

Thankful Minds, Resilient Students: Exploring the Gratitude, Academic Resilience Link Among Scholarship Recipients

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ABSTRACT: This study aimed to examine the relationship between gratitude and academic resilience among KIP scholarship recipients at Universitas Bina Darma. This study employed a quantitative approach with 177 KIP scholarship recipients as research participants, selected using simple random sampling. Data were collected using the Academic Resilience Scale and Gratitude Scale, which were administered using a four-point Likert scale. Data analysis was performed using simple linear regression with SPSS version 27. The results showed a very strong and significant positive relationship between gratitude and academic resilience, with a correlation coefficient of $r = 0.819$ and $p = 0.001$ ($p < 0.05$). The coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.671$) indicates that gratitude contributed 67.1% to academic resilience, while the remaining 32.9% was associated with other factors outside the scope of this study. Descriptively, 53% of participants had high academic resilience and 54.8% had high gratitude. These findings indicate that students with higher gratitude tend to demonstrate higher academic resilience in dealing with academic demands and challenges. Therefore, gratitude represents an important psychological resource in supporting students' ability to persist, adapt, and recover from academic difficulties.

KEYWORDS: Gratitude; Academic Resilience; Scholarship Recipients

I. INTRODUCTION

Higher education is an important means of improving the quality of human resources. The purpose of education, as stated in Government Regulation Number 19 of 2005 concerning National Education Standards Article 26 paragraph (4), emphasizes that higher education is directed at preparing students to become members of society who are morally upright, knowledgeable, skilled, independent, and able to discover, develop, and apply science, technology, and art that are beneficial to human life. Thus, higher education is not only oriented toward academic achievement but also toward character development, independence, and social responsibility (Yunanto & Kasanova, 2023). Higher education in Indonesia also faces challenges in ensuring that students continue and complete their studies. One significant challenge is the risk of dropping out, particularly among students from economically vulnerable groups. Limited socioeconomic conditions may hinder learning consistency, fulfillment of academic needs, and psychological stability during the study period (Kemendikbudristek, 2022).

As a commitment to expanding access to higher education, the Indonesian government, through the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology, launched the KIP scholarship program in 2019. This program aims to provide opportunities for high-achieving students from disadvantaged families to pursue higher education without financial constraints. KIP scholarship is expected to reduce dropout rates caused by economic factors and increase equal access to higher education in Indonesia (Mulyosaputro, 2025). Data information the number of KIP scholarship recipients reached approximately 1,044,921 students in 2025 and was targeted to increase to approximately 1,047,221 students in 2026. This reflects the government's commitment to expanding equal opportunities for higher education through the KIP college program (<https://poliban.ac.id>).

Based on the 2020 KIP-K Guidelines, KIP scholarship assistance may be terminated if students fail to meet established requirements. One requirement is maintaining a minimum GPA of 3.00 for eight semesters in Diploma IV and Bachelor programs and six semesters in Diploma III programs. This requirement may create academic pressure among KIP scholarship recipients (Dinda *et al.*, 2025). Students from disadvantaged families must adapt to increasingly complex academic demands while facing limited learning facilities, family financial pressure, and psychological burdens associated with maintaining educational assistance (Anam *et al.*, 2025; Mulyosaputro, 2025).

KIP scholarship recipients are expected to demonstrate stable academic performance, strong persistence, and the ability to manage stress and academic challenges adaptively (Dinda *et al.*, 2025). Strong academic resilience enables students to recover from low grades, improve learning strategies, and maintain the required GPA (Salman *et al.*, 2024; Pandiangan & Brahmana, 2026).

Thankful Minds, Resilient Students: Exploring the Gratitude, Academic Resilience Link Among Scholarship Recipients

Conversely, academic pressure may cause anxiety, decreased motivation, academic stress, emotional exhaustion or burnout, decreased GPA, and even termination of financial assistance (Ilmiyah & Laka, 2025).

Reivich dan Shatte (2002) define resilience as the ability to endure, adapt to stressful situations, overcome difficulties, and recover from adversity. In education, this concept is known as academic resilience, namely the ability to persist and recover when facing failure, academic pressure, or obstacles (Resnick et al., 2011). Gizir (2009) explains that academic resilience is the ability to persist, adapt, and function effectively when facing academic pressures, difficulties, and challenges.

The results of an interview with a KIP scholarship student revealed several academic issues, such as lack of self-confidence, fatigue and confusion during thesis preparation, anxiety related to academic evaluations, procrastination, and pressure related to academic demands. Behavioral indications show self-doubt, fatigue, anxiety, and psychological pressure, but they are gradually learning to adapt and continue working on their thesis, even though they have to face difficulties. According to Resnick, Gwyther, and Roberto (2011), academic resilience is influenced by self-esteem, social support, and positive emotions. One positive emotion associated with resilience is gratitude. Listiyandini (2024) states that grateful students tend to recover from difficulties through adaptive strategies, while Lin (2015) explains that gratitude generates positive emotional responses that contribute to emotional well-being.

Gratitude is a positive emotion that arises when someone recognizes, acknowledges, and appreciates the kindness or benefits they receive from others or from the situations they experience. According to Aisyah and Chisol (2025), gratitude or *syakara* is defined as praise for goodness and recognition of the blessings given by Allah SWT. It also involves submission and obedience to Him. The results of student interviews show various expressions of gratitude, such as appreciating friends' help, overcoming financial problems, and receiving support. A study by Saputra & Fauziah (2021) found a significant positive relationship between gratitude and resilience among Bidikmisi students at Universitas Diponegoro Semarang, with a correlation coefficient of $r = 0.512$; $p < 0.001$. This finding indicates that higher gratitude is associated with higher resilience. Based on this background, this study aims to examine the relationship between gratitude and academic resilience among KIP scholarship recipients at Universitas Bina Darma.

II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

According to Cassidy (2016), academic resilience is defined as the ability formed within an individual to continue achieving educational success despite facing various difficulties, which can be seen through the cognitive, behavioral, and emotional responses exhibited by that individual. Martin & Marsh (2006) explain that academic resilience is the ability of individuals to effectively cope with failure, pressure, and stress in an educational context. Mwaura, Kinai, and Oyoo (2018), academic resilience emphasizes the strengths and optimal abilities possessed by learners in facing various demands and challenges in the learning process. Resilience is a person's ability to rise, adapt, and positively endure when facing challenges, pressures, or difficult situations. Resilience is the result of various factors working together, allowing a person to understand difficult experiences while maintaining mental health. Martin and Marsh (2006), student engagement consists of five main components. These aspects include: a. Confidence: Confidence is the belief of students in their ability to learn. Students with high selfconfidence believe they are capable of facing academic challenges and will succeed. Tasks can be completed well by students who have good self-control. d. composure is the ability of students to remain calm and manage their emotions when facing difficulties in learning, which helps them stay focused and reduce anxiety. e. Commitment is the ability of students to keep trying and not give up when facing difficulties, as well as to remain steadfast in completing academic challenges.

McCullough et al. (2002) define gratitude as an individual's tendency to recognize and respond with gratitude to the kindness of others that contributes to positive experiences or outcomes. Watkins et al. (2003) view gratitude as an emotion that arises when someone recognizes and appreciates the kindness they have received. Four aspects that differentiate a person's gratitude, according to McCullough, Emmons, and Tsang (2002): a. Intensity: indicates how strong the feeling of gratitude is when someone experiences a positive event. People with high intensity will feel gratitude more intensely than those who rarely or less strongly feel it. b. Frequency indicates how often a person feels or expresses gratitude in daily life. c. Scope indicates how broad the areas of life are that become sources of gratitude. d. The number of parties considered to have contributed to a person's positive experience is referred to as density.

III. METHOD

A. Research Variables

Based on the research objectives and hypotheses, this study consists of two variables: academic resilience as the dependent variable and gratitude as the independent variable. Academic resilience refers to the ability of KIP scholarship recipients at Universitas Bina Darma to overcome failure, learning pressure, and obstacles in the educational process through adaptive behavior and dynamic resilience.

The academic resilience scale refers to the aspects proposed by Martin & Marsh (2006), namely Confidence, Control, Coordination, Composure, and Commitment. Gratitude refers to a positive attitude, emotion, and character reflected through

Thankful Minds, Resilient Students: Exploring the Gratitude, Academic Resilience Link Among Scholarship Recipients

appreciation, thankfulness, and sincere responses toward goodness received from others and from God. The gratitude scale refers to the aspects proposed by Smith (2020), namely outcomes related to motivation, something aligned with the person's motivation or desired outcome, and something given to others for their efforts (Smith 2020).

B. Research Subjects

The population of this study consisted of 366 KIP scholarship recipients at Universitas Bina Darma from the 2022, 2023, 2024, and 2025 cohorts. According to Sugiyono (2013), a population is the entire group with specific characteristics determined by researchers as the target of generalization, while a sample is part of the population that represents its characteristics. Based on the Isaac and Michael table with a 5% error level, 177 students were selected as the research sample. In addition, 50 subjects were involved in the instrument trial.

The sampling technique used was simple random sampling, in which every member of the population had an equal opportunity to be selected. This technique was selected because all KIP scholarship recipients had the same opportunity to become research participants (Arikunto, 2008). The research subjects were active KIP scholarship students at Universitas Bina Darma from the 2022, 2023, 2024, and 2025 cohorts who were willing to participate in the study.

C. Research Design and Instrument

This research uses a quantitative approach. The Likert scale model is used to collect research data. This is a useful tool for measuring the attitudes, opinions, and perceptions of each individual or group toward the research variables.

In this study, two scales are used: the academic resilience scale and the gratitude scale. This scale consists of two types of statements: supporting statements (positive) and non-supporting statements (negative). There are four options to measure each variable: SA (strongly agree), A (agree), DA (disagree), and SDA (strongly disagree). Each item is scored based on the type of statement, whether positive or negative. This research uses two scales, namely the Academic Resilience scale and the Gratitude scale. Each scale is constructed based on specific indicators that represent the aspects being measured.

Academic Resilience scale constructed using the reference aspects according to Martin & Marsh (2006), namely 1) Confidence, 2) Control, 3) Coordination, 4) Composure, and 5). Commitment (Commitment). This Gratitude Scale is constructed based on the aspects according to Smith (2020), which are results related to motivation, something that aligns with the person's motivation or is desired by that person, given to others for their efforts.

D. Validity and Reliability Testing

The validity test in this study was conducted using the Alpha Cronbach technique, with a minimum correlation coefficient threshold considered adequate, which is > 0.30 . Items with a correlation coefficient > 0.30 are declared valid and suitable for use in the research, in accordance with the criteria proposed. Using a satisfactory correlation coefficient threshold of more than 0.30, the academic resilience scale consisting of sixty items has been evaluated.

The results of the validity analysis show that 51 items are correct and 9 items are incorrect (dropped). The analysis was conducted in two stages. First, items 10, 13, 17, 34, 42, 48, 49, 52, and 55 were identified as invalid in the first stage. In the second stage, each of the 51 items was deemed valid. The correlation coefficients for the valid items range from 0.583 to 0.831. Next, in the Gratitude Scale, 53 valid items and 7 invalid items (dropped) were found. The analysis process was conducted in two stages. In the first stage of the analysis, 7 items were deemed invalid, namely items number 5, 34, 37, 40, 45, 54, and 59. In the second stage of the analysis, all items were valid, totaling 53 items. The correlation coefficient values for the valid items range from the lowest value of 0.549 to the highest value of 0.823.

E. Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted using simple linear regression to examine the relationship and contribution of gratitude as the independent variable to academic resilience as the dependent variable. Before hypothesis testing, assumption tests were conducted, including normality and linearity tests. According to Ghazali (2013), classical assumption testing is conducted to ensure that the regression model produces accurate, consistent, and unbiased estimates.

The normality test was conducted using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test. Data were considered normally distributed when the significance value was $p > 0.05$, while $p < 0.05$ indicated that the data were not normally distributed (Azwar, 2018). The linearity test was conducted to determine whether the relationship between the independent and dependent variables was linear. The relationship was considered linear when $p < 0.05$.

Hypothesis testing was conducted using simple linear regression. A hypothesis is a temporary answer to a research problem that must be empirically tested through data analysis (Azwar, 2018). According to Sugiyono (2013), simple linear regression is based on a functional or causal relationship between one independent variable and one dependent variable. All data analyses were performed using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) version 27 for Windows.

IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A. Research Preparation and Implementation

This study was conducted among KIP scholarship recipients at Bina Darma University. The research preparation consisted of obtaining research permission, developing the instruments, conducting a pilot test, and collecting research data.

The research instruments consisted of an Academic Resilience Scale and a Gratitude Scale. The Academic Resilience Scale was developed based on the aspects proposed by Martin and Marsh (2006), namely *confidence*, *control*, *coordination*, *composure*, and *commitment*. The initial scale consisted of 60 items, comprising 30 favourable and 30 unfavourable items. Meanwhile, the Gratitude Scale was developed based on the aspects proposed by Smith (2020) and initially consisted of 60 items. In this study, data collection was conducted online using Google Forms. The form was sent to all 177 KIP scholarship recipients via WhatsApp.

B. Research Data Description

The study involved 177 KIP scholarship recipients at Universitas Bina Darma, representing 15 study programs and 10 regions of origin. Based on study program, the respondents consisted of Business Administration (8 students; 4.5%), Accounting (11; 6.2%), Communication Science (2; 1.1%), Management (12; 6.8%), Informatics Management (9; 5.1%), Indonesian Language Education (16; 9.0%), Sports Education (18; 10.2%), Hospitality Management (14; 7.9%), Psychology (20; 11.3%), English Literature (15; 8.5%), Information Systems (4; 2.3%), Electrical Engineering (10; 5.6%), Industrial Engineering (13; 7.3%), Informatics Engineering (19; 10.7%), and Computer Engineering (6; 3.4%). Based on region of origin, the respondents came from Banyuasin (16; 9.0%), Lahat (10; 5.6%), Lubuklinggau (7; 4.0%), Muara Enim (29; 16.4%), Ogan Ilir (25; 14.1%), Ogan Komering Ulu (19; 10.7%), Ogan Komering Ilir (22; 12.4%), Pagaralam (13; 7.3%), Palembang (32; 18.1%), and Prabumulih (4; 2.3%). Thus, the respondents represented diverse educational backgrounds and regions of origin. The empirical and hypothetical scores of both variables are presented in Table.

Table 3. Research Data Description

Variable	Empirical Mean	SD	Xmin	Xmax	Hypothetical Mean	SD	Xmin	Xmax
Academic Resilience	148	19	93	200	127.5	25.5	51	204
Gratitude	153	25	88	207	132.5	26.5	53	212

Based on the categorization, 94 students (53%) had high Academic Resilience, while 83 students (47%) had low Academic Resilience. Meanwhile, 97 students (54.8%) had high Gratitude and 80 students (45.2%) had low Gratitude. Thus, both variables tended to fall into the high category, although a considerable proportion of students remained in the low category. According to Resnick, Gwyther, and Roberto (2011), academic resilience is characterized by confidence in one's abilities, commitment and persistence, and the ability to recover after failure. Meanwhile, Thomas and Watkins (2003) explained that gratitude is characterized by a sense of sufficiency, attention to positive aspects of life, and appreciation of other people's presence.

D. Assumption Tests

Assumption testing was conducted before hypothesis testing to ensure that the data met the requirements for statistical analysis. The tests consisted of normality and linearity tests.

1) Normality Test:

In this study, the normality test is used to determine whether the data on the research variables follow a normal distribution pattern. It is considered normal if the obtained significance value is greater than the established significance level, which is p greater than 0.05. According to the decision-making criteria, the data is considered normally distributed if the p value > 0.05 , and not normal if the p value < 0.05 .

Table 4. Results of the Normality Test

Variable	KS-Z	p	Description
Academic Resilience	0.062	0.090	Normal
Gratitude	0.063	0.087	Normal

The results showed that Academic Resilience had a significance value of $p = 0.090$, while Gratitude had $p = 0.087$. Both values were greater than 0.05, indicating that the data for both variables were normally distributed.

2) Linearity Test:

The linearity test was conducted to determine whether the relationship between Gratitude and Academic Resilience was linear. A relationship is considered linear when the significance value is below 0.05.

Table 5. Results of the Linearity Test

Variable	F	p	Description
Academic Resilience and Gratitude	356.705	0.001	Linear

The results showed an F value of 356.705 with $p = 0.001$. Since the significance value was below 0.05, the relationship between Gratitude and Academic Resilience was considered linear.

E. Hypothesis Testing

The hypothesis was tested using simple linear regression to determine the relationship between Gratitude and Academic Resilience.

Table 6. Results of Hypothesis Testing

Variable	r	R Square	p	Description
Gratitude and Academic Resilience	0.819	0.671	0.001	Significant

The analysis showed an R value of 0.819 with $p = 0.001$ ($p < 0.05$). This indicates a very strong and positive relationship between Gratitude and Academic Resilience. The R Square value of 0.671 indicates that Gratitude contributed 67.1% to the variance in Academic Resilience, while the remaining 32.9% was associated with other factors outside the variables examined in this study.

These findings indicate that higher levels of Gratitude among KIP scholarship recipients are associated with higher levels of Academic Resilience. Therefore, the hypothesis stating that there is a positive relationship between Gratitude and Academic Resilience among KIP scholarship recipients at Universitas Bina Darma is accepted.

F. Discussion

The research results show a significant positive relationship between gratitude and academic resilience among KIP Scholarship recipients at Bina Darma University. There is a very strong and positive relationship between the two variables, as indicated by the correlation coefficient of $r = 0.819$ and a significance level of $p = 0.001$ ($p < 0.05$). These findings also indicate that students with lower levels of gratitude tend to have lower levels of academic resilience compared to students with higher levels of gratitude. Gratitude helps students interpret their academic experiences more positively, allowing them to maintain adaptive views and responses even in demanding academic conditions (Seligman, 2011).

Students face pressure and difficulties due to academic demands, such as completing assignments, exams, presentations, guidance, and theses. Survival and adaptation are the keys. Gratitude is a cognitive and emotional mechanism that allows students in this situation to shift their attention from various pressures and obstacles to the positive things they still have, such as the opportunity to attend school, support from family, peers, and teachers, as well as the opportunity to grow. This process helps students build a more positive meaning about their academic experiences, which helps them stay motivated and strive to meet academic demands (Fredrickson, 2001). A more positive meaning can also help students build the psychological resources they need to endure and adapt to academic pressures (Fredrickson, 2001).

McCullough et al. (2001), who view gratitude as an emotional response and a tendency to recognize and appreciate the kindness received from others. KIP scholarship recipients, support for their studies can come from family, peers, lecturers, or other parties who assist students in their educational journey. When students realize the existence of such support, gratitude can encourage the desire to respond positively to the supporters. Therefore, the act of making those who support education feel appreciated can be a tangible form of gratitude.

Every human is always given by Allah SWT an opportunity to experience blessings. One of them is to get education and a job, and humans should be able to show their gratitude for what has been given to them. There are many factors that influence human gratitude, such as love, affection, feeling valued, living sufficiently, satisfaction, desire to help others, His blessings and gifts, worship and obedience to Him. Looking at the meaning of gratitude understood by each teacher, gratitude has a broad meaning, based on each individual's experiences in living their life. It is clear how a teacher or anyone else interprets every gift that Allah gives to humans, both the pleasure and difficulty, so that there is a balance in life that must be implemented (Itryah, 2022). Gratitude can be one of the important psychological resources in facing academic challenges, as there is a strong correlation between gratitude and academic resilience among students who receive KIP scholarship. Gratitude helps students better understand the various resources available in their lives, both from their environment and from within themselves. This awareness can help students remain optimistic and confident when facing challenges. Therefore, students can not only focus on the challenges they encounter, but they can also see opportunities, support, and positive experiences, which can be used as a foundation for continued learning.

Students who excel academically can view academic challenges as something that can be overcome and resolved. This shows that students have the ability to keep trying and believe in their abilities when facing various academic demands. They have the ability to manage academic pressure, maintain commitment to completing tasks, and continue to complete tasks despite facing

Thankful Minds, Resilient Students: Exploring the Gratitude, Academic Resilience Link Among Scholarship Recipients

difficulties. Academic resilience, as demonstrated by this condition, helps students adapt to their academic tasks despite facing various challenges in the educational process. The factors that influence gratitude are many, in addition to the three indicators studied, including appreciation for something or someone, including feelings of love and affection, moral emotions which can move someone to pay attention to others or support supportive social ties, good intentions that are often This is called a moral motive, namely gratitude or gratitude encourages someone to act reciprocally towards others who help them directly or in other ways (Itryah, 2022).

Students who are grateful for the KIP scholarship, on the other hand, tend to see the educational process as a valuable and meaningful opportunity. Students might appreciate their academic process more if they are aware of the opportunities to learn, the support received, and the various experiences in college. In this situation, students see their college activities as opportunities to enhance their abilities and achieve their academic goals. Positive meaning can help students stay engaged and strive in facing various academic demands. This condition reflects the students' ability to maintain engagement and commitment in the academic process. This engagement can be seen in the students' willingness to continue attending lectures, completing assignments, making corrections when mistakes occur, and maintaining effort when facing difficulties. Meanwhile, meaningfulness is reflected in the students' awareness that the education they are pursuing is a valuable opportunity and can support the achievement of future goals. Seligman (2011), who emphasizes the importance of strengths and positive experiences in supporting individual functioning. Gratitude, as one of the positive strengths, can help students give a more positive meaning to their academic experiences, thereby providing them with psychological resources to face the demands and difficulties that arise during the educational process.

V. CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTION

1. There is a highly significant positive relationship between gratitude and academic resilience among KIP scholarship recipients at Universitas Bina Darma, with values of $R = 0.819$ and $p = 0.001$ ($p < 0.05$). This indicates that higher levels of gratitude correspond to higher levels of academic resilience among the students.
2. Gratitude contributes 67.1% to academic resilience, while the remaining 32.9% is attributed to factors outside the scope of this study. Consequently, the alternative hypothesis (H_a) is accepted, and the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected.
3. Students are encouraged to cultivate and maintain a sense of gratitude by appreciating the opportunity to pursue an education and acknowledging the support received from family, friends, lecturers, and the university. This practice is expected to assist students in managing academic demands and sustaining the motivation needed to complete their studies.
4. Universitas Bina Darma is encouraged to provide guidance, mentoring, counseling, and student programs designed to help KIP scholarship recipients enhance their gratitude, self-confidence, and ability to cope with academic pressure.
5. Future researchers are encouraged to consider other factors potentially linked to academic resilience, such as social support, family support, self-efficacy, optimism, motivation, self-esteem, problem-solving skills, and the academic environment.

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