

# Predictors of Academic Resilience and Its Relationship to Academic Achievement among Secondary School Students in Kiambu County, Kenya

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## Abstract

The fundamental aim of this study was to investigate the predictors of academic resilience and its relationship to academic achievement among secondary school students in Kiambu County. The study was designed to explore the protective factors, both external and internal, that could predict resilience among the students in order to survive academic challenges and in turn lead to high academic achievement. This study investigated the interplay between external and internal protective factors in predicting academic resilience among secondary school students in Kiambu County. It further sought to establish if there is any relationship between academic resilience and academic achievement. The significance of demographic variables such as age and gender were also investigated. This is in view of the fact that age and gender have been frequently confirmed as correlates of resilience, assuming a protective role. Academic resilience was examined within the context of the resilience theory, the health realization theory and Bronfenbrenner's ecological framework which address the multi-level interactions that make up resilience. The study adopted a descriptive correlational research design. The accessible population was from three secondary schools in Kiambu County. A sample size of 390 students was determined using the Yamane formula. Data was collected using a demographic form, school performance records, and the California Healthy Kids Survey-module B which was used to measure academic resilience. The reliability of the research instrument was determined using the cronbach alpha coefficient. The pilot study and peer review helped to ascertain the instrument's validity. The main data analysis techniques were Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient and regression analysis. Findings revealed that all the domains related to external protective factors were positively and significantly correlated to academic resilience. The highest relationship was observed between high expectations and external protective factors ( $r(388) = .88, p < .01$ ). All the three sub-scales of internal protective factors were found to be positively correlated to academic resilience. The highest correlation was found between sense of meaning and purpose and academic resilience ( $r(388) = .93, p < .01$ ). In addition, a significant and positive relationship was observed between the external and internal protective factors as predictors of academic resilience. Further analysis revealed that the internal protective factors had the highest positive and significant predictive value on academic resilience ( $\beta = .42, p < .05$ ) as compared to external protective factors ( $\beta = .29, p < .05$ ). Pearson Moment Correlation Coefficient depicted a positive and significant relationship between academic resilience and academic achievement ( $r(388) = .68, p < .05$ ). The findings also revealed significant differences in academic resilience given different age categories. The results indicated significant gender differences in mean academic resilience scores ( $t = 1.97, df = 388, p = .05$ ). The difference was in favour of girls. In view of the positive transactional effects of the external and internal protective factors in predicting academic resilience, this study recommended that teachers, parents and all concerned stakeholders should create protective environments that empower students to optimize their potential. In order to increase academic success of students, the study further recommended that they should adopt an education paradigm that desists from focusing on difficulties and problems to one that focuses on strengths and success.

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