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Perceived Social Support as a Catalyst for Academic Resilience: A Systematic Review of Narrative Literature

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ABSTRACT

Research has explored how students adapt to higher education, highlighting both internal and external influences. Academic resilience has emerged as a critical factor, with perceived social support identified as particularly influential. Given the heightened pressures experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic, understanding how perceived social support fosters academic resilience is especially relevant for current and future cohorts. This systematic review investigated the relationship between perceived social support and academic resilience in higher education during COVID-19. Literature was sourced from Google Scholar, EBSCOhost, and PubMed, using search terms including "Academic resilience", AND "Perceived social support", AND "COVID-19", AND "Higher education". Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-methods studies were included. Data were analysed thematically, and a 'qualitising' process enabled comparison across methodologies. The PRISMA framework guided the assessment of study quality and bias. Key findings highlight the importance of support from family, peers, and lecturers in sustaining academic resilience during COVID-19. Mechanisms such as emotional regulation, venting, and communication were found to mediate this relationship. The review concludes that perceived social support, particularly from close relational networks, was central to academic resilience during the pandemic, working through mechanisms such as emotional regulation, venting, and communication. Institutions should actively promote such support through peer groups, inclusive activities, and timely communication, especially for students from low-income backgrounds. This review contributes to the literature by clarifying the mechanisms through which social support operates in times of crisis and offering practical recommendations for higher education.

Keywords: *Academic Resilience, COVID-19, Higher Education, Perceived Social Support, Students*

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INTRODUCTION

A growing amount of research suggests that students experience difficulties adapting to the different academic rules and processes in the higher education setting. There are factors such as increased demands, course difficulty, and larger diversity in culture and socioeconomic (SES) groups that may negatively impact adaptation to higher education. [1] Additionally, they believe that impersonal relationships with educators may also impact adapting to higher education.

[1] Ike Dwiastuti, Wiwin Hendriani, and Fitri Andriani, "The Impact of Academic Resilience on Academic Performance in College Students during the Covid-19 Pandemic," *KnE Social Sciences*, 2022, 25–41.

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Perceived social support can be defined as actions that produce feelings of being loved and worthy, and belonging to a support system that can provide help in times of need from an individual, group, or community.[2] Perceived social support had a stronger power to predict successful adaptation to academic demands than received social support during the coronavirus disease (COVID-19).[3] Literature indicated that received social support may not meet the individual's needs with the same efficacy as perceived social support.[4] Students may be better able to remain committed to their studies in times of difficulty.[5] There are indications that better academic achievement is present when an individual perceives that they have adequate social support.[6]

Individuals require a level of resilience to deal with problems in a well-adapted way.[7] Due to the high demands on students in higher education, academic resilience may play an important role in their academic journey. Academic resilience can be seen as the propensity of an individual to cover and effectively manage academic pressure, impediments, challenges, and adversity in the context of academic settings.[8] Academic resilience has also been linked to an individual's academic achievement.[9] Internal factors have been found to affect academic resilience. These factors could include self-esteem, feelings of worth, curiosity and other factors relating to decisiveness. External factors such as interactions with family, peers, community, and the social environment may affect resilience.[10] While there is an ever-growing body of research that has been conducted with the aim of understanding how social support affects resilience, there is still scope for further investigation.[11]

COVID-19 has had an impact on many aspects of life, with many of these specifically impacting students in higher education.[12] Many governments around the world implemented social distancing protocols, which necessitated the move from face-to-face lectures and learning to an online platform that could facilitate learning.[13] Students faced challenges such as internet connectivity issues, not understanding material properly, and impersonal relationships with staff and students, which may have increased their difficulties.[14] This may have put additional stress on them and lowered their academic resilience. COVID-19 presented students in higher education with new challenges. These challenges include internet access and changes in learning patterns caused by the migration to online learning.[15] These changes may have negatively impacted academic resilience. Students experienced elevated levels

[2] Edward P. Sarafino and Timothy W. Smith, *Health Psychology: Biopsychosocial Interactions* (John Wiley & Sons, 2014).
[3] Sarafino and Smith, *Health Psychology: Biopsychosocial Interactions*.
[4] Stephen, Taylor and Marisa von Fintel, "Estimating the Impact of Language of Instruction in South African Primary Schools: A Fixed Effects Approach," *Economics of Education Review* 50 (2016): 75–89.
[5] Nirwana, Permatasari, Farhana Rahmatillah Ashari, and Nursyamsu Ismail, "Contribution of Perceived Social Support (Peer, Family, and Teacher) to Academic Resilience During Covid-19," *Golden Ratio of Social Science and Education* 1, no. 1 (2021): 1–12.
[6] Serge Dupont, Benoit Galand, and Frédéric Nils, "The Impact of Different Sources of Social Support on Academic Performance: Intervening Factors and Mediated Pathways in the Case of Master's Thesis," *European Review of Applied Psychology* 65, no. 5 (2015): 227–37.
[7] Permatasari, Ashari, and Ismail, "Contribution of Perceived Social Support (Peer, Family, and Teacher) to Academic Resilience During Covid-19."
[8] Andrew J. Martin and Herbert W. Marsh, "Academic Resilience and Its Psychological and Educational Correlates: A Construct Validity Approach," *Psychology in the Schools* 43, no. 3 (2006): 267–81.
[9] Umair, Ahmed et al., "Examining the Links between Teachers Support, Academic Efficacy, Academic Resilience, and Student Engagement in Bahrain," *International Journal of Advanced and Applied Sciences* 5, no. 9 (2018): 39–46.
[10] Robin D, Everall, K Jessica Altrows, and Barbara L Paulson, "Creating a Future: A Study of Resilience in Suicidal Female Adolescents," *Journal of Counseling & Development* 84, no. 4 (2006): 461–70; Larry Kenneth Thomson, "The Effect of the Dayak Worldview, Customs, Traditions, and Customary Law (Adat-Istiadat) on the Interpretation of the Gospel in West Kalimantan, Indonesian Borneo" (." Acadia University, 2000., 2000).
[11] Grace M. Lady, "How Can I Help? Investigating the Role of Social Supports in Academic Resilience for Undergraduate Students," 2021.
[12] Sigalit Warshawski, "Academic Self-Efficacy, Resilience and Social Support among First-Year Israeli Nursing Students Learning in Online Environments During Covid-19 Pandemic," *Nurse Education Today* 110 (2022): 105267; Permatasari, Ashari, and Ismail, "Contribution of Perceived Social Support (Peer, Family, and Teacher) to Academic Resilience During Covid-19."
[13] Warshawski, "Academic Self-Efficacy, Resilience and Social Support among First-Year Israeli Nursing Students Learning in Online Environments During Covid-19 Pandemic"; Permatasari, Ashari, and Ismail, "Contribution of Perceived Social Support (Peer, Family, and Teacher) to Academic Resilience During Covid-19."
[14] Niken Bayu Argaheni, "Sistematik Review: Dampak Perkuliahan Daring Saat Pandemi Covid-19 Terhadap Mahasiswa Indonesia," *Placentum: Jurnal Ilmiah Kesehatan Dan Aplikasinya* 8, no. 2 (2020): 99–108.
[15] Permatasari, Ashari, and Ismail, "Contribution of Perceived Social Support (Peer, Family, and Teacher) to Academic Resilience During Covid-19."

of academic stress during online learning.[16] This becomes problematic, as unresolved problems can threaten the student's willingness to complete their studies.[17] Social support may increase students' willingness and ability to complete and excel in their studies by increasing academic resilience.[18]

The present study thus has the objective of exploring the effects that perceived social support may have had on academic resilience during COVID-19 with a focus on students in higher education.

METHODOLOGY

This research was conducted using a systematic review methodology. This process starts with the definition and demarcation of search terms that would be used to locate the relevant literature.

Search terms, limits, and exclusions

During the preliminary search, the terms "Resilience", "Social support", "COVID-19", and "Higher education" were identified as essential terms to locate relevant articles. These terms were then developed and adapted. Medical Subject Headings (MeSH) terms were used to identify other appropriate articles. The team reviewed all search terms via Zoom meetings. Search terms were used on the title, abstract and full-text search. The final search terms were "Academic resilience", AND "Perceived social support", AND "COVID-19", AND "Higher education". These terms were selected following a preliminary search that identified that these would assist in obtaining the most relevant results. MeSH terms were enabled on databases to locate any relevant literature that may have been missed.

The researchers included qualitative, quantitative and mixed-methods studies written in English. Grey literature was also included, age of participants in the reviewed studies, which was set at 18 years or older, reflecting the typical age of university students in South Africa. Additionally, articles needed to explicitly address the constructs of academic resilience and perceived social support conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic. Both international and local articles were included, provided they were published in English. Simply put, the included studies were about academic resilience and perceived social support among university students aged 18 plus years during COVID-19 globally. All reviews and studies conducted outside higher education settings and not during the COVID-19 period were excluded.

Papers published in languages other than English that did not have available translations were excluded due to budgetary constraints. While academic resilience is relevant in various contexts, this review was specifically concerned with its role within higher education. Furthermore, publications that did not pertain to the COVID-19 period were omitted. Lastly, literature that discussed forms of resilience other than academic resilience was excluded, as the review aimed to concentrate specifically on academic resilience within higher education during the pandemic.

Table 1: Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Inclusion criteria	Exclusion criteria
University students aged 18+ (male and female)	Studies that do not focus on perceived social support
Perceived social support	Studies examining forms of resilience other than academic resilience
Academic resilience	Studies published before 2019
English-language publications	Publications in languages other than English
Published from 2019 to present	Studies conducted outside a higher education setting
Focus on the COVID-19 pandemic	
International and local articles	

[16] Lina Martínez, Isabella Valencia, and Valeria Trofimoff, "Subjective Wellbeing and Mental Health During the Covid-19 Pandemic: Data from Three Population Groups in Colombia," *Data in Brief 32*, 2020, 106287.
[17] Carolyn Hart, "Factors Associated with Student Persistence in an Online Program of Study: A Review of the Literature," *Journal of Interactive Online Learning* 11, no. 1 (2012).
[18] Martin and Marsh, "Academic Resilience and Its Psychological and Educational Correlates: A Construct Validity Approach"; Permatasari, Ashari, and Ismail, "Contribution of Perceived Social Support (Peer, Family, and Teacher) to Academic Resilience During Covid-19."

Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-method designs	

Databases

Articles were searched using the specified search terms across the following databases: EBSCOhost, Google Scholar, and PubMed. All databases were set in the time frame of 2019 to 2022. The language was not set; all articles that were not in English and had no translation available were excluded. The databases' location was not adjusted from default. Google Scholar produced the most articles. PubMed and EBSCOhost were set with the same filters; however, the original search terms yielded no results. The word 'academic' was removed by the MeSH terms, leaving simply 'resilience' in the filter. This provided relevant literature. Google Scholar duplicated many of the results found in PubMed and EBSCOhost.

Screening Procedure

Once identified, the journals were retrieved and uploaded into the Covidence software by the first author (DM). The purpose of this software was to determine the validity of a study due to the established inclusion and exclusion criteria. DM screened all 316 abstracts and titles. The second CM) and third (WF) authors screened 148 of the titles and abstracts. In the case of a conflict, DM decided if the title was to move to the next stage of screening and conflicts were resolved. The next phase of screening was the full-text screening. DM read the full article and either included or excluded the journal on the basis of criteria established for inclusion and exclusion. One hundred and two (102) articles were subjected to full-text screening by DM. Of these 102 articles, 24 of these studies were found to be suitable to be included in the review by DM. To assess the methodological quality of these 24 studies, DM used the Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool (MMAT), version 2018. Following the quality appraisal, relevant data were extracted using Covidence and exported to Excel for analysis.

Data Analysis

The first task in the analysis of data was to become familiar with the information extracted, which was done during the data extraction and tabulation of the data. Many authors tabulate data according to the data they will extract during a systematic review.[19] Tables assist in finding themes, as well as accounting for any bias or related issues in the appraisal process and increase the openness of the study.[20] The Covidence software allows users to create a table that is relevant to the data that will be extracted. The data extracted from this study included Author, Title, Publication Date, Study Design, Data Analysis Method, and Findings. This data was then extracted from the articles by DM into the table created by the software. The data was extracted by copying and pasting the relevant information into its corresponding area.

Once the data was tabulated using the Covidence software, it was exported to an Excel spreadsheet by DM. The studies were subjected to thematic analysis, and the data was 'qualitised'. 'Qualitising' is the process of converting quantitative data into qualitative data so that it can be analysed alongside qualitative data.[21] This method has been shown to be an appropriate manner for comparison between qualitative and quantitative results.[22] 'Qualitising' was done by DM extracting the data from the results of quantitative analysis and reporting on them using thematic analysis.[23]Becoming familiar with

[19] Michelle Eykelenboom et al., "Political and Public Acceptability of a Sugar-Sweetened Beverages Tax: A Mixed-Method Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis," *International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity* 16 (2019): 1–19; Nikolaos, Pellas, Ioannis Kazanidis, and George Palaigeorgiou, "A Systematic Literature Review of Mixed Reality Environments in K-12 Education," *Education and Information Technologies* 25, no. 4 (2020): 2481–2520; Permatasari, Ashari, and Ismail, "Contribution of Perceived Social Support (Peer, Family, and Teacher) to Academic Resilience During Covid-19."

[20] Mark, Petticrew and Helen Roberts, *Systematic Reviews in the Social Sciences: A Practical Guide* (John Wiley & Sons, 2008).

[21] Georgia Mckenzie, Claire Willis, and Nora Shields, "Barriers and Facilitators of Physical Activity Participation for Young People and Adults with Childhood-Onset Physical Disability: A Mixed Methods Systematic Review," *Developmental Medicine & Child Neurology* 63, no. 8 (2021): 914-24.

[22] Margarete Sandelowski, Corrine I Voils, and Julie Barroso, "Defining and designing mixed research synthesis studies," *Research in the schools: a nationally refereed journal sponsored by the Mid-South Educational Research Association and the University of Alabama* 13, no. 1 (2006).

[23] Pellas, Kazanidis, and Palaigeorgiou, "A Systematic Literature Review of Mixed Reality Environments in K-12 Education."

the data is often the first step when thematic analysis is utilised.[24] This process started when the reviewers began to extract data. As they were reading, this allowed the researchers to familiarise themselves with the data that would be extracted.[25] Following this, the tabulated data was read again, and the reviewers made themselves familiar with this data. This led to the second step, where DM began identifying initial codes from the extracted data and grouping them into tentative themes.[26] Once the names had been agreed on, they were coded.[27] This was done by DM creating columns in the Excel spreadsheets that would contain the themes that emerged. These columns were then given a name as a form of coding. Once the texts were coded, the third step was to categorise the codes into themes. Once coded, the texts were analysed and clustered together by DM using the common themes they held. These clusters were identified and compiled. The last step was to analyse these themes and interpret them. This was done by placing all relevant information from the extracted data from the journal into a shared column in Excel. This would have all the same themes next to their appropriate author and title, allowing for the identification of a theme by reading down the column. In this step, the goal was to find the common themes, which can be seen in Table 2. The data included within these themes was interpreted for their meaning and implications by DM. After themes were identified, subthemes were extracted by following the same process but within each column. As there was a mix of methods extracted in the current research, quantitative studies were also interpreted. Quantitative studies were analysed by using their findings using a narrative technique.[28] A method using a narrative system of these studies could be combined with the findings of thematic analysis. Studies were categorised using similar settings, outcomes, and models. These studies could then be interpreted using the same process as the qualitative studies. This use of quantitative studies strengthens the results of qualitative studies.[29]

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

The initial search yielded 3680 articles. A year filter was applied to restrict studies to those published between 2019 and 2022. Following this, 334 articles were imported into Covidence software. Of these, 18 were identified as duplicates. The remaining 316 articles were screened for relevance. For the first 148 articles, two reviewers independently assessed eligibility (CM and WT), with any disagreements resolved by the lead reviewer (DM). Title and abstract screening identified 202 studies as irrelevant. Twelve articles could not be accessed. The remaining 102 articles underwent full-text screening, from which 24 studies were deemed relevant and included in the final review (see *Figure 1*). These studies are summarised in *Table 2*.

[24] Muhammad Naeem et al., "A Step-by-Step Process of Thematic Analysis to Develop a Conceptual Model in Qualitative Research," *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 22 (2023): 16094069231205789.
[25] Naeem et al., "A Step-by-Step Process of Thematic Analysis to Develop a Conceptual Model in Qualitative Research."
[26] Karen L. Peel, "A Beginner's Guide to Applied Educational Research Using Thematic Analysis," *Practical Assessment Research and Evaluation* 25, no. 1 (2020).
[27] Eykelenboom et al., "Political and Public Acceptability of a Sugar-Sweetened Beverages Tax: A Mixed-Method Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis."
[28] Permatasari, Ashari, and Ismail, "Contribution of Perceived Social Support (Peer, Family, and Teacher) to Academic Resilience During Covid-19."
[29] Petticrew and Roberts, *Systematic Reviews in the Social Sciences: A Practical Guide*.

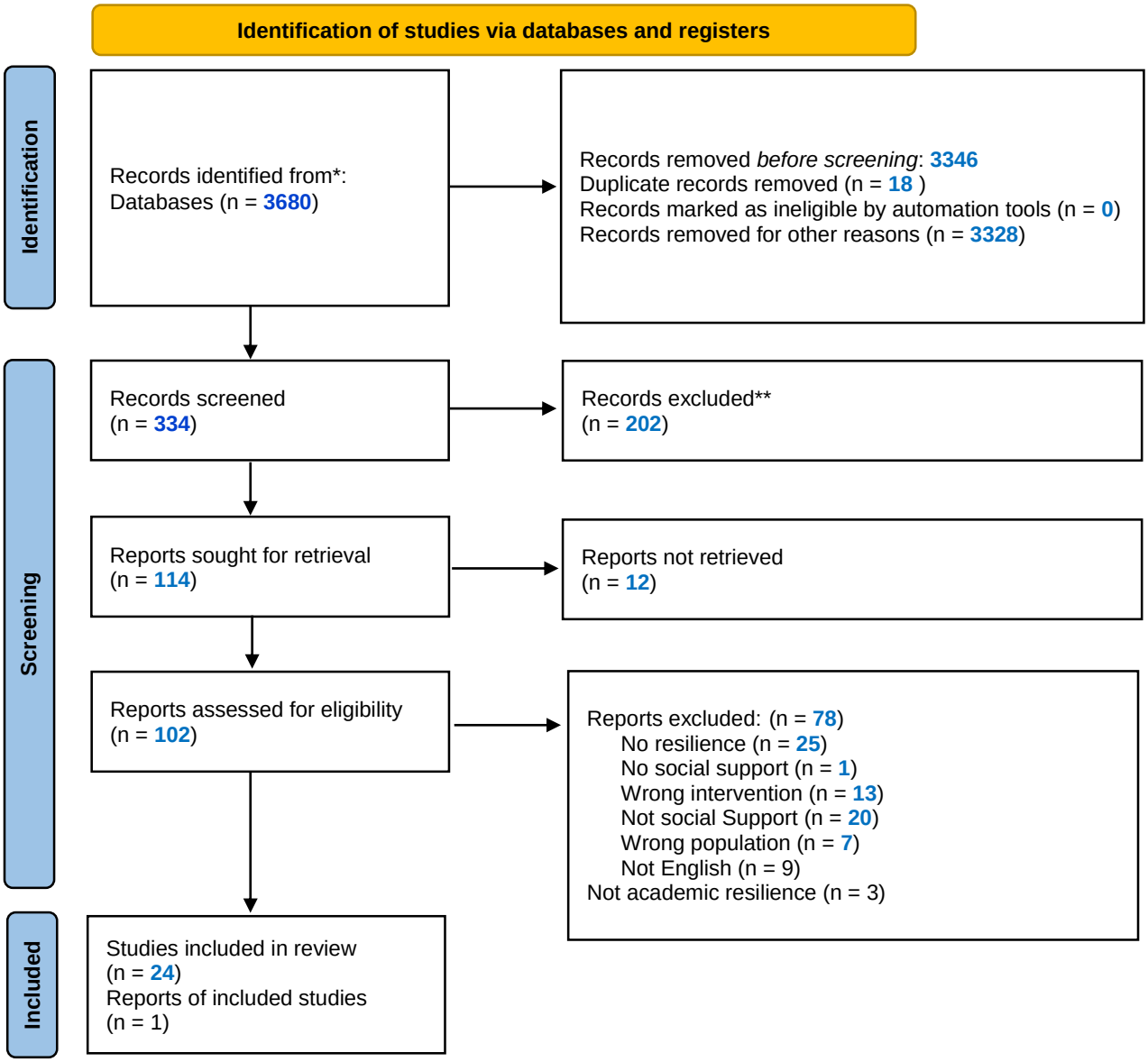

Figure 1: Prisma Flow Chart

Table 2: Chart Summary of Results

Author	Title	Study Data Analysis	Methodology	Findings
Sigalit Warshawski (2022)	Academic self-efficacy, resilience and social support among first-year Israeli nursing students learning in online environments during the COVID-19 pandemic	SPSS-25 statistical package	Descriptive quantitative	Increases in resilience and social support were associated with improved academic performance. Peer-based activities that contributed to enhanced academic resilience included directed study, problem-based learning, experiential learning, reflective practice, and other collaborative learning activities. Students also reported greater perceived resilience when their family was perceived as supportive.
Smita Singh, Jie Ying Loh, and Patrick K. F. Lin (2021)	Student online learning experience and academic resilience during COVID-19: Exploring the role of academic self-efficacy and perceived social support	Descriptive Analysis	Quantitative	Academic resilience was found to be directly influenced by the presence of a social support system.
Wening Cahya Putri, Ade Nursanti (2020)	The relationship between peer social support and academic resilience of young adult migrant students in Jakarta	Correlation analysis	Descriptive quantitative	A positive relationship was identified between increased peer support and academic resilience. Peer support was strongly linked to resilience in academic contexts through several mechanisms, including skill and critical thinking modelling, material support, venting, problem exploration, and nurturance. Material support was associated with greater resilience, while nurturance supported self-reflection and encouraged help-seeking behaviours. Venting facilitated emotional regulation, further contributing to students' ability to cope with academic challenges. When students perceived high levels of support from their social networks, they experienced greater feelings of self-worth and reassurance, which increased their likelihood of engaging in academic activities and seeking support from peers.

Nirwana Permatasari, Farhana Rahmatillah Ashari, Nursyamsu Ismail (2021)	Contribution of perceived social support (peer, family, and teacher) to academic resilience during COVID-19	Linear regression	Descriptive quantitative	Students who felt supported by their social systems demonstrated greater capacity to buffer stress and exhibited stronger problem-solving skills.
Nakakande Saniah (2022)	Social support, subjective happiness and resilience among university students who identify as Muslims	Pearson Correlation (r) coefficient and frequency tables that summarised data	Descriptive quantitative	Individuals without adequate social support were found to have significantly lower levels of resilience. This study confirmed previous research demonstrating a strong link between social support and resilience, particularly within higher education settings. Among the various sources of support, peer support was identified as having the greatest impact on resilience.
Mukokoma M. N. Mary and Arinda Christone (2022)	Social-financial effects of universities' closure due to COVID-19 on students' learning resilience	Correlation analysis	Descriptive quantitative	A clear link was identified between social network support and resilience in learning. The three primary sources of support that influenced resilience were peers, family, and lecturers.
Kizzy M. Lopez, Jennifer M. Geiger, Nathanael J. Okpych, Sara I. Gamez, Danielle Larregui (2022)	The impact of COVID-19 on campus-based support programs serving students with foster care experience: Focus groups with administrators and students	Mixed method analytic strategy	Mixed methods	Relationships with staff formed prior to COVID-19 were found to have a greater impact than those developed in the online learning environment. The main sources of support identified were peers and lecturers. Through peer interactions, students were able to communicate, vent, and share experiences, which facilitated mutual emotional regulation and cognitive processing of challenging situations.
Agnes Yuen-Kwan Lai, Letitia Lee, Man-ping Wang, Yibin Feng, Theresa Tze-Kwan Lai, Lai-ming Ho, Veronica Suk-fun Lam, Maryman Sau Ip and Tai-Hing Lam (2020)	Mental health impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on international university students, related stressors, and coping strategies	Chi-square	Descriptive quantitative	Access to information about academic processes during COVID-19 helped reduce negative emotions among students. Those who felt supported reported lower levels of negative emotions, while students with less perceived support experienced an increase in negative emotional states.

Grace M. Lady (2021)	How can I help? Investigating the role of social supports in academic resilience for undergraduate students	Correlational analysis	Mixed methods	Increased levels of academic resilience were observed among students who felt supported by a strong social network. Social support provided a space for students to vent, reflect on situations cognitively, and develop plans through cognitive appraisal. The process of venting was particularly significant. It was found to reduce negative emotions through catharsis, support emotional regulation, and serve as an important step in problem-solving. Peer support took various forms, including informational support, behavioural modelling, opportunities for venting, and emotional benefits such as reduced negative affect, catharsis, and enhanced problem-solving abilities. These mechanisms of support were shown to have a strengthening effect on academic resilience. Behavioural modelling, in particular, helped students respond more adaptively to future stressors. Moreover, students with strong relationships with peers and family demonstrated higher levels of academic resilience, and lecturers were also identified as having a positive influence on students' academic well-being.
Hae-Ok Kim, Insook Lee (2022)	The mediating effects of social support on the influencing relationship between grit and academic burnout of nursing students	Hierarchical multiple regression analyses	Descriptive quantitative	Academic resilience and social support were indicated to have a positive correlation. Social support was found to reduce negative emotions and decrease stress.
Rizal M Hussain, Nor Syazila Abdul Rahim, Fatma Azwani Abdul Aziz, Rahmawati Umar, Yap Wing Fen, Aminuddin Hassan, Norshahilda Md Shahril (2021)	The relationship between social support and demographic characteristics among Malaysian university students during the COVID-19 pandemic	Descriptive statistics, T-test, One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), and Pearson Correlation analysis	Descriptive quantitative	Social support was found to have a positive impact on students. Support came from peers and academic staff, including friends, lecturers, researchers, administrative, and residential staff. Family and peer support were particularly influential, significantly contributing to student well-being and academic resilience.

				All forms of support helped reduce feelings of loneliness, and the study reported no significant differences in the impact of the different support sources.
Jessica Hopkins (2022)	Supporting women of color in STEM doctoral programs: The association between academic challenges and symptoms of distress and possible moderating effects of academic resilience and perceived social support	Hierarchical multiple regression analysis	Descriptive quantitative	A strong positive relationship was identified between social support and academic resilience. Seeking support was described as an effective coping strategy in itself. Students experiencing distress often turned to family and friends, which increased their perceived support and fostered a greater sense of belonging. This supportive environment enabled students to express themselves in ways that felt authentic. Additionally, advisors and other influential figures were highlighted as playing a key role in students' success and persistence through academic challenges.
Mary A. Hershberger (2023)	Social cognitive predictors of academic success in first-year college students	Descriptive analyses	Descriptive quantitative	Academic resilience was successfully increased when support systems focused on stress reduction and resilience building. Family support was seen to play a vital role in academic resilience by providing information and emotional and cognitive processing of stressors in adjustment to higher education.
David Joshua Heim (2022)	The effect of email communications on professor-student rapport, academic self-efficacy, resiliency, motivation, and student-rapport	Analysis of variance (ANOVA)	Descriptive quantitative	Email communication with students was found to have no significant effect on academic resilience. The study found that support from institutions did not have a significant impact. Instead, academic resilience was more strongly related to course difficulties.
Christa Grant (2022)	Identifying an effective strategy to enhance black students' experiences and sense of belonging at a predominantly White institution through action research	Thematic analysis	Qualitative	Black students in this study developed stronger social support systems, which created environments where they felt safe to share their experiences. Feeling accepted enabled them to both offer and seek advice. University staff played a role by providing information and emotional support. Students also noted that identity-affirming groups and spaces helped them feel more comfortable in their skin, particularly those engaged in academic support programmes. These supports made a significant difference in their academic experiences.

Jory Fulcher (2021)	University students using physical activity as a coping strategy during the COVID-19 pandemic	Ordinal logistic regression analysis	Descriptive quantitative	Social support was found to buffer the effects of stress, functioning as a coping mechanism in its own right. The study identified four key forms of support: emotional, instrumental, informational, and appraisal. Together, these forms helped reduce stress levels and enhance resilience among students.
Mariah D. Ehmke, Bhagyashree Katare, Kristin Kiesel, Jason S. Bergtold, Jerrod M. Penn, Kathryn A. Boys (2021)	U.S. agricultural university students' mental well-being and resilience during the first wave of COVID-19: Discordant expectations and experiences across genders	Linear regression analysis	Mixed method	This study illustrated that resilience was shaped by both community connection and experiences of discrimination, with these factors having a significant impact across the lifespan. They were closely associated with variations in health and life satisfaction across the sample. The influence of these factors was found to be greater in females compared to males.
R. M Díaz-Jiménez Ph. D, F Caravaca-Sánchez Ph. D, M. C Martín-Cano Ph. D, and Y. M. De la Fuente-Robles Ph. (2020)	Anxiety levels among social work students during the COVID-19 lockdown in Spain	Chi-square, nonparametric test	Descriptive quantitative	This study found an inverse relationship between social support and anxiety levels, as support increased, anxiety decreased. Family support, in particular, was associated with the greatest reduction in anxiety.
Adelaide de Villiers (2019)	An examination of the factors that influence postgraduate students' intention to stay in higher education	Item analysis, exploratory factor analysis, structural equation modelling, and partial least squares structural equation modelling	Descriptive quantitative	In this study, social support was identified as one of the key factors influencing a student's ability to complete university. Additionally, academic fit emerged as another important contributor. Together, these two factors had a significant impact on students' willingness and capacity to persist in their academic journeys.

Nerizza Cristobal and Lucila Bance (2021)	Come into bloom: a grounded theory of well-being among Filipino university students	Grounded, iterative analysis	Qualitative	This study explored how social support contributes to student well-being. Findings showed that when individuals shared common interests and experiences with peers, their well-being was positively influenced. In contrast, limited peer interaction and academic pressure had a negative impact. Students who felt supported were more likely to activate their support networks, which in turn enhanced feelings of security and safety. Support systems that were validating had a particularly strong effect on well-being. Families played a central role by offering bonding experiences, advice, and objective reflection. While family support had the strongest influence, participants also reported that peer support provided similar benefits. Additionally, understanding professors who fostered quality interactions were seen as promoting resilience, whereas harsh or punitive academic staff were associated with decreased resilience and well-being.
Ashley C. Gray Benson (2019)	An exploration of factors influencing first-generation college students' ability to graduate college: A Delphi study	Delphi Method	Qualitative	An environment where students felt comfortable sharing their experiences enabled them to receive meaningful peer support, which in turn helped build stronger connections. These relationships often took on familial qualities, offering a vital source of encouragement and support. Faculty who were willing to mentor played an important role in promoting academic resilience. However, most institutions were found to lack formal support systems, which may have contributed to a decline in academic resilience among students.
Jeremy Gonzalez (2021)	Examining the differences in perceived family support, self-esteem, self-efficacy, academic performance, and academic help-seeking on college	Correlational analysis	Descriptive Quantitative	The results of this study indicate that academic performance, self-esteem, perceived parental support, and self-efficacy collectively have a significant influence on the college adjustment and resilience of first-year students.

	adjustment among Hispanic first-year college students			
John M. Barratt, Fazeelat Duran (2021)	Does psychological capital and social support impact engagement and burnout in online distance learning students?	Hierarchical linear regressions	Descriptive quantitative	Student engagement, both socially and academically, was found to be positively influenced by social support. Conversely, students with lower levels of academic resilience experienced decreased self-efficacy, motivation, perseverance, and problem-solving abilities. Individuals with lower levels of psychological development were shown to benefit significantly from social support. The authors suggested this may be due to support enhancing resilience, which in turn improved coping skills and helped mitigate developmental deficits.
Julie Apker (2022)	College student accounts of coping and social support during COVID-19 impacted learning	Grounded, iterative analysis	Qualitative	This study highlighted the importance of activating social support resources as a key coping strategy for managing stressful communication. Reaching out to others with shared experiences was found to benefit both parties, primarily through mutual venting. Venting played a valuable role in reducing negative emotions, fostering reassurance, making individuals feel heard, and offering encouragement. In contrast, interactions with unresponsive staff were associated with increased negative affect, heightened uncertainty, and a further reduction in resilience.

Data Analysis

Thematic analysis of the data revealed four themes: the relationship between social support and academic resilience, support from peers, support from family, and support from lecturers.

Table 3: Themes and Sub-themes

Theme	Sub-themes
Social Support and Academic Resilience	• Emotional regulation • Loneliness
Support from Peers	• Activities • Emotional support
Support from Family	• Family as a coping mechanism • Venting
Support from Lecturers	• Communication

Theme 1: Social Support and Academic Resilience

Thematic analysis of the relationship between social support and academic resilience indicated a strong correlation. One study by Putri and Nursanti found that social support and learning resilience were strongly related.[30] Additionally, it was noted that a perceived lack of social support made it more difficult for students to continue and complete their studies in higher education. Grant also found a correlation between social support, student retention and graduation rates.[31] This could indicate that when students do not perceive themselves as having social support, they may find it more difficult to overcome challenges faced in higher education. Additionally, social support may function as a buffer for low levels of internal resilience. Social support impacted engagement by increasing resilience.[32] This could indicate that when students are faced with difficulties, social support may assist in increasing resilience.

Sub-theme 1: Emotional regulation

The analysis also highlighted the emotional impact that social support may have. Polizzi and Lynn found that students reported increased resilience when they perceived social support.[33] Their findings suggest that students who feel supported are more likely to report higher levels of resilience. This may be linked to the findings of Putri and Nursanti, who noted that social support helps reassure students of their self-worth, thereby enhancing their self-belief.[34] Social support in the form of reassurance could lead to better coping strategies being utilised, increasing resilience. This could indicate that when an individual feels that they have social support, they are better able to develop strategies that enhance resilience and are better able to overcome difficulties. Several articles indicated that venting may be one of the mechanisms that help reduce the negative emotions associated with social support. Venting has several functions, including catharsis, reduction of negative emotion and obtaining recognition and nurturance.[35] This suggests that social support may reduce emotional pressure on students, thereby enhancing their academic resilience.

In addition to this, a lower level of social support may increase negative emotions, with an article by Bernardon et al., stating that when social support was lower, there was an increased chance of poor

[30] Wening Cahya, Putri and Ade Nursanti, "The Relationship between Peer Social Support and Academic Resilience of Young Adult Migrant Students in Jakarta," *International Journal of Education* 13, no. 2 (2020): 122–30.
[31] Christa Grant, *Identifying an Effective Strategy to Enhance Black Students' Experiences and Sense of Belonging at a Predominantly White Institution through Action Research* (Northeastern University, 2022).
[32] John M, Barratt and Fazeelat Duran, "Does Psychological Capital and Social Support Impact Engagement and Burnout in Online Distance Learning Students?," *The Internet and Higher Education* 51 (2021): 100821.
[33] Craig P, Polizzi and Steven Jay Lynn, "Regulating Emotionality to Manage Adversity: A Systematic Review of the Relation between Emotion Regulation and Psychological Resilience," *Cognitive Therapy and Research*, 2021, 1–21.
[34] Putri and Ade Nursanti, "The Relationship between Peer Social Support and Academic Resilience of Young Adult Migrant Students in Jakarta."
[35] Julie Apker , "College Student Accounts of Coping and Social Support During Covid-19 Impacted Learning," *Communication Quarterly* 70, no. 3 (2022): 296–316.

mental health.[36] One article suggests that social support may reduce feelings of loneliness, with Kim and Lee, showing that reduction in loneliness was one of the functions of social support.[37] This could indicate that social support plays a role in cultivating an emotionally supportive and psychologically safe environment, where individuals feel able to express themselves authentically. Hopkins highlights in her study that creating such spaces fosters a sense of belonging and encourages congruent self-expression.[38]

Sub-theme 2: Loneliness

Loneliness was found to be a factor that negatively affected academic resilience. Individuals who displayed lower resilience did not have a present social support system.[39] This finding would indicate that when individuals do not have the required social support, they begin to experience loneliness, lowering their academic resilience.

Similar findings are that academic resilience was greatly affected by social support.[40] This would indicate that just the presence of social interaction has a positive influence on social support. These findings may suggest that when individuals perceive social support, they are more likely to have meaningful social interations and connections with others. Social support had a significant effect on the reduction of loneliness.[41] The source of social support had no observed difference in the reduction of loneliness.[42] This would suggest that whilst social support from certain sources may play a larger role in increasing academic resilience, both interactions with these key sources and with others outside of them can significantly reduce feelings of loneliness.

Theme 2: Support from Peers

Perceived social support from peers was found to play a role in how social support impacts academic resilience, social support from peers, both through assistance and non-assistance, was seen to have a positive effect on the academic resilience of migrant students.[43]

In the theme of support from peers, two sub-themes emerged, including activities and emotional support. Social support could increase academic resilience through peer-based activities. This may indicate that peer activities play a role in enhancing academic resilience.[44]

Additionally, when individuals are made to feel that they belong, students are more likely to engage in behaviours that enhance their social support. An environment that promotes connection encourages individuals to share their experiences and fosters a sense of community.[45] Feeling connected to one's environment increases resilience and well-being and has a positive effect on students.[46] This suggests that it is important for individuals to perceive that they have social support with which they can genuinely connect.

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[36] Stephanie, Bernardon et al., "Loneliness, Attachment, and the Perception and Use of Social Support in University Students," *Canadian Journal of Behavioural Science/Revue Canadienne Des Sciences Du Comportement* 43,no.1(2011): 40.

[37] Hae-Ok Kim and Insook Lee, "The Mediating Effects of Social Support on the Influencing Relationship between Grit and Academic Burnout of the Nursing Students," *Nursing Open* 9, no. 5 (2022): 2314–24.

[38] Jessica Hopkins, "Supporting Women of Color in STEM Doctoral Programs: The Association between Academic Challenges and Symptoms of Distress and Possible Moderating Effects of Academic Resilience and Perceived Social Support" (Arizona State University, 2022).

[39] Saniah Nakakande, "Social Support, Subjective Happiness and Resilience among University Students Who Identify as Muslims" (Makerere University, 2022).

[40] Mary MN Mukokoma and Christone Arinda, "Social-Financial Effects of Universities' Closure Due to Covid-19 on Students' Learning Resilience," *African Journal of Education, Science and Technology* 7, no. 1 (2022): 18–31.

[41] Mohd Rizal Hussain et al., "The Relationship between Social Support and Demographic Characteristics among Malaysian University Students During the Covid-19 Pandemic," *International Journal of Human Resource Studies* 11, no. 4S (2021): 8097–97.

[42] Hussain et al., "The Relationship between Social Support and Demographic Characteristics among Malaysian University Students During the Covid-19 Pandemic."

[43] Putri and Ade Nursanti, "The Relationship between Peer Social Support and Academic Resilience of Young Adult Migrant Students in Jakarta."

[44] Warshawski, "Academic self-efficacy, resilience and social support among first-year Israeli nursing students learning in online environments during COVID-19 pandemic."

[45] Grant, "Identifying an Effective Strategy to Enhance Black Students' Experiences and Sense of Belonging at a Predominantly White Institution through Action Research."

[46] Mariah D. Ehmke et al., "Us Agricultural University Students' Mental Well-Being and Resilience During the First Wave of Covid-19: Discordant Expectations and Experiences across Genders," *Applied Economic Perspectives and Policy* 44, no. 1 (2022): 129–61.

Sub-theme 1: Activities

As previously mentioned, venting may also play a role in fostering resilience and reducing negative emotions. However, the more powerful element in fostering resilience may be the informational support offered by peers. Informational support encompassed behavioural strategies, including peer-assisted studying.[47] Many participants found that this directly reduced anxiety and increased resilience. These interactions also allowed for more experienced peers to model behaviours that could strengthen resilience. This may suggest that, while venting is an important aspect of this form of social support, informational support from peers may play a stronger role in academic resilience. Material support also led to greater insight into problem-solving, including what actions, steps, or activities could be used to address common academic challenges.[48] This may indicate that the social support provided by peers can help students develop coping strategies and enhance their problem-solving abilities. In turn, this may enable them to navigate similar situations in the future, thereby increasing resilience.

Sub-theme 2: Emotional support

The second sub-theme, namely emotional support, was found to influence academic resilience. Lopez et al. stated that an important function of social support is to foster understanding of the individual's experiences and to ensure that the individual feels connected to their support system.[49] This emotional support may also play a role in engagement in peer activities. Participants were found to be far more likely to seek support from individuals who were able to relate to the challenges that the participants were facing, and this led to a sense of community.[50] This would imply that when students feel they are understood and accepted, they are more likely to participate in activities that may foster academic resilience.

Additionally, when students feel accepted and emotionally supported, they may display increased resilience due to lower levels of negative emotion, as mentioned above: connection and student well-being was found to be related to interactions with peers.[51] Conversely, they also found that low peer interaction had a negative effect on well-being.[52] When students have emotional support, they are able to develop relationships that offer continued social support.[53]

Theme 3: Support from Family

Analysis indicated that family support played a significant role in building resilience in students. Family, peer, and lecturer support were all fundamental in fostering resilience.[54] Family may assist the individual in adjusting to the increased demands of higher education. First-year students who perceived themselves as having parental support showed a significant improvement in college adjustment.[55] Family support may be a coping mechanism.[56]

[47] Lady, "How can I help? Investigating the role of social supports in academic resilience for undergraduate students."
[48] Putri and Nursanti, "The relationship between peer social support and academic resilience of young adult migrant students in Jakarta."
[49] Kizzy M, Lopez et al., "The Impact of Covid-19 on Campus-Based Support Programs Serving Students with Foster Care Experience: Focus Groups with Administrators and Students," *Children and Youth Services Review* 142 (2022): 106696.
[50] Hopkins, "Supporting Women of Color in STEM Doctoral Programs: The Association Between Academic Challenges and Symptoms of Distress and Possible Moderating Effects of Academic Resilience and Perceived Social Support."
[51] Nerizza V, Cristobal and Lucila O. Bance, "Come into Bloom: A Grounded Theory of Well-Being among Filipino University Students," *Philippine Social Science Journal* 4, no. 4 (2021): 40–49.
[52] Cristobal and Bance, "Come into Bloom: A Grounded Theory of Well-Being among Filipino University Students."
[53] Ashley C. Gray. Benson, "An Exploration of Factors Influencing First-Generation College Students' Ability to Graduate College: A Delphi Study" (Antioch University, 2020).
[54] Mary A. Hershberger, "Social Cognitive Predictors of Academic Success in First-Year College Students" (The University of New Mexico, 2020).
[55] Marian, González-García et al., "Feasibility of a Brief Online Mindfulness and Compassion-Based Intervention to Promote Mental Health among University Students During the Covid-19 Pandemic," *Mindfulness* 12, no. 7 (2021): 1685–95.
[56] Hopkins, "Supporting Women of Color in STEM Doctoral Programs: The Association Between Academic Challenges and Symptoms of Distress and Possible Moderating Effects of Academic Resilience and Perceived Social Support."

Sub-theme 1: Family as a coping mechanism

Support received from family and friends may be a part of academic resilience in the form of adaptive coping mechanisms, with Hopkins[57] explaining that when students experience high levels of stress and distress, they rely on their family and peer support systems. When family support is not available, it may cause negative perceptions of academic ability and preparedness, suggesting that first-generation university students may perceive themselves as being less capable academically. As with peer support, parental support may assist in increasing academic resilience.[58] Family support could have a positive effect on an individual's self-efficacy, leading to increased self-esteem and adjustment to higher education.[59] This increased college adjustment may be a result of increased academic resilience fostered by the family system. Additionally, factors affecting the family could affect the quality of the family's ability to function as a coping mechanism. Socioeconomic status and willingness to engage in activities strongly affected participants' well-being.[60] This would indicate that while a family could be seen as a coping mechanism, it could negatively influence an individual's academic resilience, and judgements about how realistic and prepared they are to succeed. These negative self-views may place strain on the student, lowering academic resilience. The view of the family system as a support system could be an indication that it interacts with academic resilience in a complex and multifaceted manner.

Sub-theme 2: Venting

As with peer support, family support may provide a space for students to vent, with many students frequently turning to family members to express their frustrations.[61] As previously stated, venting may serve as a way to release negative emotions. This could assist in enhanced emotional resources and, therefore, increase academic resilience. Venting may also allow an individual to increase coping skills. Individuals also become more reliant on family and peers when in distress.[62] This would indicate that when a student is seeking support in a family environment, this may come as a form of venting to their family members. First-generation college students may perceive university differently and their family support may not be as effective as students with families who have previously attended university. [63]

While venting plays a role, there may be other influences that assist in the impact that venting has. Support may also assist students in how to use their resources in such a way that it reduces stress and assists in overcoming challenges.[64] This may suggest that venting also enables individuals to activate internal or external resources, which can help reduce stress or negative emotions beyond the immediate relief it provides.

Theme 4: Support from Lecturers

The collected data indicated mixed results regarding the efficacy of lecturer and staff support. Email communications providing information had little to no effect on resilience.[65] Conversely, all sources of support, including lecturer support, played an important role in building resilience.[66] This could indicate that while support from lecturers did play a role in academic resilience, this impact may not be as significant as other forms of social support. An example of assistance that was found to assist in the cultivation of resilience was studied by Lopez et al.,[67] who found that staff who had existing relationships with students and facilitated an environment that fosters resilience by making direct contact with students,

[57] Hopkins, "Supporting Women of Color in STEM Doctoral Programs: The Association Between Academic Challenges and Symptoms of Distress and Possible Moderating Effects of Academic Resilience and Perceived Social Support."
[58] Hershberger, "Social Cognitive Predictors of Academic Success in First-Year College Students."
[59] González-García et al., "Feasibility of a brief online mindfulness and compassion-based intervention to promote mental health among university students during the COVID-19 pandemic."
[60] Cristobal and Bance, "Come into bloom: A grounded theory of well-being among filipino university students."
[61] Apker, "College student accounts of coping and social support during COVID-19 impacted learning."
[62] Hopkins, "Supporting Women of Color in STEM Doctoral Programs: The Association Between Academic Challenges and Symptoms of Distress and Possible Moderating Effects of Academic Resilience and Perceived Social Support."
[63] Hershberger, "Social Cognitive Predictors of Academic Success in First-Year College Students."
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[65] David J. Heim, "The Effect of Email Communications on Professor-Student Rapport, Academic Self-Efficacy, Resiliency, Motivation, and Student-Rapport," 2022.
[66] Hershberger, "Social Cognitive Predictors of Academic Success in First-Year College Students."
[67] Lopez et al., "The impact of COVID-19 on campus-based support programs serving students with foster care experience: Focus groups with administrators and students."

assessing and assisting with their need and providing encouragement. This may indicate that by building relationships and offering consistent encouragement, lecturers can positively influence academic resilience.

Sub-theme: Communication

Additionally, the study conducted by Lady,[68] determined that informational support from lectures and academic staff helped create positive feelings regarding academic work and increased their self-esteem, thus increasing motivation to overcome challenges. This may indicate that lecturers' social support may impact resilience by fostering motivation and enjoyment in their students and that this may increase resilience in students. Inversely, when lecturers are unresponsive or absent, it may have a negative impact on resilience by increasing negative emotions and creating confusion. Apker found that individuals who perceived their lecturers as unresponsive and uncommunicative experienced greater uncertainty and stress. [69] However, they later indicate that this can be mitigated when individuals have informational support from peers. As highlighted by Apker much like in family support, lecturers' support may be seen as a coping mechanism that constitutes resilience.

DISCUSSION

This review found that perceived social support may significantly influence academic resilience. Through thematic analysis, perceived social support emerged as a complex and multifaceted factor in fostering resilience among students. The studies indicated that social support exists predominantly between three support networks, namely peers, family, and lecturers.

Social support was found not only to increase resilience but also to buffer the effects of negative emotions such as anxiety and stress.[70] Poor social support or negative family systems could have a lowering effect on academic resilience. Individuals from a lower socio-economic status (SES) background were at a higher risk of experiencing a significant negative impact from COVID-19.[71] This could indicate that individuals may have experienced more negative emotions due to family members being at risk of COVID-19, thus decreasing the resources available for other areas of academics, thereby decreasing academic resilience. Interestingly, it was reported that individuals from low SES families receive financial and social support, which buffers against the negative effects associated with low SES status.[72]

The analysis indicated that family support assisted in building resilience in students. Family may assist the individual in adjusting to the increased demands of higher education. The study by González-García et al., found that a supportive family increased an individual's adjustment to higher education.[73] Academic resilience was greatly affected by social support.[74] This would indicate that the mere presence of social interaction has a positive influence on academic resilience. The effect of perception of support on loneliness is further explained by Bernardon et al., who showed that just the perception of support decreased feelings of loneliness in students, as loneliness was found to have increased during the pandemic.[75] The family system may have had an impact on students' resilience. This resilience, including the individual's improved adjustment to higher education, could indicate the strong effect that family social support has on academic resilience.[76] This may imply that when a student is given adequate social support, students are better equipped to navigate the difficulties associated with higher education. Social

[68] Lady, "How can I help? Investigating the role of social supports in academic resilience for undergraduate students."
[69] Apker, "College student accounts of coping and social support during COVID-19 impacted learning."
[70] Phillip M, Jolly, Dejun Tony Kong, and Kyoung Yong Kim, " Social Support at Work: An Integrative Review," *Journal of Organizational Behavior* 42 (2021): 229–51.
[71] Xiaogang Wu et al., "Two Tales of One City: Unequal Vulnerability and Resilience to Covid-19 by Socioeconomic Status in Wuhan, China," *Research in Social Stratification and Mobility*, 2021, 100584.
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[73] González-García et al., "Feasibility of a brief online mindfulness and compassion-based intervention to promote mental health among university students during the COVID-19 pandemic."
[74] Mukokoma and Arinda, "Social-Financial Effects of Universities' Closure due to COVID-19 on Students' Learning Resilience."
[75] Bernardon et al., "Loneliness, Attachment, and the Perception and Use of Social Support in University Students."
[76] Permatasari, Ashari, and Ismail, "Contribution of perceived social support (peer, family, and teacher) to academic resilience during COVID-19."

support could assist in the regulation of negative affect.[77] This could indicate that social support plays a dual role in resilience. The first role may be assisting in increasing resources for the student while lowering levels of negative emotions. It was noted that venting was one of the most common mechanisms that assisted in the reduction of negative emotions. Venting may be a mechanism that allows for catharsis of negative emotions. [78]

Venting may be a more popular mechanism in the family support system than in the peer support system. Venting may be a way to remove negative emotions, which could assist in enhancing emotional resources and, therefore, increase academic resilience.[79] Venting may be a more popular mechanism in family systems as an individual may have learned to use their family's coping strategies and communication strategies.[80] Individuals have effective coping strategies, resilience can be built, further stated that making sense, improvisation and adaptation are key to the fostering of resilience. [81] Additionally, individuals may feel more comfortable sharing their negative emotions with family members. As mentioned before, the comfort of an individual within a system may play a large role in their willingness to access the family as a mechanism for venting. This would indicate that the mechanisms in perceived family support are that the family support system itself can be seen as a form of emotional regulation and that one of the mechanisms used by the family support system is venting.[82] The findings further showed that a family can impart longer-term coping skills and problem-solving abilities to its members. This may be why individuals feel that venting is the primary mechanism. In contrast, the same mechanisms that peers use may be incorporated into family venting and more long-standing family relational patterns. This may provide an individual with a safe place where venting is possible. As previously mentioned, venting may also play a role in fostering resilience and lowering negative emotions. This venting may serve as a form of emotional regulation that occurs between peers in an academic setting. This would suggest that when an individual perceives that they have social support, they are able to express emotions. Peers may also play a role in that emotional regulation. This reduction in negative emotion could assist in providing more resilience resources dedicated to academic challenges.

Perceived social support would have a significant effect on academic resilience through the emotional regulation of the individual.[83] This finding was consistent with Fu et al.,'s research, which found that perceived social support assisted individuals in better emotional regulation.[84] However, the present literature does not present a clear picture of how social support impacts the emotional regulation of individuals, more specifically during pandemics such as COVID-19. Social support could play a part in assisting individuals with reappraisal and suppression.[85] This would indicate that when an individual feels that they belong, they may be more willing to accept the reappraisal of situations or suppression of negative emotions. However, unlike the findings by Kitahara, Mearns, and Shimoyama, the data may indicate that, depending on the different sources of support, venting may also play a role in emotional regulation.[86] While venting could be seen as a form of catharsis, it could also contribute to the reappraisal

[77] Leia Y. Saltzman, Tonya Cross Hansel, and Patrick S Bordnick, "Loneliness, Isolation, and Social Support Factors in Post-Covid-19 Mental Health," *Psychological Trauma: Theory, Research, Practice, and Policy* 12, no. S1 (2020): 55.
[78] Hart, "Factors associated with student persistence in an online program of study: A review of the literature."
[79] Rachele Mariani et al., "The Impact of Coping Strategies and Perceived Family Support on Depressive and Anxious Symptomatology During the Coronavirus Pandemic (Covid-19) Lockdown," *Frontiers in Psychiatry* 11 (2020): 587724.
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[85] Yuri, Kitahara, Jack Mearns, and Haruhiko Shimoyama, "Emotion Regulation and Middle School Adjustment in Japanese Girls: Mediation by Perceived Social Support," *Japanese Psychological Research* 62, no. 2 (2020): 138–50.
[86] Kitahara, Mearns, and Shimoyama, "Emotion Regulation and Middle School Adjustment in Japanese Girls: Mediation by Perceived Social Support."

or suppression of situations by individuals.[87] Venting could be seen to be one of the mechanisms through which an individual is able to solve problems through the process of appraisal.

Peers were also found to be very helpful in problem-solving. It was found that the use of modelling and preparation assisted individuals in managing academic stress.[88] This may allow the student to navigate similar situations in the future, thereby increasing resilience. It is important to note that when an individual perceives others as being high performers there can be a reduction in self-efficacy that may increase adversity that students face in higher education. [89]

This could indicate that peer support from older students may assist individuals in the development of behavioural patterns and emotional preparedness that could foster long-term academic resilience, or alternatively could have a negative impact if the influence is unhelpful or misaligned. The central function of this form of support is the perception of the support. An individual who perceives social support from their peers may be more likely to ask for assistance and accept assistance when in need.[90] Additionally, when they perceive support, they may be more likely to internalise the behaviours of older students.[91] In support from peers, two sub-themes emerged, namely, activities and emotional support.

The collected data indicated mixed results regarding the efficacy of the lecturer and support staff. Literature was divided on the effectiveness of perceived support from lecturers, with some studies finding that there was no impact, whilst others found a significant impact. This could indicate that while support from lecturers may play a role in academic resilience, this impact may not be as significant as other forms of social support. The most effective form of resilience building through lecturers could have been the informational aspect. This informational support was found to provide a sense of stability and feelings of safety and understanding. Support from lecturers indicated that when lecturers are open and timely with communications and information, it increases the academic resilience of an individual. When lecturers communicate, it creates positive feedback loops.[92] Additionally, when lecturers communicate challenges or expectations, students may feel that they are able to cope, and this may bolster their resilience. When lecturers are open in their communication, students feel that they are developing a relationship with their lecturer and that this increases resilience.[93] Additionally, this communication could foster a feeling that an individual belongs. This sense of belonging can increase resilience, as illustrated earlier in this paper.

Inversely, when lecturers are unresponsive or absent, it may have a negative impact on resilience by increasing negative emotions and creating confusion. However, this lack of information sharing by the lecturers can also strain the relationship between the lecturer and the student, thus further diminishing the student's resilience. Overall, unresponsiveness seemed to have a more significant impact on academic resilience than positive communication did.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Institutions of higher education could assist in fostering perceived social support by creating social events or entities that promote students' sense of belonging. Interventions that create social support are believed to have a significant impact on the creation of social support systems and extended networks. A befriending/social support programme has been found to have promising results in increasing perceived social support. Peer support systems or groups could be created with the aim of providing peer

[87] Kristin J, Behfar, Matthew A Cronin, and Kimberly McCarthy, "Realizing the Upside of Venting: The Role of the 'Challenger Listener,'" *Academy of Management Discoveries* 6, no. 4 (2020): 609–30.
[88] Bhavya Agarwal, Samantha K Brooks, and Neil Greenberg, "The Role of Peer Support in Managing Occupational Stress: A Qualitative Study of the Sustaining Resilience at Work Intervention," *Workplace Health & Safety 68, No. 2 (2020): 57-64.* 68, no. 2 (2020): 57–64.
[89] Agarwal, Brooks, and Greenberg, "The role of peer support in managing occupational stress: a qualitative study of the sustaining resilience at work intervention."
[90] Antonia Aguirre Velasco et al., "What Are the Barriers, Facilitators and Interventions Targeting Help-Seeking Behaviours for Common Mental Health Problems in Adolescents? A Systematic Review," *BMC Psychiatry* 20 (2020): 1–11; Martina Jablotschkin et al., "Benefits and Challenges of Cancer Peer Support Groups: A Systematic Review of Qualitative Studies," *European Journal of Cancer Care* 31, no. 6 (2022): e13700.
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information, peer preparation and peer socialising, these groups have been shown to be effective. Students with low-income family support systems could be given extra support, as this could buffer against low-income family social support. Additionally, lecturers should be encouraged to give clear and timely communications regarding course information. Institutions of higher learning could also establish policies encouraging students who require institutional support to reach out.

CONCLUSION

The current study aimed to explore the role that perceived social support played in academic resilience during COVID-19, using a systematic review methodology. The results indicated that perceived social support may play a central role in the development of strong support systems. These support systems may assist the individual in regulating negative effects, thus increasing resilience resources that can be used in an academic setting. This regulation by support systems would indicate that when individuals perceive that they have social support, they are able to foster strong social support systems that increase academic resilience and decrease negative emotions, and that may increase the number of academic resources that can be used in other stressors associated with higher education. The findings suggest that various forms of social support, particularly from peers, family, and lecturers, contributed to strengthening students' resilience in the face of pandemic-related challenges. Identified sources of support included being given information about the task, learning strategies and behaviours from others and emotional regulation strategies. Additionally, the family and institution systems could be seen as a coping mechanism when activated by the individual. Whilst the family system was seen as a powerful coping mechanism by literature, institutional support may not have been illustrated as having a strong effect on the academic resilience of students. This study found that there may be a limited understanding in the literature surrounding the mechanisms that social support uses when building academic resilience. Further research could be directed toward exploring and understanding these mechanisms.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

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