

## Escalation Students' Academic Achievement Through Soft Skills Training and Academic Resilience

Efi Miftah Faridli<sup>1</sup>, Fatmah Bagis<sup>2</sup>, Sabar Narimo<sup>3</sup>, Endang Fauzi<sup>4</sup>, Anam Sutopo<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1,2</sup>Universitas Muhammadiyah Purwokerto, <sup>1,3,4,5</sup>Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta

<sup>1</sup>efimiftahfaridli@gmail.com, <sup>2</sup>fatmahbagis2014@gmail.com, <sup>3</sup>sn124@ums.ac.id, <sup>4</sup>ef274@ums.ac.id, <sup>5</sup>as123@ums.ac.id

### Abstract

*Improvement of academic achievement is the main factor in improving the quality of education in University of Purwokerto City. This study aims to empirically examine how soft skills training and academic resilience affect student academic achievement in higher education with social recognition theory. The use of the method uses a quantitative descriptive approach. The distribution of the questionnaire was carried out openly during the training of 461 students who were studying in the 2nd semester at university. Analysis using Smart-PLS (Partial Least Squares). As a result, soft skill training had a significant influence on student academic achievement (accepted) with p-values ( $0.000 > 0.05$ ). Resilience had a negligible influence on students' academic achievement based on p-values ( $0.708 < 0.05$ ). This research contributes to universities to provide support for improving student achievement by supporting student skills and universities need to pay attention to the level of resilience so that students are ready to face difficulties in the future.*

**Keyword : Soft Skills Training, Resilience, Academic Achievement.**



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### 1. INTRODUCTION

Training in the world of education and the world of work has been the focus of several studies. The increasingly high level of human resource quality has become the center of attention from various sectors (Santi, 2020). A number of studies have also linked training topics to job topics (La Fleur et al., 2021; Niati et al., 2021; Pelucha et al., 2019; Pržulj Beogradska et al., 2017; Sigalingging & Pakpahan, 2021), health (Dos'Santos et al., 2019; Wetmore et al., 2020), Education (Bara & Xhomara, 2020; Daniëls et al., 2021; Mallarangan et al., 2024; Mislia et al., 2021), Entrepreneurship (Al-Awlaqi et al., 2021; Galvão et al., 2020; Gavigan et al., 2020; Ubfal et al., 2022). Success in one's personal and professional life is seen as highly dependent on one's capacity to identify, develop, and apply one's skills (Pelucha et al., 2019). The development and maintenance of hard and soft skills is essential for this achievement (Lamri & Lubart, 2023).

One of the main metrics used to assess the quality of university education is student academic performance (Jafari et al., 2019). Although there is no doubt about the important role of academic achievement in students' lives now and in the future (Colmar et al., 2019; Martínez et al., 2019), previous academic achievement is considered the most significant outcome of formal education experience (Moore, 2019). Several studies have been conducted to date, and elements that can improve students' academic achievement have been established (Liu & Hou, 2018), several factors related to education level (Jafari et al., 2019), psychology (Martínez et al., 2019; Moore, 2019). In today's world of education, not only technical skills or hard skills are needed to achieve good academic achievements, but also softskill skills or non-technical skills that are no less important as the basis for training each individual (Patacsil & Tablatin, 2017)

Soft skills are a group of personal qualities, habits, attitudes, and social graces that result in excellent scientific achievement and allow students to be compatible to work with it (Obilor, 2019) as well as the existence of human interactions and their way of getting work done (Sancho-Cantus et al., 2023). Softskill includes more use of the right brain (Mohamed, 2019) and can be interpreted as skills such as communication, problem-solving, decision-

making, time management, and self-motivation (Shahida, 2021). A study by Ahmed, (2020). Soft Skills is considered the foundation of academic achievement and career success. Many studies report that 75% of job success is based on soft skills and only 25% rely on hard skills (El-Tabal, 2020). It is common knowledge that entrepreneurs are increasingly emphasizing soft skills. Therefore, it is important for students to improve the value of soft skills and make serious efforts to acquire them so that when they work, they can maintain their jobs and develop (Obilor, 2019).

Students who have good softskills tend to excel academically, are able to adapt to various situations, and are better prepared to enter the workforce after graduation (Karimi & Pina, 2021; Suleman, 2018). Many studies have shown that the development of softskill has a significant effect on student achievement in higher education (El-Tabal, 2020; Obilor, 2019; Shahida, 2021). However, the provision of training or softkill training in universities is still not optimal. Most educational programs are still too focused on developing hard skills, so universities need to explore students' insights about soft skills from a new perspective and environment (Shahida, 2021). Therefore, now universities have greater pressure to improve the soft skills of their students (Shahida, 2021). In addition to soft skills that have an influence on student success, the level of student resilience is also indispensable (Bagis, et al., 2024).

Resilience is a trait that has been studied as something stable (Lin et al., 2024). The protective mechanism known as resilience is what alters a person's response to danger or their ability to adapt to their environment, regardless of any unfortunate circumstances that may arise (Alexopoulou et al., 2019). It is now common knowledge that resilience refers to the ability to adapt, grow, and advance in the face of adversity, change, or adversity (Fru-Ngongban, 2023). Resilience in the academic environment refers to the student's capacity to effectively manage possible environmental challenges caused by their nature, circumstances, and prior experiences (Trigueros et al., 2019). Of course, some students underperform and continue to perform poorly, which results in failure, but others overcome difficulties to reverse their academic misfortunes and thrive (Karabiyik, 2020).

It is no secret that today's entrepreneurs are more concerned with soft skills, so that students succeed after entering the workforce, it is very important for them to realize the importance of soft skills and work hard to develop them (Obilor, 2019). Unfortunately, the development of students' soft skills does not receive the attention they deserve. In addition to soft skills training, it is necessary to pay attention to the level of student resilience. Because with resilience in themselves, students can overcome and survive in facing difficulties and challenges during lectures and in the world of work. Therefore, this study examines the relationship between Training and resilience to students' academic achievement and offers suggestions on how to help them thrive in this field.

### **Social Learning Theory**

Social Learning Theory, developed by Bandura (1963), focuses on the fact that learning occurs not only through direct experience, but also through observation and imitation of other people's behavior in social contexts. Bandura explains that individuals can learn something from their social environment without needing to be directly involved in the situation they observe.

From the perspective of the educational context, this theory is used to support students in developing social skills, self-management skills, and academic resilience through interaction with others whose behaviors can be observed and imitated (Bagis, Arraniri, et al., 2024). The relationship between theory and the development of soft skills such as teamwork, communication skills can be developed through direct observation or imitating others, both mentors and lecturers, in this case positive behavior to complete tasks with their group (Zimmerman, 2000). Related to academics, this theory is also applied by showing successful student behavior, so that it has an effective way of learning to improve

academic achievement (Schunk, 1991). Increasing academic resilience, students also monitor others to overcome academic failures (Masten, 2001).

### Soft Skills Training and Academic Achievement

The level of training obtained by students is closely tied to the academic achievement of students. Training is a process of forming and preparing workers by improving their knowledge, skills, and behaviors so that they can complete tasks more efficiently, rationally, and quickly (Niati et al., 2021). Meanwhile, academic achievement itself is a level of the quantity of learning that students complete in school, and is measured by comparing student performance with learning goals or educational goals, which shows how well the teacher preparation program and student efforts are running (Motevalli et al., 2021). Overall, students who receive soft skills training not only become more proficient in interacting and communicating, but they also acquire a broader range of skills that will help them deal with problems in their academic and professional lives (Obilor, 2019). As a result, their academic performance can be significantly improved. Interpersonal and intrapersonal skills, which are very important in daily life and at work but are not directly related to academic knowledge, are referred to as soft skills (Patacsil & Tablatin, 2017)

H1: Training has a significant effect on students' academic achievement

### Academic Resilience and Academic Achievement

In general, an invaluable internal resource for achieving superior academic achievement is academic resilience (Lin et al., 2024). In academia, resilience is an important motivational-affective component. According to them, academic resilience is a dynamic process that academically accomplished people go through to overcome obstacles that prevent their classmates from achieving success (Yang & Wang, 2022). The ability to survive, or overcome adversity, has a great influence on a student's academic success (Karabiyik, 2020). Thus, one of the main goals of educational initiatives to improve students' academic achievement is to build and strengthen academic resilience.

H2 : Resilience has a significant effect on student academic achievement

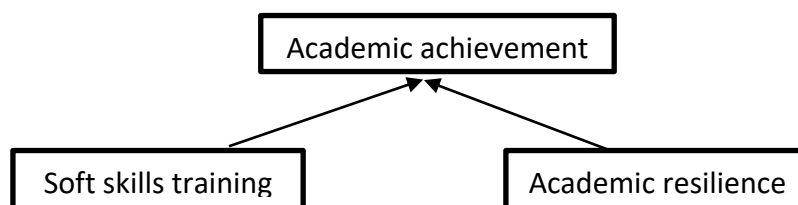


Figure 1. Research Model

## 2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a quantitative descriptive approach, by distributing a questionnaire with a likert scale with 5 points from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree". In this study, the questionnaire was distributed openly during the training activities. The population of this study is 2nd semester students in University of Purwokerto City, the number of samples collected is 461 students. The analysis technique uses Smart-PLS (partial least squares).

## 3. RESULTS

Reporting of research results includes descriptive statistical data analysis, measurement evaluation and application of structural models using Partial least squares (PLS). This section aims to test hypotheses and present the results of data analysis in detail, so as to provide guidelines in decision-making by universities. The results of the analysis recorded the presentations of respondents from various faculties. From the data, it can be

seen that a number of female respondents dominated the analysis results, the majority of respondents from the faculty of teacher training and education, with an age range of 17 – 19 years.

### Structural Model Analysis

The results of the study, the R Square value is 0.626 which shows that the variation of academic achievement is influenced by training and resilience with an influence level of 62.6%. while 37.4% were influenced by other factors.

### Convergent Validity and Reability

The first analysis data is shown in Figure 1 and Table 1, which show the AVE values of the following variables: Training, Resilience, and Academic Achievement. The Cronbach alpha and Composite Reability values > 0.7, with an AVE value of > 0.5, which means that each variable is declared valid and reliable.

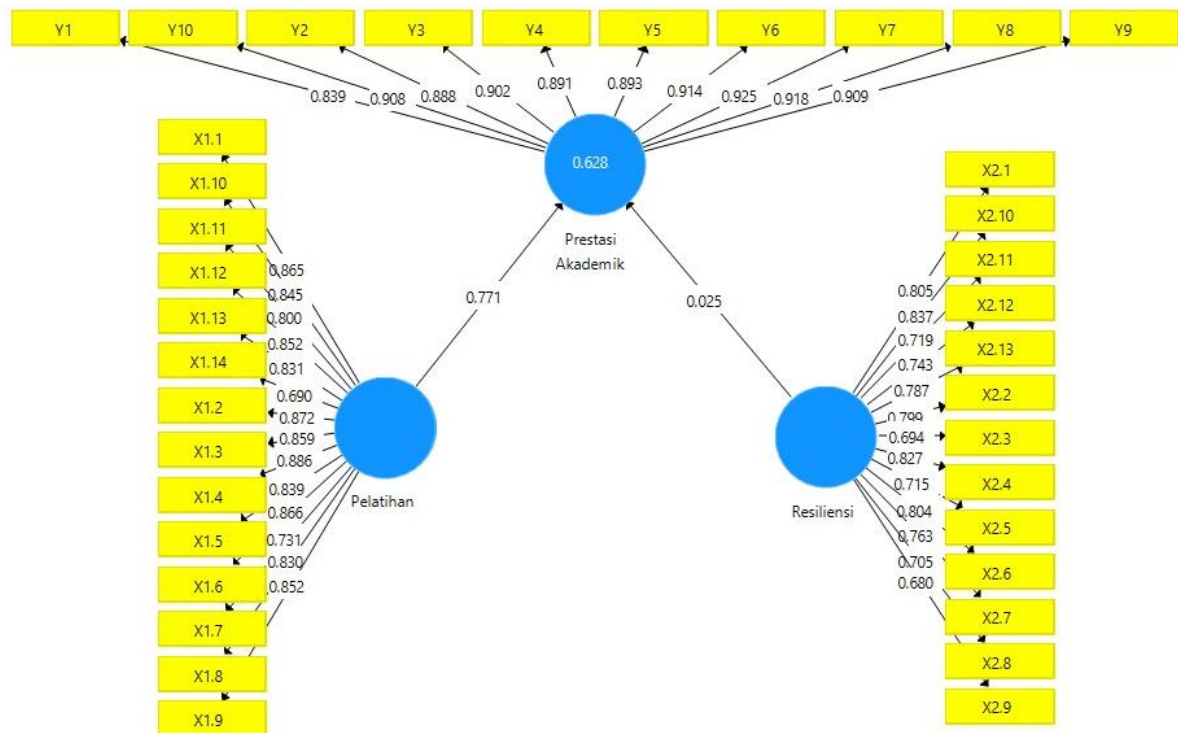


Figure 2. Loading Factor (Source: Primary Data)

Table 1 shows Cronbach's alpha and composite reability values on the variables of training, reliance, and academic achievement with a value of >0.70. while the AVE value is >0.50, it is concluded that all measurement items are reliable and valid.

Table 1. Construct Validity and Reability

	Cronbach'Alpha	Rho_A	Composite Reability	AVE
Soft Skills Training	0.965	0.968	0.969	0.692
Academic Achievement	0.974	0.974	0.977	0.808
Resilience	0.939	0.944	0.947	0.580

Based on the results of the calculations presented in table 2, it is concluded that training has a significant influence on academic achievement. The second observation shows that resilience has a statistically insignificant effect on academic achievement.

**Table 2.** Hypotesis

	Original Sample (O)	Mean	Standar Deviasi (STDEV)	T Statistik	P Values
Soft Skill Training -> Academic Achievement	0.771	0.765	0.062	12.382	0.000
Resilience -> Academic Achievement	0.025	0.031	0.066	0.375	<b>0.708</b>

#### 4. DISCUSSION

##### The Effect of Training on Student Academic Achievement

Looking at the effect of training on academic achievement in the first hypothesis test, it is shown with an original sample of 0.771 and a p-value ( $0.000 < 0.05$ ) which proves that the level of training obtained by students has a very significant impact on academic achievement. This means that when students get training such as soft skills, they will have skills or knowledge and help students in overcoming their academic problems (Niati et al., 2021; Obilor, 2019). Students who have good softskills tend to excel academically, are able to adapt to various situations, and are better prepared to enter the workforce after graduation (Karimi & Pina, 2021; Suleman, 2018)

##### The Effect of Resilience on Student Academic Achievement

The results of data analysis showed that there was an insignificant effect between resilience on academic achievement, as evidenced by the original sample value of 0.025 and the p value ( $0.708 > 0.05$ ). These findings show that resilience plays an important role in improving students' academic achievement. However, students' ability to improve their achievement is not only limited to the ability to survive in experiencing difficulties in their academic field (Yang & Wang, 2022). Rather, there are several other factors that can increase student achievement. Students who are able to survive the process they go through during their studies will have a high fighting power so that it has an impact on their academic success (Karabiyık, 2020)

#### 5. CONCLUSION

This study examines the influence of training and resilience on the academic achievement of 2nd semester students in University of Purwokerto City. The results of the research can provide interesting insights and can be used as a basis for future research. These findings show that there is a definite support for improving student achievement through training and resilience, based on the results of data analysis that training shows a significant influence on academic achievement while resilience has a non-significant influence on academic achievement. The implication of this study is that it is important for the university to optimize soft skills training to support student skills and provide readiness for students to be ready to work, and be able to maintain jobs in the future. In addition to soft skills training, universities need to pay attention to the level of student resilience so that students can overcome and survive in facing difficulties and challenges during lectures and in the world of work.

The research was carried out by utilizing a limited number of samples, namely students who have studied for 2 semesters. The results of the study may not apply to all universities in other regions. This study only looks at or examines how training and resilience have an impact on student academic achievement. In addition, there are other factors that may have a greater impact on students' academic achievement. Suggestions for future studies, may add a larger sample size and identify other factors that affect academic achievementswa.

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