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Research Paper

Mindfulness, Resilience and Academic performance among College Students

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ABSTRACT

Academic stress has been a concern in recent times. Students face a lot of issues because of the stress they go through. So, the purpose of the study is to understand the relationship between mindfulness, resilience and academic performance among college students along with gender differences. The data was collected from students of various colleges, including males and females. The results showed that mindfulness and resilience have positive correlation, resilience and academic performance has positive relationship and mindfulness and academic performance has a negative correlation. And the results didn't show any gender differences in all these 3 variables.

Keywords: *Stress, Mindfulness, Resilience, Academic Performance*

People believed for a very long time that students were the group least impacted by stress or issues of any kind. Students were merely required to study, and there was never any thought of studying as a burden or as a difficult task (Reddy et al., 2018). The importance of students' academic achievement cannot be overstated, since it is seen as a necessary condition for obtaining good employment, a better career, and ultimately a decent life (Singh & Saumya, 2021). Students' learning and performance levels are negatively impacted by academic stress, as well as their mental, emotional, and physical health. Consequently, the students start to experience competitive pressure from the pre-primary level itself, since year-end exams are used to determine who gets to move up to the next grade. At the pre university level, the pressure to perform academically mounts even more because entrance to prestigious universities is contingent upon passing the qualifying test with excellent scores (Rentala et al., 2019). Academic success and continued education depend on student adjustment to university life, challenges, and effort in educationally purposeful activities (Ayala et al., 2018).

A student who is resilient will not give up quickly or give up easily in the face of unforeseen or unpleasant circumstances. The ability of a person to handle adversity and hardship is known as resilience (Rao & Krishnamurthy, 2018). It is one of the primary psychological variables connected to a person's ability to adjust to difficult situations. This necessitates the application of techniques for positive reinforcement that enhance wellbeing (Trigueros et al.,

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2020). Resilient individuals have an accepting attitude towards their events in life, which is essential for overcoming trauma. A transcendent sense of self, flexibility, and adaptability all depend on self-acceptance. Developing resilience and wellbeing also requires having compassion for oneself. It is facilitated by the growth of widely positive emotions in particular and effective emotion control in addressing negative situations. Mindfulness practice emphasises the need of affect control and enacting positive affect as important experiences for adapting to challenging life situations (Sunbul & Guneri, 2019).

The practice of mindfulness, which involves focusing on the task at hand and experiencing the moment as it unfolds, is becoming more and more popular as a means of enhancing personal wellbeing (Lu et al., 2017). By fostering certain abilities like openness, attentiveness, or curiosity, mindfulness may also have an effect on academic achievement by raising a student's capacity for success. Because mindfulness may help students perceive things in fresh and exciting ways and change their perspective on what they already know, it may be positively connected with academic engagement. In other words, individuals become more engaged, focused, and interested in what they are doing, which increases their participation and effort in the tasks they do (Miralles-Armenteros et al., 2019).

Maintaining physical and mental well-being is crucial for students to excel in their academic pursuits. However, stress, worry, fear, trauma, despair, and physical health issues can hinder their academic success, making it essential for students to actively participate in their education (Rentala et al., 2019). Among the many issues linked to students experiencing high levels of academic stress include depression, anxiety, behavioural issues, impatience. Additionally, it was noted that they engage in a number of dangerous behaviours, including increasing drug and alcohol use, unprotected sexual engagement, physical inactivity, and irregular eating and sleeping schedules. These youngsters are under tremendous pressure to excel, which has led to a five-fold rise in suicide attempts. India has the highest suicide rate in the world among those aged 15 to 29. And these figures don't appear to be going down (Reddy et al., 2018).

According to the research conducted by (Banu et al., 2015), about two-thirds of Kolkata's senior high school students suffer from academic stress, which is a major problem, with no significant differences in gender, age, grade or personal factors. Another study on higher secondary students of Tamil Nadu's found that male students experienced higher stress levels than females, with factors such as urbanity, government school has less stress than private school students, science subjects having more stress than arts and literate parents contributing to higher academic stress among urban and rural students (Prabu, 2015). The study by (Rao & Krishnamurthy,2019) found a significant correlation between students' academic performance and their resilience level, indicating a strong correlation between resilience and academic success.

Since students undergo individual and social transitions when they reach college, a study was conducted by (Reddy et al.,2018), to understand if there exists academic stress among students, the stream they have chosen and to see if there is difference in academic stress according to gender. Differences in gender and stream were also noted in the different dimensions or sources of stress. A study that was done by (Ayala & Manzano, 2018), among the first-year university student's academic performance and resilience and engagement dimensions. The study found that engagement and resilience variables, specifically dedication and absorption, and hardiness and resourcefulness, significantly predict academic

achievement, with males predicting success through absorption, and students finishing their degrees exhibiting greater vitality and resilience.

(Vidal-Meliá et al., 2022) study highlighted the importance of mindfulness in fostering resilience and academic performance in Education for sustainable development. They found that mindfulness positively correlates with resilience, leading to improved academic achievement. This highlights the significance of attentiveness in maximising learning potential and personal development. A study by (Caballero et al., 2019) using the Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS) found that greater mindfulness is associated with better academic achievement in over 2,000 urban Grades 5-8 students. The study found that greater mindfulness correlated significantly with better attendance and fewer suspensions. The relationship was similar across demographic characteristics, supporting the reliability of the MAAS as a measure of mindfulness among youth. Because mindfulness is malleable, this link makes it more compelling to investigate whether mindfulness-based therapies might improve academic achievements. The study supports the need for mindfulness-based interventions to improve academic outcomes.

Objectives
- To examine if there is significant relationship between mindfulness, resilience and academic performance
- To examine if there is significant difference among males and females in mindfulness
- To examine if there is significant difference among males and females in resilience
- To examine if there is significant difference among males and females in academic performance.

Hypotheses
H_1-There is significant relationship between mindfulness, resilience and academic performance
H_2 - There is significant difference in mindfulness based on gender
H_3- There is significant difference in resilience based on gender
H_4 - There is a significant difference in academic performance based on gender

METHODS
The data is collected only from those who have been enrolled to a college for full time course which includes only Undergraduate and Postgraduate students of India. The total number of participants for this study was 300 students. Convenience sampling was used to collect the data. The data collection was collected through Google forms by sending links through various Social media platforms and in person through QR code of the form. it is a quantitative study using Correlation research design to understand the relationship between the variables and t-test research design is used to test the differences among the 2 groups.

Tools
There are three scales measuring each of the variables.
Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS)- designed by Kirk Warren Brown, Ph.D and Richard M Ryan, Ph.D is a 15 item likert scale ranging from 1(almost always)-6 (almost never which evaluates variations in the frequency of mindfulness states, self-regulation and various states of wellbeing across individuals. Higher scores reflected higher trait mindfulness and reliability with Cronbach's Alpha = .80.

Bharathiar University Resilience Scale - To measure Resilience we are using Bharathiar University Resilience Scale - by Annalakshmi, the scale consists of 30 items based on 7 domains such as (1) reaction to negative events (2) duration for getting back to normalcy (3) perception of effect of past negative events (4) response to risk factors in life (5) defining problems, perception of effect of past negative events (6) openness to experience (7) hope in coping with future and flexibility. It is a likert scale ranging from 1 (if the statement is not at all appropriate in describing you) - 5 (if the statement is most appropriate in describing you). The responses given by the participants are summed up to get the total score which shows the level of psychological resilience of the participant. The maximum score possible is 150 and the maximum score a participant can get is 30. The test retest reliability of the scale is r = 0.72 and cronbach alpha for the scale was found to be r = 0.82. The scale has adequate concurrent validity.

Academic Performance Scale - The third scale that we are using is the Academic Performance Scale by Carson Birchmeier, Emily Grattan, Sarah Hornbacher, and Christopher McGregory of Saginaw Valley State University, it is a 5 point scale ranging from strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree and strongly disagree. Higher the scores higher the academic performance. The scale has internal consistency of .89 and a test-retest reliability of .85.

Ethical concern

The study ensured ethical considerations by obtaining informed consent from all participants, ensuring they were aware of the nature of the study and their rights. Anonymity was maintained by not collecting any identifying information that could link responses to individual participants. Confidentiality was also upheld by storing all data securely and only accessible to authorised personnel involved in the study. These measures were implemented to protect the privacy and rights of the participants throughout the research process.

Statistical Analysis

The results were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. IBM SPSS- 25 was used for data analysis. Among descriptive statistics, mean and standard deviation were used; among the inferential statistics inferential statistics, Pearson correlation method was used to test the hypothesis.

Table 1 Descriptive Statistics and Correlations for Mindfulness, Resilience and Academic Performance

Variables	n	M	SD	1	2	3
Mindfulness	298	51.06	13.639	-		
Resilience	298	90.11	17.741	.255**	-	
Academic Performance	298	23.26	5.775	.042	.282**	-

$^{**}p < 0.01.$** correlation is significant at 0.01 level (2 tailed).

In the Normality testing it was identified that the data was not normally distributed hence a Spearman correlation coefficient was computed to assess the linear relationship between the variables Mindfulness, Resilience and Academic Performance, as shown in Table 1. There was a positive correlation between the variables Mindfulness and Resilience r (298) = .255**, p = <0.01. Therefore, the study accepts the alternative hypothesis. (H₁). There is no correlation with Mindfulness and Academic Performance r (298) = .042, p =<0.01. Therefore, the study accepts the alternative hypothesis. (H₂). There was a positive

correlation with Resilience and Academic Performance r (298) = .282**, p =<0.01 Therefore, the study accepts the alternative hypothesis. (H₃).

Table 2 Significance of difference between Gender and Mindfulness among males and females

Variable	Male		Female		t	Sig
Mindfulness	M	SD	M	SD		
	51.19	15.063	50.93	12.109	0.169	0.866

Table-2 shows the results of the gender differences in the study variables. An independent-sample t-test was conducted to determine the gender difference in the level of Mindfulness among males and females. For mindfulness, the mean value for males is 51.19 and SD is 15.063 and the mean and SD obtained by females is 50.93 and 12.109 respectively. The t (298) = 0.169. Since the value is less than 1.96 there is no a specific difference in the level of mindfulness among males and females. While considering the significance value which is 0.866 indicating that it is not statistically significant.

Table 3 Significance of difference between Gender and Resilience among adolescents

Variable	Male		Female		t	Sig
Resilience	M	SD	M	SD		
	91.36	19.520	88.87	15.745	1.214	.226

An independent-sample t-test was conducted to determine the difference in the level of Resilience and gender difference among students. For resilience, the mean value for male is 91.36 and SD is 19.520 and the mean and SD of females is 88.87 and 15.745 respectively. The t (298) = 1.214 and P = .226 Since the t value is less than 1.96 there is no a specific difference in the level of Resilience and gender.

Table 4 Significance of difference between Gender and Academic Performance among adolescents

Variable	Male		Female		t	Sig
Academic	M	SD	M	SD		
Performance	23.40	6.387	23.13	5.113	.392	.695

An independent-sample t-test was conducted to determine the difference in the level of Academic performance and gender difference among students. For academic performance, the mean value for males is 23.40 and SD is 6.387 and the mean and SD of females is 23.13 and 5.113 respectively. The t (298) = 0.392 and P = .695. Since the t value is less than 1.96 there is no a specific difference in the level of academic performance and among males and females.

DISCUSSION

The study examined the relationship between Mindfulness, Resilience and Academic performance among college students along with gender differences (males and females). The results showed that there is a relationship between mindfulness and resilience confirming with studies that it has been found that resilience and mindfulness share related processes at the conceptual level. Several research indicates that, in addition to mindful awareness, good self- and emotion-regulation, self-compassion, and self-confidence influence the resilience

process., resilience and academic performance and no relationship with academic performance and mindfulness (Sunbul & Guneri, 2019).

But the result showed that mindfulness and academic performance does not have a relationship. Even though many studies have shown that mindfulness education improves academic achievement by assisting students including those with learning disabilities in focusing, organising their time better, making plans ahead of time, performing better on tests, and developing critical thinking skills. The benefits of mindfulness in education have been demonstrated by research in a variety of age groups and grade levels, including graduate and professional degree programs, undergraduate studies, middle school, high school, and primary school (Leland, 2015)

Mindfulness education appears to have a positive impact on academic performance by helping students even those with learning disabilities – focus, be more organised, plan ahead, perform better on exams, and think critically. Research on mindfulness in education shows its usefulness at all ages and grade levels, from elementary school to middle school to high school to undergraduate studies to graduate and professional degree programs.

And the results showed that resilience and academic performance has a relationship conforming to the studies because resilience and university students' academic achievement may be correlated in a reciprocal way. As such, providing students with resilience and engagement training from the time they enroll in college may initiate a significant process that will ultimately lead to better academic performance in upcoming courses and a shorter time to graduate from college (Ayala & Manzano, 2018).

Very little study has also been done to determine whether or not men and women report varying or equivalent degrees of mindfulness. Gender differences in mindfulness are not identified in the majority of the research that are currently available. However, the findings of a very small number of earlier studies indicate that women exhibit greater levels of mindfulness than men but the results of this study showed that there is no difference in mindfulness among both the genders (Tasneem & Panwar, 2019).

The results showed that there is no difference in resilience among gender; it could be because of personality factors such as self-efficacy, optimism, self-esteem, openness, extroversion, and intelligibility; they also include internal locus of control. In addition to these qualities—intellectual functioning, cognitive flexibility, social connection, emotion control abilities, and positive emotions can contribute to psychological resilience (Gok & Yilmaz, 2021). And in academic performance which contradicts that in comparison to men, women performed noticeably better academically. The disparities in the ways that men and women employ their skills and talents, as well as their level of dedication to achieving academic success, are factors contributing to this outcome. he finding that compared to their male students, female students do better and express more happiness with their academic lives (Balkıs & Duru, 2017).

However, the results can add to the existing knowledge about the relationship between these variables which can help in further understanding of these variables and also understand other factors that can affect and improve the general well-being of students. Research demonstrates the role resilience plays in mental health. While students bear the responsibility of enhancing their resilience and engagement levels, universities can also play a role in this regard by offering targeted programs that teach students how to be creative in

their problem-solving, how to adapt to change, how to communicate assertively, how to relax, how to gain a better understanding of their strengths and weaknesses, and how to develop coping mechanisms to face various situations bravely and optimistically. Programs should be created to teach students how to offer and receive constructive criticism, how to be patient and tolerant, how to learn from mistakes, and how to become more self-assured.

CONCLUSION

Like any other study this study also has its own limitations. Since our sample size is small and it cannot be generalised as it is the college student population. A study with more sample size can give us more accurate and reliable results. And though the study wanted to study the Indian college population, the study had its limitation in the restriction of place and time so the data collection was restricted to only the Southern parts of India (Bangalore, Kerala and Tamilnadu). The purpose of this study is to bring more awareness about the mental health of every student and how individual differences can exist. Understanding that students also go through a lot of stress and face other issues so bringing in interventions aimed at improving students' academic self-efficacy and mindfulness may help to build resilience. Improving a student's general wellbeing will ultimately help the institution's overall output.

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