

# Examining Student Resilience by Observing the Effect of Social Support and Optimism

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## Abstract

There are many negative situations that make students depressed and very stressed with their academics. Students who lack endurance need conducive conditions through social support and strong optimism. This study aimed to test the effect of social support and optimism on the resilience of students working on their thesis. The subjects involved were 79 active students of the faculty of psychology. This study was conducted with quantitative methods using three scales: resilience, social support, and optimism. Sampling was performed using the purposive sampling technique, while the analysis employed the multiple linear regression technique. The results of the major hypothesis analysis show a very significant relationship between social support and student optimism and the resilience of students working on their thesis. The findings of this study can be a significant discussion topic for researchers or other education practitioners to prioritize establishing student resilience in writing final projects and encourage further research related to predominant factors that influence the attitudes of final-year students.

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## 1. Introduction

Universities or colleges have required students to complete their final project for a bachelor's degree as a thesis. This final project is compulsory; however, the writing process is characterized by a number of challenges (Siregar & Rahma, 2020). The right quality to deal with the challenges of a final project is resilience (Bukhori, Hassan, Hadjar, & Hidayah, 2017). Assignments of any kind at any level of difficulty that seem difficult for students indicate a low level of resilience (Neufeld & Malin, 2022). The previous statement has also been strengthened by the results of the study by Edwards et al. (2016), demonstrating a low level of student resilience. In the study by Reznik et al., (2022), low levels of resilience were caused by high levels of stress. Higher stress levels are likely to give rise to lower levels of resilience (Roy et al., 2023).

High stress on students is widely discussed and significantly associated with the final project. Many students suffer increased academic stress and psychological pressure nearing their final project (Rizanaj, 2023). Individuals are unable to overcome the effect of stressors in their university, and many of them suffer physically and psychologically (Hamaideh, Al-Modallal, Tanash, & Hamdan-Mansour, 2021). When academic pressure compromises student psychology, it results in low resilience (Kumar et al., 2022). Resilience provides a great advantage for students to adapt and cope with stressors on campus (Kotera, Green, & Sheffield, 2022). Resilience is especially important to be applied in educational aspects, both during study and after study (Kotera, Ozaki, Miyatake, Tsunetoshi, & Nishikawa, 2022).

However, students can determine the course of their education by making the right choice and action. The choice is to relieve oneself from all stressors in the university (Basri, Hawaldar, Nayak, & Rahiman, 2022). Lately, self-recovery can be seen from the characteristics of resilience, where

individuals are able to rise from their problems and fight to solve the problem. Students can foster resilience with supporting factors such as social support and optimism. As described in the study by Schroeter et al., (2022), optimism and social support interact and form connections to increase student resilience. As a result, individuals believe that when problems arise, one of which is a final project, they will know what can be done and react more positively (Haikalis, Doucette, Meisel, Birch, & Barnett, 2022).

Reacting more positively is indeed a final-year student's strength. Likewise, it is true that this study revealed new strengths in final-year students in completing their thesis. Even though it was hard and stressful initially, students are expected to have the same belief as this study: to be resilient with social support and optimism to achieve a bright future. This study does not discuss supporting factors of resilience other than social support and optimism. However, it focuses on the effect of optimism and social support.

The number of studies related to resilience continues to emerge but only use standard research. In this research, it is classified as more accessible, more practical, and more objective than previous studies. Moreover, this research follows current trending predictors and is still much needed, namely social support and optimism. Social support is not only external support; this research combines self-support and support from lecturers and the surrounding environment to renew student resilience. Likewise, optimism that makes students' awareness increase and makes them more adaptive.

Students need proper adaptation to all stressors from the environment. Mental readiness, namely resilience, needs strengthening through optimism and social support (Zhang, Ewalds-Kvist, Li, & Jiang, 2019). Examining resilience was the focus of this study. And this study's main objective was to determine the extent to which optimism and social support influence the resilience of final-year students in thesis writing.

## 2. Method

### 2.1. Research Design

This study was designed quantitatively by associating two variables, optimism, and social support, with resilience. A quantitative study described the effect of optimism and social support through robust and supportive theoretical studies in order to examine and predict student resilience. The researcher collected the subjective answers of the respondents so that the researcher must make relevant questions in accordance with the current conditions of the students. This research is quite easy for respondents and gets full support from them. This study was conducted in an independent and paperless manner. While still adhering to health protocols, this study was conducted online, independently per individual, and via Google Forms.

### 2.2. Population and Sample

The population in this study were students of the faculty of psychology of Ahmad Dahlan University. The researchers also choose a class that met the criteria for this study, namely odd-semester students for the 2021/2022 academic year. The scope was final-year students who were in the process of writing a thesis. A group of respondents who met the inclusion criteria were asked to fill out the research link and work on the scale by providing a sincere answer. The purposive sampling technique was used in this study. The number of respondents in the final sample was 79 students. Researchers involved a sample of men and women. Apart from that, another criterion is having attended cadre training as usual at Ahmad Dahlan University.

### 2.3. Research Instrument

From several works of literature, scales such as CLOT-R (the Chinese Revised Life Orientation Test adapted from LOT-R Scheier) (Fang, Zhang, Mei, Chai, & Fan, 2018), then MSPSS (the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support) (Li, Han, Wang, Sun, & Cheng, 2018) and RS (Resilience Scale) (Roulston, Montgomery, Campbell, & Davidson, 2018) can be a reference for items that survey optimism, social support and resilience. However, the researchers did not adopt all the mentioned scales. Instead, the researchers developed their own scales and adapted from the Connor-

Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC) devised by Connor and Davidson (2003), which has been adapted by Alfiani (2020). This study used a scale from Alfiani (2020) because it was proven to be valid and reliable with a reliability coefficient ( $r_{it}$ ) of 0.944, and because her study bears similarities with our study in terms of subject characteristics, namely students working on a thesis. The instrument used was the social support scale that was compiled by Galintias (2021), with modifications by the researchers. The reason for this modification was the difference in research subjects. Several items were modified to suit the subject used by the researchers, which were described in three scales: the resilience, optimism, and social support scale. Furthermore, the instrument used to measure the level of optimism was the optimism scale developed by Kurniawan and Susilo (2021), with modifications from the researchers.

## 2.4. Validity and Reliability

In this study, content validity was used because content validity is the extent to which the components in a measuring instrument are genuinely relevant and form a picture of the construct that is in line with the measurement objectives. The item's content validity eligibility can be concluded from the results of the assessment of several competent assessors (expert judgments) carried out by a group of individuals subjectively. The validity of the contents of the scale uses expert judgment by discussing with the supervisor regarding the items to be used on the scale and making a blueprint. Meanwhile, the reliability approach used is the Single Trial Administration approach which produces internal consistency reliability estimates, in which the data is obtained through the one-time presentation of the scale to many respondents who have been selected using the alpha coefficient formula or commonly called Cronbach's Alpha.

## 2.5. Resilience Scale

Resilience refers to the ability of individuals to face adversity, survive and not give up because of difficulties, adapt and bounce back from adversity experienced, and grow after going through difficult times. Resilience was measured based on aspects of: (1) personal competence, high standards, and tenacity, (2) trust in one's instincts, acceptance of negative influences, and strengthening the effects of stress, (3) acceptance of positive change and peaceful relationships with others, (4) control, and (5) spiritual influence. Subjects who got a high resilience score means that the resilience level is high, and if the resilience score is low, the resilience would also be low.

## 2.6. Social Support Scale

Social support is the presence or availability of other people in providing assistance and relationships that involve emotions so that individuals feel loved, cared for, and valued. It was measured based on the type of support: emotional support (self-esteem), instrumental support, informational support, and friendship support. Subjects who score high on social support have access to high social support, whereas if the score is low, it means that the social support obtained would also be low. After analysis, a reliability coefficient alpha of 0.933 and a discrimination index of ( $r_{it}$ ) of 0.341 to 0.733 were obtained for the social support scale. Four items were discarded: item number 5 with a ( $r_{it}$ ) value of 0.506, item number 16 with a ( $r_{it}$ ) value of 0.495, item number 18 with a ( $r_{it}$ ) value of 0.502, and item number 27 with a ( $r_{it}$ ) value of 0.547, and 1 item was re-entered based on the highest ( $r_{it}$ ) value in the last round or the last item discarded, namely item number 3 with a ( $r_{it}$ ) value of 0.341.

## 2.7. Optimism Scale

Optimism can be defined as an individual's inclination to think positively and believe that good things will happen in life. Optimism was measured based on the dimensions of optimism, namely permanence, pervasiveness, and personalization. After the optimism test scale was analyzed, an alpha reliability coefficient of 0.862 and a discrimination index ( $r$ ) of 0.266 to 0.706 were obtained. Further, six items were discarded, namely item number 4 with a ( $r_{it}$ ) value of 0.234, item number 6 with a ( $r_{it}$ ) value of 0.269, item number 7 with a ( $r_{it}$ ) value of 0.317, item number 21 with a ( $r_{it}$ ) value of 0.293, item number 33 with a ( $r_{it}$ ) value of 0.232, and item number 36 with a ( $r_{it}$ ) value of 0.394. 21 items were valid.

## 2.8. Data Collection Technique

The Likert-type attitude scale was used as a measurement scale model. The Likert Scale was used because it was considered suitable to measure students' attitudes, opinions, and perceptions regarding the level of resilience, optimism, and social support received during the thesis process. The subject would choose the answer that best fits the situation. Each scale has five alternative answers, which cover Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Neutral (N), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD). There are no wrong answers because each respondent's answer will be coded with a different code. If favorable, "strongly agree" was worth 5, "agree" was worth 4, "neutral" was worth 3, "disagree" was worth 2, and "strongly disagree" was worth 1. Conversely, if the item is unfavorable, then "strongly agree" was worth 1, "agree" was worth 2, "neutral" was worth 3, "disagree" was worth 4, and "strongly disagree" was worth 5.

## 2.9. Research Instrument

Each scale was tested first on subjects with nearly identical criteria as the research sample via <https://forms.gle/gLhwsyH6ExDLG5oF9>. After the trial, the research scales were distributed to the proper sample via <https://forms.gle/81oCp4a5YwjVmV9o6>. The resilience scale contained 25 items and was not trialed since the items were already valid and reliable. The social support scale contained 48 trial items. On the other hand, the optimism scale contained 42 trial items. A total of 115 items were completed by the respondents. After the data were gathered, they were processed in such a way. After being analyzed, a reliability coefficient alpha of 0.890 and a discrimination index of ( $r_{it}$ ) of 0.393 to 0.667 for the resilience scale were obtained.

## 2.10. Data Analysis Technique

After the data is input, the next step is data analysis. The analysis used was multiple linear regression tests to see the effect of social support and optimism on student resilience. First, the researcher assumed that the higher the social support, the higher the resilience. Second, the higher the optimism, the higher the resilience. This indicates that the more positive the social support and optimism, the more positive the resilience.

Testing of assumptions and hypothesis testing were conducted. Testing of assumptions consists of normality test, linearity test, and multicollinearity test. A normality test was used to determine whether the data population was normally distributed or not. The rule of significance test for the normality test was if the significance level/ $p > 0.05$ . It can be said that the data is normally distributed, and it is said to be abnormal if the significance level/ $p < 0.05$ . Furthermore, the linearity test aimed to determine whether social support and optimism as the independent variables and resilience as the dependent variable can be connected with a straight line (linear). The data in the independent variables are said to be linear with the dependent variable if  $\text{sig. } F_{\text{linearity}} < 0.05$  and  $\text{sig. } F_{\text{Deviation from Linearity}} > 0.05$ .

Even when one of them is not met, the data can still be considered linear, however, if both are not met, then the data cannot be considered linear ( $\text{sig. } F_{\text{linearity}} > 0.05$  and  $\text{sig. } F_{\text{Deviation from Linearity}} < 0.05$ ). When the linearity equation has been found, we can proceed to the multicollinearity test. Multicollinearity test was conducted to see the relationship between independent variables in the regression model. The absence of multicollinearity indicates a good regression model. Multicollinearity occurs when the tolerance value is  $< 0.1$  and the VIF (Variance Inflation Factor) value  $\geq 10$ . On the other hand, if the tolerance value is  $> 0.1$  and the VIF value is  $< 10$ , then there is no multicollinearity (Ghodang & Hantono, 2020). If the assumptions are complete and statistically tested, then we can proceed to hypothesis testing. Multiple linear regression test is an option for determining the hypothesis of this study in the SPSS version 25.

## 3. Results

The results of this study can be explained in the presented regression agreement.

$$Y = 64.866 + 0.016 X_1 + 0.433 X_2 + 4357.906 \quad (1)$$

The equation above explains the contribution of social support as much as 16% while optimism is as much as 43%. Statistically, the proposed hypothesis has been accepted and becomes a reference for determining other coefficients. Based on data analysis conducted on 79 respondents using the Multiple Regression Analysis technique, a regression coefficient of 0.475 with a significance level ( $p$ ) of 0.000 was obtained, which means it is very significant (Table 1). It showed that there is a relationship between social support and optimism and resilience in students working on a thesis.

**Table 1. Major Hypothesis Testing Results**

Variable	R	$p$	Description
Social support and optimism on resilience	0.475	0.000	Very significant

Note. R = Regression coefficient,  $p$  = level of significance

Based on the results of the analysis of the first minor hypothesis (Table 2), the social support and resilience variable obtained a beta coefficient of 0.016 and a correlation coefficient ( $r_{xy}$ ) of 0.016, and a significance level of 0.887 ( $p > 0.05$ ), which means it is not significant. Thus, it can be concluded that there is no relationship between social support and the resilience of students working on a thesis. In other words, the first minor hypothesis is rejected.

**Table 2. Minor Hypothesis Testing Results**

No	Variable	Beta	$r_{xy}$	Sig ( $p$ )	Description
1.	Social support and resilience	0.016	0.016	0.887	Hypothesis rejected
2.	Optimism and resilience	0.468	0.433	0.000	Hypothesis accepted

Note.  $r_{xy}$  = correlation coefficient between variables X & Y, Beta = regression equation to determine the effect and effective contribution produced by the independent variables on dependent variables.

#### 4. Discussion

The results of this study show that social support and optimism significantly affect final-year students' resilience. This result is supported by Ruiz-Rodríguez et al. (2022), stating that optimism and social support can significantly and accurately predict resilience. In other words, optimism and social support have a significant effect on the resilience of first-year students. Another study by Yessica (2019) also demonstrated a highly significant relationship between optimism and social support and resilience in people with HIV/AIDS. However, separately, social support did not have the same effect on resilience. The absence of the effect of social support on the resilience of students working on a thesis may be due to students having high confidence or optimism about themselves. Thus, the presence or absence of social support does not affect their resilience. Although the social support received by students is plenty, it does not affect student resilience, as indicated by the effective contribution of social support to the resilience of only 3.46%. Another reason why social support does not affect the resilience of students working on a thesis is the presence of other factors besides social support that can enhance resilience, such as spirituality, self-efficacy, self-esteem, problem-analysis skills, emotional control, and impulse control (Missasi & Izzati, 2019; Wilda, Nazriatu, & Firdaus, 2016).

The support from the campus may be insignificant, resulting in insignificant social support overall. As a result, students feel that many changes are not in their capacity. For example, there are difficulties experienced during thesis writing, including difficulty in finding reference sources, difficulty in contacting thesis supervisors, lack of understanding in writing a thesis, prolonged laziness, confusion in writing ideas into written form, allocating time difficulty, regulating emotions and improving mood difficulty, as well as difficulty in finding research respondents. This result is in line with the study by Maria (2017), demonstrating that social support has no significant effect on students' academic resilience because students do not feel close to friends or teachers. In addition, the emergence of strong isolated and independent feelings makes it difficult for students to live in the Ma'had and campus environment. Another study similarly stated that there is no relationship between social support and resilience (Naulha & Sundari, 2021; Pratama, 2019).

The subject also said that there were several things that they felt during the process of working on the thesis. Among them, they often felt worried and afraid if they could not graduate on time, felt anxious, easily changed moods, and irregular sleeping and eating hours due to staying up late. The difficulties and challenges encountered during thesis writing make students respond to it differently when faced with them. If these challenges are left unchecked, they may give rise to negative feelings such as anxiety, frustration, inferiority, lack of motivation, and stress, causing delays in the completion of the thesis or even abandonment of the thesis (Hariwijaya, 2017).

One of the declines in social support can be observed from the frequent rejection by lecturers regarding the thesis and coupled with the prolonged study of up to 7 years (Daton, 2020). Every year, universities continue to innovate to foster resilience in students in the hope that after graduating from university, they can take responsibility for themselves (Goodenough et al., 2020). This result contrasts the results of the study by Everall (2006) and Wilda (2016), stating that social support is the key to nurturing resilience in students.

Another difference is also described in the study of Marni and Yuniawati (2015), that social support can predict resilience. Social support contains attention, advice, affection, guidance, and services or goods from family and friends, but it cannot strengthen student resilience as in this study. Another research show different results from this study (Astuti & Hartati, 2013; Pittman, Quayson, Rush, & Minges, 2022). In previous findings, social support fosters resilience because individuals can face and overcome their problems by finding solutions from people around them, such as family, friends, significant others, and supervisors.

Optimism is one of the factors that determine resilience. According to Seligman (2008), optimism is the tendency to think positively, observable through how one approaches events that have occurred or have not occurred. Optimistic individuals believe that events that are currently happening are good things and that what happens in the future reflects our expectations. Kurniati and Fakhruddin (2018) stated that highly optimistic individuals are more likely to overcome their problems. Meanwhile, individuals with an optimistic mindset in their daily lives have high confidence and tend to be happier.

The study by Gallardo-Peralta et al. (2022) expressed that there is a relationship between optimism and social support and resilience. Optimism significantly improves resilience among students, where collectively optimism and resilience help students face unfavorable situations. Apparently, in this study, the effect of optimism is much greater than social support. Optimism is internal in nature, and it is supported by the study of Roellyana and Listiyandini (2016), stating that optimism results in 12.3% better resilience in individuals. When students constantly think positively and realistically about all the possibilities, it can help them get good results, thereby helping them face difficulties during the thesis writing process.

In this study, the researcher recognizes several weaknesses, such as remote data collection, preventing the researcher from filling the scales. Consequently, respondents outside the criteria of the researcher participating in filling out and inconsistency in filling out the scales occurred. The gap between the initial data collection, namely interviews and research data collection, was too long, resulting in the number of subjects planned at the beginning is not in accordance with the number obtained in the field because, at that time, many students had completed their thesis so that it did not match the criteria proposed by the researcher. Social support and optimism significantly affect students' resilience during thesis writing. In this study, optimism shows a more significant effect on resilience compared to social support. Optimistic students, in the face of failure, refrain from blaming themselves constantly and believe that bad things that happen will not last long, replaced by success. That attitude enables students to think positively in response to the difficulties encountered during the thesis writing process.

## 5. Conclusion

Optimism is a force that dominates this study. It produced an effective contribution of 22.23% to resilience, meaning that it is able to determine 22.23% of the resilience in students. Conversely, the lower the optimism, the lower the resilience. This study is expected to expand using other vari-

ables that might affect the level of resilience, such as spirituality, self-efficacy, self-esteem, emotion regulation, and other variables not disclosed in this study. If one insists to use similar variables, it is advisable to determine more specific social support, such as support from parents or support from peers. Future studies are expected to use different subjects than the ones in this study. Students can maintain or improve resilience by improving optimism. Students can do several things to increase optimism, including positive thinking, refraining from self-blame, and stop dwelling on sadness.

For study programs, they are expected to participate more actively in fostering optimism in students. It can be done by establishing a more harmonious relationship between students and supervisors by making it easier for students to communicate or discuss with supervisors to nurture trust and motivate students to complete their thesis. In addition, providing facilities that can instill optimism in students writing their thesis, such as self-concept training, is also advisable.

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# Mengkaji Resiliensi Siswa dengan Mengamati Pengaruh Dukungan Sosial dan Optimisme

## Kata kunci

Resiliensi  
Dukungan sosial  
Optimisme

## Abstrak

Terdapat banyak faktor dari situasi negatif yang membuat mahasiswa tertekan dan sangat stress dengan kondisi akademiknya. Siswa yang daya tahannya kurang membutuhkan kondisi yang kondusif melalui dukungan sosial dan optimisme yang kuat. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menguji pengaruh dukungan sosial dan optimisme terhadap resiliensi mahasiswa yang mengerjakan skripsi. Subyek yang terlibat sebanyak 79 mahasiswa aktif fakultas psikologi. Penelitian ini dilakukan dengan metode kuantitatif dengan menggunakan tiga skala yaitu resiliensi, dukungan sosial, dan optimisme. Pengambilan sampel dilakukan dengan menggunakan teknik *purposive sampling*, sedangkan analisis menggunakan teknik regresi linier berganda. Hasil analisis hipotesis mayor menunjukkan ada hubungan yang sangat signifikan antara dukungan sosial dengan optimisme mahasiswa dan resiliensi mahasiswa dalam mengerjakan skripsi. Temuan penelitian ini dapat menjadi topik diskusi yang signifikan bagi peneliti atau praktisi pendidikan lainnya guna memprioritaskan pembentukan resiliensi mahasiswa dalam menulis tugas akhir dan mendorong penelitian lebih lanjut terkait faktor dominan yang memengaruhi sikap mahasiswa tingkat akhir.