The Impact of Social Support on Academic Resilience Mediated by Positive Affect in University Students

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1. Round 1

1.1. Reviewer 1

Reviewer:

In the introduction, first paragraph, the sentence "Academic resilience enables students to maintain engagement, performance, and motivation despite encountering stressors…" could benefit from including specific examples of academic stressors in the South African higher education context to ground the study geographically.

In the introduction, paragraph beginning "Social support, conceptualized as the perception or experience…", you reference the "social cure" framework but do not elaborate on its mechanisms until later; consider briefly defining its core components here for better flow.

In Table 2, the correlation matrix does not include confidence intervals; adding them could improve the precision and interpretability of the reported associations.

In Table 3, while fit indices are presented, the χ^2 significance value is omitted; even if expected to be significant in large samples, its inclusion is standard for completeness.

In Table 4, consider adding effect size interpretations (e.g., small, medium, large) for the standardized coefficients, as this would help readers interpret practical significance.

In the discussion, first paragraph, you state that "The overall model showed acceptable fit indices…"; reiterating the most compelling index values here would reinforce the robustness of the model.

In the discussion, paragraph starting "The mediation effect of positive affect identified in this study…", you could strengthen the theoretical contribution by contrasting the findings with studies where mediation was not found or where negative affect was included.

Authors uploaded the revised manuscript.

1.2.   Reviewer 2

Reviewer:

In the introduction, paragraph starting "Positive affect, referring to the experience of pleasurable emotions…", while the broaden-and-build theory is cited, the link between broadened cognition and resilience could be elaborated with an example from prior educational research.

In the introduction, final paragraph, the statement "few have integrated these constructs into a single mediation framework" could be supported by a citation to a systematic review or meta-analysis to substantiate the novelty claim.

In "Study Design and Participants", you state that "representation across gender, age groups, and academic disciplines" was ensured; however, consider providing the stratification ratios or strata composition for transparency.

In the "Measures" section, paragraph on the Academic Resilience Scale (ARS-30), the reporting of psychometric properties could be enhanced by including any validation evidence from African or culturally similar contexts, given the study's location.

In the "Measures" section for MSPSS, you note reliability and validity in "diverse university student samples" but do not indicate if any prior South African validation exists—addressing this would strengthen methodological rigor.

In the "Measures" section for PANAS-PA, the time frame "past few weeks" is mentioned; clarify if this was standardized for all respondents and whether it aligns with the study's intended measurement period.

In the "Data Analysis" section, you list several model fit indices. Including justification for the chosen cut-off values (e.g., citing Hu & Bentler, 1999) would enhance methodological transparency.

In "Findings and Results", the paragraph following Table 1 reports normality using skewness and kurtosis; please specify the cut-off criteria used to determine "acceptable limits" for these values.

Authors uploaded the revised manuscript.

2.   Revised

Editor's decision after revisions: Accepted.
Editor in Chief's decision: Accepted.