

## Turning Achievement Around:

### Predictors of Academic Resilience of Academically At-risk Students in Singapore



## Research Insights

The factors that are key to the development of academic resilience:

- Emotional regulation
- Goal-setting skills (particularly in the context of failure)
- Student-to-teacher communication
- Teacher competence support

## RESEARCH BACKGROUND

**Academically at-risk students** are those who are likely to follow a trajectory of poor academic performance due to adverse conditions or risk factors (e.g., low initial achievement). There is currently a dearth of research on the profiles of these students in Singapore and on the nature of protective factors that can help them develop **academic resilience**, which can be defined as the achievement of positive school outcomes despite the presence of risk factors in their lives.

The study hypothesises that **students' socio-emotional strengths** and **social factors** supporting students' psychological needs of competence, autonomy and relatedness are **resources** that students could draw upon to **develop academic resilience**.

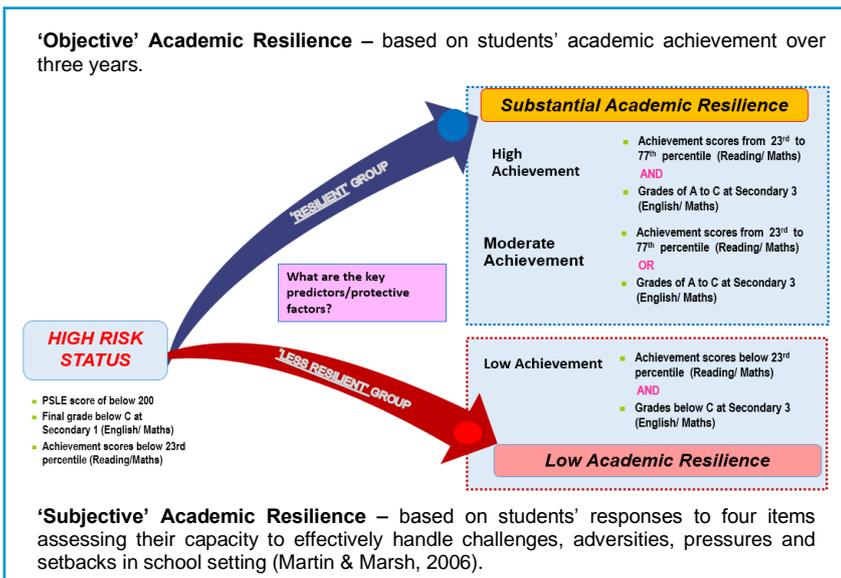
## RESEARCH PURPOSE

The study aimed to:

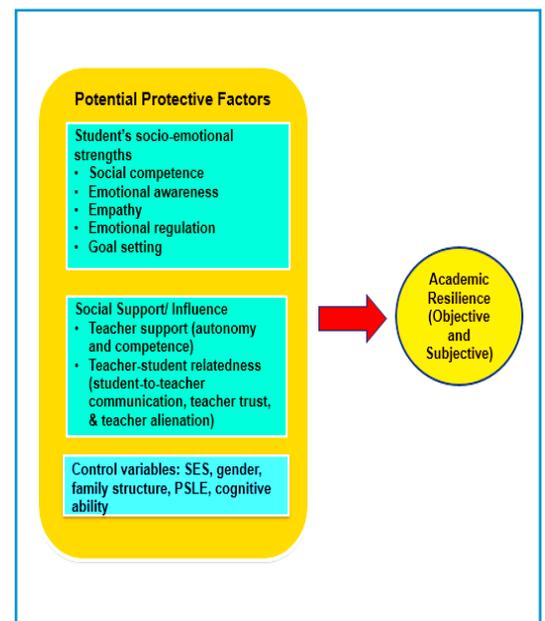
- explore **protective factors** related to the development of students' academic resilience
- **generate profiles** of students facing different levels of academic risk
- **compare profiles** of academically high-risk students who developed **low** and **substantial** level of **academic resilience**.



**Academic resilience** refers to "the capacity to strive towards competence when faced with stressors that threaten academic performance" (Alva, 1991, p.19).



**Two Approaches in Framing Academic Resilience**



**Theoretical Model**

## RESEARCH DESIGN

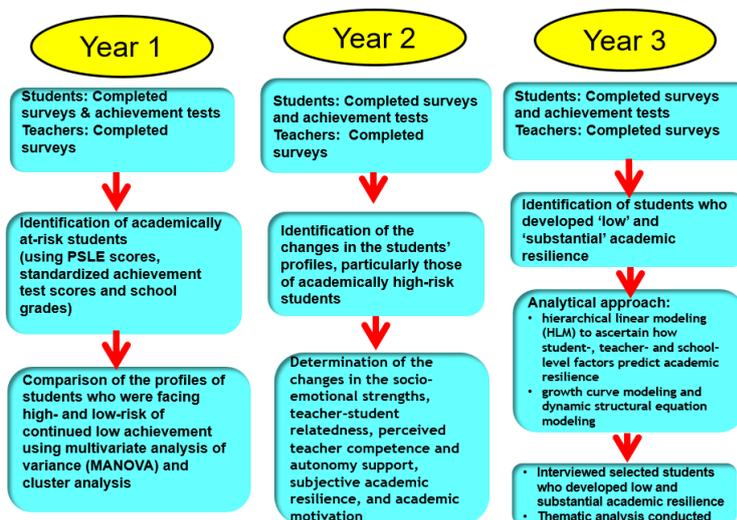
Utilising the Explanatory Design with Follow-up Explanations Model (Creswell & Clark, 2006), which is a form of **mixed-methods** research design, quantitative data were collected in three waves using questionnaires and standardized achievement tests. Qualitative data were collected via open-ended questions and semi-structured interviews.

### Research participants:

Secondary school students ( $N=1035$ ) from 22 government schools participated in the study.

## KEY FINDINGS

1. Students facing **high academic risk** reported **lower levels of socio-emotional strengths** and **perceived teacher support**, and **higher levels of teacher alienation** and **amotivation** as compared to their lower risk peers.
2. **Emotional regulation**, **goal-setting skills**, **student-to-teacher communication**, and **teacher competence support** were found to be the most consistent factors that were positively associated with the students' academic resilience.
3. **Academically at-risk students who developed resilience** differed from their peers in the way they **set and pursued their goals**, how they **viewed and dealt with failures**, and in the **level of perceived competence** and **relatedness support** received from key social partners, such as parents, peers and teachers.



## IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY AND PRACTICE

1. As students enter secondary school, their risk for continued low achievement or academic failure can be significantly mitigated by **enhancing their emotional awareness**, **goal-setting skills**, and **perceived teacher support** and **reducing their amotivation** and **alienation**.
2. **Enhancing students' emotional regulation** and **goal-setting skills**, and **improving student-to-teacher communication** and **teacher competence support** need to be among the **key targets of initiatives** and **efforts** to support students facing high academic risk to develop academic resilience.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

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To visit the project page

Scan code or visit <http://www.nie.edu.sg/project/oer-42-12-isc>.

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### References:

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