A CORRELATIONAL ANALYSIS OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RESILIENCE AND PERCEIVED STRESS AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS

A

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I hereby declare that the work presented in the dissertation entitled:

"A CORRELATIONAL ANALYSIS OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RESILIENCE AND PERCEIVED STRESS AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS" submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Bachelor of Arts (Honours with Research) to MIER College of Education (Autonomous), is an authentic record of my own research work carried out under the supervision of Ms Upasana Moten, Assistant Professor.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CERTIFICATE ii
DECLARATION BY THE CANDIDATE iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT iv
LIST OF TABLES viii
LIST OF FIGURES ix
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS x
LIST OF APPENDICES xi
ABSTRACT xii
CHAPTER I 2
INTRODUCTION 2
1.1 COLLEGE STUDENTS 3
1.2 RESILIENCE 5
1.2.1 Importance of Resilience in College Students 7
1.3 STRESS 8
1.3.1 Impact of Stress on College Students 10
1.4 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RESILIENCE AND PERCEIVED STRESS AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS 11
1.5 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK 14
1.5.1 Cognitive Appraisal of Stress 15
1.5.2 Resilience as a Coping Resource 15
1.5.3 The Transactional and Dynamic Nature of Stress 15
1.5.4 Social and Environmental Support 16
1.5.5 Coping Strategies and Academic Outcomes 16
1.5.6 Implications for Perceived Stress and Resilience 16
1.5.7 Application to the Present Study 16
1.5.8 Conclusion 17
1.6 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM 17
1.7 OPERATIONAL DEFINITION 17
1.8 OBJECTIVES 18
1.9 HYPOTHESIS 18
1.10 DELIMITATIONS 18
1.11 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY 19

CHAPTER II 22
REVIEW OF LITERATURE 22
2.1 RESILIENCE 23
2.2 PERCEIVED STRESS 27
2.3 STUDIES LINKING RESILIENCE AND PERCEIVED STRESS AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS 31
2.4 RESEARCH GAP 35
CHAPTER III 37
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY 37
3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN 37
3.2 POPULATION AND SAMPLE 37
3.3 SAMPLING TECHNIQUE 38
3.4 RESEARCH TOOLS AND DESCRIPTION 38
3.4.1 Connor–Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC-10) 39
3.4.2 Perceived Stress Scale (PSS-10) 39
3.5 STATISTICAL TECHNIQUE EMPLOYED 40
CHAPTER IV 42
ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA 42
CHAPTER V 49
FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, DISCUSSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH 50
5.1 INTRODUCTION 50
5.2 INTERPRETATION OF THE FINDINGS 51
5.2.1 Relationship Between Resilience and Perceived Stress 51
5.2.2 Gender Differences in Resilience 51
5.2.3 Gender Differences in Perceived Stress 52
5.3 IMPLICATIONS FOR THEORY AND RESEARCH 52
5.4 IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE 52
5.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY 53
5.6 SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH 53
5.7 CONCLUSION 54
SUMMARY 56
INTRODUCTION 56
RATIONALE OF THE STUDY 57
NEED AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY 57
STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM 58

OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS 58
OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY 59
HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY 59
POPULATION AND SAMPLE OF THE STUDY 59
SAMPLING TECHNIQUE 59
TOOLS USED 60
STATISTICAL TECHNIQUES USED 60
RESULTS OF THE STUDY 60
SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH 61
CONCLUSION 62
REFERENCES 63
APPENDIX-I 67
APPENDIX-II 69

LIST OF TABLES

Table 4.1: Demographic profile of the respondents 42

Table 4.2: Means, standard deviations, and correlations 45

Table 4.3: Presents the results of the Independent Samples t-test conducted to examine gender differences in Resilience among participants.....47

Table 4.4: Presents the results of the Independent Samples t-test conducted to examine gender differences in perceived stress (PSS) among participants. 48

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 4.1 Age Percentages 44

Figure 4.2 Gender Percentages 44

Figure 4.3 Course Percentages 45

Figure 4.4 Type of Institutions 45

Figure 4.5 Scatter Plot Representing the correlation between resilience and perceived stress

.....47

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ABBREVIATION	FULL FORM
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
PSS	Perceived Stress Scale
M	Mean
N/n	Total Population/ Sample Size
p	Probability value (p-value)
r	Pearson Correlation Coefficient
SD	Standard deviation
t	t-statistic (Independent Samples t-test)

LIST OF APPENDICES

APPENDIX	TITLE
Appendix I	Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC)
Appendix II	Perceived Stress Scale (PSS-10)

ABSTRACT

The present study investigates the relationship between resilience and perceived stress among college students, a population increasingly exposed to academic, social, and personal challenges. In contemporary higher education settings, students often encounter multiple stressors, including academic workload, performance expectations, and uncertainty regarding future careers, making it essential to examine psychological resources that promote effective coping. Resilience, as a dynamic capacity to adapt to adversity, is considered a key factor in mitigating the negative effects of stress.

A quantitative, cross-sectional research design was employed, and a total of 152 college students were selected through convenience sampling. Data were collected using standardised instruments, namely the Connor–Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC-10) and the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS-10). Statistical analyses included descriptive statistics, Pearson's product-moment correlation, and independent samples t-tests to examine relationships and differences among variables.

The results indicated moderate levels of resilience ($M = 23.37$, $SD = 6.137$) and perceived stress ($M = 21.28$, $SD = 4.578$) among participants. A statistically significant negative correlation was found between resilience and perceived stress ($r = -0.342$, $p < .01$), suggesting that higher resilience is associated with lower perceived stress. These findings support the view that resilience serves as a protective factor, enabling students to manage stress effectively and maintain psychological well-being. Demographic analysis provided additional insights into the sample characteristics, although the central relationship between resilience and stress remained consistent.

In conclusion, the study highlights the crucial role of resilience in reducing perceived stress and enhancing students' ability to cope with academic and life challenges. The findings emphasise the importance of incorporating resilience-building programs, stress management interventions, and supportive institutional practices within higher education to promote mental health, academic success, and overall well-being among students.

Keywords: resilience, perceived stress, college student

CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the mental health of college students has received increasing scholarly attention due to the growing prevalence of stress-related concerns in higher education. Contemporary research indicates that college students are exposed to multiple academic, personal, and social stressors, including heavy coursework, frequent examinations, competitive academic environments, peer comparison, financial strain, and uncertainty regarding future career prospects (Gupta & Saini, 2023). These stressors often coexist with developmental challenges, making students particularly vulnerable to psychological strain during their academic journey.

Recent studies have further highlighted that perceived stress among college students varies across demographic and academic factors. Saddique et al. (2021) reported that female students consistently experience higher levels of perceived stress than male students, suggesting gender-based vulnerability linked to academic expectations, emotional responsibilities, and social pressures. Their findings also revealed that students in higher academic years and those enrolled in academically demanding courses report greater stress due to increased workload, time constraints, and concerns related to academic performance and employability.

The relationship between perceived stress and resilience has become a central focus of recent student mental health research. Empirical evidence consistently demonstrates a significant negative association between these two variables, indicating that resilience functions as a protective factor that buffers the adverse effects of stress on psychological well-being and academic functioning (Abolghasemi & Varaniyab, 2010; Saddique et al., 2021). Students with higher resilience are better able to manage academic pressures, reinterpret stressors positively, and sustain motivation despite challenges.

Earlier empirical findings by Abolghasemi and Varaniyab (2010) revealed that elevated levels of perceived stress are significantly associated with negative psychological outcomes, including anxiety, depressive symptoms, reduced life satisfaction, and poorer academic performance. Their study underscored the long-term consequences of unmanaged stress, particularly when students perceive academic and personal demands as overwhelming or uncontrollable.

The construct of resilience was further elaborated by Connor and Davidson (2003), who defined it as the capacity to cope effectively with stress, recover from adversity, and maintain psychological stability in challenging situations. Resilience is conceptualised as a dynamic and developable process rather than a fixed trait, shaped by experience, social support, and adaptive coping strategies. Research indicates that resilient students demonstrate better emotional regulation, optimism, problem-solving skills, and academic persistence.

From a theoretical perspective, Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) Stress and Coping Theory provides a foundational framework for understanding stress experiences. According to this model, stress outcomes depend on individuals' cognitive appraisal of demands and the availability of coping resources rather than on stressors alone. Within this framework, resilience enhances coping capacity and influences how students evaluate and respond to academic and personal challenges.

The concept of perceived stress was originally introduced by Cohen et al. (1983), who defined it as the extent to which individuals perceive situations in their lives as stressful, unpredictable, and exceeding their coping resources. This appraisal-based perspective emphasises that stress is subjective in nature and shaped by personal interpretation. Among college students, similar academic demands may therefore be experienced differently depending on coping abilities, emotional regulation, and support systems.

Therefore, the present study seeks to examine perceived stress and resilience among college students, contributing to the growing body of literature in educational and health psychology. By exploring this relationship, the study aims to generate empirical evidence that can inform preventive strategies, counselling services, and institutional policies designed to promote psychological well-being, resilience, and academic success among college students.

1.1 COLLEGE STUDENTS

Despite the growing recognition of mental health concerns in higher education, access to professional psychological support remains limited in many Indian institutions. Counselling services are often insufficient, underutilised, or inaccessible due to stigma, lack of awareness, or fear of social judgment. Consequently, many students rely on maladaptive coping strategies, such as avoidance, procrastination, or emotional suppression, which may exacerbate stress and psychological difficulties.

Given these challenges, Indian college students represent a vulnerable population requiring focused psychological research and institutional support. Understanding their experiences is essential for examining how factors such as perceived stress and resilience influence mental health and academic outcomes. Studying this population can help identify protective psychological resources, inform targeted interventions, and guide the development of student-centred policies that promote emotional well-being, adaptive coping, and academic success.

The transition to college life also involves significant social and environmental adjustments. Students may relocate from their hometowns to urban centres or hostels, resulting in reduced family support and increased responsibility for daily living. Adjusting to new peer groups, managing interpersonal relationships, and navigating romantic and social expectations can contribute to emotional distress and feelings of isolation. Research has shown that these transitional stressors, when combined with academic pressure, can adversely affect students' mental health and academic engagement (Deb et al., 2015).

Beyond academic demands, Indian college students often experience strong parental and societal expectations regarding career success and financial stability. Many students feel obligated to meet family aspirations, particularly in households where education is viewed as a primary means of socioeconomic advancement. Financial constraints, rising educational costs, and concerns about employability in an increasingly competitive job market add further strain. Students from rural areas or economically disadvantaged backgrounds may face additional challenges, including language barriers, cultural adjustment, and limited access to academic resources.

India's higher education system is among the largest in the world, enrolling over 40 million students across public and private institutions. While this vast system provides opportunities for academic advancement, skill development, and upward social mobility, it also places substantial demands on students. The competitive nature of admissions, continuous assessments, semester-based examinations, and pressure to maintain academic excellence contribute to heightened academic stress. For many students, academic performance is closely tied to future career prospects, social status, and family expectations, further intensifying performance-related anxiety.

In India, college students generally refer to young adults enrolled in undergraduate and postgraduate programs offered by universities, colleges, and professional institutions across diverse disciplines. These students are typically between 18 and 25 years of age, a

developmental phase identified as emerging adulthood, characterised by identity exploration, emotional development, increasing autonomy, and preparation for adult roles (Arnett, 2000). This stage involves significant psychological and social transitions, as students move away from the structured environment of school and family supervision toward greater independence and self-regulation.

1.2 RESILIENCE

Resilience is broadly defined as the capacity of an individual to adapt successfully in the face of adversity, stress, or significant life challenges. Rather than implying the absence of stress or difficulty, resilience refers to the ability to withstand, recover from, and grow through challenging experiences. Masten (2014) described resilience as "ordinary magic," emphasising that it is a common human capacity shaped by biological, psychological, and social systems. For college students, resilience is especially important, as this developmental stage is characterised by heightened academic pressure, identity formation, and increasing personal responsibility.

Psychological research conceptualises resilience in two primary ways: as a trait and as a dynamic process. Trait-based perspectives view resilience as a relatively stable set of personal characteristics, including optimism, self-efficacy, emotional regulation, and perseverance. Individuals high in these traits tend to maintain emotional balance and problem-solving abilities even under stressful conditions. In contrast, process-based perspectives emphasise resilience as an adaptive process that develops over time through exposure to stressors and the effective use of coping strategies (Fletcher & Sarkar, 2013). This means resilience is not fixed but can be strengthened through learning, experience, and supportive environments.

For college students, resilience plays a crucial role in managing academic stressors such as examinations, heavy workloads, academic competition, and performance expectations. Resilient students are more likely to approach academic challenges with confidence, persistence, and flexibility. When faced with academic setbacks, such as poor grades or failure in examinations, resilient students are less likely to engage in self-blame or hopelessness. Instead, they tend to interpret setbacks as temporary and controllable, using them as opportunities for learning and self-improvement. Smith et al. (2008) noted that resilient individuals demonstrate greater emotional recovery and maintain goal-directed behaviour despite experiencing stress.

Resilience is also closely linked to effective coping strategies. Students with higher resilience are more likely to use adaptive coping mechanisms, such as problem-focused coping, cognitive reappraisal, and seeking social support. These strategies allow students to manage stress constructively and prevent the escalation of psychological distress. In contrast, low resilience is often associated with maladaptive coping behaviours, including avoidance, denial, and rumination, which increase vulnerability to anxiety and depression. Thus, resilience serves as a protective factor that moderates the negative effects of perceived stress on mental health outcomes.

Another important aspect of resilience is its relationship with emotional regulation. Resilient students are better able to manage intense emotions, such as frustration, fear, and disappointment, that commonly arise in academic settings. Effective emotional regulation helps students maintain concentration, make rational decisions, and sustain motivation under pressure. Connor and Davidson (2003) emphasised that resilience involves emotional stability and confidence in one's ability to cope with adversity. Their work led to the development of the Connor–Davidson Resilience Scale, which highlights components such as personal competence, tolerance of negative affect, and positive acceptance of change.

Resilience is not solely an individual characteristic; it is also influenced by social and environmental factors. Garmezy (1991) emphasised the role of protective factors, such as supportive family relationships, peer networks, and positive institutional environments, in fostering resilience. For college students, supportive friendships, mentoring relationships, and accessible faculty members provide emotional reassurance and practical guidance during stressful periods. These social resources enhance students' sense of belonging and reduce feelings of isolation, thereby strengthening their capacity to cope with stress.

Educational institutions play a vital role in promoting resilience among students. Universities that offer counselling services, stress management programs, mentorship initiatives, and opportunities for extracurricular engagement contribute to the development of students' coping skills and psychological strength. Structured interventions such as mindfulness training, resilience workshops, and life-skills education have been shown to improve emotional regulation, reduce perceived stress, and enhance academic engagement. By creating supportive learning environments, institutions can actively cultivate resilience as a developmental outcome rather than viewing it solely as an individual responsibility.

Resilience also has long-term implications beyond academic life. The coping skills, emotional flexibility, and problem-solving abilities developed during college years extend into adulthood and professional life. Resilient students are better prepared to navigate career transitions, workplace stress, and personal challenges. Thus, resilience contributes not only to academic success but also to overall life satisfaction and psychological well-being across the lifespan.

In conclusion, resilience is a multifaceted construct that plays a central role in how college students manage stress and adversity. It encompasses personal traits, adaptive processes, emotional regulation, and social support systems. By buffering the negative effects of perceived stress, resilience promotes psychological well-being, academic persistence, and personal growth. Understanding resilience among college students is therefore essential for designing effective interventions that enhance coping capacity and foster mental health within higher education settings. Strengthening resilience equips students with the skills needed to thrive academically and adapt successfully to the challenges of modern life.

1.2.1 Importance of Resilience in College Students

Resilience plays a crucial role in shaping how college students experience, interpret, and respond to the various challenges encountered during higher education. Increased academic demands, competitive environments, social adjustments, and uncertainty about future career prospects often mark the college years. Students with higher levels of resilience are better equipped to adapt to these stressors and maintain psychological balance despite ongoing pressures. Research consistently indicates that resilience is positively associated with academic persistence, emotional well-being, and overall life satisfaction among college students (Hartley, 2011).

One of the primary benefits of resilience is its role in reducing the negative impact of stress. Resilient students tend to perceive stressful situations as manageable rather than overwhelming, which helps regulate emotional responses and prevents prolonged psychological distress. By fostering effective coping strategies, resilience enables students to handle academic setbacks, such as poor grades or examination failure, without experiencing significant declines in self-esteem or motivation. This adaptive functioning promotes problem-solving, goal-setting, and constructive appraisal of challenges, which are essential for sustained academic engagement.

Resilience is also closely linked to self-efficacy and optimism. According to Connor and Davidson (2003), resilient individuals possess a stronger belief in their ability to overcome

difficulties, which enhances confidence and perseverance. In academic contexts, this sense of self-efficacy motivates students to take initiative, manage time effectively, and remain focused under pressure. For instance, resilient students facing multiple deadlines are more likely to prioritise tasks, seek clarification when needed, and maintain a balanced approach to their responsibilities rather than resorting to avoidance or procrastination.

Beyond individual coping, resilience encompasses social and environmental dimensions. Supportive relationships with peers, family members, and educators play a vital role in strengthening resilience during the college years. Garmezy (1991) emphasised that social support acts as a protective factor, helping individuals buffer the effects of stress and adversity. Resilient students are more inclined to seek help and utilise available support systems, thereby reducing feelings of isolation and emotional exhaustion. Positive social interactions contribute to emotional stability, enhance coping capacity, and foster a sense of belonging within the academic environment.

Educational institutions also play an important role in nurturing resilience among students. Universities that provide counselling services, mentorship programs, stress management workshops, and opportunities for extracurricular engagement create environments that promote adaptive coping and emotional growth. Resilience-building interventions, such as mindfulness training, peer mentoring, and leadership development programs, have been shown to enhance students' ability to manage stress effectively and sustain motivation throughout their academic journey.

Ultimately, resilience is not only essential for academic success but also for long-term personal development. The skills and coping strategies developed during college years extend beyond academic settings and prepare students to face future professional and personal challenges. By transforming adversity into opportunities for learning and growth, resilience equips students with the psychological strength necessary to thrive in an increasingly demanding and competitive world. Thus, fostering resilience among college students is vital for promoting mental health, academic achievement, and overall well-being.

1.3 STRESS

Recent research indicates that chronic stress among college students has severe consequences for mental health, academic performance, and overall well-being. Pascoe et al. (2020) reported

that prolonged exposure to stress hormones such as cortisol disrupts immune functioning, impairs sleep patterns, and increases vulnerability to physical illnesses, including cardiovascular problems. Chronic stress is strongly associated with anxiety, depression, emotional exhaustion, irritability, and reduced life satisfaction, highlighting the serious health implications of sustained stress during the college years.

Subsequent studies have focused on coping patterns and demographic differences in stress experiences. Ibrahim et al. (2013) found that students experiencing sustained stress frequently adopt maladaptive coping strategies such as procrastination, avoidance, emotional eating, substance use, and excessive reliance on digital media, which further exacerbate academic and psychological difficulties. The same research highlighted that female students tend to report higher perceived stress than male students, possibly due to societal expectations, emotional sensitivity, and role conflicts. Importantly, Ibrahim et al. (2013) also demonstrated that students who use adaptive coping strategies—such as time management, goal-setting, relaxation techniques, mindfulness, and seeking social support—are better able to manage stress and avoid burnout.

Earlier research emphasised the role of the academic environment as a primary source of stress among college students. Misra and McKean (2000) identified examinations, continuous assessments, heavy coursework, and competitive grading systems as major academic stressors. Their findings also showed that students enrolled in demanding academic programs or those in the final years of study experience elevated stress due to workload pressure, performance expectations, and uncertainty regarding future career prospects. These stressors, when prolonged, contribute to emotional strain and reduced academic engagement.

Theoretical explanations for stress experiences among college students are grounded in Lazarus and Folkman's transactional model of stress and coping. According to this model, stress arises when individuals perceive that environmental demands exceed their available coping resources. This framework highlights the subjective nature of stress, explaining why students exposed to similar academic demands may experience different stress levels depending on cognitive appraisal, coping strategies, resilience, and personal resources.

Foundational perspectives further distinguish between beneficial and harmful forms of stress. Cohen et al. (1983) noted that moderate stress, often referred to as *eustress*, can enhance alertness, motivation, and performance in academic tasks such as examinations and deadlines. However, when stress becomes chronic or overwhelming, it transforms into distress, negatively

affecting psychological functioning, behaviour, and physical health. Persistent distress impairs decision-making, reduces motivation, and reinforces maladaptive coping patterns, creating a self-perpetuating cycle that hinders academic success.

In summary, stress among college students is a multidimensional phenomenon that has been progressively understood through empirical and theoretical research. While moderate stress may promote motivation and growth, chronic and unmanageable stress poses significant risks to mental and physical health. Recognising stress as a subjective experience shaped by coping resources and cognitive appraisal is essential for developing effective interventions. Resilience-building programs, coping-skills training, and supportive academic environments are crucial for promoting student well-being and academic success.

1.3.1 Impact of Stress on College Students

Recent evidence indicates that excessive and unaddressed stress has serious consequences for college students' academic performance, mental health, physical well-being, and social functioning. High levels of academic stress are strongly associated with burnout, emotional exhaustion, and reduced academic efficacy (Pascoe et al., 2020). Chronic stress activates the hypothalamic–pituitary–adrenal (HPA) axis, leading to elevated cortisol levels that disrupt sleep, weaken immune functioning, and increase susceptibility to physical illnesses. Poor sleep quality, fatigue, and low energy further impair concentration, academic achievement, and overall life satisfaction, highlighting the extensive physiological impact of prolonged stress.

Subsequent research has drawn attention to the severe mental health consequences of chronic stress among college students. Persistent exposure to stress significantly increases vulnerability to anxiety, depression, and other psychological disorders (Deb et al., 2015). In extreme cases, stress has been linked to suicidal ideation, underscoring the urgency of timely mental health interventions in higher education. The cumulative burden of academic, social, and personal stressors can overwhelm students' coping capacities, particularly among those with limited familial, social, or institutional support.

Studies have focused on the behavioural and social consequences of stress. Ibrahim et al. (2013) reported that highly stressed students frequently adopt maladaptive coping strategies such as procrastination, social withdrawal, binge eating, and substance use. While these behaviours may offer temporary relief, they often intensify long-term academic and psychological difficulties. The same research emphasised the protective role of adaptive coping strategies, including effective time management, planning, mindfulness practices, and seeking

social support. Engagement in supportive peer networks and campus communities has been shown to buffer stress, reduce feelings of isolation, and promote psychological well-being (Ibrahim et al., 2013).

Earlier physiological research demonstrated that prolonged stress negatively affects cognitive functioning. Kim and Dimsdale (2007) found that chronic stress impairs attention, concentration, and memory processes, thereby hindering learning and academic performance. Students experiencing sustained stress may show reduced motivation, diminished academic engagement, and a perceived lack of control over academic progress, contributing to dissatisfaction with their college experience.

Foundational academic stress research highlighted the role of coping in mitigating stress outcomes. Misra and McKean (2000) showed that students who employ adaptive coping strategies—such as planning, organisation, and proactive problem-solving—tend to achieve better academic results, maintain healthier lifestyles, and develop stronger psychological resilience. Their findings underscore the importance of effective coping skills in breaking the cycle of stress and underperformance.

In conclusion, stress among college students is a multidimensional phenomenon with far-reaching academic, psychological, behavioural, social, and physical consequences. While unmanaged stress can impair functioning across multiple domains, the development of effective coping strategies and resilience can significantly reduce its negative impact. Addressing student stress through counselling services, stress-management training, peer support programs, and resilience-building initiatives is therefore essential for promoting student well-being, academic success, and holistic development.

1.4 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RESILIENCE AND PERCEIVED STRESS AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS

Ali et al. (2022) emphasised that universities that provide counselling services, mentorship programs, stress management workshops, and opportunities for extracurricular engagement further enhance students' resilience, equipping them with strategies to manage perceived stress effectively. Students with strong social support are better able to cope with stress, as they have access to emotional reassurance, practical guidance, and encouragement during difficult periods. These findings underscore the interactive nature of resilience, wherein personal traits,

social support, and environmental resources collectively determine students' ability to cope with stress.

Saddique et al. (2021) found that resilience mitigates the impact of academic and social stressors, particularly for female students and those enrolled in highly demanding programs, thereby reducing vulnerability to anxiety, depressive symptoms, and academic burnout. Similarly, research indicates that female students often report higher perceived stress, yet resilience can buffer these effects by enhancing coping efficacy and emotional regulation. Students in demanding courses or in transitional phases of their education, such as final-year students, face elevated stress, making resilience-building interventions particularly relevant for these groups.

Thomas and Revell (2016) found that resilience significantly predicted lower perceived stress and enhanced well-being among undergraduate students, indicating that resilient individuals interpret challenges in a way that reduces cognitive and emotional load.

Deb et al. (2015) highlighted that students who engage in resilience-building activities, including mindfulness exercises, self-reflection, and social support, demonstrate lower perceived stress and higher levels of academic engagement. Students with higher resilience are more likely to seek supportive relationships, participate in extracurricular activities, and engage in self-care practices, all of which reduce perceived stress and foster a sense of belonging and competence. Conversely, low resilience can lead to social withdrawal, increased feelings of isolation, and heightened vulnerability to mental health challenges, highlighting the importance of resilience not only for academic success but also for holistic student development.

Masten (2014) conceptualised resilience as the ability to adapt positively to adversity, recover from setbacks, and maintain psychological stability under pressure. In essence, resilience functions as a psychological buffer, enabling students to reinterpret stressful situations constructively, regulate emotional responses effectively, and employ adaptive coping strategies. Consequently, a higher level of resilience is often associated with lower levels of perceived stress, while low resilience can exacerbate stress perception and psychological distress.

Fletcher & Sarkar (2013) explained that resilient students tend to employ adaptive coping mechanisms, such as problem-focused coping, positive reframing, seeking social support, and proactive time management. These strategies enable students to approach stressors with confidence and a sense of control, thereby reducing the intensity and duration of perceived

stress. Conversely, students with lower resilience often resort to maladaptive coping strategies, including avoidance, rumination, procrastination, and excessive reliance on digital media for distraction. Such behaviours not only fail to alleviate stress but can exacerbate psychological distress, impair academic performance, and compromise overall well-being.

Ibrahim et al. (2013) reported that maladaptive coping behaviours, including avoidance, rumination, procrastination, and excessive reliance on digital media, exacerbate psychological distress, impair academic performance, and compromise overall well-being.

Chao (2012) reported that resilient students exhibited fewer symptoms of anxiety and depression, even when confronted with high academic demands, suggesting that resilience acts as a protective factor that mediates the impact of stress on mental health outcomes.

Hartley (2011) demonstrated that students with high resilience are more likely to perceive academic, social, and personal stressors as temporary, manageable, and opportunities for growth, whereas students with low resilience are more prone to feelings of helplessness, overwhelm, and psychological strain. Resilient students not only experience lower stress levels but are also more likely to demonstrate persistence, motivation, and engagement in academic tasks. By maintaining psychological stability under pressure, these students can focus on goal achievement, problem-solving, and learning from mistakes rather than succumbing to anxiety or avoidance behaviours. In contrast, low resilience often amplifies perceived stress, which negatively affects concentration, memory, and academic performance, creating a cycle of stress and decreased achievement.

Smith et al. (2008) reported that higher resilience is often associated with lower levels of perceived stress, whereas low resilience can exacerbate perceived stress and psychological distress.

Connor & Davidson (2003) emphasised that resilience influences students' emotional regulation, which directly affects stress perception. Resilient students are better equipped to manage intense emotions such as frustration, fear, and disappointment, which frequently arise in academic contexts. Effective emotional regulation allows students to maintain focus, sustain motivation, and engage in constructive problem-solving even under high-pressure situations. For example, a resilient student facing multiple deadlines may approach tasks strategically, prioritise responsibilities, and maintain a balanced perspective on potential setbacks. Such students perceive challenges as manageable and as opportunities for personal growth rather than threats, reducing perceived stress and fostering psychological well-being.

Garmezy (1991) emphasised the importance of protective factors such as supportive family relationships, peer networks, and positive educational environments in fostering resilience. Students with strong social support are better able to cope with stress, as they have access to emotional reassurance, practical guidance, and encouragement during difficult periods.

Cohen et al. (1983) defined perceived stress as an individual's subjective appraisal of situations as demanding, unpredictable, or uncontrollable, highlighting the cognitive and emotional evaluation of stressors rather than their objective presence.

In conclusion, resilience and perceived stress are closely interrelated constructs that jointly shape the college student experience. Resilience serves as a protective factor that reduces perceived stress, facilitates adaptive coping, promotes emotional regulation, and enhances academic and psychosocial outcomes. Empirical evidence demonstrates that resilient students are better equipped to navigate academic, social, and personal challenges, while low resilience increases vulnerability to stress-related difficulties. Cultivating resilience through individual strategies, social support, and institutional interventions is therefore essential for reducing perceived stress, promoting mental health, and supporting holistic student development in increasingly competitive and demanding higher education environments. Fostering resilience not only mitigates the negative consequences of stress but also equips students with lifelong coping skills that extend beyond the college years, underscoring its central role in educational psychology and student well-being.

1.5 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is guided by Lazarus and Folkman's Stress-Coping Theory (1984), which provides a comprehensive framework for understanding how individuals perceive, appraise, and respond to stressful situations. According to this theory, stress does not solely arise from external events or demands; rather, it emerges when individuals evaluate environmental demands as exceeding their available resources to cope effectively. This perspective underscores the importance of cognitive appraisal in the stress process, suggesting that the same situation can be perceived as highly stressful by one individual and manageable by another, depending on personal coping abilities, prior experiences, and available support systems.

1.5.1 Cognitive Appraisal of Stress

The theory distinguishes between primary and secondary appraisal. In primary appraisal, an individual evaluates whether a situation poses a threat, challenge, or harm/loss. For example, a college student preparing for final examinations may perceive the situation as a challenge that can be overcome with proper planning or as a threat that exceeds their abilities, potentially causing anxiety and worry. Secondary appraisal involves evaluating available coping resources and strategies to manage the perceived demands. Students who recognise their personal resilience, social support networks, or study skills as sufficient are more likely to perceive stress as manageable, while those who feel inadequately equipped are more likely to experience heightened perceived stress (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Cohen et al., 1983).

1.5.2 Resilience as a Coping Resource

Resilience functions as a crucial coping resource within this theoretical framework. It is conceptualised as both a trait and a dynamic process that allows individuals to adapt successfully to challenges, recover from setbacks, and maintain psychological equilibrium under pressure (Masten, 2014). Resilient students are more capable of employing effective coping strategies, such as problem-solving, time management, seeking social support, and positive reframing, which reduce the perceived intensity of stress and mitigate its negative consequences (Fletcher & Sarkar, 2013). Conversely, students with lower resilience may rely on maladaptive coping strategies, including avoidance, rumination, or procrastination, which amplify perceived stress and increase susceptibility to emotional and academic difficulties (Ibrahim et al., 2013).

1.5.3 The Transactional and Dynamic Nature of Stress

Saddique et al. (2021) highlighted that college students' stress levels are influenced by academic workload, social pressures, financial concerns, and personal expectations, all of which interact with internal factors such as self-efficacy, optimism, and emotional regulation. The ability to appraise stressors accurately and implement adaptive coping mechanisms determines the outcome of these interactions. For instance, two students facing identical academic demands may experience different stress levels depending on their resilience, social support, and previous experiences of overcoming challenges (Hartley, 2011). The Stress-Coping Theory emphasises that stress is transactional and dynamic. Stress is not a fixed response but arises from continuous interactions between the individual and the environment.

1.5.4 Social and Environmental Support

Saddique et al. (2021) demonstrated that students who engage with supportive peers, faculty, and family members report lower perceived stress and greater academic engagement. Deb et al. (2015) highlighted that resilience, in conjunction with supportive environments, can buffer the negative impact of stress, facilitate adaptive functioning, and promote overall well-being. In the context of higher education, students who perceive strong social support are better able to manage academic pressures and personal stressors. Lazarus and Folkman (1984) emphasised that external resources, including peer networks, family support, mentorship, and institutional counselling services, enhance an individual's coping capacity. Social and environmental support play a vital role in moderating the stress-resilience relationship.

1.5.5 Coping Strategies and Academic Outcomes

The theory also integrates the role of appraisal in determining behavioural and emotional outcomes. Adaptive coping strategies, informed by resilience, influence not only stress perception but also mental health, academic performance, and social functioning. Students with effective coping mechanisms demonstrate emotional regulation, perseverance, and problem-solving skills, which contribute to positive outcomes even under high-pressure circumstances (Fletcher & Sarkar, 2013). Conversely, maladaptive coping can lead to heightened anxiety, depression, academic disengagement, and behavioural issues, highlighting the importance of interventions that strengthen resilience and coping skills.

1.5.6 Implications for Perceived Stress and Resilience

In the context of perceived stress and resilience among college students, this theoretical framework provides a structured understanding of the mechanisms through which resilience mitigates stress. It emphasises that stress outcomes are not predetermined by external demands but are shaped by cognitive appraisal, coping strategies, and available resources. By conceptualising resilience as a buffer and coping resource, the theory explains why students with similar academic pressures may experience divergent levels of stress and psychological adjustment.

1.5.7 Application to the Present Study

Applying the Stress-Coping Theory to this study allows for a holistic approach to investigating the interplay between perceived stress and resilience. It provides a basis for examining how individual characteristics, such as optimism, self-efficacy, and emotional regulation, interact with environmental factors like social support, institutional resources, and academic

expectations. This framework also informs the design of interventions, suggesting that strategies aimed at enhancing resilience—through mindfulness training, stress management workshops, peer mentoring, and counselling services—can reduce perceived stress, improve academic outcomes, and promote psychological well-being.

1.5.8 Conclusion

Saddique et al. (2021), Deb et al. (2015), and Fletcher & Sarkar (2013) emphasised that interventions can foster resilience, reduce perceived stress, and enhance academic and psychological adjustment among college students. Understanding these mechanisms is essential for developing evidence-based strategies to support students in navigating the challenges of higher education, ensuring both short-term academic success and long-term psychological health. Lazarus and Folkman's Stress-Coping Theory (1984) offers a robust framework for understanding the relationship between perceived stress and resilience among college students. By emphasising the dynamic interplay between cognitive appraisal, coping resources, and environmental support, the theory highlights the role of resilience as a protective factor that moderates stress outcomes.

1.6 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The present study is entitled "A Correlational Analysis of the Relationship Between Resilience and Perceived Stress Among College Students".

1.7 OPERATIONAL DEFINITION

Resilience: Resilience is the psychological ability of college students to adapt to adversity, recover from setbacks, and maintain stability.

Perceived Stress: Perceived stress is the subjective evaluation of how overwhelming and uncontrollable life demands feel to college students.

College Students: College students are young adults (18–25 years) enrolled in higher education in India, experiencing transitional challenges that influence their perceived stress and resilience.

1.8 OBJECTIVES

1. To examine the relationship between resilience and perceived stress among college students.

2. To examine the gender differences in resilience between male and female college students.

3. To assess the gender differences in perceived stress scores between male and female college students.

1.9 HYPOTHESIS

H1: There will be a significant and negative relationship between resilience and perceived stress.

H2: There will be a significant gender difference in resilience between male and female college students.

H3: There will be a significant gender difference in perceived stress between male and female college students.

1.10 DELIMITATIONS

- The study is limited to college students residing and studying within the Jammu district. Therefore, the findings cannot be generalised to students from other districts, states, or national contexts.

- The sample consists of 152 college students, which may not fully represent the diverse student population across different colleges, disciplines, and socio-economic backgrounds.

- The study focuses exclusively on Perceived Stress and Resilience. Other relevant psychological variables—such as coping strategies, social support, anxiety, depression, or academic motivation—have not been included.

- The data are collected through self-report standardized questionnaires (CD-RISC and PSS-10). Self-report measures may be influenced by social desirability, personal interpretation, and response bias, which may affect the accuracy of the results.

- The study includes only undergraduate and postgraduate college students. Students from schools, coaching institutes, vocational programs, and universities are not part of the sample, limiting the generalizability of the findings to the broader student population.

1.11 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study is significant as it offers a deeper and more nuanced understanding of how perceived stress and resilience jointly influence the psychological well-being of college students, a population that is particularly vulnerable to academic pressure, transitional challenges, and emotional strain. College students are frequently exposed to multiple stressors, including academic workload, performance expectations, social adjustment, and uncertainty regarding future career prospects. By examining both perceived stress and resilience together, this study provides insight into why some students experience heightened psychological distress while others can adapt effectively despite facing similar academic demands.

The findings of this study are expected to be especially valuable for mental health professionals, educators, and university administrators who are directly involved in supporting student well-being. Understanding the role of resilience in shaping students' stress perception can help professionals move beyond deficit-based approaches that focus solely on stress reduction. Instead, the results highlight the importance of strengthening internal coping resources that enable students to manage stress more effectively over time. This perspective supports a shift toward preventive and strength-based mental health practices within higher education settings.

On a practical level, the findings of the study can guide the design and implementation of student-focused intervention programs aimed at enhancing resilience while simultaneously reducing perceived stress. Interventions such as mindfulness training, cognitive-behavioural skill-building sessions, stress-management workshops, and peer mentoring initiatives can be developed or refined based on the study's insights. Integrating these interventions into existing university support systems, such as counselling centres, orientation programs, and academic

advising services, can strengthen students' coping capacity, enhance emotional regulation, and promote sustained academic engagement. Such initiatives may also contribute to reduced emotional exhaustion, improved concentration, and better academic performance among students.

From a theoretical perspective, this study contributes to established psychological frameworks, particularly Lazarus and Folkman's Stress and Coping Theory and the Connor–Davidson Resilience Framework. By examining how perceived stress is shaped by cognitive appraisal and individual coping resources, the study reinforces the transactional nature of stress. Highlighting resilience as a mediating factor emphasises its role in determining whether exposure to stress leads to psychological distress or adaptive functioning. This contribution helps extend existing models by empirically demonstrating the protective role of resilience within the academic context of college students.

The study also holds considerable institutional and societal relevance. With increasing concern about student mental health and rising rates of stress-related problems in higher education, evidence-based findings can inform policy-level decisions aimed at promoting student well-being. Universities and colleges can use the results to justify the integration of preventive counselling services, wellness initiatives, and structured psychological support programs into academic environments. Such initiatives not only address existing mental health concerns but also foster long-term psychological resilience among students.

Additionally, identifying differences in perceived stress and resilience based on demographic variables such as gender, age, and academic discipline allows for the development of targeted and group-specific interventions. Tailored support strategies can better address the unique stressors experienced by different student groups, enhancing the effectiveness of mental health services and promoting equity in psychological support.

Overall, this research contributes meaningfully to the fields of educational psychology and health psychology by demonstrating how resilience can buffer the adverse effects of perceived stress among college students. By emphasising both stress perception and adaptive capacity, the study supports the development of mentally healthy, emotionally balanced, and academically successful students who are better equipped to navigate the challenges of higher education and beyond

CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Recent studies highlight resilience as a crucial psychological resource that enables college students to manage academic stress and maintain emotional well-being. Resilient students consistently report lower perceived stress, demonstrating better emotional regulation, adaptive problem-solving, and proactive coping strategies (Saddique et al., 2021). Post-pandemic research emphasises that resilience supports recovery from academic disruptions, online learning challenges, and prolonged uncertainty. Students with higher resilience adapted more effectively by maintaining study routines, regulating emotions, seeking guidance, and engaging in peer support, while students with lower resilience exhibited heightened anxiety and disengagement. Contemporary literature further recognises resilience as a dynamic and developable capacity, mediating the relationship between external stressors and perceived stress. Resilience transforms environmental demands into manageable experiences through optimism, self-efficacy, emotional regulation, and adaptive coping, enabling students to sustain focus, motivation, and engagement (Gupta & Saini, 2020).

Recent Indian studies reinforce the cultural and contextual dimensions of resilience, showing that family support, peer relationships, and institutional resources strengthen resilience and reduce perceived stress (Gupta & Saini, 2020). Students perceiving strong social support demonstrate lower stress, higher academic self-efficacy, and enhanced engagement in learning. Structured interventions such as resilience workshops, mindfulness training, and counselling services have further been shown to improve coping efficacy, emphasising that resilience can be cultivated through institutional and social support.

Masten (2014) provided foundational conceptualisations, defining resilience as a dynamic process of positive adaptation in the face of adversity. Resilience buffers the impact of academic stressors, with students exhibiting self-esteem, optimism, and adaptive coping skills demonstrating lower perceived stress even in competitive environments. Earlier empirical studies by Abolghasemi and Varaniyab (2010) established the inverse relationship between resilience and perceived stress, showing that students with higher resilience experienced better life satisfaction, reduced psychological distress, and improved academic functioning. Resilient students also demonstrate faster recovery from stress, greater psychological flexibility, and

sustained motivation and concentration after setbacks, highlighting resilience as both a protective trait and an active process.

Overall, literature across chronological stages demonstrates that resilience is a central mechanism in managing perceived stress among college students. Recent research emphasises resilience's role in recovery and adaptation, mid-period studies highlight its buffering and mediating functions, and earlier foundational work confirms its protective influence on psychological adjustment and academic performance. By enabling constructive appraisal of challenges, adaptive coping, and recovery from setbacks, resilience emerges as a vital factor in reducing perceived stress and promoting students' emotional, cognitive, and academic well-being across diverse cultural and institutional contexts.

2.1 RESILIENCE

Recent research continues to position resilience as a vital psychological strength that enables college students to adapt effectively to academic, emotional, and social challenges. Contemporary studies increasingly recognise resilience as a developable capacity rather than a fixed personality trait, suggesting that resilience can be strengthened through institutional interventions, counselling services, and structured skill-building programs (Saddique et al., 2021). Universities are increasingly incorporating resilience-building initiatives into student support systems, recognising their role in promoting psychological well-being, academic engagement, and emotional balance. Interventions such as stress management workshops, cognitive restructuring techniques, mindfulness-based practices, and peer-support initiatives have demonstrated positive outcomes in improving students' coping abilities, emotional regulation, and overall psychological adjustment. These approaches emphasise active skill development and reflect a broader shift toward preventive mental health strategies within higher education institutions.

Post-pandemic research has further highlighted the importance of resilience in helping students manage uncertainty, academic disruption, and social isolation. Students with higher resilience reported better psychological adjustment, greater engagement in learning activities, and increased confidence in managing academic challenges during periods of prolonged stress (Saddique et al., 2021). The abrupt shift to online learning, reduced opportunities for peer interaction, and disruption of established academic routines created unprecedented stressors for college students. However, resilient students were better able to adapt to these changes,

maintain academic motivation, and regulate emotional distress. These findings underscore resilience as a protective factor that facilitates recovery, continuity in academic functioning, and adaptive coping in challenging educational environments.

Post-pandemic studies further strengthen the relevance of resilience in academic contexts by demonstrating its role in promoting psychological stability during extended periods of disruption. Students who demonstrated higher resilience reported better adjustment to online learning environments, reduced emotional exhaustion, and greater confidence in managing uncertainty and academic demands (Saddique et al., 2021). Resilient students were more likely to sustain consistent study routines, demonstrate perseverance in completing academic tasks, and engage in self-directed learning despite changes in instructional formats. Additionally, resilience supported continued participation in extracurricular activities, maintenance of social connections, and engagement in proactive problem-solving, highlighting its comprehensive influence on both academic and personal domains of student life.

Recent literature also emphasizes that resilience is a dynamic and process-oriented construct shaped by continuous interactions between individual characteristics and environmental factors (Saddique et al., 2021). Research conducted in higher education settings demonstrates that resilient students exhibit stronger emotional regulation, greater optimism, and enhanced problem-solving abilities, enabling them to cope more effectively with academic pressures and everyday stressors. Empirical findings consistently indicate that higher levels of resilience are associated with lower levels of anxiety, depression, and academic burnout (Gupta & Saini, 2020). Resilience is further linked to increased self-confidence and a sense of personal agency, allowing students to approach challenges with a proactive rather than reactive mindset and to interpret setbacks as opportunities for learning and growth.

Several Indian studies conducted during this period highlight the cultural dimensions of resilience. In collectivistic contexts, family cohesion, peer support, and perceived social connectedness significantly contribute to resilience development among college students (Gupta & Saini, 2020). These findings indicate that resilience within Indian academic settings is deeply embedded within social and cultural frameworks rather than being solely an individual attribute. Students who perceive strong emotional and instrumental support from family members, peers, and academic mentors are more likely to demonstrate optimism, persistence, and adaptive coping when facing academic or personal challenges. Such relational

support systems play a critical role in reinforcing emotional stability and confidence among students.

Similarly, Indian and international studies indicate that resilience is strongly influenced by broader social and institutional contexts. Family support, peer relationships, and institutional climate play a significant role in fostering resilience among college students (Gupta & Saini, 2020). In collectivistic cultures, resilience is often reinforced through interpersonal connections, shared responsibilities, and collective coping practices, suggesting that resilience is a socially embedded psychological capacity. Students with supportive peer networks or mentorship relationships frequently demonstrate improved problem-solving skills, better emotional adjustment, and greater capacity to cope with academic stress, highlighting the importance of relational and institutional support systems in resilience development.

Earlier research from the past decade conceptualised resilience as a key psychological resource for academic adjustment and student well-being. Scholars described resilience as the capacity to adapt positively despite exposure to adversity, stress, or significant challenges, emphasising its relevance for emotional stability and academic persistence among college students (Masten, 2014). These studies positioned resilience as a crucial factor enabling students to manage academic pressures alongside personal life challenges, contributing to sustained engagement, goal-directed behaviour, and overall well-being within demanding educational contexts.

Foundational studies conducted during this period conceptualised resilience primarily as an individual characteristic that facilitates effective stress management. Key contributors to resilience development identified in these studies include optimism, self-esteem, internal locus of control, and social competence (Masten, 2014). Although early research often viewed resilience as relatively stable, it provided the theoretical foundation for later models that recognise resilience as malleable and context-dependent. These studies also emphasised the role of prior life experiences, suggesting that students who had successfully navigated earlier adversities were more likely to develop enduring resilience skills applicable to academic and interpersonal challenges.

Earlier foundational research further emphasised resilience as a protective factor against psychological distress and maladjustment. Resilience was viewed as a buffering variable that mitigates the negative impact of stress on mental health, thereby reducing vulnerability to anxiety, depression, and disengagement (Masten, 2014). These findings laid the groundwork for subsequent research exploring resilience as a multidimensional construct influenced by both

internal psychological resources and external support systems, including family, peers, and educational institutions.

Mid-period studies subsequently expanded the conceptualisation of resilience by examining its relationship with emotional intelligence, self-efficacy, and coping styles. Evidence suggests that resilience is positively associated with adaptive coping strategies such as problem-focused coping and cognitive reappraisal, while lower resilience is linked to maladaptive strategies including avoidance, rumination, and emotional suppression (Abolghasemi & Varaniyab, 2010). These coping patterns help explain why resilient students experience better mental health outcomes despite exposure to similar academic and personal stressors.

Research conducted during this phase also focused on identifying psychological correlates of resilience, including self-efficacy and emotional intelligence. Findings indicate that resilient students are more likely to employ constructive coping mechanisms, actively seek social support, and engage in effective problem-solving, while avoiding maladaptive responses such as withdrawal and rumination (Abolghasemi & Varaniyab, 2010). These coping strategies partially explain the protective role of resilience against stress-related psychological outcomes, emotional exhaustion, and academic burnout.

Longitudinal research from this period provides important insights into the stability and flexibility of resilience across academic years. Findings indicate that resilience levels may fluctuate during periods of increased academic demand, such as examinations, academic transitions, or heightened performance expectations, and improve when students receive adequate institutional, familial, and peer support. These results highlight the sensitivity of resilience to contextual influences and underscore the importance of sustained support structures and opportunities for skill development throughout students' academic journeys.

Research consistently demonstrates a strong association between resilience and emotional well-being. Resilient students experience lower levels of negative affect and higher levels of positive affect, enabling them to cope more effectively with daily academic stressors and maintain constructive interpersonal relationships. These emotional benefits extend to improved communication skills, effective conflict resolution, and active participation in campus and community activities, further enhancing students' sense of belonging and engagement.

In addition, resilience has been linked to adaptive cognitive patterns. Resilient students tend to engage in positive self-talk, realistic goal setting, and flexible thinking, which support effective problem-solving and reduce emotional reactivity to academic challenges. These cognitive

characteristics contribute to healthier emotional adjustment during stressful academic periods and promote long-term psychological stability.

Studies among college populations further indicate that resilience is shaped by life experiences and learning environments. Exposure to manageable challenges, supportive academic contexts, and inclusive institutional climates fosters resilience development over time. Students who perceive their institutions as supportive consistently report higher resilience levels, and opportunities for mentorship, peer collaboration, and structured skill-building activities further strengthen resilience and enhance academic engagement.

Furthermore, resilience has been associated with better social functioning. Resilient students are more likely to establish supportive peer networks and seek assistance when needed, strengthening their capacity to cope with academic stress and emotional challenges. These social interactions reinforce resilience by providing opportunities for shared problem-solving, emotional support, and collective coping.

The literature also indicates that resilience plays a significant role in shaping students' responses to academic and personal challenges. Resilient students maintain psychological balance under high academic demands, remain focused on academic goals despite setbacks, and adapt effectively to interpersonal and collaborative academic tasks. Several studies report that resilience is positively associated with motivation and persistence, contributing to sustained academic engagement and reduced likelihood of academic disengagement.

Overall, existing research consistently supports resilience as a beneficial psychological characteristic that enhances college students' ability to cope effectively with academic and life stressors. Across diverse cultural and institutional contexts, resilience remains a key determinant of students' psychological, emotional, and academic well-being.

2.2 PERCEIVED STRESS

Recent research consistently indicates that perceived stress continues to be a significant psychological concern among college students, even after the normalisation of academic activities following the pandemic. Studies conducted in the post-pandemic period report that students experience persistent stress related to academic performance, lingering learning gaps, competitive academic environments, and uncertainty regarding career prospects (Saddique et al., 2021). Despite the resumption of face-to-face instruction, many students report difficulty

readjusting to structured academic routines, heightened performance anxiety, and sustained emotional strain. These findings suggest that perceived stress may persist beyond immediate situational stressors and continue to influence students' psychological well-being and academic functioning.

Post-pandemic research further emphasises that perceived stress plays a critical role in shaping students' adjustment to evolving academic demands. Students who struggled with online learning, reduced peer interaction, and academic disruption during the pandemic continue to report elevated stress levels even after returning to campus-based education (Saddique et al., 2021). Ongoing concerns regarding academic competence, evaluation standards, and future employability contribute to heightened stress perception. High perceived stress during this phase has been associated with emotional exhaustion, irritability, reduced concentration, and diminished academic engagement, underscoring the long-term psychological impact of prolonged disruption.

Recent studies also demonstrate that perceived stress fluctuates across the academic calendar. Stress levels tend to peak during examinations, assignment deadlines, and periods of intensive coursework, while declining during academic breaks and holidays (Saddique et al., 2021). These temporal variations highlight the dynamic nature of stress perception and the influence of situational demands on students' cognitive appraisal. Students with limited coping resources or ineffective stress-management strategies are particularly vulnerable to heightened stress during academically demanding periods.

Contemporary literature consistently reports moderate to high levels of perceived stress among college students across diverse academic contexts. Academic workload, frequent assessments, performance expectations, and uncertainty related to future career paths are commonly identified as major contributors to stress perception (Gupta & Saini, 2020). Students experiencing high perceived stress often report psychological distress in the form of anxiety, depressive symptoms, emotional exhaustion, and reduced academic satisfaction. Importantly, these outcomes are more strongly associated with subjective stress appraisal than with objective academic demands, emphasising the central role of perceived stress in student mental health.

Recent Indian studies highlight the sociocultural factors influencing perceived stress among college students. Parental expectations, societal pressure to achieve academic success, financial constraints, and limited access to mental health resources significantly contribute to stress

perception (Gupta & Saini, 2020). Students from collectivistic cultural backgrounds often experience heightened stress due to strong family involvement in academic decision-making and perceived obligations to meet social expectations. First-generation college students and those from rural or economically disadvantaged backgrounds frequently report higher perceived stress due to adjustment difficulties, unfamiliarity with academic systems, and reduced institutional support.

Gender differences in perceived stress have also been documented in recent research. Female students often report higher levels of perceived stress than male students, a finding attributed to gender-role expectations, emotional expressiveness, academic self-doubt, and heightened sensitivity to interpersonal stressors (Gupta & Saini, 2020). Additionally, students at transitional academic stages—such as first-year undergraduates and final-year students—tend to experience elevated stress due to adaptation challenges, academic workload, and career-related uncertainty. These findings indicate that perceived stress is not static but varies across demographic and academic factors.

Research conducted over the past decade highlights the significant impact of perceived stress on academic functioning. High perceived stress has been associated with reduced concentration, impaired memory, lower academic efficiency, and decreased motivation to engage in learning activities (Gupta & Saini, 2020). Students experiencing elevated stress often struggle with time management, procrastination, and avoidance behaviours, which further exacerbate academic difficulties and reinforce negative stress appraisals. In contrast, students with lower perceived stress demonstrate better academic engagement, emotional regulation, and overall satisfaction with academic life.

Recent studies also emphasise the physical health implications of perceived stress. Students reporting high stress levels frequently experience somatic symptoms such as headaches, gastrointestinal disturbances, sleep problems, and chronic fatigue (Gupta & Saini, 2020). These physical complaints often interact with psychological distress, creating a cycle of impaired functioning that negatively affects academic performance and well-being. Students with lower perceived stress tend to adopt healthier coping behaviours, maintain better sleep patterns, and demonstrate greater emotional stability.

Moving toward earlier empirical work, mid-period studies increasingly applied transactional models of stress to explain individual differences in stress perception. These models emphasise cognitive appraisal as the central mechanism through which academic demands are interpreted

as manageable or overwhelming. Empirical evidence from this period suggests that perceived stress is a stronger predictor of psychological outcomes than objective indicators such as the number of examinations or hours of study (Abolghasemi & Varaniyab, 2010). This finding underscores the importance of subjective interpretation in determining stress intensity and psychological outcomes.

Mid-period research also explored the role of individual differences in shaping perceived stress. Students with low self-efficacy, limited coping skills, and poor emotional regulation were more likely to perceive academic demands as threatening and overwhelming (Abolghasemi & Varaniyab, 2010). Conversely, students who employed adaptive coping strategies—such as problem-solving, effective time management, and seeking social support—reported lower perceived stress under comparable academic conditions. These findings highlight the protective role of coping resources in stress appraisal.

Studies conducted during this phase further linked perceived stress to maladaptive coping patterns and psychological distress. High perceived stress was associated with rumination, avoidance coping, emotional suppression, and increased vulnerability to anxiety and depression (Abolghasemi & Varaniyab, 2010). These maladaptive responses intensify stress perception and contribute to sustained psychological strain. In contrast, adaptive coping strategies were found to mitigate stress by altering cognitive appraisal and promoting emotional regulation.

Earlier theoretical work conceptualised perceived stress within a transactional framework that emphasised the interaction between individuals and their environments. Lazarus and Folkman (1984) proposed that stress arises when individuals perceive that environmental demands exceed their available coping resources. This model shifted the focus of stress research from objective stressors to subjective appraisal processes, highlighting the role of perception, meaning-making, and coping evaluation in stress experiences.

According to this framework, two students exposed to identical academic demands may experience vastly different levels of stress depending on how they appraise those demands and evaluate their coping capacity. This perspective is particularly relevant in academic settings, where students encounter similar workloads but display wide variability in stress responses. The transactional model underscores the importance of cognitive appraisal, emotional regulation, and coping resources in shaping perceived stress.

Earlier foundational research also established perceived stress as a measurable psychological construct. The development of standardised instruments such as the Perceived Stress Scale by Cohen and colleagues (1983) enabled systematic assessment of individuals' subjective stress experiences. These early studies demonstrated that perceived stress reliably predicts emotional dysregulation, somatic symptoms, sleep disturbances, and reduced coping effectiveness across diverse populations, including college students. The scale provided a robust methodological foundation for subsequent empirical research on stress appraisal.

Overall, the literature consistently demonstrates that perceived stress is a pervasive and multifaceted phenomenon among college students. It is shaped by academic demands, personal characteristics, sociocultural context, and cognitive appraisal processes. High perceived stress adversely affects emotional, cognitive, behavioural, and physical functioning, while lower perceived stress is associated with better psychological adjustment and academic performance. Viewing perceived stress in strict descending chronological order highlights its theoretical evolution and reinforces its importance as a critical determinant of student mental health and academic success.

2.3 STUDIES LINKING RESILIENCE AND PERCEIVED STRESS AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS

The relationship between resilience and perceived stress has been extensively examined within student mental health research, with recent scholarship consistently documenting a strong inverse association between these constructs across diverse academic, cultural, and institutional contexts. Contemporary studies emphasise that resilience functions as a crucial psychological resource that enables college students to appraise academic demands more constructively, regulate emotional responses effectively, and maintain psychological well-being in the face of increasing academic pressures. Students with higher levels of resilience consistently report lower perceived stress, even when exposed to similar workloads, evaluative demands, and performance expectations, underscoring the central role of resilience in adaptive academic functioning.

Recent empirical research highlights the importance of cognitive appraisal processes in explaining how resilience influences perceived stress. Resilient students tend to interpret academic challenges as manageable, temporary, and controllable, whereas students with lower

resilience are more likely to appraise similar situations as overwhelming, unpredictable, and threatening (Saddique et al., 2021). These appraisal differences are critical in determining stress intensity and subsequent psychological outcomes. When confronted with academic stressors such as overlapping deadlines, examinations, or competitive grading systems, resilient students are more likely to engage in strategic planning, prioritize tasks effectively, and seek appropriate academic or social support. In contrast, students with lower resilience often experience heightened anxiety, emotional distress, and disengagement, which amplifies perceived stress and negatively affects academic performance.

Post-pandemic research has further reinforced the protective role of resilience in shaping students' stress experiences. Studies conducted during and after periods of academic disruption indicate that students with higher resilience experienced lower levels of chronic perceived stress and demonstrated faster psychological recovery from academic setbacks (Saddique et al., 2021). The abrupt transition to online learning, reduced peer interaction, and uncertainty regarding academic progress posed significant stressors for students globally. However, resilient students adapted more effectively to these changes, maintained academic routines, managed emotional challenges, and demonstrated greater confidence in their ability to cope with uncertainty. These findings suggest that resilience contributes not only to immediate stress reduction but also to long-term psychological adjustment and academic continuity.

Research has also identified adaptive coping strategies as a key mechanism linking resilience and perceived stress in contemporary studies. Resilient students are more likely to engage in problem-focused coping, cognitive reappraisal, time management, and support-seeking behaviours, all of which contribute to lower stress perception and improved emotional regulation (Saddique et al., 2021). In contrast, students with lower resilience often rely on maladaptive coping strategies such as avoidance, rumination, and emotional suppression, which intensify stress perception and hinder academic engagement. These behavioural patterns highlight the practical role of resilience in facilitating effective stress management and sustaining academic functioning.

Recent literature also conceptualizes resilience as an active and dynamic psychological process rather than a static personality trait. Empirical evidence indicates that resilience mediates the relationship between external stressors—such as academic workload, institutional demands, and social pressures—and perceived stress outcomes (Gupta & Saini, 2020). This mediating function suggests that resilience transforms potentially stressful environmental inputs into

manageable experiences through internal psychological resources such as optimism, self-efficacy, emotional regulation, and adaptive coping strategies. Students with higher resilience are better equipped to interpret stressors realistically, respond flexibly to challenges, and maintain emotional balance, highlighting resilience as a multidimensional construct shaped by ongoing interactions between the individual and their environment.

Indian studies examining resilience and perceived stress provide important insights into the cultural and contextual dimensions of this relationship. Research consistently demonstrates that resilience significantly predicts lower perceived stress among Indian college students, even after controlling for demographic variables such as age, gender, socioeconomic status, and academic discipline (Gupta & Saini, 2020). In academic environments characterized by high competition, strong parental expectations, societal pressure for academic success, and limited mental health resources, resilience emerges as a critical determinant of stress perception. Students with higher resilience report greater confidence in managing academic demands, reduced emotional distress, and better adjustment to academic challenges.

Recent findings further emphasize the role of social and institutional support in strengthening resilience and reducing perceived stress. Family encouragement, peer relationships, and mentoring from faculty members enhance students' resilience by providing emotional reassurance, academic guidance, and problem-solving support (Gupta & Saini, 2020). Students who perceive their academic environment as supportive demonstrate greater coping efficacy, higher academic self-confidence, and lower stress levels. These findings illustrate that resilience is not solely an individual attribute but is reinforced through social connections and institutional resources that buffer the impact of stress.

Moving to earlier conceptual developments, research during this phase increasingly emphasized resilience as a moderating factor that buffers the relationship between academic stressors and perceived stress. Masten (2014) conceptualized resilience as a dynamic process involving positive adaptation despite adversity, rather than merely an inherent trait. This perspective marked a significant shift in resilience research, emphasizing developmental processes and contextual influences. Within academic settings, resilient students were found to report lower perceived stress in response to examinations, workload pressure, and performance evaluations, even in highly competitive educational environments.

Masten's (2014) work further highlighted the role of individual psychological strengths such as self-efficacy, emotional regulation, optimism, and adaptive coping skills in explaining why

resilient students experience lower stress levels. These characteristics enable students to maintain concentration, motivation, and goal-directed behaviour during periods of heightened academic demand. By fostering a sense of control and confidence, resilience reduces the likelihood of cognitive overload and emotional exhaustion, thereby supporting sustained academic engagement and psychological well-being.

Earlier foundational empirical studies provided strong evidence for the inverse relationship between resilience and perceived stress among students. Research by Abolghasemi and Varaniyab (2010) demonstrated that resilience significantly predicted lower perceived stress and higher life satisfaction, establishing resilience as a key protective factor in student mental health. These findings laid the groundwork for later research examining resilience as both a mediator and moderator in the stress process. Early studies emphasized that students with higher resilience were better able to withstand academic pressures without experiencing severe psychological distress.

Foundational research also underscored the role of coping styles in linking resilience and perceived stress. Students with higher resilience were more likely to employ adaptive coping strategies such as problem-solving, cognitive restructuring, and emotional regulation, while avoiding maladaptive strategies such as avoidance and rumination (Abolghasemi & Varaniyab, 2010). These coping patterns contributed to lower perceived stress and better psychological adjustment, reinforcing the view of resilience as a stress-buffering mechanism. Additionally, resilient students demonstrated greater persistence, motivation, and academic confidence, which further reduced the likelihood of stress escalation.

Across the literature, resilience is consistently associated with faster recovery from stressful experiences. Students with higher resilience demonstrate greater psychological flexibility, enabling them to return to baseline emotional functioning following academic setbacks. This recovery process reduces vulnerability to prolonged stress responses and supports sustained academic participation. Improved sleep quality, reduced emotional exhaustion, and enhanced concentration are commonly reported outcomes among resilient students, further illustrating the broad impact of resilience on stress regulation.

Overall, the literature provides compelling evidence that resilience plays a central role in reducing perceived stress among college students. When examined in descending chronological order, research demonstrates a clear progression from early foundational findings to more nuanced, process-oriented models that emphasize cognitive appraisal, coping

mechanisms, and contextual influences. Across diverse populations and academic contexts, higher resilience is consistently associated with lower stress perception, better emotional regulation, and improved psychological well-being. By enabling students to appraise challenges constructively, recover effectively from setbacks, and engage in adaptive coping strategies, resilience functions as a core mechanism in managing perceived stress and promoting academic success throughout the college experience.

2.4 RESEARCH GAP

The present study addresses the following gaps identified in the existing literature regarding resilience and perceived stress among college students:

● Most empirical studies on resilience and perceived stress have been conducted in Western or foreign contexts, with limited research focusing specifically on Indian college students.

● Existing research has predominantly examined perceived stress, anxiety, and psychological distress, while comparatively less attention has been given to positive psychological constructs such as resilience among college students.

● A considerable number of previous studies have investigated resilience and perceived stress as separate variables, with relatively few studies examining the relationship between these two constructs simultaneously.

● Existing research has mainly focused on medical, engineering, or other professional students, whereas general college students from diverse academic streams remain underrepresented.

● Gender differences in resilience and perceived stress have not been adequately explored in the Indian higher education context.

● Limited studies have examined the protective role of resilience in reducing perceived stress and promoting psychological well-being among college students.

● There is a scarcity of research investigating resilience and perceived stress among college students in the post-COVID-19 academic environment, characterized by increased psychological demands, uncertainty, and changes in learning patterns.

● Existing literature highlights the need for more comprehensive studies examining resilience as an important coping resource that contributes to stress management, emotional adjustment, and overall mental health among college students.

CHAPTER III
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research methodology refers to the systematic framework or overall plan used to conduct a research study. It describes the procedures and techniques followed by the researcher for collecting, analysing, and interpreting data in order to answer the research questions and achieve the objectives of the study. Research methodology includes the selection of the sample, tools used for data collection, methods of data analysis, and statistical techniques applied for interpreting the findings.

3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

The present study adopted a quantitative cross-sectional research design to examine the relationship between resilience and perceived stress among college students. A quantitative approach was employed because the study aimed to objectively measure the variables and analyse their relationship using appropriate statistical techniques.

The cross-sectional design involved collecting data from college students at a single point in time, allowing the researcher to assess the current levels of resilience and perceived stress among the participants. This research design was considered appropriate as it enabled the systematic, objective, and efficient examination of patterns, relationships, and differences among the study variables.

In particular, the study sought to identify gender differences in resilience and differences in perceived stress among college students.

3.2 POPULATION AND SAMPLE

Population refers to the entire group of individuals, objects, or elements that possess certain characteristics relevant to a research study. It represents the complete set from which the researcher selects a sample for investigation. In the present study, the population consisted of undergraduate and postgraduate male and female students aged between 18 and 25 years studying in colleges of the Jammu region.

Sampling constitutes a fundamental aspect of every scientific investigation, as it ensures that the data collected is meaningful, reliable, and representative of the target population. An appropriate sample helps in minimizing errors, saving time and resources, and increasing the accuracy of the findings. The determination of sample size depends upon factors such as the objectives of the study, research methodology, and characteristics of the population under investigation.

In the present study, a total of 152 college students (N = 152) were selected as participants. The sample comprised both male and female undergraduate and postgraduate students aged between 18 and 25 years from colleges in the Jammu region. Participants were selected from different colleges and academic streams in order to obtain diverse responses and ensure better representation of the college-going population. The selected sample size was considered appropriate for examining the relationship between perceived stress and resilience among college students, while also remaining manageable within the available time and resource constraints.

3.3 SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

The present study employed the convenience sampling technique for data collection. This method involves selecting participants who are readily accessible and willing to participate in the study. Accordingly, college students who were available during the data collection period and provided informed consent were included in the sample.

Convenience sampling was chosen due to practical considerations such as limited time, accessibility, and feasibility. Although this technique may limit the generalizability of the findings, it enabled the efficient collection of relevant data and provided valuable insights into perceived stress and resilience among college students.

3.4 RESEARCH TOOLS AND DESCRIPTION

Data for the present study were collected exclusively through an online mode using Google Forms. The questionnaire was designed and distributed digitally to ensure ease of access and efficient data collection. The Google Form link was shared through institutional communication channels such as email, student WhatsApp groups, and other relevant social media platforms. This method allowed participants to respond at their convenience while

maintaining uniformity in the data collection process. All participants received the same set of questions, ensuring consistency and comparability of responses.

- **Selection of Research Tools**

The selection of appropriate research tools is a crucial aspect of the research process, as it determines the accuracy, reliability, and validity of the data collected. The choice of instruments was guided by the objectives of the study, which aim to examine the relationship between perceived stress and resilience among college students. Standardized tools with strong psychometric properties were selected to ensure scientific rigor and suitability for the target population.

3.4.1 Connor–Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC-10)

The Connor–Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC-10), developed by Connor and Davidson (2003), is a widely recognized tool for measuring resilience, defined as the ability to cope with stress and adversity. The 10-item version is a brief and efficient measure derived from the original 25-item scale, retaining its strong psychometric properties while being more practical for research purposes.

The scale assesses key aspects of resilience such as adaptability, persistence, emotional regulation, optimism, and the ability to bounce back from difficult experiences. Participants respond to each item on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 0 (Not true at all) to 4 (True nearly all the time), indicating how well each statement applies to them.

The total score represents the individual's level of resilience, with higher scores indicating greater resilience. The CD-RISC-10 has shown high reliability and validity across different populations, including students, and is widely used in psychological research. Its simplicity, clarity, and strong empirical support make it particularly suitable for assessing resilience among college students.

3.4.2 Perceived Stress Scale (PSS-10)

The Perceived Stress Scale (PSS-10), developed by Cohen, Kamarck, and Mermelstein (1983), is one of the most widely used psychological instruments for assessing perceived stress. The scale consists of 10 items that measure the degree to which individuals appraise situations in their lives as stressful, unpredictable, and overwhelming. It focuses on subjective experiences of stress rather than objective stressors.

Participants are required to indicate how often they have experienced certain feelings and thoughts on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 0 (Never) to 4 (Very Often). The scale includes both positively and negatively worded items, with positive items being reverse-scored during analysis. The total score reflects the overall perceived stress level, with higher scores indicating greater perceived stress.

The PSS-10 has demonstrated good internal consistency and reliability across various populations, including college students. It is widely used in research due to its brevity, ease of administration, and strong validity in measuring perceived stress.

3.5 STATISTICAL TECHNIQUE EMPLOYED

To analyse the data, I have employed the following statistical techniques:

1. Mean – to determine the average scores of resilience and perceived stress among participants.

2. Standard Deviation – to measure the variability or dispersion of scores around the mean.

3. Independent Samples t-test – to examine the differences in resilience and perceived stress based on gender.

4. Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation – to assess the relationship between resilience and perceived stress among participants.

CHAPTER IV
ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

The present study was conducted to examine the relationship between resilience and perceived stress among college students. The study aimed to understand how resilience influences the levels of stress experienced by students in their academic and personal lives.

A total of 152 participants were included in the study. Data were collected using standardised measures of resilience and perceived stress. Descriptive and inferential statistical techniques were employed to analyse the data. The findings are presented systematically in the form of tables and figures for clarity and better interpretation.

This chapter presents a detailed analysis of the results obtained from the study. It begins with the description of the demographic characteristics of the sample, followed by the analysis of the relationship between resilience and perceived stress. Further, differences across demographic variables are examined. The findings are discussed in the context of existing literature and relevant theoretical frameworks.

Table 4.1:

Demographic profile of the respondents

Variable	Category	n	Percentage
Age	18- 21	97	63.8
	22- 25	55	36.2

Gender	Female	94	61.8
	Male	58	38.2
Course	Humanities	96	63.2
	Science	35	23.0
	Commerce	21	13.8
Type of Institution	Autonomous	64	42.1
	Private	42	27.6
	Government	46	30.3

The study explored differences in resilience and perceived stress across various demographic variables such as age, gender, course of study, and type of institution. The majority of participants (63.8%) belonged to the 18–21 age group, while 36.2% were aged 22–25 years. In terms of gender, females constituted a higher proportion (61.8%) compared to males (38.2%). With respect to the course of study, most participants were from the humanities stream (63.2%), followed by science (23.0%) and commerce (13.8%). Regarding the type of institution, the largest group of participants were from autonomous institutions (42.1%), followed by government (30.3%) and private institutions (27.6%).

The table indicates that the sample is predominantly composed of younger students, females, and those from the humanities stream, with representation from different types of institutions.

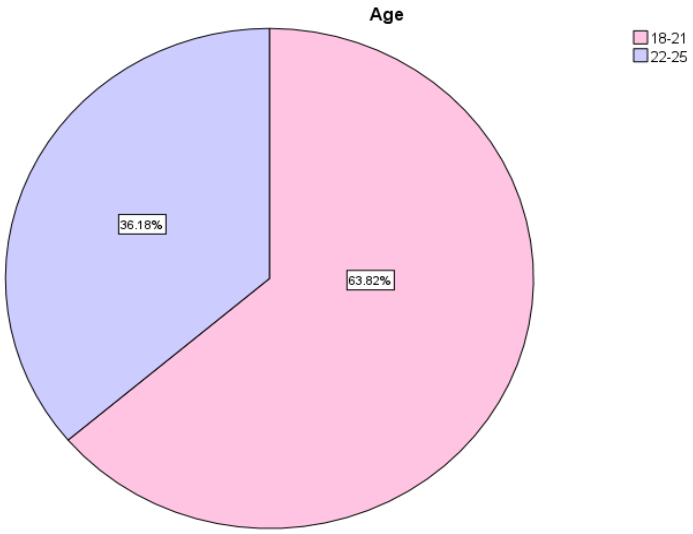


Figure 4.1

Age Percentages

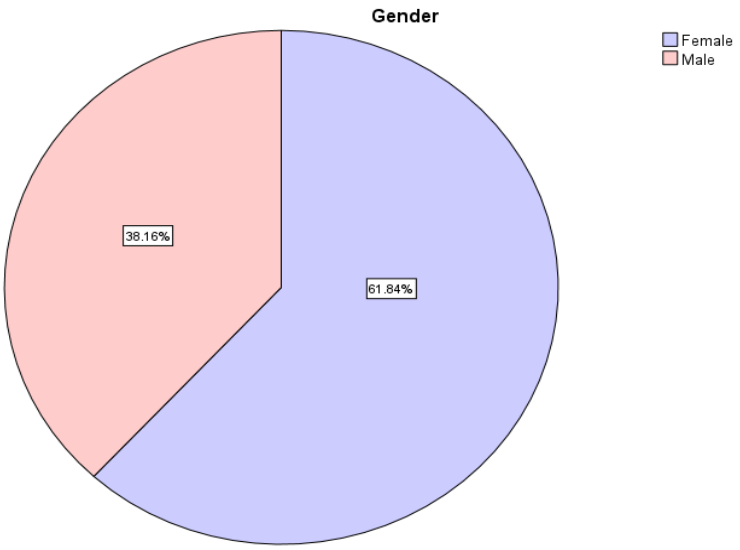


Figure 4.2

Gender Percentages

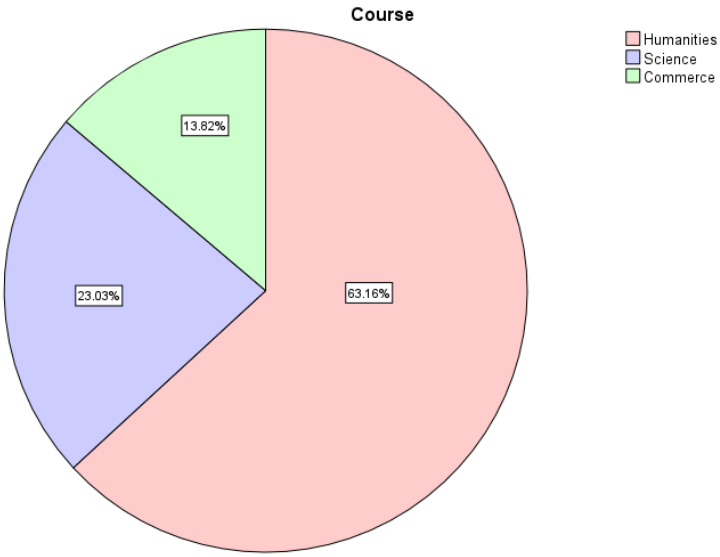


Figure 4.3

Course Percentages

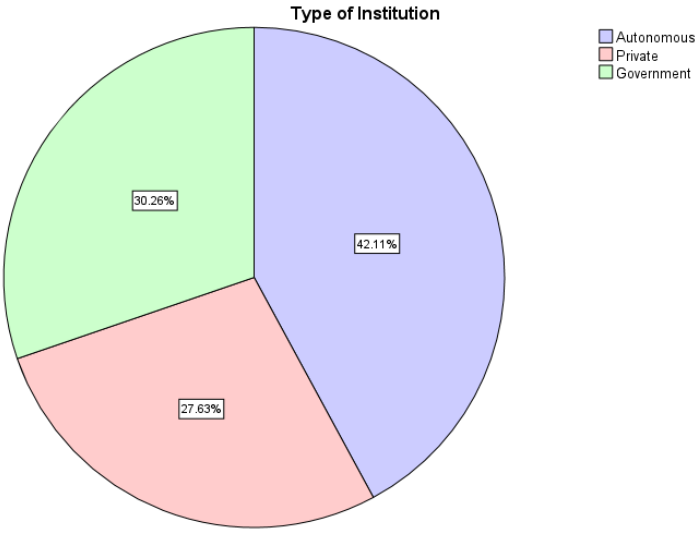


Figure 4.4

Type of Institution

Table 4.2

Means, standard deviations, and correlations

Variable	M	SD	Resilience	PSS
Resilience	23.37	6.137	1	-.342**
PSS	21.28	4.578	-.342**	1

Note: PSS = Perceived Stress Scale

** Denotes significance at 0.01

Table 4.2 presents the means, standard deviations, and Pearson correlation coefficients for resilience and perceived stress among college students. The mean score for resilience was 23.37 (SD = 6.137), while the mean score for perceived stress (PSS) was 21.28 (SD = 4.578), indicating moderate levels of both resilience and perceived stress among the participants.

The results of the Pearson correlation analysis reveal a statistically significant negative relationship between resilience and perceived stress ($r = -0.342$, $p < .001$). This indicates that as resilience increases, perceived stress decreases among college students. In other words, individuals with higher resilience tend to experience lower levels of stress, whereas those with lower resilience are more likely to report higher perceived stress.

The correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed), suggesting a high level of statistical reliability. Overall, the findings highlight the important role of resilience as a protective factor in reducing perceived stress among college students.

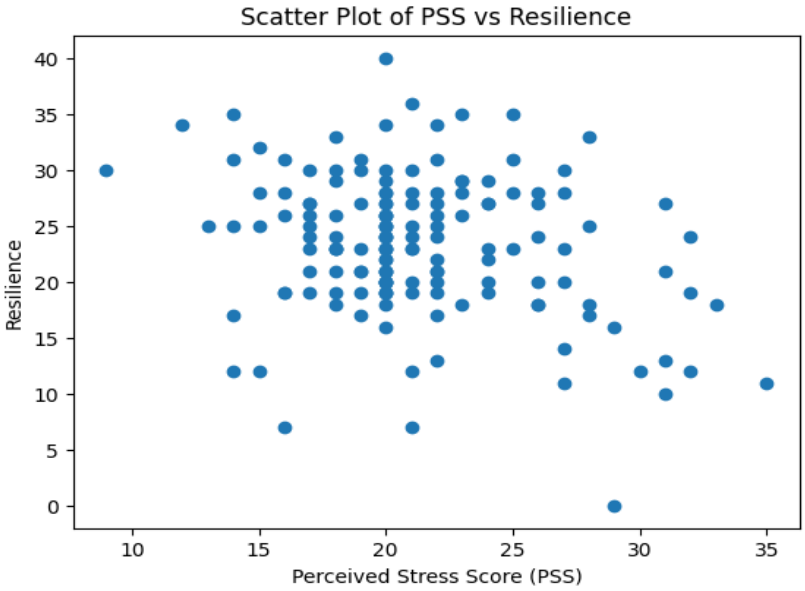


Figure 4.5

Scatter Plot Representing the correlation between resilience and perceived stress

Table 4.3

Presents the results of the Independent Samples t-test conducted to examine gender differences in Resilience among participants

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	SD	t	p
	Female	94	22.44	6.031		
Resilience	Male	58	24.88	6.056	-2.422	.017*

Note: $p < .05$* indicates statistical significance.

The findings reveal that male participants (M = 24.88, SD = 6.056) reported higher levels of resilience compared to female participants (M = 22.44, SD = 6.031). The difference in mean scores between males and females was found to be statistically significant, t = -2.422, p = .017*.

Since the p-value is less than .05, the result indicates a significant difference in resilience levels based on gender. This suggests that gender plays an important role in influencing resilience, with male students demonstrating comparatively greater resilience than female students in the present sample.

These findings may be explained by differences in coping mechanisms, socialisation patterns, or exposure to stress across genders. Overall, the results highlight the importance of considering gender as a significant factor when examining resilience among college students.

Table 1.4

Presents the results of the Independent Samples t-test conducted to examine gender differences in perceived stress (PSS) among participants.

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	p
	Female	94	21.97	4.554		
PSS	Male	58	20.17	4.433	2.385	.018*

Note: $p < .05$* indicates statistical significance.

The findings indicate that female participants (M = 21.97, SD = 4.554) reported higher levels of perceived stress compared to male participants (M = 20.17, SD = 4.433). The difference in mean scores was found to be statistically significant, t = 2.385, p = .018*.

Since the p-value is less than .05, the results suggest a significant difference in perceived stress between males and females. This indicates that female students experience higher levels of perceived stress compared to their male counterparts.

These findings highlight the role of gender as an important factor influencing stress levels among college students. The higher stress levels observed among females may be attributed to differences in emotional processing, coping styles, or greater sensitivity to academic and social pressures. Overall, the results emphasise the need to consider gender differences when addressing perceived stress in student populations

CHAPTER V

FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, FUTURE IMPLICATIONS & SUGGESTIONS

CHAPTER V

FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, DISCUSSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The present study was undertaken to examine the relationship between resilience and perceived stress among college students. In the context of contemporary higher education, students are increasingly exposed to academic demands, performance pressures, and psychosocial challenges, which significantly influence their mental health and overall well-being (Beiter et al., 2015).

Resilience, conceptualised as the capacity to adapt positively in the face of adversity, serves as a crucial protective factor in mitigating stress (Connor & Davidson, 2003). Understanding its role in reducing perceived stress is therefore essential for promoting psychological well-being among students.

This chapter presents a comprehensive discussion of the findings in relation to existing empirical literature and relevant theoretical frameworks. It further outlines the implications, limitations, and future directions, followed by the overall conclusion.

The present study was guided by the following objectives:

1. To examine the relationship between resilience and perceived stress among college students.

2. To examine the gender differences in resilience between male and female college students.

3. To assess the gender differences in perceived stress scores between male and female college students.

Based on the review of the literature, the following hypotheses were formulated:

H1: There will be a significant and negative relationship between resilience and perceived stress.

H2: There will be a significant gender difference in resilience between male and female college students.

H3: There will be a significant gender difference in perceived stress between male and female college students.

5.2 INTERPRETATION OF THE FINDINGS

5.2.1 Relationship Between Resilience and Perceived Stress

The primary objective of the study was to examine the relationship between resilience and perceived stress among college students. The findings revealed a statistically significant negative correlation between resilience and perceived stress ($r = -0.342$, $p < .001$), indicating that higher resilience is associated with lower perceived stress.

This finding is consistent with previous research which identifies resilience as a key protective factor against stress and psychological distress (Smith et al., 2008; Tugade & Fredrickson, 2004). Individuals with higher resilience are better equipped to regulate emotions and employ adaptive coping strategies, thereby reducing their perception of stress.

From a theoretical perspective, these findings align with the Transactional Model of Stress and Coping (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), which posits that stress is influenced by an individual's cognitive appraisal and coping resources. Resilient individuals are more likely to appraise stressors as manageable and respond with effective coping mechanisms.

Furthermore, the results are supported by research indicating that resilience buffers the negative effects of stress and contributes to better mental health outcomes among students (Hartley, 2011). Thus, the present findings reinforce the role of resilience as a protective psychological resource.

5.2.2 Gender Differences in Resilience

The findings indicated that male participants reported significantly higher levels of resilience compared to female participants. This result is partially supported by existing literature suggesting that gender differences in resilience may arise due to variations in coping styles, socialization processes, and exposure to stress (Matud, 2004).

Men are often found to engage more in problem-focused coping, whereas women may rely more on emotion-focused coping strategies, which can influence resilience levels (Tamres,

Janicki, & Helgeson, 2002). However, it is important to note that findings in this area remain mixed, and resilience is influenced by multiple contextual and individual factors.

5.2.3 Gender Differences in Perceived Stress

The study also revealed that female participants reported significantly higher levels of perceived stress compared to male participants. This finding is consistent with prior research indicating that women tend to report higher perceived stress levels due to greater emotional responsiveness and societal expectations (Cohen & Janicki-Deverts, 2012).

Research among college populations has similarly shown that female students often experience higher academic and psychological stress (Misra & McKean, 2000). These differences may be attributed to both biological and psychosocial factors, including differences in emotional processing and coping patterns.

5.3 IMPLICATIONS FOR THEORY AND RESEARCH

The findings of the present study provide empirical support for established psychological theories, particularly the Transactional Model of Stress and Coping (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). The observed relationship between resilience and perceived stress underscores the importance of cognitive appraisal and coping resources in determining stress outcomes.

The study also contributes to the field of positive psychology, which emphasizes the role of strengths such as resilience in enhancing well-being (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). By highlighting resilience as a key factor in stress reduction, the study adds to the growing body of literature on protective psychological mechanisms.

Future research should explore additional variables such as social support, emotional intelligence, and coping strategies, which may mediate or moderate the relationship between resilience and stress (Ozbay et al., 2007).

5.4 IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

The findings of the study have significant practical implications. Educational institutions should implement structured resilience-building interventions, such as stress management programmes, mindfulness training, and cognitive-behavioural techniques, which have been

shown to reduce stress and improve psychological well-being (Regehr, Glancy, & Pitts, 2013).

Additionally, institutions should strengthen counselling services and provide targeted support for students, particularly female students who may be more vulnerable to stress. Promoting awareness about mental health and encouraging adaptive coping strategies can further enhance resilience among students.

5.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Despite its contributions, the study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. The sample size was relatively small, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to a broader population of college students. In addition, the reliance on self-report measures increases the possibility of response bias, as participants may have provided socially desirable answers or may not have accurately reflected their true experiences and feelings. The use of a cross-sectional research design also restricts the ability to establish cause-and-effect relationships between resilience and perceived stress, as data were collected at a single point in time. Furthermore, the study did not take into account other potentially influential variables, such as social support, personality traits, and environmental factors, which could have provided a more comprehensive understanding of the factors affecting stress and resilience among students.

5.6 SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Future research may:

- Use longitudinal designs to examine causal relationships.
- Include larger and more diverse samples.
- Explore mediating variables such as coping strategies and emotional intelligence.
- Conduct intervention-based studies to enhance resilience.

5.7 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the present study demonstrates that resilience is a significant protective factor in reducing perceived stress among college students. The findings reveal a clear inverse relationship between resilience and perceived stress, emphasizing the importance of fostering resilience to promote mental well-being.

The observed gender differences further highlight the need for targeted interventions to address stress among female students. Overall, the study underscores the importance of resilience as a key component of psychological health and academic success.

SUMMARY

SUMMARY

TOPIC: A CORRELATIONAL ANALYSIS OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RESILIENCE AND PERCEIVED STRESS AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS

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Semester VIII

INTRODUCTION

Resilience is regarded as one of the most important psychological strengths that enables individuals to effectively cope with stress, adversity, and challenging life situations. In contemporary psychology, resilience is conceptualized not merely as the absence of psychological problems, but as a dynamic process involving positive adaptation, emotional regulation, coping flexibility, and recovery from stressful experiences. Resilience contributes significantly to psychological well-being, emotional stability, mental health, and overall life satisfaction. Individuals with higher resilience are generally better able to manage difficulties, maintain optimism, and adapt successfully to changing circumstances.

College students constitute a particularly vulnerable population in relation to stress and psychological challenges. Academic workload, examinations, assignment deadlines, peer competition, family expectations, financial concerns, and uncertainties regarding future careers significantly contribute to increased stress levels among students. Perceived stress refers to the degree to which individuals evaluate situations in their lives as stressful, unpredictable, overwhelming, or difficult to manage. It reflects a person's subjective interpretation of stress rather than the objective occurrence of stressful events. High levels of perceived stress are often associated with anxiety, emotional exhaustion, reduced concentration, poor academic performance, and impaired psychological well-being.

Previous psychological research has consistently demonstrated a significant relationship between resilience and perceived stress. Individuals possessing higher resilience generally experience lower levels of perceived stress because they are more capable of regulating

emotions, utilising adaptive coping strategies, and maintaining psychological balance during stressful situations. Conversely, individuals with lower resilience are more likely to perceive challenges as overwhelming and experience heightened stress responses. Resilience therefore acts as a protective factor that buffers the negative impact of stress and promotes healthy psychological adjustment.

In the context of higher education, resilience plays a crucial role in helping students successfully manage academic and personal pressures. Students with greater resilience tend to exhibit better emotional control, improved coping abilities, higher self-confidence, and healthier adjustment to college life. However, the increasing pressures of modern academic environments often challenge students' resilience and negatively affect their mental health.

Considering the growing prevalence of stress-related problems among college students, the present study was undertaken to examine the relationship between resilience and perceived stress among college students. The study also aimed to investigate differences in resilience and perceived stress across demographic variables such as gender and educational level.

RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

The increasing prevalence of psychological stress among college students has become a major concern for educators, psychologists, counselors, and mental health professionals. At the same time, resilience has emerged as an important psychological resource that may help students effectively cope with academic and personal stressors.

Therefore, the present study was undertaken to examine the relationship between resilience and perceived stress among college students. The study also aimed to investigate differences in resilience and perceived stress across demographic variables such as gender and educational level.

NEED AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

In today's highly competitive academic environment, college students are continuously exposed to academic pressure, social expectations, emotional challenges, and future uncertainties. These stressors often negatively affect students' mental health, emotional stability, and academic functioning. Understanding the role of resilience in managing stress is therefore essential for promoting psychological well-being among students.

The present study is significant because it explores the relationship between resilience and perceived stress among college students. A deeper understanding of this relationship can help identify protective psychological factors that contribute to effective stress management and emotional adjustment.

The findings of the study are expected to provide useful insights for educational institutions, psychologists, counselors, and policymakers in designing resilience-building programs, stress-management interventions, and mental health awareness initiatives for students. Furthermore, the study may encourage students to develop adaptive coping strategies and strengthen their emotional resilience to deal with stressful situations effectively.

Additionally, the study contributes to the existing literature in educational and health psychology by examining resilience and perceived stress within the Indian higher education context. The findings may also serve as a foundation for future research related to student mental health and psychological well-being.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The present study is entitled as A Correlational Analysis of the Relationship Between Resilience and Perceived Stress Among College Students.

OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

Resilience

Resilience refers to the ability of college students to effectively cope with stress, adversity, and challenging situations while maintaining psychological well-being and positive adjustment.

Perceived Stress

Perceived stress refers to the degree to which individuals appraise situations in their lives as stressful, unpredictable, overwhelming, or difficult to manage.

College Students

College students refer to individuals aged approximately 18–25 years who are currently enrolled in undergraduate or postgraduate degree programs.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The following objectives were formulated for the present study:

➢ To examine the relationship between resilience and perceived stress among college students.

➢ To assess the difference in resilience between male and female students.

➢ To assess the level of perceived stress among undergraduate and postgraduate students.

HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

1. There will be a significant negative relationship between resilience and perceived stress among college students.
2. There will be no significant gender differences in the levels of resilience.
3. There will be no significant difference in the level of perceived stress between undergraduate and postgraduate students.

POPULATION AND SAMPLE OF THE STUDY

The population of the present study comprised college students pursuing undergraduate and postgraduate courses from different colleges and academic streams. The participants belonged to the age group of 18–25 years.

In the present study, random sampling technique was employed for selecting the sample. A total of 150 college students were initially selected for the study. However, after screening and data cleaning, the final sample consisted of 149 participants.

The participants included both male and female students belonging to undergraduate and postgraduate programs from different academic streams and institutions.

SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

A random sampling technique was used for collecting the data in the present study. This technique ensured that every individual in the population had an equal chance of being selected for participation. The use of random sampling helped in reducing bias and improving the representativeness of the sample.

TOOLS USED

1. Connor–Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC)

The Connor–Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC) developed by Kathryn M. Connor and Jonathan R. T. Davidson was used to assess resilience among college students. The scale measures the ability to cope with adversity, adapt to stress, and maintain psychological well-being. Higher scores on the scale indicate higher resilience.

2. Perceived Stress Scale (PSS)

The Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) developed by Sheldon Cohen was used to measure the level of perceived stress among students. The scale assesses the extent to which individuals perceive their lives as stressful, unpredictable, and overwhelming. Higher scores indicate higher levels of perceived stress.

STATISTICAL TECHNIQUES USED

The following statistical techniques were employed for analyzing the data:

➢ Mean

➢ Standard Deviation

➢ Pearson's Product Moment Correlation

➢ t-test

The statistical analyses were conducted using the IBM SPSS Statistics.

RESULTS OF THE STUDY

The major findings of the present study are summarized as follows:

• The results revealed a statistically significant negative correlation between resilience and perceived stress among college students. This indicates that students with higher resilience experienced lower levels of perceived stress.

• The descriptive statistics showed moderate levels of resilience and perceived stress among college students.

• No significant gender differences were observed in resilience levels between male and female students.

• The analysis also indicated no significant difference in perceived stress between undergraduate and postgraduate students.

• Demographic analysis revealed that the majority of the participants belonged to the 18–21 years age group. The sample was predominantly composed of female students compared to male students.

• Overall, the findings support the protective role of resilience in reducing psychological stress and enhancing emotional adjustment among college students.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The present study examined the relationship between resilience and perceived stress among college students. The findings of the study suggest several directions for future research:

● Similar studies can be conducted on a larger sample to improve the generalizability of the findings.

● Comparative studies may be conducted among students from different academic disciplines and professional courses.

● Longitudinal studies can be undertaken to examine the long-term effects of resilience on stress management and psychological well-being.

● Future research may include additional psychological variables such as anxiety, depression, coping strategies, emotional intelligence, and life satisfaction.

● Similar studies may be conducted among school students, working professionals, or students from different geographical regions.

● Experimental and intervention-based studies may be conducted to assess the effectiveness of resilience-building and stress-management programs.

● Future studies may also incorporate qualitative methods and physiological indicators for a more comprehensive understanding of psychological stress and resilience.

CONCLUSION

The present study concluded that resilience and perceived stress are significantly related among college students. Higher resilience was associated with lower perceived stress, indicating that resilience serves as an important protective factor for psychological well-being.

The findings highlight the importance of strengthening resilience and promoting adaptive coping strategies among students to help them effectively manage stress and emotional challenges.

The study emphasizes the need for educational institutions and mental health professionals to create awareness regarding resilience-building, stress management, and psychological well-being. Encouraging supportive academic environments and mental health interventions can significantly enhance students' emotional adjustment, academic performance, and overall quality of life.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX-I

CONNOR-DAVIDSON RESILIENCE SCALE (CD-RISC 10)

Please check the number that best describes how true each statement has been for you.
0 = Not true at all, 1 = Rarely true, 2 = Sometimes true, 3 = Often true, 4 = True nearly all the time.

1. I am able to adapt when changes occur.	0 1 2 3 4
2. I can deal with whatever comes my way.	0 1 2 3 4
3. I try to see the humorous side of things when I am faced with problems.	0 1 2 3 4
4. Having to cope with stress can make me stronger.	0 1 2 3 4
5. I tend to bounce back after illness, injury, or other hardships.	0 1 2 3 4
6. I believe I can achieve my goals, even if there are obstacles.	0 1 2 3 4
7. Under pressure, I stay focused and think clearly.	0 1 2 3 4
8. I am not easily discouraged by failure.	0 1 2 3 4
9. I think of myself as a strong person when dealing with life's challenges and difficulties.	0 1 2 3 4
10. I am able to handle unpleasant or painful feelings like sadness, fear, and anger.	0 1 2 3 4

APPENDIX-II

PERCEIVED STRESS SCALE (PSS-10)

Please check the number that best describes how true each statement has been for you.
0 = Never, 1 = Almost Never, 2 = Sometimes, 3 = Fairly Often, 4 = Very Often.

1.been upset because of something that happened unexpectedly?	0 1 2 3 4
2.felt that you were unable to control the important things in your life?	0 1 2 3 4
3.felt nervous and "stressed"?	0 1 2 3 4
4.felt confident about your ability to handle your personal problems?	4 3 2 1 0
5.felt that things were going your way?	4 3 2 1 0
6.found that you could not cope with all the things that you had to do?	0 1 2 3 4
7.been able to control irritations in your life?	4 3 2 1 0
8.felt that you were on top of things?	4 3 2 1 0
9.been angered because of things that were outside of your control?	0 1 2 3 4
10.felt difficulties were piling up so high that you could not overcome them?	0 1 2 3 4