Factors Affecting Academic Resilience During Crises: Cases of Secondary School Students in Phuket, Thailand

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Abstract

Academic resilience is crucial in today's crisis-prone society. This qualitative study explored the factors that shaped academic resilience during the COVID-19 pandemic to strengthen the global literature on resilience and postpandemic policy and practice in education. This study adopted a multiple-case study design, with the application of replication logic and data collection via semistructured interviews. The case studies featured interviews with three academically resilient students in Phuket and nine relevant informants, including parents, homeroom teachers, and local stakeholders. These interviews covered various factors surrounding personal qualities, families, peer groups, schools and teachers, communities and cultures, and the pandemic. Through thematic analysis, seven overarching themes emerged from the data: (1) achievement-oriented characteristics, (2) high aspirations, (3) COVID-19-driven adaptability, (4) self-directed learning in the use of online resources, (5) healthy family functioning, (6) role models, and (7) social support in the context of a giving culture.

Keywords: academic resilience, crisis, multiple-case study, post-COVID-19 era, secondary school student

1. Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic was a striking illustration of the impact of multifaceted and cross-border crises on today's "risk society" (Beck, 1992). In the education field, the pandemic took its toll on students' learning. At its peak, the crisis forced school closures, resulting in learning losses (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2021), mental health problems (Marshall, 2023), and family-based risks such as chaos (Cassinat et al., 2021), parental conflicts (Peltz et al., 2021), and toxic sibling relationships (Sun et al., 2021). The abrupt shift to online learning led many impoverished students to struggle. Research in India (Jafar et al., 2023) and Pakistan (Ullah, 2022) revealed that vulnerable students could not access appropriate technology or continue their studies like their privileged peers. In Thailand, the Equitable Education Fund (EEF, 2021) reported that 271,888 students lacked digital devices for online study and 43,013 students from disadvantaged households were forced to drop out of school due to parental loss of income and unemployment. The EEF, in collaboration with the Chulalongkorn University Faculty of Education (Faculty of Education, C.U., 2023), also found that the pandemic exacerbated family issues among low-income students, which further complicated their retention or return to school. Hence, this study aims to sustainably empower students by investigating academic resilience, defined as "a capacity to overcome acute and/or chronic adversity that is seen as a major threat to a student's educational development" (Martin, 2013, p. 488). Derived from the science of resilience and recognized for its positive effect on academic achievement (OECD, 2019), academic resilience plays a key role in helping students flourish during crises. However, despite its significance, academic resilience has been understudied in Thailand, especially in the context of Phuket Island. As an international tourist destination, Phuket saw its economy suffer from the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions (Kaewklub, 2022). The Phuket tourism industry was hit harder than during the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami (Anantamongkolkul, 2020), rendering both daily earners and registered employees jobless (Kaewklub, 2022). Academic resilience could be explained by the experiences of indigent students in Phuket who, despite facing additional hardships from such disruptions, managed to attain academic achievement. Therefore, this study sought to learn about factors surrounding academic resilience from them to benefit local stakeholders and global educators aiming to foster such resilience in their students. It could also contribute to the literature on resilience, which requires a greater understanding of risk and protective factors to address diverse and escalating human hazards (Masten, 2014).

2. Literature Review

Most of this study's investigation into academic resilience factors is based on resilience science and Bandura's social cognitive theory (SCT). Bandura (2001) proposed that in SCT, human behavior is influenced by the dynamic and mutual interaction of personal, behavioral, and environmental factors. This tenet of his triadic reciprocal causation model implies that people can be shaped by factors in their social environment and, through their own efforts, can effect a change in themselves, their circumstances, and their social systems (Bandura, 1997). Bandura (1989) also identified self-efficacy as a key agentic motivation and behavior factor. Individuals can develop self-efficacy, which refers to people's belief in their ability to exert control over life-changing events through good performance (Bandura, 1994), by undergoing mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, and physiological and affective states (Bandura, 1997). Resilience, defined as a dynamic process reflecting an individual's positive adaptation in the face of serious threats and adversity (Masten, 2015; Schwarzer & Warner, 2013), is relevant to SCT and self-efficacy. Resilience develops when people frequently interact with their external contexts and involves the operation of multiple systems, such as the neurobiological stress regulation system, families, schools, and other sociocultural systems (Masten, 2019). This reflects how SCT influences human behavior. Meanwhile, self-efficacy is considered a factor of resilience (Masten, 2015). It promotes resilience (Schwarzer & Warner, 2013) by influencing people to bring effort into action and persevere in the face of failures (Bandura, 1994). Overall, SCT and self-efficacy support the idea that both internal and external factors determine resilience.

Resilience factors, whether protective or involving risk, usually revolve around (1) personal qualities, (2) families, (3) peer groups, (4) schools and teachers, and (5) communities and cultures (Chobphon, 2021) and explain how resilience is cultivated in different settings, including education. Resilience in education—i.e., academic resilience, hinges on multiple resources within an individual. Other widely reported factors in addition to self-efficacy include optimism, internal locus of control, problem-solving skills, motivation for success, self-control, having goals and aspirations, and assertiveness (Masten, 2015; Ungar, 2008). In the context of upheaval, Diamond (2019) listed several helpful elements, such as prior crisis experience, the acceptance of one's personal responsibility to solve problems, patience, and the presence of problem-solving role models. In Thailand, Chobphon (2021) revealed that study skills (e.g., having a high level of responsibility, reviewing lessons, searching for necessary information online) could facilitate migrant children's academic achievement despite being socioeconomically disadvantaged.

Regarding families, Dou et al. (2023) observed the relationship between healthy family functioning and resilience in children and adolescents. Healthy family functioning depends on effective parenting, successful role functioning, and family cohesion to develop resilience (Dou et al., 2023; Masten, 2015). Baumrind divided parenting into three styles: authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive (Levin, 2011), with authoritative parenting being frequently associated with adolescent resilience (Baumrind et al., 2010). Parents play multiple roles to ensure their children's well-being and healthy development (Masten, 2015). Bradley (2007) defines these roles as providing (1) safety and nourishment, (2) social and emotional support, (3) stimulation (e.g., encouragement for success) that ensures competence and commitment to life-improving goals, (4) surveillance, (5) structure (e.g., family routines and rituals), and (6) a means of social connectedness (e.g., relatives and nonfamilial social network). Masten (2015) proposed that parental roles include socializing children so that they are culturally and socially acceptable, as well as developing resilience, which can be accomplished through three methods: preventing and minimizing exposure to adversity, mitigating the negative effects of adversity, and raising children to be capable and flexible. Family cohesion, defined as "the emotional bonding that family members have towards one another" (Olson, 2011, p. 65), is also an important aspect of healthy family functioning (Deng et al., 2022). Adolescents can develop subjective well-being and a sense of purpose in cohesive families in which all members show mutual affection and support (Fosco & Lydon-Staley, 2020).

Peers, teachers, and schools are important participants in the schooling context and affect academic resilience. By establishing healthy relationships with their schools and the people in them (e.g., peers and teachers), students can overcome behavioral, psychological, and educational challenges. Such relationships enhance resilience through acceptance, affection, and support (Orozco Solis et al., 2021). Peer support takes place when someone with comparable experiences and obstacles offers practical, informational, or emotional assistance. It involves providing validation, teachings, a sense of belonging, and a different perspective to enable problem-solving (Peer Support & Resilience: Strengthening Emotional Bonds, 2023). Teacher support occurs when teachers acknowledge the effects of risks on student academic performance, engage with them, and offer outlets to express their agency (Sanders et al., 2016). Schools can provide support by effectively (1) helping teachers develop a good classroom, (2) creating a positive atmosphere, (3) fostering cognitive and social skills to facilitate learning and

positive development, (4) minimizing disruptive behavior, and (5) building a learning community with compassion for students and parents (Masten, 2015).

Communities and cultures can also help students develop resilience. Protective factors at the community level include participation in out-of-school youth activities (Valdivia, 2019), close extra-familial relationships with capable adults (Masten, 2015), and opportunities for age-appropriate work (Ungar, 2008). In a community-wide crisis, students and their families can display resilience if there is a distribution of physical resources, information, cultural beliefs, collective know-how and efficacy of the community, actions that promote social cohesion, social capital (Masten, 2015), and a social support network (Juliano & Yunes, 2014). Regarding culture, Ungar (2008) proposed resilience factors that were both universal and culturally specific. In Asia, Li et al. (2017) identified several academic resilience factors among Asian students that are similar to those found in Western contexts, but some factors, such as perseverance, are emphasized differently in Asia. Regarding social support, Chen et al. (2012) found that cultural factors influence social support. In Thailand, one motivation is conveyed by the Buddhist concept of *dana*—the practice of giving that brings happiness to the giver as well as the receiver (Thongputtamon, 2019). Rittichainuwat et al. (2020) found that Thai cultural values such as *nam jai* and *kreng jai* contribute to one's willingness to help others and psychological resilience during times of crisis. *Nam jai* refers to pure generosity, whereas *kreng jai* refers to using humility and politeness to address the feelings of others (Tungtakanpoung & Wyatt, 2013). These values reflect the influence of Buddhism to earn merit and improve one's life (Rittichainuwat et al., 2020).

Several factors in the pandemic context are consistent with theory, including optimism (Chen et al., 2022), coping flexibility (Chen et al., 2022), self-directed learning ability (Doo et al., 2023), and social ties (Agashe et al., 2021). Some are specific to COVID-19, such as information literacy, the knowledge of the disease that allows one to discern the rationale behind health recommendations, direct their actions, and reflect on their adaptation process (Yeung et al., 2021). Anthonysamy (2023) found that digital literacy, among other factors, can promote learning performance. D'Angelo (2022) suggests digital literacy, voice, and agency as important skills in developing adolescent resilience and responses to global issues. Meanwhile, Roffey (2023) included agency as one of her ASPIRE (agency, safety, positivity, inclusion, respect, and equity) principles for postpandemic policy and practice; she argued that following COVID-19, adolescent well-being and academic performance can be improved if adolescents have (1) voice and agency to make decisions, (2) protection from harm, (3) protective attitudes and skills fostering resilience, (4) a sense of belonging, (5) respectful treatment, and (6) equitable distribution of resources.

3. Method

3.1 Research Method

This study employed a qualitative case study approach to explore academic resilience factors in their real-world contexts. We used a multiple-case design as it allowed for more compelling evidence (Yin, 2014) and facilitated cross-case analysis. Additionally, it helped implement "replication logic," which is a technique for increasing external validity in case study research (Yin, 2018). This logic stipulates that multiple cases in one study operate like multiple experiments to predict results (Yin, 2014); if they are carefully selected and arranged under the exact same condition, they can produce similar predictions. This design is called "literal replication" and can be conducted using 2–3 cases. In this study, we applied the literal replication design because it matched our objective and helped yield robust findings (Yin, 2018). We examined a total of three cases.

3.2 Participant Recruitment

We recruited three academically resilient students from two secondary schools in Phuket. They satisfied three criteria: coming from an impoverished household, being in the 90th percentile of their year groups in terms of academic achievement, and being economically and academically affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. To assess poverty, both household income and household characteristics were considered; prepandemic average monthly household income needed to be below the Phuket average; and household characteristics had to match at least one of the following conditions from the EEF Proxy Means Test for disadvantaged students in Thailand: (1) household burden, (2) housing quality, (3) household vehicle ownership, and (4) household agricultural land ownership. Being economically affected meant that their households experienced significant loss of income or unemployment. To ensure that sample cases were as similar as possible, we selected from two schools within the Secondary Educational Service Area. Both sites are inner-city public schools using the Thai Basic Education Core Curriculum and adhered to the same pandemic policies and measures stipulated by the Royal Thai Ministry of Education and Phuket provincial government.

For each student, we invited one parent and one homeroom teacher to participate in the study as case-based

informants to examine and validate the knowledge of these students' academic resilience from their perspective. They were appropriate informants because they were aware of the students' academic struggles, family difficulties, and impact of reduced peer interactions during the pandemic. As this study investigated factors involving schools, communities, and cultures, we also recruited three local stakeholders to obtain insights into the larger context of academic resilience. Through snowball sampling, we enlisted (1) a social network member; (2) a representative of the Phuket Thai Red Cross Society, whose role includes disaster relief; and (3) a school administrator. The first local stakeholder was identified after a student revealed that their difficulties in health and education were lessened by financial aid from a social network. The referral of this local stakeholder made it possible to reach the subsequent one, who shed more light on social networks in Phuket and was identified by all students as their financial aid provider.

3.3 Participant Protection

We explored the "private worlds and experiences" (Cowles, 1988, p. 163) during the participants' difficult times, which might trigger or reveal private thoughts and emotions (Cowles, 1988). To mitigate this and other risks, the study was evaluated by Chulalongkorn University's Research Ethics Review Committee (COA No. 169/66). After approval, we approached our potential participants in a nonhierarchical manner and adhered to common ethical principles: voluntary participation, informed consent, and confidentiality (Marquis & Daku, 2021).

3.4 Data Collection

We gathered data via semistructured interviews and conducted content validation with the help of three qualified experts in educational research and psychology to ensure that our preset questions were pertinent to our research goals and made sure data collection was consistent by arranging the case-based interviews in an organized manner (see Table 1). This inquiry emphasizes consistency because literal replication design requires each case to be studied under the same condition (Yin, 2014). We also engaged in reflexivity to ensure awareness of the effect of our values, experiences, and prejudices on the study (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This validation strategy helped avoid bias and promoted empathic neutrality in data collection and throughout the conduct of the study.

Table 1. Interview arrangement of case-based participants

No.	Case Study	Interview Order	Remark
1	A	teacher A, student A (case), parent A	
2	B	teacher B, student B (case), parent B	Replication 1
3	C	teacher C, student C (case), parent C	Replication 2

3.5 Data Analysis

We performed thematic analysis based on Creswell and Poth (2018) and Ravitch and Carl (2016) by following a 10-step process of data organization and analysis: (1) creating a systematic and safe database, (2) precoding, (3) preparing units of text, (4) performing multiple readings, (5) noting emergent ideas, (6) creating a list of codes and descriptions, (7) assigning codes to text units, (8) organizing codes into categories and themes, (9) developing interpretations from themes, and (10) creating presentations of the interpretations. Table 2 below shows examples of codes employed.

Table 2. Code examples

Code	Code Description	Category	Theme
ARF-Personal 1 [P]	Internal locus of control [Predetermined]		
ARF-Personal 2 [P]	Self-efficacy [Predetermined]	Attributes that influence taking on a task/challenge	
ARF-Personal 3 [P]	Optimism [Predetermined]		Achievement-oriented Characteristics
ARF-Personal 4	Responsibility		
ARF-Personal 5	Perseverance	Attributes that influence fulfilling a task/rising to a challenge	
ARF-Personal 6	Attentiveness		
ARF-Personal 7	Self-control		

4. Results and Discussion

This study identified seven major themes regarding academic resilience factors among secondary school students during times of crisis. These factors, like those in SCT (Bandura, 2001) and resilience literature (Masten, 2019), are either individual or social. Interestingly, some involve context- or culture-specific aspects that help clarify the nature of resilience (Ungar, 2008), whereas others highlight the increasing influence of the digital environment, which calls for further investigation.

4.1 Achievement-Oriented Characteristics

Three categories of achievement-oriented characteristics led to academic resilience. The factors in the first category are self-efficacy, internal locus of control, and optimism, which are well-documented in resilience literature (Masten, 2015; Ungar, 2008). Each student reported (1) believing in their own ability to take control of their studies and (2) believing that their learning outcomes resulted from their own actions. They also reported that they made positive decisions in the face of uncertainty during the pandemic. Attributes in this category motivated them to take action.

> I knew my own skill level at the time of COVID-19. It helped me figure out how much more work I need to put into reaching my goals. (Student C)

The second category includes attributes that drive successful task completion. The respondents shared that taking responsibility helped them achieve good grades despite COVID-19-related obstacles. Their teachers and parents expressed the same opinion, citing other qualities that accounted for participant success: (1) perseverance (Li et al., 2017), (2) attentiveness, and (3) self-control (Masten, 2015). According to Teachers B and C, these qualities were essential during the pandemic because assignments comprised a larger proportion of their grades. In all three cases, the students' high GPA suggests they possess desirable attributes which helped them complete their tasks effectively. Most informants considered responsibility, observed in an earlier study by Chobphon (2021), as the most crucial factor during the crisis.

> I was more responsible than ever when I studied from home during the pandemic. I finished assignments without reminders or monitoring due to my responsibility. (Student A)

The third category involves identities that drive academic achievement. Student A is a recipient of a scholarship for high-achieving students from low-income families, so they endeavored to maintain a high GPA. Student C committed to academic excellence as a high achiever exempt from tuition fees. A review of the literature yielded no data on scholarship recipients; hence this may be a new factor or one unique to this case study.

4.2 High Aspirations

Participant academic resilience was characterized by their aspirations (Ungar, 2008) for higher education and a better life. They strived for good academic records as they sought university admission during the first round of the Thai University Central Admission System, which accepts applicants with impressive GPAs and portfolios. These students placed great emphasis on education to raise their families' living standards. Student C stated, "education is like a ladder that helps me get to where I would like to be." Student B wondered why people were trapped in poverty and stated that they could only secure a good job to support their family through education. Student B's parent expressed their sorrow at not having opportunities for education and stated that their experience motivated their child academically. The parent also added student B "witnessed how the pandemic turned a lot of families upside down and disrupted our own, so she resolved to give studying her all in order to stand a chance of bettering her life."

4.3 COVID-19-Driven Adaptability

This theme refers to student adaptability in response to the negative effects of the COVID-19 pandemic: (1) increased economic hardship, (2) increased negative emotions, (3) learning losses, (4) online learning limitations, (5) disruptions to college preparation, and (6) fewer chances to bond with friends. The students reported three ways in which they adjusted to these challenging conditions. First, they aligned their college goals closely to their financial circumstances; explored their options; and prepared accordingly. Second, when online learning limited the ability to raise questions during lessons, the students conducted increased self-directed learning. Feeling *kreng jai* was why they did not ask their teachers for help. Student B frequently stated they felt too *kreng jai* to bother their teachers with additional requests. Conversely, student C stated, "I studied with a preservice teacher, and I felt *kreng jai* to ask her questions in an online classroom. I was also afraid to call out or ask if she was wrong." Third, the students reported devising their own techniques to manage negative emotions and modify their attitudes. Student A stated, "when I felt stressed from a lot of things in the pandemic, I spent time on social media. It was my emotional refuge." Regarding attitude modification, student B chose to watch inspirational videos, and student C

favored reading novels to learn from the characters.

Comparable to Chen et al.'s (2022) coping flexibility, COVID-19-driven adaptability illustrates the capacity to adapt coping strategies to new and dynamic conditions. This factor incorporates *kreng jai*, which pushed the students toward self-directed learning instead of asking for additional explanation or assistance. *Kreng jai* can be motivated by humility or politeness (Tungtakanpoung & Wyatt, 2013), or by fear, consideration, reluctance to interrupt others, or the suppression of one's personal goals for the benefit of others and is the polar opposite of assertiveness, which is a resilience factor in many contexts worldwide (Ungar, 2008). Scholars could consider comparative investigation into this aspect of *kreng jai* to clarify its relation to resilience or explain the nature of culture-specific factors.

4.4 Self-Directed Learning in the Use of Online Resources

The participants possessed the ability to conduct self-directed learning (Doo et al., 2023) and digital literacy to leverage online platforms to their advantage. They confidently cited YouTube, TikTok, and Facebook as their primary online learning resources. Students A and B reported that they consulted Facebook about protecting themselves against COVID-19. Student C used Facebook and YouTube to study vaccines. Student A believed it was advantageous to know about COVID-19 (Yeung et al., 2021) because it prevented infection and being unable to study. Student C stated that it kept them from being overly afraid of the disease. Interestingly, they all selected social media over other online resources.

In addition, the teachers and parents of all three students considered them to be digital native self-learners. The teachers reported two abilities that all participants had in common: searching for appropriate information and using digital technologies and platforms effectively. Parent C stated, "I can count on my daughter to search for problem-solving knowledge on the internet. She always has information." Anthonysamy (2023) highlighted the significance of digital literacy as a mediator of learning performance; however, research on its correlation with resilience and well-being remains limited. This study shows that digital literacy merits additional inquiry since it may explain academic resilience within a digital landscape.

4.5 Healthy Family Functioning

Family functioning is a predictor of resilience (Dou et al., 2023). Four factors of healthy family functioning contributed to participant academic resilience during COVID-19: authoritative parenting, effectively instilling of desirable values and attributes, active role-taking and support, and healthy relationships and cohesion. The prominent finding is parents took responsibility for all these factors, meaning efficacy in performing their role is critical. All participants reported their parents have always been caring, responsible, and attentive. Participant responses indicate their parents practiced authoritative parenting (Baumrind et al., 2010).

> My mom doesn't force me to do what she wants. She lets me be creative but urges me to be responsible, perseverant, and punctual. [...] She gives me a lot of freedom but she doesn't spoil me. (Student A)

Regarding the second factor, all participant parents reported teaching their children to value education and not to fear adversity. Parents taught that education could help their children take care of themselves, improve their lives, overcome obstacles, and become more responsible. They also encouraged their children to confront and adapt to adversity; corroborating Masten (2015), who suggested that parents should raise capable and flexible children. In some cases, a sense of agency was also nurtured.

> I always ask my daughter to picture herself as a blank canvas. How her life will turn out is up to how she colors it. Whatever she lacked in the past twelve years, she can obtain them all by herself if she has education and efforts. (Parent B)

> I often tell her, "Whatever you want to be and have, you are the one to pursue it, you are the one to work for it. Your actions determine the course of your life." (Parent C)

Under active role-taking and support, five parental roles facilitated learning and well-being: alleviating economic hardship, providing food and COVID-19 protective equipment, providing online learning resources, providing educational guidance and encouragement, and offering emotional support. Most of the roles proposed by Bradley (2007) were successfully fulfilled by the parents and some roles were shared by family members. Student A stated, "I took on more responsibility at home during the pandemic. I ran our family's modest shop by myself every day to let my mom concentrate on her real job." Active role-taking and sharing helped maintain healthy family functioning.

Lastly, all students reported that their families were cohesive and filled with mutual affection and support (Fosco & Lydon-Staley, 2020). Teacher C reflected on their virtual home visit with student C's mother and stated, "her

mother shared a lot of information that speaks to how warm and loving the family is. I was touched by how well they understand each other."

4.6 Role Models

The students developed academic resilience by emulating observed coping and learning skills from members of their familial and social circles. Moreover, public figures (Diamond, 2019) and vicarious experiences (Bandura, 1997) were sources of problem-solving ideas. Student B observed the achievements of their brothers and father's friends who overcame poverty to become electrical engineers. Students A and C overcame their fears by observing the exemplary performances of a village mayor and a self-made idol, respectively. They all noted that having role models helped them maintain their aspirations.

4.7 Social Support in the Context of a Giving Culture

Participants received various forms of assistance during the pandemic as part of Thailand's giving culture. Consistent with observations by Chobphon (2021), Masten (2015), Sanders et al. (2016), and Ungar (2008), this support included peer guidance and consolation, teacher tutoring sessions, adult emotional support from the community, age-appropriate work opportunities, and material resource distribution. Newly identified factors include communication channels with teachers, school-provided COVID-19 protective equipment and tuition subsidies, financial assistance from social networks, and donated items from *Cupboards of Shared Happiness*, which are public pantries that people can contribute to or take from when in need.

Social support was culturally specific (Ungar, 2008) because it was motivated by cultural beliefs (Chen et al., 2012). The *Cupboards of Shared Happiness* were partly motivated by *dana* (Thongputtamon, 2019). Financial assistance from social networks was also motivated by *nam jai* (Rittichainuwat et al., 2020). This type of support was reported solely by student A and was indirectly related to the other two cases. Their mother mentioned that student A could not get medical treatment because of COVID-19 travel restrictions and financial constraints. However, they received assistance after applying for a royal scholarship and after their predicament was brought to the attention of two provincial committees: the Empirical Data Investigation Committee and the Selection Committee. Despite not winning the scholarship, student A was granted financial aid after being interviewed by a member of the second committee, allowing them to resume medical treatment and receive follow-up support from other relevant organizations. According to local stakeholders 1 and 3, who served on the first and second committees, respectively, the number of underprivileged applicants far exceeds the number of places each year. As chair of both committees, the then-governor of Phuket resolved the issue by inviting the public to participate in the second committee to augment and widen the scope of support provided. These members of the public (e.g., associate judges, honorary consuls, business owners in the hotel and hospitality industry) were referred to as *pu yai jai dee* ("kind-hearted adults") because their contribution to the young demonstrates generosity. When they joined the preexisting network of public sector committee members, the resources at hand became more diverse and inclusive. During the pandemic, students B and C also received financial aid from the Phuket Thai Red Cross Society, which was represented by local stakeholder 3. Local stakeholder 3 explained the organization was able to promptly assist students in need because it had access to information and coordination from schools and social networks, such as the scholarship committees. Despite the modest amount of aid, it helped address student difficulties because it came from different sectors of Phuket society. One implication for postpandemic policy and practice is to open preexisting networks of support to any willing members of society.

Though this study's exploratory nature and time constraint prevented an in-depth investigation of each factor, it strengthened the understanding of how academic resilience can be fostered by the social environment. It portrayed diverse contributing "actors," including parents, siblings, nonfamilial social ties, peers, teachers, schools, neighbors, community members, local organizations, public figures, and social networks. Given that self-efficacy is an academic resilience factor, these actors contribute through appraisals, providing vicarious experiences, emotional support, and by helping students develop positive affective states and belief in their ability to succeed. Indirect contributions can also involve empowering the most accountable actors during crises, parents, to function effectively. Through the agentic lens of SCT, students can also be considered actors, since self-efficacy promotes their resilience (Masten, 2015) and "agency" in motivation and action (Bandura, 1989). All participants in this study displayed agency through self-directed study and helping their parents through individual initiative. As academically resilient agentic actors, they influence their academic success and generate positive change in their social environment, where risks perpetually persist.

In the pandemic's aftermath, a growing body of research has focused on rebuilding education, so it is more effective and suitable for the future. Roffey (2023) advocated for a greater emphasis on young people's voice and agency as well as safety, positivity, inclusion, respect, and equity, to enhance well-being and promote educational

advancement. This study's findings benefit schools that follow her recommendations and stakeholders who foster academic resilience since the results came from students with both academic resilience and agency. Future investigations should explore these factors in greater depth; from more diverse perspectives (e.g., peers, public figures); and evaluate their significance.

5. Conclusion

This study identified various factors for academic resilience among secondary school students during a crisis. Some were consistent with existing literature; in particular, COVID-19-driven adaptability, self-directed learning ability, and digital literacy were specific to the COVID-19 pandemic and its digital context. This implies that knowledge of the crisis is crucial to developing academic resilience.

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Informed consent

Obtained.

Ethics approval

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The data that support the findings of this study are available on request from the corresponding author. The data are not publicly available due to privacy or ethical restrictions.

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No additional data are available.

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