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Academic self-efficacy and social support as predictors of academic resilience among first-year Physical Education and exercise and Sports Science students

La autoeficacia académica y el apoyo social como predictores de la resiliencia académica en estudiantes de primer año de Educación Física y Ciencias del Ejercicio y del Deporte

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Abstract

Academic resilience plays an important role in helping university students cope with academic challenges, particularly during the transition to higher education. This study examined academic self-efficacy and perceived social support as predictors of academic resilience among first-year Physical Education and Exercise and Sports Science students enrolled in a public higher education institution in the southern Philippines. A quantitative cross-sectional correlational design was employed with 100 first-year students selected through complete enumeration sampling. Data were collected using standardized instruments, namely the Academic Resilience Scale (ARS-30), the College Academic Self-Efficacy Scale (CASES), and the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS). Descriptive statistics, Pearson product-moment correlation, and multiple linear regression analyses were conducted using JASP statistical software. The findings revealed that students demonstrated high levels of academic resilience, academic self-efficacy, and perceived social support. Correlation analyses showed significant positive relationships between academic self-efficacy and academic resilience, as well as between perceived social support and academic resilience. Regression analysis further revealed that both academic self-efficacy and perceived social support significantly predicted academic resilience, with academic self-efficacy emerging as the stronger predictor. These findings suggest that strengthening students' confidence in their academic capabilities and promoting supportive learning environments may enhance their resilience and ability to cope with the demands of higher education.

Keywords: academic resilience; academic self-efficacy; perceived social support; first-year university students; physical education; exercise and sports science

Resumen

La resiliencia académica desempeña un papel importante en la capacidad de los estudiantes universitarios para afrontar los desafíos académicos, especialmente durante la transición a la educación superior. Este estudio examinó la autoeficacia académica y el apoyo social percibido como predictores de la resiliencia académica entre estudiantes de primer año de Educación Física y Ciencias del Ejercicio y del Deporte matriculados en una institución pública de educación superior en el sur de Filipinas. Se utilizó un diseño de investigación cuantitativo correlacional de corte transversal con una muestra de 100 estudiantes de primer año seleccionados mediante muestreo por enumeración completa. Los datos se recopilaron utilizando instrumentos estandarizados, incluyendo la Escala de Resiliencia Académica (ARS-30), la Escala de Autoeficacia Académica Universitaria (CASES) y la Escala Multidimensional de Apoyo Social Percibido (MSPSS). Se aplicaron estadísticas descriptivas, correlación de Pearson y análisis de regresión lineal múltiple utilizando el software estadístico JASP. Los resultados indicaron que los estudiantes presentaron niveles altos de resiliencia académica, autoeficacia académica y apoyo social percibido. El análisis de correlación mostró relaciones positivas significativas entre la autoeficacia académica y la resiliencia académica, así como entre el apoyo social percibido y la resiliencia académica. Además, el análisis de regresión reveló que tanto la autoeficacia académica como el apoyo social percibido predicen significativamente la resiliencia académica, siendo la autoeficacia académica el predictor más fuerte. Estos hallazgos sugieren que fortalecer la confianza

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de los estudiantes en sus capacidades académicas y promover entornos de aprendizaje con apoyo social pueden mejorar su resiliencia y su capacidad para afrontar los desafíos académicos en la educación superior.

Palabras clave: resiliencia académica; autoeficacia académica; apoyo social percibido; estudiantes universitarios de primer año; educación física; ciencias del ejercicio y del deporte

Introduction

Academic resilience in higher education describes the ability of students to adapt, endure challenges, and still maintain academic performance, even when faced with stress, challenges, or critical changes. The ability to withstand challenges that most students experience in their first year of university is particularly evident in the first year of university in programs in physical education (PE) and exercise and sports science. In these applied fields, resilience is not just a “nice trait.” Rather, it serves as a valuable academic resource to protect students and keep them engaged as they navigate the complexities of their roles, responsibilities, and academic identities, as well as the high-volume, high-demand coursework and performance prescriptions and high school-to-university identity transitions. Also, resilience in this demographic, while being sporty or active may play a role, or is a default phenomenon, is more a crafted phenomenon involving a complex range of cognitive-behavior strategies and adequate learning environment supportive systems (Tudor et al, 2020). This concern is particularly prominent in disruptive periods, and PE students have reported adaptations to changed learning environments and increased workload pressure and, ultimately, the supportive systems of wellbeing and, consequently, resilience, coping systems (Brien et al, 2022). Studies have shown that resilient students demonstrate higher persistence and stronger reluctance to abandon their studies, indicating that there is a strong relationship between resilience and dropout risk (López-Aguilar et al., 2023). Overall, global research shows that academic resilience in university students is usually found to be at a moderate level, and this level varies considerably from one country to another, demonstrating that the resilience of students is uneven, and that the students' academic resilience may require the support of a specific discipline or context. Resilience booster modules have been



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found to significantly improve resilience levels, particularly when implemented at the beginning of the first year (Elnaem et al., 2024; Heath & Richardson, 2023).

The ability of university students across various international contexts to demonstrate academic resilience has been studied as an important ability to cope with the academic and psychosocial challenges of higher education. Research done in Malaysia shows that international students begin to build resilience through participation in class, through group collaborative assignments, and through the use and the guidance provided by the institutions support services that helps students deal with the challenging and new academic environments and educational systems (Singh, 2021). A study done in the United States shows that international university students with a higher level of intrinsic motivation and resilience, and that students who can academically self-motivate are better able to endure work and effort academically, and to deal with the stress of adjusting to a new environment (Mostafa & Lim, 2020). In another context, the study done in Taiwan has stated that optimism and the ability to manage one's emotions positively have an impact on resilience, and that students who are emotionally controlled are better able to adapt to stress, especially academic stress, and uncertainty (Radiamoda et al., 2024). In Brazil, it has been shown that academic resilience has been influenced by academic psychos and sociodemographic issues, like gender, family income, and the level of education of one's parents, which determine a student's ability to overcome academic challenges (Andrade et al., 2024). From the point of view of the findings in China, it was suggested that academic resilience psychos and self-esteem, and the personality of the student, and the ability to manage academic stress and challenges as well as overall mental health, and the well-balanced state of the student within the university community (Song et al., 2024). These studies have also shown that a study of academic resilience in students, there are many psychos, educational, and socioeconomic and their interactions across the world that have a great impact on academic resiliency and psychos among the university students in each respective country.

The Philippine higher education system has seen an increase in research on academic resilience because of the challenges facing university students entering complex academic systems. In one study of Filipino Physical Education teacher education students, Panganiban et al. (2025) stated that the ability to academically resilient is



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fundamental in the students' engagement and motivation, notwithstanding the academic challenges and organizational expectations of the students. Findings from the study suggest that resilience works as a psychological tool that aids the teachers of the future to work their way through academically challenging situations and to keep moving forward in their studies. Likewise, studies on Filipino college students showed that resilience empowers students to continue pursuing their education in the face of academic challenges and emotional difficulties, demonstrating the degree to which resilient students remain engaged in their studies, even in the face of academic challenges and emotional difficulties (Lobo, 2023). In a study of Filipino college freshmen in Physical Education, Sameon and Villarojo (2026) identified that perseverance and positive change are phenomena observed when students exhibit a great deal of positive change in the way that students take on academic challenges and sustain their academic engagement. In addition, in the area of sports and exercise education, Lobo et al. (2026) pointed out that students' ability to cope with the challenges posed by academia while juggling academic and athletic commitments makes the role of academic resilience even more critical in fostering ongoing engagement and commitment to academics among student-athletes. The aforementioned studies in the Philippines show that academic resilience is one psychological resource that remains vital among university students, especially in the field of physical education and sports, where the academic, physical, and emotional demands often overlap.

Major studies on the concept of self-efficacy show its significance as a resource in solidifying a student's ability to stay resilient in a challenging academic situation. This stems from the fact that self-efficacy is the belief that a student has in his ability to perform a given academic task and this belief will influence the student's persistence, motivation, and response to a given academic task. Wu et al. (2024) noted that students who self-evaluate themselves as academically worthy of success will possess a greater degree of academic resilience and self-confident students will see academic challenges as something they can overcome as opposed to an obstacle to their academic attainment goals. A self-efficacious student. Abdolrezapour and Ghanbari (2023) argued, will demonstrate even more academic motivation and engagement even in the face of daunting circumstances and learning environments (such as online learning) learning



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environments) and as a result, they will possess a greater ability to deal with academic adversity. In a similar fashion, the findings of Chen et al. (2024) supported the concept of self-efficacy and its relation to resilience, however they focused on the improvement self-regulation of stress and emotions and academic adjustment and as such the ability to manage academic stress. Further reinforcing these findings, self-efficacy was reported by Orang et al. (2025) as a self-adjusted boundary/ mechanism that guides students 'difficult recovery and further persistence of academic efforts in post-difficult situation. In addition, from an overall educational point of view, Honicke et al. (2023) posits that the belief in self-efficacy influences how much effort students are willing to extend as well as the degree to which they continue to engage in difficult tasks. This explains how self-efficacy fosters resilience in students. In addition, the reviews argue that self-efficacy is foundational to students' resilience and sustained engagement in the face of adversity, thus, reinforcing self-efficacy as a base psychological construct.

The role of social context has also been examined alongside personal factors as protective factors for the academic resilience of students. Examples of social support stem from both informal (friends) and formal (teachers, family) social networks and include emotional support and practical aid to manage the academic demands and sustain their engagement in learning. Through supportive peer networks, students are able to develop a sense of belonging and, as a result, the ability to deal with academic challenges. Here, social support is translated into positive feelings and emotional well-being, as explained by Kirby et al. (2022) and, in the same sense, Sorkkila et al. (2019) mentioned that students with a high level of resilience resource, due to supportive relationships, are less likely to experience facets of academic burnout or withdrawal, especially when they manage high workloads of both studies and a job. Stressful feelings are alleviated and students' academic efforts are continued when social support from family, friends, partners, etc., is also evident, and social networks are seen as protective factors against the academic adversities students are facing. Stressful and challenging conditions can be managed positively by students in the presence of emotional engagement and school integration, and this is the supportive role of teachers and peers, as explained by Azpiazu et al. (2024). Additionally, Liu and Cao (2022) noted that perceived social support fosters psychological resilience and assists students in the regulation of stress during difficult



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learning periods, therefore, reducing academic burnout among university students. Overall, social support strengthens students' academic resilience and, thus, their ability to manage academic stress and continue their engagement in higher education.

The current research draws from Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory, which posits that behavior and adaptation occur from the interplay of the individual, the environment, and the behavior through a psychosocial lens. In classroom situations, the theory describes self-efficacy beliefs as the primary self-regulating mechanisms of the individual, guiding how they tackle problems, adjust their effort, and sustain their focus despite obstacles. Regarding self-efficacy in academics, students in higher education that view problems as challenges rather than barriers display high levels of academic resiliency. Moreover, Social Cognitive Theory recognizes that learning behaviors are the product of their environment, meaning that learning behaviors are influenced by social relationships and support. Positive social relationships motivate students to learn and overcome academic challenges through the learning climate they create. This theory explains the learning environment in exercise and sports science and physical education, which combines high academic and performance-based expectations. For students to succeed in this environment, the supportive environment and the students' internal beliefs must work in tandem. In this sense, self-efficacy relates to the individual cognitive mechanism that fosters the person's resiliency, whereas social support is the situational resource that helps the student adjust to the academic difficulties. This study aims to look at the academic resilience of first-year physical education and exercise and sports science students through the scope of the students' self-efficacy and the social support that is accessible within the students' classroom surroundings.

While the study of academic resilience has received attention in higher education, the literature has clear, persisting gaps. Existing studies predominantly focus resilience within the general university student population, or within fields of study that do not include the unique academic and physical rigors of physical education and exercise and sports science programs. Furthermore, past studies show academic self-efficacy and social support as contributing factors to students' adjustment to their studies, yet these factors are often studied in isolation and not as synergistic factors that may collectively strengthen academic resilience. Furthermore, the empirical studies of first-year students

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in physical education and exercise and sports science programs are few and far between, although this period is chronologically positioned at an important point in the students' academic journey. In the case of the Philippine higher education system, very few studies have examined the psychological resources and social learning environments in tandem to understand academic resilience in these students. Bridging these gaps may help scholars understand the role of both the students' inner self-belief and the support system around them on their academic resilience in the stated disciplines of study. This aims to investigate the role of social support and self-efficacy in predicting academic resilience in first-year students of physical education and exercise and sports science. To achieve this, the following questions were formulated: (1) What is the level of academic resilience among first-year physical education and exercise and sports science students? (2) How is academic self-efficacy related to academic resilience among these students? (3) How is social support related to academic resilience among these students? (4) To what extent do academic self-efficacy and social support predict academic resilience among first-year physical education and exercise and sports science students?

Methods

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative, cross-sectional correlational research design to examine the predictive relationships between academic self-efficacy, social support, and academic resilience among first-year physical education and exercise and sports science students. Quantitative correlational research designs are appropriate when the objective is to determine the strength and direction of relationships among naturally occurring variables without manipulating the research environment or introducing experimental conditions (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Cohen et al., 2018).

Such designs are widely used in physical education and higher education research to investigate psychological and contextual factors that influence students' academic functioning within authentic educational settings. In the present study, the correlational approach enabled the simultaneous examination of academic self-efficacy as an individual psychological resource and perceived social support as an environmental factor that may contribute to students' academic resilience. This design is consistent with



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recommendations for educational research that seeks to explain complex academic phenomena influenced by multiple interacting factors rather than isolated causal effects (Shadish et al., 2002; Creswell, 2014). Accordingly, the selected research design aligns with the study's objective of determining the extent to which academic self-efficacy and social support predict academic resilience among first-year students enrolled in physical education and exercise and sports science programs.

Respondents and Sampling

This study was conducted during the academic year 2023–2024 in a public higher education institution in the southern Philippines. To preserve institutional confidentiality and protect the anonymity of the research setting, the name of the institution is not disclosed; however, relevant contextual details, including institutional type, geographic region, academic programs, sample size, and sampling procedure, are provided to support transparency and methodological clarity.

The sample consisted of 100 first-year undergraduate students enrolled in Physical Education and Exercise and Sports Science programs, comprising 50 students from the Bachelor of Physical Education program and 50 students from the Bachelor of Science in Exercise and Sports Science program. These students were selected because they were enrolled in introductory-level courses in their respective programs and were in the transitional stage of university life, a period commonly associated with academic adjustment challenges. Participants ranged in age from 17 to 21 years old, with a mean age of 18.47 years ($SD = 0.89$). In terms of sex, the sample consisted of 56 male students (56%) and 44 female students (44%), reflecting the gender distribution commonly observed in physical education and sports science programs.

The study employed complete enumeration sampling because the entire accessible population of first-year students from the two identified program sections was included. Complete enumeration was considered appropriate because the target population was limited, accessible, and directly aligned with the objectives of the study. This approach helped reduce sampling bias and allowed the study to represent the specific group under investigation. In addition, the sample size of 100 respondents was considered adequate for correlation and multiple regression analyses involving two predictor variables, as it exceeded commonly recommended minimum participant-to-predictor ratios for



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regression analysis. Complete enumeration is also justified when the population size is manageable and the research aims to describe the entire accessible population (Fraenkel et al., 2019).

To ensure consistency within the sample and improve the reliability of the data, specific eligibility criteria were applied. Participants were included if they were first-year students enrolled in either the Bachelor of Physical Education or Bachelor of Science in Exercise and Sports Science program during the academic year 2023–2024 and voluntarily agreed to participate in the study. Students were excluded if they were not first-year students, were not enrolled in either of the two programs during the data collection period, declined to participate, or submitted incomplete survey responses. These criteria were established to ensure that the data accurately represented the academic experiences of first-year students in physical education and exercise and sports science programs.

Research Instrument

The study utilized validated and widely used research instruments to measure academic resilience, academic self-efficacy, and perceived social support, thereby ensuring methodological rigor and alignment with international research standards.

Academic resilience was measured using the Academic Resilience Scale (ARS-30) developed by Cassidy (2016). The ARS-30 consists of 30 items designed to assess students' ability to persist, adapt, and recover from academic challenges. The scale includes items related to perseverance, adaptive help-seeking, and emotional responses to academic setbacks. Previous studies have reported strong internal consistency for the ARS-30, with Cronbach's alpha values typically ranging from 0.80 to 0.90, indicating high reliability among university students. In the present study, the ARS-30 demonstrated strong internal consistency, with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of $\alpha = .91$.

Academic self-efficacy was measured using the College Academic Self-Efficacy Scale (CASES) developed by Owen and Froman (1988). This instrument measures students' confidence in performing various academic tasks, including studying effectively, completing assignments, participating in academic discussions, and managing academic responsibilities. The CASES has been widely used in higher education research and has demonstrated acceptable reliability and construct validity



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across diverse student populations, with reported Cronbach's alpha coefficients generally exceeding 0.80. In the present sample, the CASES showed good internal consistency, with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of $\alpha = .88$.

Perceived social support was measured using the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS) developed by Zimet et al. (1988). The MSPSS assesses students' perceptions of support received from family, friends, and significant others through a 12-item scale. The instrument has been extensively used in psychological and educational research and has consistently demonstrated strong psychometric properties, with reported reliability coefficients typically ranging from 0.85 to 0.92. In this study, the MSPSS also demonstrated strong internal consistency, with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of $\alpha = .90$.

All instruments used in the study employed a Likert-type response format, allowing respondents to indicate the degree to which they agreed with each statement. Prior to full-scale data collection, the questionnaire was pilot tested with a small group of students to ensure clarity, readability, and contextual appropriateness. The reliability results obtained from the present sample indicate that all three instruments had acceptable to strong internal consistency and were therefore suitable for measuring academic resilience, academic self-efficacy, and perceived social support among first-year physical education and exercise and sports science students.

Statistical Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques consistent with the study's research objectives. Descriptive statistics, including frequency distributions, means, and standard deviations, were computed to describe the demographic characteristics of the respondents and to determine the levels of academic resilience, academic self-efficacy, and perceived social support among first-year physical education and exercise and sports science students.

Prior to conducting the inferential analyses, the assumptions for Pearson correlation and multiple linear regression were examined. For Pearson Product-Moment Correlation, the assumptions of continuous-level measurement, linearity, normality, and absence of significant outliers were considered. Scatterplots were inspected to assess the linear relationships between academic self-efficacy and academic resilience, as well as



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between perceived social support and academic resilience. The distributions of the variables were also reviewed to determine their suitability for parametric analysis.

For multiple linear regression, the assumptions of linearity, normality of residuals, homoscedasticity, independence of errors, absence of multicollinearity, and absence of influential outliers were assessed. Linearity and homoscedasticity were examined through scatterplots and residual plots. The normality of residuals was evaluated using normal probability plots. Multicollinearity was assessed using tolerance and variance inflation factor values, while influential cases were examined using standardized residuals and Cook's distance. The assumption checks indicated that the data were appropriate for Pearson correlation and multiple linear regression analyses.

To examine the relationships between the study variables, the Pearson Product–Moment Correlation Coefficient was used to determine the strength and direction of the associations between academic self-efficacy and academic resilience, as well as between perceived social support and academic resilience. The correlation coefficient, r , was interpreted as the effect size, with values closer to ± 1 indicating stronger relationships. Confidence intervals at the 95% level were also reported to provide greater precision in interpreting the correlation results.

Furthermore, multiple linear regression analysis was performed to determine the extent to which academic self-efficacy and social support predict academic resilience among the respondents. In this analysis, academic resilience served as the dependent variable, while academic self-efficacy and perceived social support were treated as independent predictor variables. Standardized beta coefficients were used to compare the relative contribution of each predictor, while R^2 was interpreted as the effect size of the overall regression model. Confidence intervals at the 95% level were reported for the unstandardized regression coefficients. Statistical analyses were performed using JASP statistical software (Version 0.18.3; JASP Team, 2024), and the level of statistical significance was set at $p < .05$.

Ethical Considerations

This research did not violate any ethical principles relating to research involving human participants. Data collection began after obtaining ethical approval from the institutional research ethics committee. All participants were informed about the purpose



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of the study, the procedures involved, and the potential risks and benefits of participation before data collection began.

Participants were asked to sign an informed consent form indicating their voluntary participation in the study. They were also informed that they had the right to withdraw from the study at any time without any consequences. All collected data were treated with strict confidentiality and were used solely for research purposes.

Results

Level of Academic Resilience, Academic Self-Efficacy, and Social Support

The first research question sought to determine the level of academic resilience, academic self-efficacy, and perceived social support among first-year physical education and exercise and sports science students. Descriptive statistics including means and standard deviations were computed to determine the general level of each variable.

Prior to the main analyses, internal consistency reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha. The Academic Resilience Scale demonstrated strong reliability, $\alpha = .91$. The College Academic Self-Efficacy Scale showed good reliability, $\alpha = .88$. The Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support also demonstrated strong reliability, $\alpha = .90$. These values indicate that the instruments used in the study had acceptable to strong internal consistency in the present sample.

Table 1

Level of Academic Resilience, Academic Self-Efficacy, and Social Support among First-Year Physical Education and Exercise and Sports Science Students

Variable	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Academic Self-Efficacy	3.76	0.54	High
Social Support	3.89	0.51	High
Academic Resilience	3.71	0.56	High

The results indicate that first-year physical education and exercise and sports science students generally demonstrated high levels of academic self-efficacy, perceived



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social support, and academic resilience. Among the three variables, social support obtained the highest mean score, suggesting that students perceived strong support from family, peers, and significant others. Academic self-efficacy and academic resilience also showed relatively high levels, indicating that students possess confidence in their academic abilities and the capacity to cope with academic challenges during their transition to university life.

Relationship Between Academic Self-Efficacy and Academic Resilience

The second research question examined the relationship between academic self-efficacy and academic resilience among the respondents. Pearson Product–Moment Correlation analysis was conducted to determine the strength and direction of the relationship between the two variables. The correlation coefficient was interpreted as the effect size, and a 95% confidence interval was included to provide a more precise estimate of the relationship.

Table 2

Relationship Between Academic Self-Efficacy and Academic Resilience

Variables	r	95% CI	p-value	Interpretation
Academic Self-Efficacy and Academic Resilience	0.58	0.43 to 0.70	< .001	Moderate Positive Correlation

The findings reveal a moderate positive relationship between academic self-efficacy and academic resilience, $r = .58$, 95% CI [0.43, 0.70], $p < .001$. This indicates that students who report higher confidence in their ability to perform academic tasks are more likely to demonstrate stronger resilience when encountering academic challenges. The magnitude of the correlation suggests a meaningful effect, showing that academic self-efficacy is an important psychological resource associated with academic resilience.

Relationship Between Social Support and Academic Resilience

The third research question examined the relationship between perceived social support and academic resilience among first-year physical education and exercise and sports science students. Pearson Product–Moment Correlation analysis was conducted to



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determine whether perceived social support was significantly associated with academic resilience. The correlation coefficient was interpreted as the effect size, and a 95% confidence interval was reported.

Table 3

Relationship Between Social Support and Academic Resilience

Variables	r	95% CI	p-value	Interpretation
Social Support and Academic Resilience	0.46	0.29 to 0.60	< .001	Moderate Positive Correlation

The findings reveal a moderate positive relationship between perceived social support and academic resilience, $r = .46$, 95% CI [0.29, 0.60], $p < .001$. This indicates that students who reported higher levels of perceived support from family, friends, and significant others were more likely to demonstrate stronger academic resilience. The result suggests that social support serves as an important relational resource that may help first-year students cope with academic challenges, adjust to university life, and remain persistent in their studies.

Predictive Influence of Academic Self-Efficacy and Social Support on Academic Resilience

The fourth research question examined the extent to which academic self-efficacy and perceived social support predict academic resilience among first-year physical education and exercise and sports science students. Multiple linear regression analysis was performed with academic resilience as the dependent variable and academic self-efficacy and social support as predictor variables. The standardized beta coefficients were examined to determine the relative strength of each predictor, while R^2 was interpreted as the effect size of the regression model. Confidence intervals at the 95% level were also reported for the unstandardized coefficients.



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Table 4

Multiple Regression Analysis Predicting Academic Resilience

Predictor Variable	B	SE	95% CI for B	Beta	t	p
Academic Self-Efficacy	0.48	0.08	0.32 to 0.64	0.51	6.12	< .001
Social Support	0.29	0.09	0.11 to 0.47	0.30	3.44	.001

Model Summary: $R = 0.67$, $R^2 = 0.45$, $Adjusted\ R^2 = 0.44$, $F(2, 97) = 39.63$, $p < .001$.

The results of the regression analysis show that academic self-efficacy and perceived social support significantly predicted academic resilience among the participants. The model explained 45% of the variance in academic resilience, indicating a substantial explanatory effect. Academic self-efficacy emerged as the stronger predictor, $B = 0.48$, 95% CI [0.32, 0.64], $\beta = 0.51$, $p < .001$. This means that higher academic self-efficacy was associated with higher academic resilience. Perceived social support also significantly predicted academic resilience, $B = 0.29$, 95% CI [0.11, 0.47], $\beta = 0.30$, $p = .001$, indicating that students who perceived stronger support from others were also more likely to demonstrate higher academic resilience.

Overall, the regression findings suggest that both individual psychological resources and social-relational resources contribute meaningfully to students' academic resilience. Among the two predictors, academic self-efficacy had the stronger predictive influence, while perceived social support also played an important supportive role in helping students adjust to academic demands.

Discussion

Level of Academic Resilience, Academic Self-Efficacy, and Social Support

The findings showed that first-year physical education and exercise and sports science students had high levels of academic resilience, academic self-efficacy, and perceived social support. This implies that students entering sport-related academic programs possess important psychological and relational resources that may help them adjust to the academic, social, and performance-based demands of university life. Since first-year students commonly experience increased academic workload, greater independence, new learning environments, and unfamiliar social situations, high levels



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of self-efficacy and social support may strengthen their ability to remain engaged and persistent. In the context of physical education and exercise and sports science, where students are exposed to both theoretical coursework and practical performance requirements, these resources may be especially important in helping them cope with academic challenges.

However, the present findings may differ from studies showing that academic resilience among university students is not always high and may vary across contexts. For instance, Elnaem et al. (2024) reported differences in academic resilience among pharmacy students across several countries, indicating that resilience may be influenced by institutional setting, demographic characteristics, and students' participation in academic and extracurricular activities. Similarly, Andrade et al. (2024) found that resilience among university students was associated with sociodemographic, economic, and academic factors. These findings suggest that high resilience cannot be assumed across all student groups, as it may depend on the learning environment, student background, institutional support, and program culture.

The present findings are consistent with studies emphasizing that resilience is strengthened by both individual and contextual resources. Tudor et al. (2020) highlighted that resilience in physical education is shaped by personal factors, social relationships, and supportive learning environments. Similarly, López-Aguilar et al. (2023) found that academically resilient students are more likely to persist in higher education and less likely to develop intentions to drop out. These studies support the present findings by suggesting that students with strong self-belief and supportive relationships are better positioned to maintain academic engagement during the transition to university life.

Relationship Between Academic Self-Efficacy and Academic Resilience

The results revealed a moderate positive relationship between academic self-efficacy and academic resilience. This implies that students who believe in their ability to complete academic tasks are more likely to persist, adapt, and recover from academic difficulties. For first-year physical education and exercise and sports science students, academic self-efficacy may help them manage both classroom-based learning and practical performance-related requirements. Students with stronger academic confidence

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may view difficult tasks as manageable challenges rather than as barriers to academic success.

However, some studies suggest that academic resilience is not explained by self-efficacy alone. Song et al. (2024) emphasized that resilience among college students may also be influenced by psychological characteristics such as self-esteem, personality, mental health, and stress management. Andrade et al. (2024) also found that sociodemographic, economic, and academic factors were linked with resilience among university students. These findings indicate that while academic self-efficacy is an important factor, resilience may also be shaped by broader psychological, social, and educational conditions.

Nevertheless, several studies support the present finding that academic self-efficacy is positively associated with academic resilience. Wu et al. (2024) found that students with stronger academic self-efficacy demonstrated greater academic resilience and were more likely to use constructive coping strategies. Orang et al. (2025) similarly reported that self-efficacy contributes to students' academic adjustment and resilience. Chen et al. (2024) also found that academic self-efficacy supports learning regulation and stress management, which are important components of resilience. These studies confirm that students who trust their academic capabilities are more likely to remain motivated and persistent when faced with academic challenges.

Relationship Between Social Support and Academic Resilience

The study also found a moderate positive relationship between perceived social support and academic resilience. This implies that students who feel supported by family, friends, teachers, and significant others are more likely to cope effectively with academic difficulties. For first-year students, social support may reduce feelings of isolation, improve emotional adjustment, and encourage persistence in learning. In physical education and exercise and sports science programs, where collaborative activities, group tasks, and peer interaction are common, social support may serve as an important protective factor that strengthens academic resilience.

However, some studies suggest that social support may not always influence resilience directly, as its effect can depend on the source, quality, and context of the support received. Liu and Cao (2022), for example, examined social support, stress, and



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academic burnout among students and emphasized the mediating role of resilience. This suggests that social support may work together with other psychological processes rather than independently producing resilience. Similarly, Sorkkila et al. (2019) showed that resilience is related to burnout and dropout among student-athletes, indicating that academic persistence may depend on the interaction of resilience, stress, and contextual demands. These findings suggest that while perceived social support is valuable, its effect may vary depending on students' broader academic and emotional circumstances.

The present finding is supported by studies showing that social support plays a significant role in students' resilience and academic success. Lin et al. (2024) reported that support from family, friends, and close relationships contributes to students' resilience and academic achievement. Li et al. (2024) emphasized that social support works alongside resilience, grit, and self-regulation in promoting academic performance. Azpiazu et al. (2024) also highlighted the protective role of social support, self-concept, and resilience in students' school adjustment. These studies support the idea that students who experience stronger social and emotional support are better able to remain engaged and resilient in the face of academic demands.

Predictive Influence of Academic Self-Efficacy and Social Support on Academic Resilience

The regression results showed that academic self-efficacy and perceived social support significantly predicted academic resilience. This implies that both personal and social factors contribute to students' ability to adapt to academic challenges. Academic self-efficacy emerged as the stronger predictor, suggesting that students' belief in their academic capabilities plays a central role in resilience. However, perceived social support also contributed significantly, indicating that supportive relationships provide emotional and practical resources that help students manage academic demands. These findings suggest that resilience is strengthened when students possess both internal confidence and external support.

The results may differ from studies suggesting that academic resilience is shaped by a wider range of predictors beyond self-efficacy and social support. Song et al. (2024) indicated that psychological resilience among college students may be influenced by



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multiple psychological characteristics, including self-esteem and mental health. Andrade et al. (2024) also emphasized the role of socioeconomic and academic factors in explaining resilience among university students. In addition, Mao et al. (2022) suggested that academic self-efficacy, positive relationships, and psychological resilience are connected to students' life satisfaction, indicating that resilience may be part of a broader network of academic and psychological outcomes. These studies suggest that although self-efficacy and social support are significant predictors in the present study, other psychological, institutional, and background variables may also contribute to students' academic resilience.

Despite these differences, the present findings are consistent with studies showing that self-efficacy and social support are important contributors to resilience. Wu et al. (2024) found that academic self-efficacy strengthens academic resilience, while Abdolrezaipoor and Ghanbari (2023) reported that self-efficacy and resilience predict students' academic motivation in online education. Honicke et al. (2023) also emphasized the role of self-efficacy in academic performance and learner development. In relation to social support, Lin et al. (2024) and Li et al. (2024) showed that supportive relationships contribute to students' resilience and academic functioning. Similarly, Martin (2026) found that academic self-efficacy and social support significantly predicted academic resilience among first-year university students, with academic self-efficacy emerging as the stronger predictor. These findings support the present study by showing that resilience is not only an individual trait but also a product of supportive learning environments.

Practical Implications

The findings suggest that higher education institutions, especially programs in physical education, exercise, and sports science, should implement strategies that strengthen both academic self-efficacy and social support among first-year students. Since academic self-efficacy was the stronger predictor of academic resilience, instructors may help students by providing constructive feedback, mastery-based learning tasks, clear academic expectations, and opportunities to experience success in both theoretical and practical coursework. These strategies may help students develop confidence in their academic abilities and improve their willingness to persist during academic difficulties.



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However, interventions focused only on individual confidence may be insufficient if students lack supportive academic and social environments. First-year students may still struggle with adjustment if they do not receive adequate peer support, teacher guidance, mentoring, or institutional assistance. This is especially important in physical education and exercise and sports science programs, where students must manage both academic and performance-based expectations. Therefore, academic resilience should not be developed only through individual motivation but also through structured support systems that respond to students' emotional, academic, and social needs.

The practical value of this study is that it highlights the need for a balanced approach to student development. Programs may strengthen resilience by combining academic confidence-building activities with peer mentoring, collaborative learning, teacher-student consultation, and early intervention programs for first-year students. By promoting both personal self-belief and supportive relationships, universities can help students sustain engagement, cope with academic challenges, and succeed during the transition to higher education.

Conclusions

This study examined the contributions of academic self-efficacy and perceived social support in predicting academic resilience among first-year physical education and exercise and sports science students. The findings showed that students had high levels of academic self-efficacy, perceived social support, and academic resilience. In addition, both academic self-efficacy and perceived social support were positively and significantly associated with academic resilience, indicating that students who have greater confidence in their academic abilities and perceive stronger social support are more likely to demonstrate resilience in the face of academic challenges.

The regression analysis further revealed that academic self-efficacy and perceived social support significantly predicted academic resilience, with academic self-efficacy emerging as the stronger predictor. These findings highlight the importance of both personal and social resources in supporting students' academic adaptability. Strengthening students' academic confidence, while also providing supportive learning



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environments, may therefore help first-year students cope more effectively with academic demands and sustain their engagement in higher education.

Limitations of the Study

This study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings. First, the study employed a cross-sectional correlational design; therefore, causal relationships among academic self-efficacy, perceived social support, and academic resilience cannot be established. Second, the respondents were limited to first-year physical education and exercise and sports science students from one public higher education institution in the southern Philippines, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other institutions, academic levels, or disciplines. Third, the study relied on self-report questionnaires, which may be subject to response bias and participants' subjective interpretation of the survey items. Finally, the study focused only on academic self-efficacy and perceived social support as predictors of academic resilience, while other psychological, social, and institutional factors, such as motivation, personality, learning environment, teacher support, and institutional services, were not examined. Future studies may consider using longitudinal designs, larger and more diverse samples, and broader predictor variables to provide a more comprehensive understanding of how academic resilience develops among university students.

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