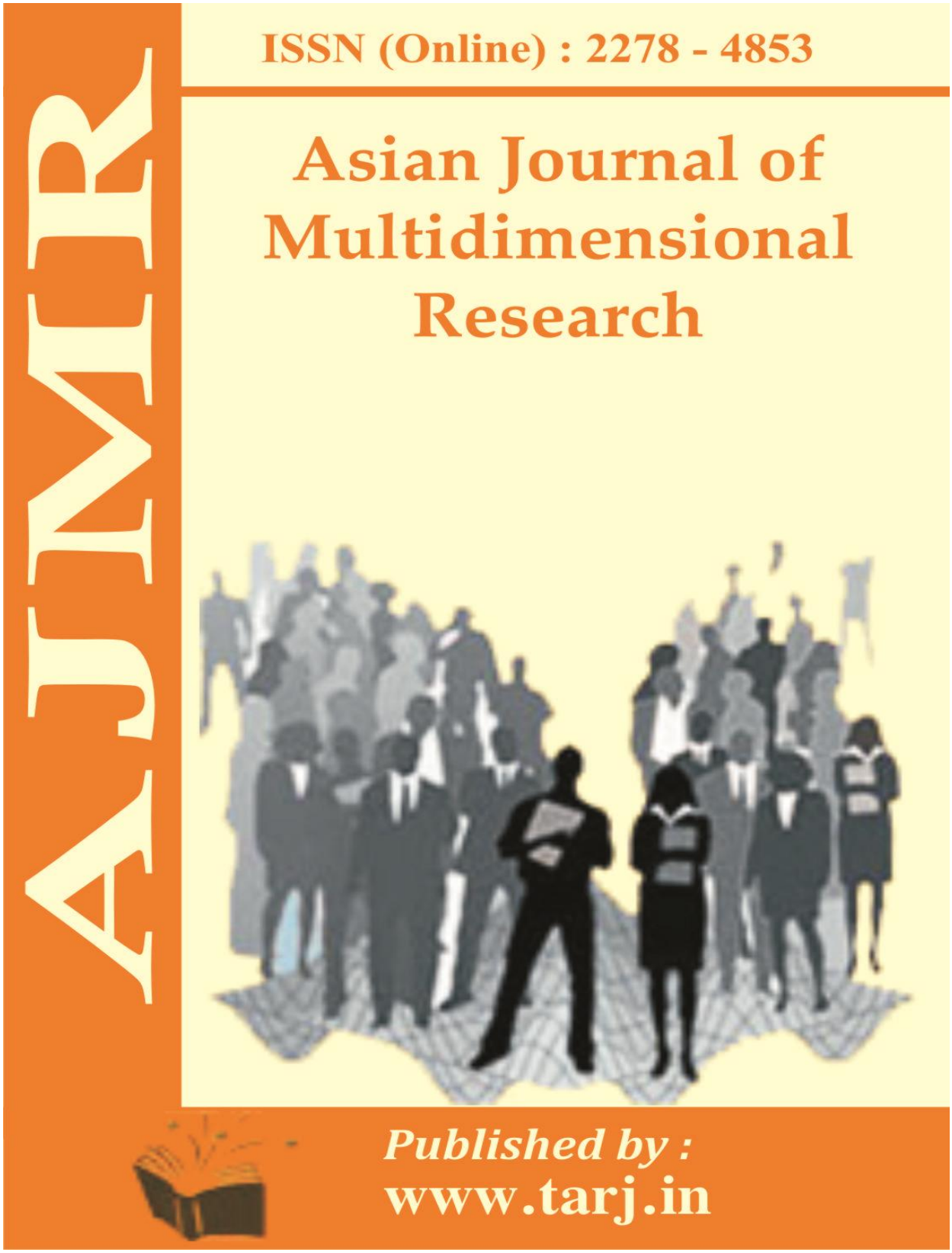
AJMR
ISSN (Online) : 2278 - 4853
Asian Journal of Multidimensional Research
Published by :
www.tarj.in

**AJMR** ISSN (online) : 2278-4853

Editor-in-Chief : Dr. Esha Jain

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Impact Factor | : | SJIF 2022= 8.179 |
| Frequency | : | Monthly |
| Country | : | India |
| Language | : | English |
| Start Year | : | 2012 |

Published by : www.tarj.in

Indexed/ Listed at : Ulrich's Periodicals Directory, ProQuest, U.S.A.

E-mail id: tarjjournals@gmail.com

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Asian Journal of Multidimensional Research
ISSN: 2278-4853 Vol. 15, Issue 8, August 2026 SJIF 2022 = 8.179
A peer reviewed journal

# TANGIBLE AND INTANGIBLE CULTURE OF KHATRI COMMUNITY OF CHAMBA DISTRICT OF HIMACHAL PRADESH: A CULTURAL STUDY

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**DOI: 10.5958/2278-4853.2026.00032.7**

## ABSTRACT

*Culture is a way of life which includes dialect, beliefs, traditions, practices, custom, dress, artefacts, and literature and so on. Simultaneously, Culture is also present intangible as well as tangible form in a society, group or any community. India is known for its rich cultural diversity ranging from North to South and East to West direction. Each and every region and part of India has diverse and unique culture which enriched its glorious past. Likewise, Himachal Pradesh is one of the state of India which is known for its unique culture which includes various communities. The state embedded unique and distinct kind of enriched tribal culture of Gaddis, Pangwalas, Kinnauris and so on. But, after the partition of British India, many other communities from Pakistan Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (POJK) and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province of Pakistan are also resettled in various districts of Himachal Pradesh like Kangra, Shimla, Mandi, Chamba etc. Out of those various communities, the Khatri community is one of them which came from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province and resettled in Chamba district which is followed by Shimla district. The Khatri community of Chamba has its unique and vibrant culture which added the colour in the enrich culture of Himachal Pradesh. Therefore, the present study is an to highlights the intangible and tangible culture of Khatri community of Chamba district of Himachal Pradesh.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Chamba District, Culture, Himachal Pradesh, Intangible, Khatri Community, Tangible.*

## INTRODUCTION

The word ‘culture’ refers as the ‘ways of life’ of the people or of groups within a society. This way of life is expressed in the shared language as well as the norms, practices, and values of the community. Dresses, birth, marriage and death rituals, fairs and festivals, eating and cooking customs, religious rituals, and a lot of other things are all examples of it (Rawat, 2013).

On the other hand, E.B. Taylor defined “culture is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities acquired by man as a member of a society” (Rawat, 2013). According to the ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) *Declaration on Cultural Heritage* in 2002 “Culture” is the total sum of the unique spiritual, intellectual, emotional, and material characteristics that define a community or social

group. It encompasses human lifestyles, value systems, creativity, knowledge systems, customs, beliefs, and the arts and literature (Taylor, 2013).

After World War II, UNESCO has supported a number of world heritage campaigns, beginning with tangible heritage (both immovable and movable), progressing to natural heritage and in later years, an intangible heritage. Although there are three different heritage lists, there is growing recognition of the arbitrary nature of the categories and their interconnectedness. Tangible heritage is described as a "monument, group of buildings, or site of historical, aesthetic, archaeological, scientific, ethnological, or anthropological significance" (Krishenblatt- Gimblett, 2006). But over the period of time, it is realised that intangible culture heritage is less explored than tangible culture heritage and in few past decades the intangible culture is also considered important for the preservation of a cultural heritage.

Cultural heritage encompasses more than just monuments and collections of artifacts. It additionally involves traditions or living expressions inherited from our forefathers and passed down to our descendants, such as oral traditions, performing arts, social practices, rituals, festive events, knowledge and practices about nature and the universe, and the ability to create traditional crafts. Understanding diverse communities' intangible cultural legacy facilitates intercultural discussion and fosters mutual respect for alternative ways of living (Ministry of Culture, 2024).

The 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage describes it more broadly as the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, and skills that communities, groups, and, in some cases, individuals recognize as a component of their cultural inheritance. It is passed down from one generation to other. It is continually recreated by groups and societies in reaction to their history, environment, and interactions with nature. Provide a feeling of continuity and identity to groups and communities and promotes tolerance for human creativity and cultural diversity (UNESCO, 2003). The live expressions and customs that communities, organizations, and individuals inherit from their ancestors and transmit to their offspring make up intangible cultural heritage. This legacy is especially fragile since it is continuously recreated and gives its bearers a sense of continuity and identity. In order to create a feeling of place where the tangible and intangible come together, identity is essential (Taylor, 2013). In India, various communities preserve their tangible as well as intangible cultural heritages in terms of their traditional dresses, jwellery, food, language, folk songs, dances, kinship and so on to preserve their distinct and unique identity and the Khatri Community of Chamba is no exception in this case.

**The History of Khatri Community of Chamba District of Himachal Pradesh**

The Khatri community has prospered, in several states, including Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Delhi, Maharashtra, and Himachal Pradesh. They possess qualities of bravery, tenacity, and cultural diversity. It reflects the community's rich history and enduring influence on the fabric of Indian culture. Additionally, the Khatris have left their imprint throughout Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iran, demonstrating their widespread influence and presence. stories of their courage, resiliency and cultural diversity are woven throughout the history of the Khatris. They have made significant contributions throughout history and occupy a prominent position in Indian society. Khatris' eminent ancestry is highlighted by their connections to well-known lineages like *Soorya Vanshi*, *Chandra Vansh*, and *Agni Vansh* (https://historyofkhatris.com/).

A well-known merchant group dispersed across multiple regions i.e., the Khatris. They are Punjabi immigrants who have come to the states at different times. The majority of those who arrived during the partition in 1947 are now considered as *Refugees* (Sharma, & Sankhyan, 1996).

Along with many other communities, the Khatri community made the decision to relocate to India when the partition of the British India was declared. They spent six months living in camps after abandoning their homes, properties, and possessions. However, Pakistan has another plot against them. Firstly, they were compelled to convert to Islam by Pakistan, but the Khatri community resisted. Afterwards, they were witnessed the most horrific massacre in human history when Pakistan attacked them on 22nd January, 1948 and they have lost their loved ones, culture, motherland, and their people. The 22nd January also remembered by the Khatri community as their *Shaheedi Dihada* or *Shaheedi Diwas*. Initially, they were saved and resettled to the Kurukshetra camp in Haryana by the Government of India. After that, the Indian government initiated a nationwide rehabilitation and resettlement program for them. The Khatri community scattered throughout the nation but they selected some certain locations for their resettlement i.e., Punjab, Delhi, Haryana, Uttrakhand and Himachal Pradesh.

In Himachal Pradesh, the main concentration of the Khatri population is resettled in the Chamba district followed by the Shimla district. The Khatri community of Chamba also known as *Parachinaris* which means they came from the Parachinar region that lies in the Kurram valley, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province of Pakistan. They also called themselves '*Kurramwaal'* which means the people who lived in the upper or hilly area of the Kurram Valley. Therefore, the present study highlights the tangible and intangible culture of Khatris of Chamba district of Himachal Pradesh after their displacement from their native place. One respondent said

'*Parachinaryo ke Teen Nishan Gwakha, Mayyu Saa Vrijey aur Ngaan'*

To understand the tangible and intangible cultural heritage of the Khatri Community of Chamba discussed below.

**Finding and Results**

**Tangible Culture of Khatri Community of Chamba District**

Tangible culture heritage consists of materials aspect of the any community or group culture. It includes physical items which can be touch i.e., monuments, buildings, artifacts and many other things.

**Traditional Dresses**: Men of Khatri community of Chamba traditionally wear *Pathani* outfits and a cap which they call *Pagdeeh* in Pashto, which shows their unique and distinct identity. The *Pathani* outfit comprises of three pieces of clothing: a long shirt which they call *Kha*t (Kameez), loose pants i.e., *Partugaah* (Salwaar) which they called *Khat Partugaah* and on top of shirt a basket. Along with it the *Pagdeeh* which consists of *Kula, Turla, and Langaai* and footwear of men they called it *Keede*. Women, on the other hand, wear a *Salwaar Kameez* outfit, also known as *Khat Partugaah*, and a veil called as *Makh Patkhe/Patwala* to conceal their faces. Even, in the Khatri community the women have double veil or *Dohra Ghungat* which is known as *Dwakho Makh Patwala* in Pashto. In modern times, men still wear their *Pathani* outfit on various occasions and keep their distinct identity while wearing those traditional garments. Their traditional dress shows their native roots and it also express in their tangible cultural heritage.

**Deity System:** Traditionally, the Khatri community followed the deity (*Kuldevi*), which means their ancestors have strong faith on deity**.** Many of the members of the Khatri community said that *Hinglaaj Devi, Vaishno Devi, and Kaali Maa* is considered their deity or *Kuldevis*. People who regard Goddess *Vaishno Devi* to be their deity said they have visited the Vaishno Devi temple in Jammu and Kashmir, India on all auspicious occasions even from their native land. Even, after the displacement they claimed that the newly wedded couple seeks blessing from the Goddess *Vaishno Devi.*

**Traditional Jwellery:** The women of the Khatri community fond of silver and gold jwellery and they have distinct kind of jwellery to wore in their native place. Traditionally, the women wore rings which they call *Guttei*, long rings called as *Pattleh*, *Pond ka Haar* means a long necklace of silver/gold coins, *Tilli ka Haar*, earings means *Ghvegoh*, a large nose ring called as *Chargul*, anklets as *Punjebee*, and *Pacche* which wore from the knees to the feet and it was made of silver. The traditional jwellery of females also represents their native tangible cultural heritage.

**Traditional Food:** Various communities in India have different kind of traditional food and the Khatri community of Chamba also has their unique and distinct food. Traditionally, on the occasion of marriage, they prepared *Jhatka* mutton and called it as *Gwakha*, dry mutton cuisine means *Talaunne*, rice means *Vrijeeh*, *Pulao*, Roti means *Tandoori Ngaan/ Naan*, and mutton biryani means *Yakhni*, along with onion salad. However, *on Lohri, Baisakhi, and Diwali*, they made fried potato means *Srrar Lgaan*, Moong ki Khichdi they call it *Mayyu Saar Vrijeeh*, *Kachre*, Masala Khichdi called as *Trkhe Vrijeeh*, curd, papad, *Pude* (*Meethe Pude*), *Khele* (*Roti ki Churi*), and *Jreesh* (made of jaggery and wheat flour). However, they ignored mutton on several special occasions. The native region of Khatri community i.e., *Parachinar* is rich in fruits and dry fruits such as almonds, apricots, cashews, and raisins. The traditional food also represents their native identity as well as their tangible culture. Due to harsh weather conditions in their native place they used *Tandoor* in the kitchens to prepare for their well-known traditional *Tandoori Ngaan* (Naan/Chapattis). The Community used *Tandoor* for food and winter's harsh weather.

**Traditional Beverage Tea/ Chaane Chaa:** The Khatri community of Chamba has their traditional beverage like *Chaane Chaa* / tea which means *Hari Neeli Chaai.* The community is quite fond of their beverages even today they consume their traditional Chai after meals. The preservation of their *Chaane Chaa*/ tea is also considered in their tangible cultural heritage.

**Intangible Culture of Khatri Community of Chamba District**

Intangible Cultural Heritage involves oral stories or histories, living traditions, arts, social traditions and practices which cannot be touched but seen and passed down from one generation to another.

**Language:** The Khatri community was resettled in the Chamba, Himachal Pradesh after being uprooted for almost 70 years from their homeland**.** They speak their unique and native language i.e., *Pashto* although they speak *Chambyali* dialect as well. Following their displacement, they continue to speak *Pashto* in the newly established settlement with their community members, allowing them to retain their native dialect. It shows that community preserves their intangible culture in the form of their native language.

**Folk Songs and Dances:** The Khatri community celebrated their marriages with great delight and gladness, accompanied by various traditional songs. Their folk songs include *Sandre*, *Ghra*, and *Badle* (Tappe) in *Pashto*. *Sandre* is performed by individuals representing the celebration of family members and relatives on auspicious occasions such as marriage, whereas *Ghra* is performed together by people who sing and dance, and *Badle* is performed by two groups in which teasing songs are also performed. The traditional dances of the Khatri community of Chamba are known as *Gurbishta*, *Giddidla*, and *Gaddasha.*

**Birth Rituals:** In Indian culture, birth rituals are regarded as the *Sanskaar* of a baby and are holy events carried out to guarantee the health and welfare of the child. It has been enthusiastically and joyfully celebrated in many places. Similarly, in the Khatri community of Chamba, the birth of a newborn is marked by special customs which demonstrate their unique culture. When a newborn is born in the Khatri community, forty days period is observed which they call '*Potak*' in Pashto. During the '*Potak*' period mother is not allowed to do any household chores. In this period, the other ritual which is also carried out is their *Jepachlweh/ Suraj Dikhana* (Ek Jagah Se Uthana) ritual, which involves showing mother and a newborn sun rays. When the boy is born in the community they celebrated it with preparing '*Gungdi'* their traditional dish which is made up of some grains like yellow lentil '*Moong*', maize '*Makki*', wheat '*Gehun*', kidney beans '*Rajmaah*'.

**Significance of number Seven in Marriage Rituals:** The central ritual of Hindu marriage traditions is *Saptpad* or seven vows. Even, among the Khatris of Chamba, the number seven is also considered highly significant. Numerous rituals in marriage involve repeating seven numbers, for example. In the *Goona Bandan* ritual, seven married women use green thread to stitch a silver coin with the bride's attire or dress. On the bridegroom side, seven married women place a silver coin in the middle of the quilt and stitched it then give a ride to seven young boys. In marital ceremonies, seven is regarded as the auspicious omen. Even in the other rituals of marriage, the seven married women play a major part like in the bathing ritual of the bride and groom. The significance of seven number is an auspicious in their marriage rituals as well as it is considered as one of the important intangible cultural trait.

**Kinship Terminology:** Every society or community has a distinct kind of Kinship terminology to call their kins and the Khatri community of Chamba is no exception to it. The Community has a unique set of kinship terms that differs from the other communities which shows their distinct cultural identity. They called mother as *Moor*, father as *Plor*, sister as *Khor*, brother as *Vror*, father-in-law as *Zkhar*, mother-in-law as *Khwakhi*, daughter-in-law as *Nangoor*, and sister-in-law as *Nandoor*. Husband as *Med*, wife as *Khzaa*, Son as *Udke*, daughter as *Zhilkhe/Lur*, devar and jeth as *Levaar*, Bhabhi as *Vandyara*, devrani as *Yor*, Jeeja as *Vokhee*, Saali as *Vakheena*, new bride as *Noovi*, new husband as *Jnee* and grandmother as *Anyo*.

**Identity:** Prior to partition of British India, the Khatri community lived in North West Frontier Province presently known as Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The majority of Khatri community of Chamba is separated into distinct *Qbilas* and identifies themselves as *Pathan*, whether they are Hindu or Muslim. Additionally, they shared socio-cultural characteristics, such as living in the same region, their way of life and habits were very similar. Traditionally, the term *Pathan* is associated with Muslims and has been related to Islam by numerous historians. But the Khatri community of Chamba identified themselves as *Hindu Pathans* in their native land. Their

identity is one of the most important intangible cultural heritage which make them unique and distinct from the other communities.

**Loya Jirga (Justice Council):** Earlier in each and every culture there are different ways of getting Justice and the Khatri community of Chamba has traditional way of obtaining justice by informal council. The informal Justice council consists of some community elders and intellectual members who resolve conflicts between the community members. The Justice council and they called it *Loya Jirga* which consists of several types of layers, ranging from the smallest to the largest. The disagreement or matter is resolved in the smallest unit i.e., *Ghar* or home. And, if the issue is not resolved in home then it is escalated to a higher customary authority i.e., *Loya Jirga*.

The *Loya Jirga* was the largest and final stage for obtaining justice in an informal manner, and it was regarded as the Supreme Court, meaning that everyone was required to obey the verdict, which was widely acknowledged by all community members. However, only the major conflicts were addressed in the *Loya Jirga*. In the present time, they sought to handle their problem on their own and with the support of their community members who are selecting for resolving the conflict and their approach is to avoid the involvement of police and court in their community matters. It reflects the informal justice council to obtain Justice and it also falls into intangible cultural heritage.

**Death Rituals:** Death rituals are the most important rituals in Hindu traditions because it is believed that by performing these rituals the deceased soul attain the ultimate goal i.e., *Moksha*. The term ‘Antyeshti Sanskaar’ or ‘Antim Sanskaar’ refers to the funeral rites that are performed following a person's passing in Indian society, even the Khatri community of Chamba also perform these rituals. A funeral rites *Chalikhti*, a 40-day period of mourning, is a part of the Khatri Community. In *Chalikhti*, a deceased person's widow is prohibited from leaving the home. Following the death, the family receives their first meal from their *Biradari* (brotherhood) which is also known as *Deg*. Over the next four days, the family receives food from their close relatives. And, before the *Uthala* (Asthi Visarjan) in the Ganga river in *Haridwar*, there is no use of fire in the kitchen of the deceased person's household. The funeral rituals show the intangible culture of the community.

## CONCLUSION

Culture is a way of life that encompasses every aspect of a community or group and it exists in both tangible and intangible forms. Despite being uprooted from their country for almost 70 years, the Khatri community of Chamba maintains their unique identity by preserving both their tangible and intangible cultural heritage in terms of their traditional dress, jwellery, food, language, folk songs, and dances and so on. In the past, tangible culture was valued more highly than intangible culture in international conventions and treaties. However, as time went on, it came to light that intangible culture is just as significant for the preservation of the entire culture heritage..

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Asian Journal of Multidimensional Research
ISSN: 2278-4853 Vol. 15, Issue 8, August 2026 SJIF 2022 = 8.179
A peer reviewed journal

# ASSESSING THE INFLUENCE OF DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES ON ACADEMIC RESILIENCE AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS AND TYPICALLY DEVELOPING STUDENTS IN SAN TAN VALLEY, ARIZONA

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**DOI: 10.5958/2278-4853.2026.00033.9**

## ABSTRACT

*Academic resilience refers to a student's capacity to respond constructively to academic difficulties, setbacks, and stressful educational experiences while continuing to participate in learning and pursue academic goals. The present study examined academic resilience among secondary school students in San Tan Valley, Arizona, with particular attention to selected demographic characteristics. The study included adolescents aged 14 to 18 and considered age, gender, and educational status as the primary demographic variables. Educational status was examined by comparing students with special educational needs and typically developing students. A quantitative descriptive survey design was employed for the investigation. Data were obtained from 162 students enrolled in grades 9 through 12. The sample consisted of 74 students with special educational needs and 88 typically developing students. Academic resilience was assessed using the Academic Resilience Scale developed by Kaur and Singh. The instrument examined five dimensions: Positive Adaptation, Positivity, Self-Reliance, Persistence, and Psychological Support. Statistical analysis was conducted using descriptive statistics, independent-samples t-tests, and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA).*

*The findings indicated that demographic characteristics did not consistently account for differences in academic resilience. Gender was associated with a statistically significant difference in Psychological Support, while educational status was associated with a significant difference in Self-Reliance. In contrast, age did not produce statistically significant differences across the examined dimensions. The findings suggest that academic resilience may be influenced more strongly by students' personal resources and the support available within their educational and social environments than by demographic characteristics alone. The study has implications for inclusive educational practices, school-based support systems, and interventions designed to strengthen students' persistence, confidence, adaptive responses, and psychological support.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Academic resilience, secondary school students, special educational needs, typically developing students, adolescence, inclusive education, demographic variables.*

## INTRODUCTION

Academic achievement is influenced not only by cognitive ability but also by students' responses to academic pressure, setbacks, difficult coursework, and changing educational demands. Students differ in their capacity to remain engaged, adapt to difficulty, seek assistance, and continue working toward academic goals. These responses are central to academic resilience.

Academic resilience is especially relevant during adolescence, when students encounter increasing academic expectations, graduation requirements, career decisions, peer relationships, and demands for greater independence. Students also experience substantial cognitive, emotional, and social development during this period. Consequently, confidence, motivation, coping strategies, persistence, and access to support may shape how adolescents respond to academic adversity.

Students with special educational needs may face additional barriers related to learning, communication, attention, social participation, or access to appropriate instructional support. Accommodations, specialized instruction, assistive technologies, and differentiated approaches may be necessary for meaningful participation. However, the presence of special educational needs does not necessarily imply lower resilience. Supportive relationships, appropriate educational resources, and opportunities for success may strengthen students' ability to manage challenges.

Inclusive education makes it particularly important to examine resilience among students with and without special educational needs within comparable educational contexts. Such comparisons can help distinguish educational status from broader factors that support resilience. Age and gender have also been studied as possible correlates of resilience, although previous findings have been inconsistent. These variables may interact with coping strategies, help-seeking behavior, relationships, developmental changes, and school experiences rather than independently determining resilience.

The present study therefore examines age, gender, and educational status in relation to five dimensions of academic resilience among secondary school students in San Tan Valley, Arizona: Positive Adaptation, Positivity, Self-Reliance, Persistence, and Psychological Support. Examining these dimensions separately permits a more specific assessment of where demographic differences may or may not occur.

### Objectives of the Study

The study was undertaken with the following objectives:

1. To assess the level of academic resilience among secondary school students in San Tan Valley, Arizona.
2. To examine whether academic resilience differs according to gender.
3. To determine whether academic resilience differs across the selected age groups.
4. To compare academic resilience among students with special educational needs and typically developing students.
5. To determine whether selected demographic variables are significantly associated with the different dimensions of academic resilience.

**Hypotheses**

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at the 0.05 level of significance:

**$H_o$1:** There is no statistically significant difference in academic resilience between male and female secondary school students.

**$H_o$2:** There is no statistically significant difference in academic resilience among the selected age groups of secondary school students.

**$H_o$3:** There is no statistically significant difference in academic resilience between students with special educational needs and typically developing students.

**Review of Literature**

Academic resilience is increasingly recognized as an important concept in educational and psychological research because it helps explain how students continue to engage with learning despite academic difficulties. Current perspectives generally view resilience not as a fixed trait, but as a developing process shaped by the interaction between individual strengths and environmental support.

Martin and Marsh (2006) examined students' responses to academic adversity and identified self-belief, persistence, planning, and lower levels of anxiety as important factors in managing academic challenges. Their work highlights the psychological and educational dimensions of academic resilience. Similarly, Waxman, Gray, and Padrón (2003), in their review of educational resilience among students experiencing disadvantage, emphasized classroom engagement, teacher support, positive learning environments, and educational aspirations. These findings suggest that resilience is closely connected to the learning environment in which students function.

Morales (2008) found that self-efficacy, motivation, and supportive teacher relationships were important in understanding academic resilience among students from minority backgrounds. The findings suggest that resilience may develop through the combined influence of personal determination and supportive relationships. Extending this perspective, Ungar (2011) emphasized the social and ecological nature of resilience. According to this view, students' ability to cope with adversity depends not only on their personal coping resources but also on whether supportive relationships and meaningful resources are available within their social, educational, and community environments.

Gender has also been examined as a possible factor in academic resilience. Mwangi et al. (2015) reported gender-related differences among secondary school students; however, findings across studies remain inconsistent. This suggests that gender alone may not explain differences in resilience, which may instead be associated with coping patterns, social support, educational experiences, and other contextual factors.

The **Academic Resilience Scale developed by Kaur and Singh** provides a multidimensional approach to understanding resilience. The scale used in the present study assesses **Positive Adaptation, Positivity, Self-Reliance, Persistence, and Psychological Support**. Considering these dimensions separately allows researchers to identify particular strengths and areas where students may benefit from additional support.

Research involving students experiencing educational difficulties further demonstrates the importance of protective factors. Alva (1991) reported that students facing educational disadvantage could achieve positive academic outcomes when protective resources and supportive relationships were available. This perspective is particularly relevant to students with special educational needs because it shifts attention from limitations alone toward the environmental conditions that can support successful adaptation.

Hartley (2011) also examined resilience in relation to psychological well-being and academic persistence among students with disabilities. The findings highlight the connection between resilience, mental well-being, and continued educational engagement. More broadly, Luthar, Crossman, and Small (2020) described resilience as a developmental process shaped by relationships and environmental conditions. Together, these studies reinforce the importance of supportive teachers, positive school environments, social relationships, and psychological resources in helping students manage adversity.

Overall, the literature indicates that demographic characteristics do not consistently explain differences in academic resilience. Evidence concerning age, gender, and educational status remains mixed, suggesting that resilience is more appropriately understood through the interaction of individual characteristics with social and educational environments. This body of research provides a foundation for comparing students with and without special educational needs within the same educational setting. The present study extends this work by examining secondary school students in **San Tan Valley, Arizona**, with particular attention to the relationship between demographic characteristics and the five dimensions of academic resilience.

**Research Gap & Need for the Study**

Three gaps informed the present investigation. First, findings regarding demographic differences in academic resilience are inconsistent, making it important to determine whether age, gender, or educational status is associated with resilience dimensions. Second, students with special educational needs and typically developing students are not always compared within the same educational context, limiting interpretation of group differences. Third, comparatively limited evidence is available for secondary students in San Tan Valley, Arizona.

Adolescence is an important period for developing academic habits, coping strategies, self-confidence, and educational expectations. Both students with special educational needs and typically developing students may experience academic pressure, although the nature of their challenges can differ. Identifying whether demographic characteristics correspond with resilience differences may help schools determine whether targeted or broadly applicable supports are appropriate.

**Significance of the Study**

The present study is significant because it examines academic resilience among two student populations—students with special educational needs and typically developing students—within the same secondary educational context. This comparative approach may provide a more balanced understanding of resilience among diverse learners.

**For Teachers:** The findings may help teachers recognize that students' responses to academic challenges can differ across dimensions of resilience. Understanding these differences can

support the use of instructional strategies that encourage persistence, self-confidence, positive adaptation, and help-seeking.

**For Special Educators:** The findings may provide useful information for designing individualized supports for students with special educational needs. Resilience-related strengths may be incorporated into educational planning alongside academic and functional goals.

**For School Counselors and Psychologists:** The results may assist in identifying areas related to psychological support, coping, and student confidence that could benefit from targeted interventions.

**For School Administrators:** The study may provide evidence that can inform the development of school-wide approaches to student well-being, inclusive practices, and resilience-building programs.

**For families:** The findings may increase awareness of the importance of supportive relationships and encouragements in helping adolescents respond to academic challenges.

**For Researchers:** The study contributes evidence from a specific secondary school context in Arizona and may provide a foundation for future research involving larger samples, additional demographic variables, longitudinal designs, and intervention studies.

Overall, the study emphasizes the importance of understanding academic resilience as a multidimensional process. Examining demographic variables alongside educational and psychological factors may provide a more complete picture of how students respond to academic adversity.

## Methodology

### Research Design

The study adopted a quantitative descriptive survey design to examine the relationship between selected demographic characteristics and academic resilience among secondary school students. A quantitative approach was appropriate because the study involved the systematic collection of numerical data and the application of statistical procedures to examine differences among student groups. The descriptive component allowed the researcher to investigate naturally occurring characteristics of the participants without introducing an experimental intervention or manipulating the independent variables.

### Participants

The sample consisted of 162 students enrolled in grades 9 through 12 in San Tan Valley, Arizona. Participants were between 14 and 18 years of age and included both male and female students. Of the total sample, 74 students (45.7%) were identified as having special educational needs, while 88 students (54.3%) were typically developing students.

With respect to gender, 86 participants (53.1%) were male and 76 participants (46.9%) were female. The age distribution was as follows: 22 students (13.6%) were in the 14–15-year group, 38 students (23.5%) were in the 15–16-year group, 38 students (23.5%) were in the 16–17-year group, and 64 students (39.5%) were in the 17–18-year group. The distribution provided

representation across the selected demographic categories and permitted comparisons among the groups included in the study.

**Sampling Technique**

Purposive sampling was used to select the participants. This approach was appropriate because the study required the inclusion of students from two specific educational categories: students with special educational needs and typically developing students. Participants were selected according to the inclusion criteria established for the research.

**Research Instrument**

Academic resilience was assessed using the Academic Resilience Scale developed by Dr. Karanbir Kaur and Dr. Gurmit Singh. The instrument examines academic resilience through five dimensions: Positive Adaptation, Positivity, Self-Reliance, Persistence, Psychological Support.

The multidimensional structure of the instrument enabled the researcher to examine specific aspects of students' resilience rather than treating resilience as a single undifferentiated characteristic.

**Data Collection Procedure**

Prior approval was obtained from the participating school administration before the commencement of data collection. The students were provided with information regarding the purpose of the research and their participation was voluntary. Appropriate measures were taken to maintain the privacy and confidentiality of the participants.

Each participant completed the Academic Resilience Scale together with a demographic information form. The demographic form collected information concerning age, gender, and educational status. The completed responses were subsequently organized for statistical analysis.

**Statistical Analysis**

The collected data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Frequencies and percentages were calculated to describe the demographic characteristics of the participants. Means and standard deviations were used to summarize scores on the dimensions of academic resilience. Independent-samples t-tests were used to examine differences between two groups, including comparisons based on gender and educational status. One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to examine differences in academic resilience across the selected age groups. Statistical decisions were based on a significance level of 0.05.

**Results**

**Demographic Profile of the Participants**

A total of 162 secondary school students participated in the study. The gender distribution showed that 86 participants (53.1%) were male and 76 (46.9%) were female. With regard to educational status, 74 participants (45.7%) were students with special educational needs and 88 (54.3%) were typically developing students.

The largest age group was the 17–18-year category, which represented 39.5% of the sample. Students aged 15–16 and 16–17 years each represented 23.5%, while students aged 14–15 years represented 13.6% of the participants.

This presents the statistical outputs contained in the supplied SPSS tables. Values are reproduced from the source output; interpretations are based on the reported means, standard deviations, t-tests and Pearson correlations. Statistical significance is evaluated at α = .05.Abbreviations used in the source output: PA, Positivity, SR, Persistence, and PS. The source labels are retained rather than redefining the constructs.

**Comparison by special-education status**

The sample comprised 162 participants: 74 in the special-education group and 88 in the non-special-education group.

| Variable | Group | N | Mean | SD | | p |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| PA | Yes | 74 | 3.203 | 0.906 | 1.165 | 0.246 |
| PA | No | 88 | 3.375 | 0.963 | | |
| Positivity | Yes | 74 | 3.311 | 0.595 | 0.977 | 0.330 |
| Positivity | No | 88 | 3.409 | 0.672 | | |
| SR | Yes | 74 | 3.176 | 0.558 | 0.848 | 0.398 |
| SR | No | 88 | 3.261 | 0.703 | | |
| Persistence | Yes | 74 | 3.459 | 0.780 | 0.930 | 0.354 |
| Persistence | No | 88 | 3.568 | 0.708 | | |
| PS | Yes | 74 | 2.905 | 0.762 | 1.476 | 0.142 |
| PS | No | 88 | 3.091 | 0.825 | | |

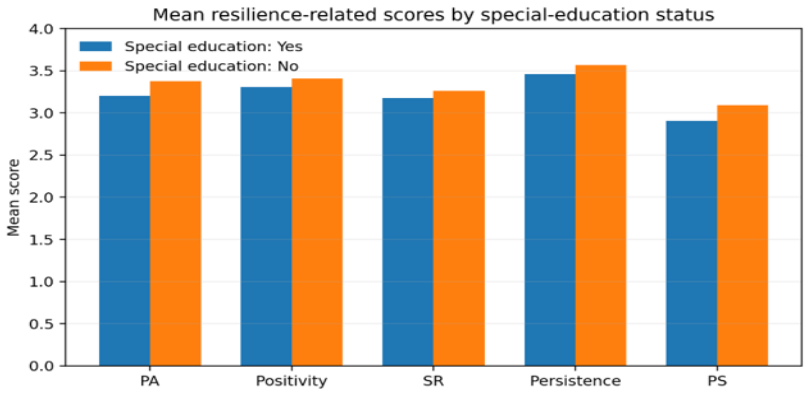


Table 1 Descriptive statistics and independent-samples t-tests by special-education status.

**Interpretation**

Participants in the non-special-education group had slightly higher mean scores than the special-education group on all five variables: PA (3.375 vs. 3.203), Positivity (3.409 vs. 3.311), SR (3.261 vs. 3.176), Persistence (3.568 vs. 3.460), and PS (3.091 vs. 2.905). However, none of these mean differences was statistically significant at the .05 level: PA, t(160) = -1.165, p = .246; Positivity, t(160) = -0.977, p = .330; SR, t(160) = -0.848, p = .398; Persistence, t(160) = -0.930, p = .354; and PS, t(160) = -1.476, p = .142. Therefore, the results do not provide sufficient evidence of a difference between the two special-education-status groups on these outcomes.

**Correlation Analysis**

| Variable | Age | Gender | Special Education/ or not | PA | Positivity | SR | Persistenc | PS |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Age | .000 | 0.040 | ).205** | ).002 | 0.067 | ).162* | ).049 | ).137 |
| Gender | 0.040 | .000 | ).007 | ).047 | 0.026 | 0.022 | 0.027 | ).209** |
| Special Education or not | ).205** | ).007 | .000 | ).092 | ).077 | ).067 | ).073 | ).116 |
| PA | ).002 | ).047 | ).092 | .000 | ).078 | ).541** | ).608** | ).130 |
| Positivity | 0.067 | 0.026 | ).077 | ).078 | .000 | ).302** | ).084 | ).008 |
| SR | ).162* | 0.022 | ).067 | ).541** | ).302** | .000 | ).593** | ).325** |
| Persistenc | ).049 | 0.027 | ).073 | ).608** | ).084 | ).593** | .000 | ).372** |
| PS | ).137 | ).209** | ).116 | ).130 | ).008 | ).325** | ).372** | .000 |

Table 2. Pearson correlation matrix (N = 162). *p < .05; **p < .01, two-tailed.

**Interpretation**

The strongest positive association was between PA and Persistence (r = .608, p < .001), followed by SR and Persistence (r = .593, p < .001) and PA and SR (r = .541, p < .001). Moderate positive relationships were also observed between SR and PS (r = .325, p < .001), Positivity and SR (r = .302, p < .001), and Persistence and PS (r = .372, p < .001). Gender was positively associated with PS (r = .209, p = .008).

Age showed a small positive association with special-education status (r = .205, p = .009) and a small positive association with SR (r = .162, p = .040). The remaining reported correlations were not statistically significant at the .05 level. Correlation indicates association rather than causation; therefore, these findings should not be interpreted as evidence that one variable causes another.

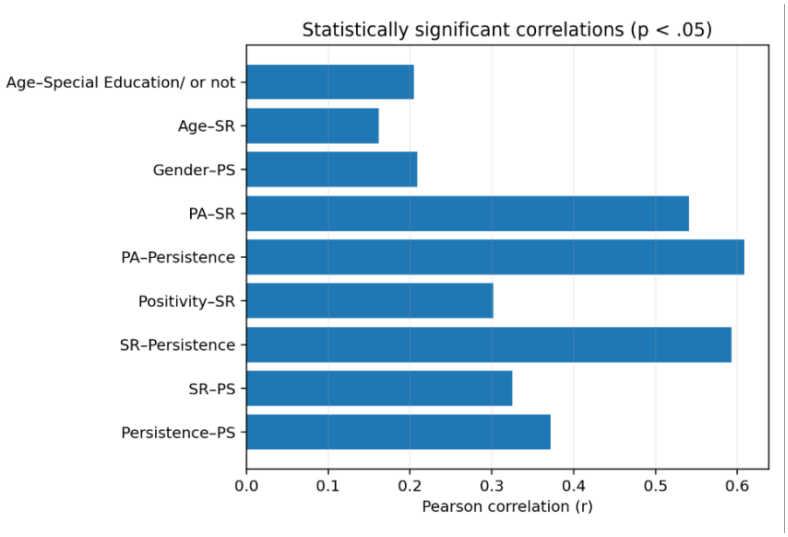


Figure 2. Statistically significant Pearson correlations reported in the source output.

**Comparison by age group**

The age-group comparison reported in the supplied output includes 60 participants: 22 aged 14–15 years and 38 aged 15–16 years.

| Variable | Group | N | Mean | SD | | p |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| PA | 14–15 years | 22 | 3.364 | .848 | .677 | .501 |
| PA | 15–16 years | 38 | 3.184 | .062 | | |
| Positivity | 14–15 years | 22 | 3.364 | .492 | 0.854 | .396 |
| Positivity | 15–16 years | 38 | 3.500 | .647 | | |
| SR | 14–15 years | 22 | 3.046 | .575 | 0.196 | .846 |
| SR | 15–16 years | 38 | 3.079 | .673 | | |
| Persistence | 14–15 years | 22 | 3.546 | .739 | .946 | .348 |
| Persistence | 15–16 years | 38 | 3.368 | .675 | | |
| PS | 14–15 years | 22 | 2.818 | .664 | 0.116 | .908 |
| PS | 15–16 years | 38 | 2.842 | .823 | | |

Table 3. Descriptive statistics and independent-samples t-tests by age group.

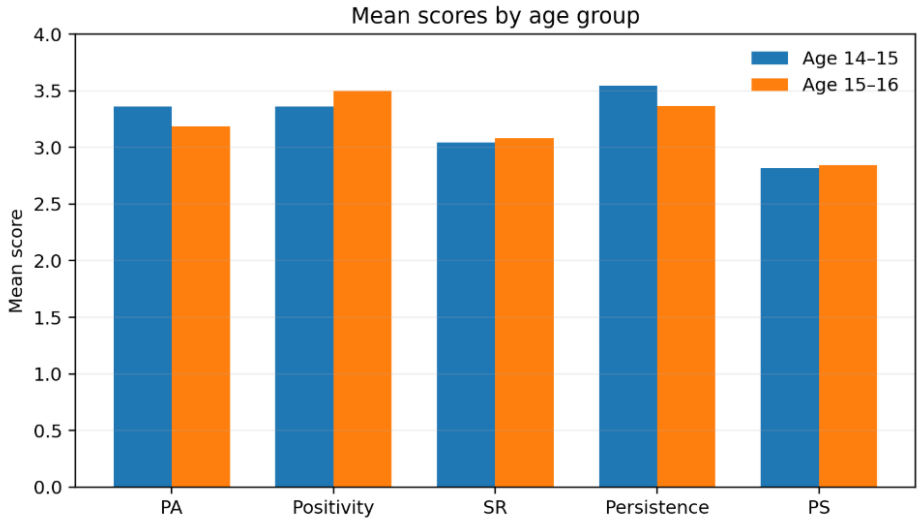


Figure 3. Mean scores by age group.

**Interpretation**

The 15–16-year group scored slightly lower than the 14–15-year group on PA (3.184 vs. 3.364) and Persistence (3.368 vs. 3.545), while it scored higher on Positivity (3.500 vs. 3.364), SR (3.079 vs. 3.045), and PS (2.842 vs. 2.818). None of the observed differences was statistically significant: PA, t(58) = .677, p = .501; Positivity, t(58) = -.854, p = .396; SR, t(58) = -.196, p = .846; Persistence, t(58) = .946, p = .348; and PS, t(58) = -.116, p = .908. Thus, within this reported age-group comparison, there is no statistically significant evidence that the two age groups differ on the five measured outcomes.

**Summary of findings**

| Analysis | Main result | Statistical decision | Thesis interpretation |
|---|---|---|---|

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Special-education status | All five non-special-education means were higher | All p > .05; not significant | No significant group differences were demonstrated. |
| Correlations | PA–Persistence r=.608; SR–Persistence r=.593; PA–SR r=.541 | Significant at p<.001 | Several resilience-related variables showed moderate-to-strong positive associations. |
| Age group | Mean differences were small and mixed in direction | All p > .05; not significant | No significant age-group differences were demonstrated in the reported comparison. |

Table 4. Concise statistical summary for use in the Results chapter.

**Results Narrative**

Independent-samples t-tests were conducted to examine differences in PA, Positivity, SR, Persistence and PS across special-education status. Although the non-special-education group showed higher mean scores on all five variables, none of the differences reached statistical significance ($p > .05$). Pearson correlation analysis revealed significant positive associations among several study variables. PA was positively correlated with SR ($r = .541$, $p < .001$) and Persistence ($r = .608$, $p < .001$), while SR was positively correlated with Positivity ($r = .302$, $p < .001$), Persistence ($r = .593$, $p < .001$), and PS ($r = .325$, $p < .001$). Persistence was also positively correlated with PS ($r = .372$, $p < .001$). In addition, Gender was significantly associated with PS ($r = .209$, $p = .008$), and Age was significantly associated with special-education status ($r = .205$, $p = .009$) and SR ($r = .162$, $p = .040$). In the reported age-group comparison, none of the five outcomes differed significantly between participants aged 14–15 years and those aged 15–16 years (all $p > .05$).

Age was not significantly associated with any of the five resilience dimensions. The reported correlations were small, with significance values above the 0.05 criterion.

These results generally indicate that the demographic variables included in the study were not strongly related to academic resilience. Where statistically significant associations were identified, they were limited to particular dimensions rather than representing a broad influence across the entire resilience construct.

**DISCUSSION**

The findings indicate that demographic variables had a limited and dimension-specific relationship with academic resilience. Educational status did not produce statistically significant differences across the five resilience dimensions, even though the typically developing group had somewhat higher means throughout. This pattern suggests that students with special educational needs can demonstrate resilience levels broadly comparable to their typically developing peers, particularly when they participate in educational environments that provide appropriate support.

The significant association between gender and Psychological Support should be interpreted cautiously. It concerns one resilience dimension rather than academic resilience as a whole.

Differences may reflect how students perceive, access, or use available psychological and social support. The result therefore warrants further investigation rather than a conclusion that gender determines resilience.

Age showed no statistically significant differences in the reported age-group comparison. Although some mean scores varied across age groups, these differences were not large enough to meet the .05 significance criterion. This suggests that, within the represented adolescent age range, age alone may not be a strong determinant of academic resilience.

The significant correlations among Positive Adaptation, Self-Reliance, and Persistence are particularly relevant. Students who report stronger adaptive responses may also report greater independence and persistence. Likewise, the relationships between Self-Reliance, Positivity, Persistence, and Psychological Support suggest that resilience dimensions may operate as an interconnected system rather than as isolated characteristics. These associations should not be interpreted causally.

From an inclusive-education perspective, the broadly similar resilience patterns across educational groups are important. They caution against assuming that special educational needs necessarily correspond to lower resilience. Instead, schools may benefit from focusing on strengths, opportunities for success, meaningful participation, appropriate accommodations, supportive relationships, and development of independence.

## CONCLUSION

The study examined the relationship between selected demographic variables and academic resilience among 162 secondary school students in San Tan Valley, Arizona. Academic resilience was assessed across Positive Adaptation, Positivity, Self-Reliance, Persistence, and Psychological Support. Overall, age, gender, and educational status showed limited relationships with resilience. Students with special educational needs and typically developing students did not differ significantly across the five dimensions, despite higher mean scores for the typically developing group. Gender was associated with Psychological Support, while age showed a small association with Self-Reliance. The reported age-group comparison revealed no significant differences.

The findings support a multidimensional view of academic resilience. Rather than relying on demographic characteristics alone, educators and schools should consider personal resources, relationships, school climate, and opportunities for success, and access to support. Inclusive resilience-building approaches may therefore benefit students across educational groups.

### Educational Implications

The findings have several implications for schools and educational professionals.

Schools can integrate resilience development into academic and student-support programs through goal setting, problem solving, reflection, emotional regulation, and constructive responses to mistakes. Teachers can create opportunities for students to experience success, make appropriate choices, solve problems, and recognize progress. Differentiated instruction and accommodations can support meaningful participation for students with special educational needs. Counselors and support personnel may give particular attention to psychological and emotional support. Collaboration among teachers, families, counselors, and other professionals can provide students with consistent assistance when academic or personal challenges arise.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

Three gaps informed the present investigation. First, findings regarding demographic differences in academic resilience are inconsistent, making it important to determine whether age, gender, or educational status is associated with resilience dimensions. Second, students with special educational needs and typically developing students are not always compared within the same educational context, limiting interpretation of group differences. Third, comparatively limited evidence is available for secondary students in San Tan Valley, Arizona.

Adolescence is an important period for developing academic habits, coping strategies, self-confidence, and educational expectations. Both students with special educational needs and typically developing students may experience academic pressure, although the nature of their challenges can differ. Identifying whether demographic characteristics correspond with resilience differences may help schools determine whether targeted or broadly applicable supports are appropriate.

**Acknowledgements**

I express my sincere appreciation to my research guide, **Dr. Subhashini Akurathi, Associate Professor, Department of Psychology**, for her guidance, encouragement, and academic support throughout the research process.

My sincere thanks are extended to all students who participated voluntarily in the study. Their willingness to contribute their time and responses made this research possible.

Finally, I gratefully acknowledge the encouragement and support provided by my family, friends, colleagues, and mentors throughout the development and completion of this research.

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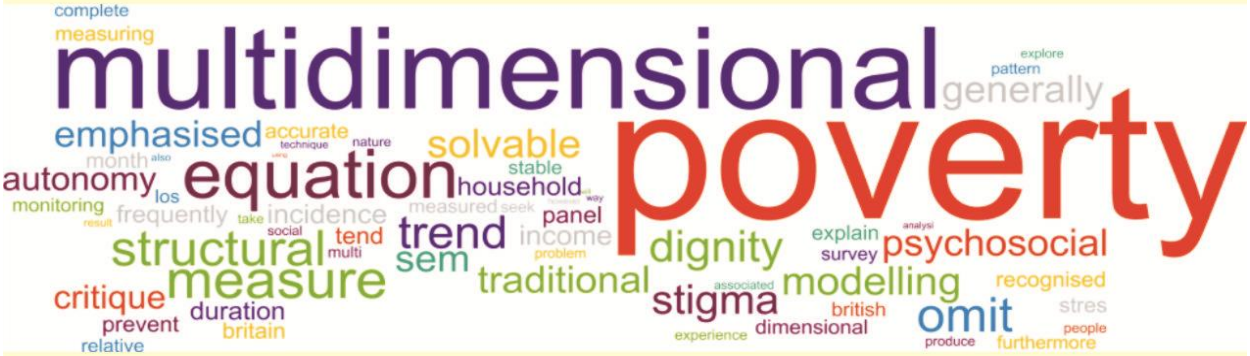


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