables with a normal distribution of data to ensure generalizability of the results. The unusual nature of the scores might be due to the instruments administered and it is suggested that the study is to be explored further with other sets of instruments which are more culture specific, relatable and accounts for external factors which can influence the study variables. Another limitation of this study is the discrepancy in the percentage of males and females. It is

suggested that in future the percentage of males and females will be kept the same for unbiased results.

For future research, longitudinal study pattern is recommended as that will help track change in the levels of resilience, subjective well-being and academic achievement, if any, from the day one of their journey in college till their final year. Students can also be categorised based on their degrees or courses that they choose to give an interdisciplinary comparison between the levels of these variables. Inclusion of more demographic details such as their family background, parenting, economical background, personality etc., which directly impacts an individual's level of resilience, subjective well-being and academic achievement. Taking into consideration all of these factors, the educational institutions and the educators can develop more insightful understanding of the students and create programs and courses as reformative measures, from the view of improving the resilience, subjective well-being and academic achievement of their students.

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Vol. 5(1), June 2025, pp. 26-42

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