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Developing a Structural Model of Academic Self-Handicapping Based on Perceived School Climate With the Mediating Role of Academic Self-Regulation in Students With Visual Impairment

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A B S T R A C T

Objective: This study aimed to develop and test a structural model explaining academic self-handicapping based on perceived school climate, with the mediating role of academic self-regulation, among students with visual impairment.

Methods and Materials: The present research was fundamental in purpose and descriptive–correlational in design, employing structural equation modeling. The statistical population consisted of male and female students with visual impairment aged 12–22 years in Tehran during the 2024–2025 academic year, from whom 230 participants were selected using convenience sampling. Data were collected using the Academic Self-Handicapping Questionnaire, the Perceived School Climate Questionnaire, and the Academic Self-Regulation Questionnaire. After screening the data for normality, multicollinearity, outliers, and independence of errors, Pearson correlation coefficients and structural equation modeling were conducted using SPSS version 24 and AMOS version 26. The mediating effect of academic self-regulation was examined using the bootstrap method with a 95% confidence interval.

Findings: The results of structural equation modeling indicated that perceived school climate had a significant direct negative effect on academic self-handicapping ($\beta = -0.78$, $p = .001$). Perceived school climate also had a significant positive effect on academic self-regulation, which in turn had a significant negative effect on academic self-handicapping. Bootstrap analysis confirmed the significance of the indirect effect of perceived school climate on academic self-handicapping through academic self-regulation, indicating a partial mediation. Model fit indices demonstrated an acceptable to good fit of the proposed model ($\chi^2/df = 2.85$, CFI = 0.98, RMSEA = 0.07).

Conclusion: The findings suggest that a positive perceived school climate reduces academic self-handicapping both directly and indirectly by enhancing academic self-regulation in students with visual impairment.

Keywords: *visual impairment; perceived school climate; academic self-regulation; academic self-handicapping.*

1. Introduction

Academic functioning is not determined solely by cognitive ability or instructional quality; rather, it emerges from a complex interaction of individual, motivational, emotional, and contextual factors. In recent years, increasing scholarly attention has been directed toward maladaptive motivational strategies that students employ to protect their self-worth in academic settings, among which academic self-handicapping has been identified as a particularly consequential phenomenon (Chang et al., 2025; Schwinger et al., 2022). Academic self-handicapping refers to behaviors or claimed impediments that students deliberately create or emphasize prior to performance situations in order to externalize potential failure and preserve a positive self-image (Losova, 2025; Zhang, 2022). Although such strategies may provide short-term psychological relief, extensive empirical evidence indicates that they are associated with poorer academic achievement, increased academic burnout, emotional distress, and long-term maladjustment (Chang et al., 2025; Marraccini et al., 2020; Şahin & Çoban, 2020).

The antecedents of academic self-handicapping are multifaceted and span intrapersonal, interpersonal, and environmental domains. Meta-analytic evidence demonstrates that fear of failure, maladaptive perfectionism, low self-esteem, and negative attributional styles consistently predict self-handicapping behaviors (Schwinger et al., 2022; Török et al., 2022). However, growing consensus suggests that contextual factors, particularly the perceived school climate, play a pivotal role in shaping students' motivational orientations and coping strategies (Aldridge et al., 2018; Reaves et al., 2018). School climate broadly encompasses students' perceptions of interpersonal relationships, fairness of rules, safety, instructional practices, and emotional support within the school environment (Aldridge & Blackstock, 2024; Marraccini et al., 2020). These perceptions function as a psychological lens through which students interpret academic demands, evaluate their sense of belonging, and regulate their learning behaviors.

A substantial body of literature has documented the protective role of a positive school climate in promoting academic engagement, psychological well-being, and adaptive learning behaviors (Aldridge & McChesney, 2018; Fan & Williams, 2018; Gaxiola-Romero et al., 2020). Conversely, a negative or threatening school climate has been associated with heightened problem behaviors, academic disengagement, and maladaptive coping strategies, including self-handicapping (Reaves et al., 2018; Şahin & Çoban, 2020). When students perceive their school environment as unsupportive, unfair, or unsafe, they may adopt defensive strategies to manage anticipated failure and social evaluation, thereby increasing the likelihood of self-handicapping behaviors (Gallo, 2024; Siegel, 2024).

Within this contextual framework, academic self-regulation has emerged as a central psychological mechanism linking environmental perceptions to academic outcomes. Academic self-regulation refers to students' capacity to actively plan, monitor, control, and reflect upon their learning processes through the use of cognitive and metacognitive strategies (Valenzuela et al., 2020; Xu & Wang, 2024). Self-regulated learners are characterized by goal-oriented behavior, adaptive strategy use, and persistence in the face of academic challenges. In contrast, students with poor self-regulatory skills are more vulnerable to avoidance behaviors, procrastination, and self-handicapping (Fatmala, 2025; Nuryana & Wahyuni, 2025).

Empirical studies consistently indicate that supportive learning environments foster the development of self-regulation by providing structure, autonomy support, and constructive feedback (Bozorgpoori et al., 2021; De Smul et al., 2020). Positive perceptions of school climate enhance students' sense of competence and control, which in turn strengthens their self-regulatory capacities (Do & Lai, 2024; Fan & Williams, 2018). Conversely, environments perceived as controlling or unpredictable may undermine students' self-regulation and increase reliance on maladaptive strategies such as self-handicapping (Ruben-Clapper, 2021; Tentama & Jayanti, 2019). Recent research has therefore emphasized the mediating role of self-regulation in the relationship between contextual variables and academic outcomes (Arbazi & Fouladchang, 2022; Ramazanpour et al., 2019).

The relevance of these dynamics becomes particularly pronounced in populations of students with disabilities, including students with visual impairment. Visual impairment presents unique educational challenges that extend beyond sensory limitations to encompass psychological, social, and motivational dimensions (Wang et al., 2024; Yadav, 2024). Students with visual impairment often encounter barriers related to instructional accessibility, peer interaction, and assessment practices, which can influence their perceptions of school climate and academic competence (Hunt et al., 2024; Nwobodo & Agusiobo, 2018). Research indicates that students with visual

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impairment are at increased risk for academic stress, reduced self-efficacy, and maladaptive coping strategies when educational environments fail to adequately address their needs (Alraddadi & Zebehazy, 2025; Farahani et al., 2018).

Inclusive education frameworks emphasize that the effectiveness of schooling for students with disabilities is strongly contingent upon the perceived inclusiveness and emotional quality of the school climate (Duka et al., 2024; Hunt et al., 2024). When students with visual impairment perceive their school environment as supportive, fair, and responsive, they are more likely to engage in adaptive self-regulation and academic persistence (Alraddadi & Zebehazy, 2025; Kazemi Jujili & Khanzadeh, 2022). In contrast, perceptions of exclusion, low expectations, or insufficient support may exacerbate vulnerability to self-handicapping behaviors as a means of protecting self-worth in evaluative contexts (Ruben-Clapper, 2021; Zhang, 2022).

Despite the growing body of research on school climate, self-regulation, and self-handicapping, several critical gaps remain. First, much of the existing literature has focused on typically developing students, with relatively limited empirical attention to students with visual impairment, particularly at the secondary education level (Hunt et al., 2024; Yadav, 2024). Second, while bivariate relationships between school climate and self-handicapping have been documented (Gallo, 2024; Şahin & Çoban, 2020), fewer studies have examined the underlying psychological mechanisms through which school climate influences self-handicapping behaviors. Third, although self-regulation has been identified as a key mediator in related educational models (Arbazi & Fouladchang, 2022; Bozorgpoori et al., 2021), its specific mediating role between perceived school climate and academic self-handicapping in students with visual impairment remains underexplored.

Addressing these gaps is particularly important in light of contemporary educational priorities that emphasize psychological well-being, equity, and adaptive learning skills for students with disabilities (Aldridge & Blackstock, 2024; Hunt et al., 2024). Understanding how environmental perceptions shape maladaptive academic behaviors through self-regulatory processes can inform the design of targeted interventions aimed at improving both academic outcomes and mental health. Moreover, structural modeling approaches allow for the simultaneous examination of direct and indirect relationships among these variables, providing a more comprehensive understanding of the underlying dynamics (Kazemi Jujili & Khanzadeh, 2022; Tarahi & Jafarzadeh, 2021).

From a theoretical perspective, integrating self-worth protection models of self-handicapping with social–contextual models of school climate and self-regulated learning offers a robust framework for examining students' academic behavior (De Smul et al., 2020; Schwinger et al., 2022). Such an integrative approach acknowledges that self-handicapping is not merely an individual deficit but a context-sensitive strategy that emerges from interactions between personal vulnerabilities and environmental cues (Chang et al., 2025; Losova, 2025). For students with visual impairment, whose educational experiences are often shaped by both structural barriers and social perceptions, this integrative lens is especially salient (Alraddadi & Zebehazy, 2025; Farahani et al., 2018).

In the Iranian educational context, empirical research examining these constructs among students with visual impairment remains scarce, despite increasing policy emphasis on inclusive education and psychological support services. Investigating these relationships within this context can contribute valuable evidence to the international literature while offering culturally relevant insights for educational planning and intervention design (Bozorgpoori et al., 2021; Tarahi & Jafarzadeh, 2021). By focusing on both male and female students across a wide age range, the present study seeks to capture a comprehensive picture of academic self-handicapping dynamics in this population.

Accordingly, the present study aims to develop and test a structural model explaining academic self-handicapping based on perceived school climate, with the mediating role of academic self-regulation, in students with visual impairment.

2. Methods and Materials

2.1. Study Design and Participants

The present study is fundamental in terms of purpose and descriptive–correlational in terms of data collection. The statistical population comprised all male and female students with visual impairment aged 12–22 years in the city of Tehran during the 2024–2025 academic year. Students with visual impairment were identified through special education schools located in Tehran, as well as nongovernmental organizations and the RP Association for the Blind. Subsequently, 230 participants were selected using convenience sampling. According to Klein (2015), studies employing structural equation modeling require a minimum sample size of 200 participants. In the present study, considering the possibility of participant attrition, a sample

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size of 230 was selected. The research instruments were as follows:

2.2. Measures

Academic Self-Handicapping Questionnaire: This questionnaire was developed by Schwinger and Stiensmeier-Pelster in 2011. It is a unidimensional instrument that measures academic self-handicapping as a general construct. The questionnaire consists of seven items rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5), yielding a total score range of 7 to 35. Schwinger and Stiensmeier-Pelster (2011) reported a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .80, indicating satisfactory internal consistency. In Iran, this questionnaire was administered to a sample of 258 participants by Tabe' Bardbar and Rastgar. To establish validity, the questionnaire was first translated into Persian by Tabe' Bardbar and Rastgar (2015). After confirmation of the translation and evaluation of item clarity and comprehensibility by several educational psychology experts, it was back-translated into English, and the equivalence of the two versions was confirmed. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient obtained in the Iranian sample was .77.

Perceived School Climate Questionnaire: The Perceived School Climate Questionnaire was developed by Bear et al. (2011) to assess students' perceptions of the school climate. This questionnaire contains 20 items and four subscales: fairness of rules and liking of school (school structure), teacher–student relationships, school safety, and student–student relationships. Items are rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5), with total scores ranging from 20 to 100. Bear et al. (2011) examined the construct validity of the questionnaire using confirmatory factor analysis, reporting an acceptable model fit, and reported a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .93 for the total scale. In an Iranian study, Torahi and Jafarzadeh (2021) also assessed the construct validity of the questionnaire using confirmatory factor analysis and reported satisfactory model fit, along with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .89 for the total scale.

Academic Self-Regulation Questionnaire: The Academic Self-Regulation Questionnaire consists of 14 items and was developed by Bouffard et al. in 1995. Responses are scored on a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5), with total scores ranging from 14 to 70. The questionnaire assesses two factors: cognitive strategies and metacognitive self-regulation strategies. Bouffard et al. (1995) evaluated the construct validity of the questionnaire using factor analysis, and the results indicated that the instrument explains 52% of the variance in self-regulation. They reported a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .71 for the total scale. In Iran, Kadivar (2001) examined the construct validity of this questionnaire using correlation coefficients and factor analysis, reporting satisfactory discriminant correlations among the items, and reported a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .80 for the total scale.

2.3. Data Analysis

The research procedure was conducted as follows: after obtaining the necessary permissions and written informed consent from the participants and their guardians, the questionnaires were distributed under the direct supervision of the researcher in classrooms or other appropriate spaces within the school and were completed by the students. In cases where participants required additional assistance, the researcher provided support to ensure clear understanding and accurate responses to the items. After collecting the questionnaires, incomplete or uninterpretable responses were excluded, and the remaining data were prepared for statistical analysis.

3. Findings and Results

In this study, 64 participants (32%) were female and 136 participants (68%) were male. Fourteen students (7%) were in the first grade of lower secondary school, 23 students (11.5%) were in the second grade of lower secondary school, 49 students (24.5%) were in the third grade of lower secondary school, 62 students (31%) were in the first grade of upper secondary school, 31 students (15.5%) were in the second grade of upper secondary school, and 21 students (10.5%) were in the third grade of upper secondary school. The mean age of the sample was 15.32 years, with a standard deviation of 2.67. Table 1 presents the descriptive indices of the study variables, including the mean, standard deviation, skewness, and kurtosis.

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Table 1

Descriptive statistics of the variables used in the study

Variables	Mean ± SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
School structure	14.52 ± 6.04	−0.394	−1.160
Teacher–student relationships	17.62 ± 5.89	−0.476	−1.053
School safety	16.72 ± 6.34	−0.460	−1.094
Student–student relationships	16.22 ± 5.58	−0.088	−1.135
Perceived school climate	67.13 ± 19.37	−0.647	−0.817
Cognitive strategies	17.29 ± 4.09	−0.165	−1.647
Metacognitive strategies	16.50 ± 4.33	−0.182	−1.566
Academic self-regulation	31.75 ± 8.21	0.099	−1.447
Academic self-handicapping	24.64 ± 8.80	−0.477	−0.957

The results in Table 1 indicate that none of the study variables show serious deviations from normal distribution. The skewness values fall within the range of −2 to +2, and the kurtosis values fall within the range of −3 to +3. Therefore, the distribution of the data can be assumed to be normal. Variance inflation factor (VIF) values were used to assess multicollinearity among the predictor variables, and all values were less than 10. In addition, the tolerance statistic in this study was approximately 0.30. Univariate outliers were examined using frequency tables, and no outlying data were identified. The Durbin–Watson statistic ranged between 1.5 and 2.5; therefore, the independence of errors can be assumed. Table 2 presents the correlation matrix of the study variables.

Table 2

Correlation matrix among the study variables

Study variables	1	2	3
1. Perceived school climate	1		
2. Academic self-regulation	0.593**	1	
3. Academic self-handicapping	−0.552**	−0.493**	1

According to the results shown in Table 2, the correlation matrix indicates a significant negative relationship between academic self-handicapping and perceived school climate ($r = -0.552$, $p < .01$), as well as between academic self-handicapping and academic self-regulation ($r = -0.493$, $p < .01$). To answer the main research question—whether the model explaining academic self-handicapping based on perceived school climate with the mediating role of academic self-regulation fits the empirical data in students with visual impairment—structural equation modeling was conducted using AMOS version 26. The main goodness-of-fit indices are reported in Table 3.

Table 3

Goodness-of-fit indices of the model

Fit indices	χ^2/df	GFI	AGFI	NFI	CFI	RMSEA
Obtained values	2.85	0.97	0.92	0.97	0.98	0.07
Acceptable values	< 3.00	> 0.90	> 0.80	> 0.90	> 0.90	< 0.10

Based on the goodness-of-fit indices reported in Table 3, the predictive model of academic self-handicapping demonstrates a relatively good fit, and the proposed conceptual model provides an appropriate framework for examining academic self-handicapping from the perspective of model fit indices. Figure 1 illustrates the tested model of the present study along with the standardized path coefficients.

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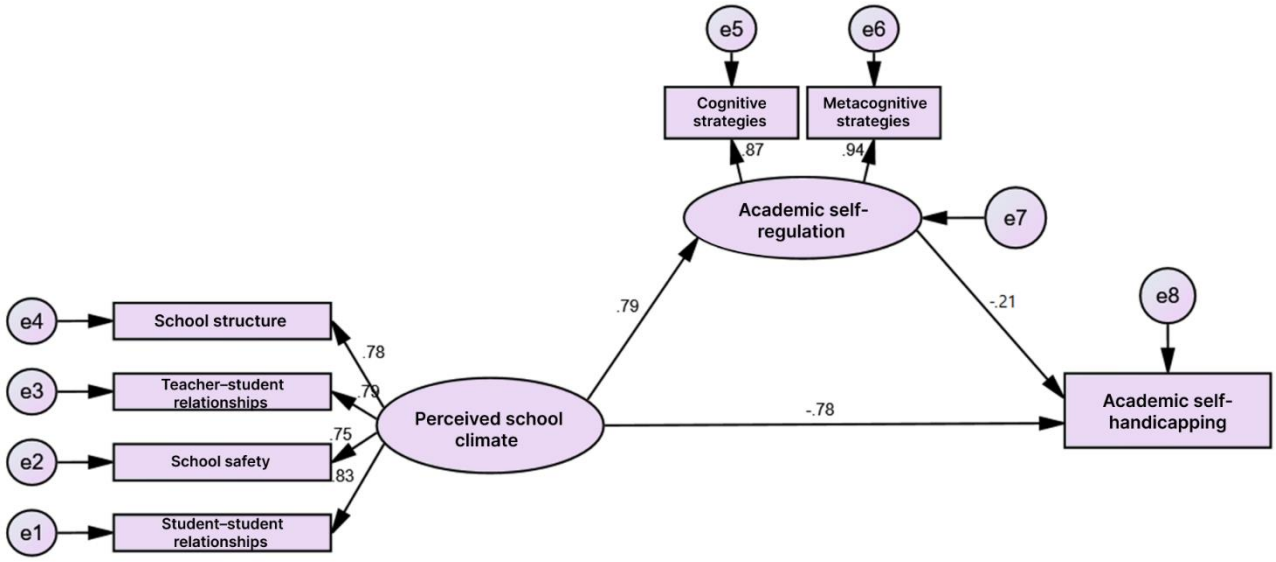
Figure 1

The tested model with standardized path coefficients



As shown in Figure 1, the relationships indicate both direct and indirect effects of perceived school climate on academic self-handicapping. Table 4 reports the direct effects of the variables.

Table 4

Direct path coefficient of perceived school climate on academic self-handicapping

Direct paths	Beta (β)	Standard Error (SE)	Critical Ratio (CR)	Significance
Perceived school climate → Academic self-handicapping	−0.780	0.206	−7.176	0.001

As shown in Table 4, the direct path coefficient of perceived school climate on academic self-handicapping is significant (β = −0.780, p = .001). To examine the mediating effect of academic self-regulation in the relationship between perceived school climate and academic self-handicapping, a bootstrap test was conducted using a macro program.

Table 5

Bootstrap results for the relationship between perceived school climate and academic self-handicapping with the mediating role of academic self-regulation

Indirect path	Path coefficient	Boot SE	Lower limit (95% CI)	Upper limit (95% CI)
Perceived school climate → Academic self-regulation → Academic self-handicapping	−0.459	0.073	−0.608	−0.322

According to the bootstrap test, if both the lower and upper confidence limits are either positive or negative and zero does not fall between them, the indirect causal path is considered significant. This condition is met for the relationship between perceived school climate and academic self-handicapping through the mediating role of academic self-regulation. Therefore, academic self-regulation plays a mediating role in the relationship between perceived school climate and academic self-handicapping in students with visual impairment.

4. Discussion

The present study aimed to examine a structural model explaining academic self-handicapping based on perceived school climate, with the mediating role of academic self-

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regulation, among students with visual impairment. The findings demonstrated that perceived school climate had a significant direct negative effect on academic self-handicapping, indicating that more positive perceptions of the school environment are associated with lower levels of self-handicapping behaviors. This result aligns with a substantial body of literature suggesting that supportive, fair, and emotionally safe school climates function as protective factors against maladaptive academic behaviors (Gallo, 2024; Reaves et al., 2018; Şahin & Çoban, 2020). When students perceive their school environment as structured, inclusive, and responsive, they are less likely to resort to defensive strategies aimed at protecting self-worth, such as self-handicapping.

The negative association between perceived school climate and academic self-handicapping can be understood within social–motivational frameworks that emphasize the role of environmental cues in shaping students' achievement-related behaviors. A positive school climate communicates messages of acceptance, fairness, and support, which reduce evaluative threat and fear of failure—two core antecedents of self-handicapping behaviors (Chang et al., 2025; Schwinger et al., 2022). In contrast, environments perceived as punitive, unpredictable, or unsupportive may heighten students' concern about negative evaluation, thereby increasing the likelihood of preemptive excuses or behavioral impediments to performance (Losova, 2025; Zhang, 2022). The present findings reinforce the notion that self-handicapping is not merely an individual-level trait but a context-sensitive coping strategy that emerges in response to perceived environmental risks.

In addition to the direct effect, the results revealed that academic self-regulation significantly mediated the relationship between perceived school climate and academic self-handicapping. Specifically, a more positive perception of school climate was associated with higher levels of academic self-regulation, which in turn predicted lower levels of self-handicapping. This mediational pathway highlights academic self-regulation as a key psychological mechanism through which contextual factors exert their influence on maladaptive academic behaviors. These findings are consistent with previous research demonstrating that supportive educational environments foster students' capacity to plan, monitor, and regulate their learning, thereby reducing reliance on avoidance-based strategies (Bozorgpoori et al., 2021; De Smul et al., 2020; Do & Lai, 2024).

The positive relationship between perceived school climate and academic self-regulation observed in this study aligns with self-determination and social–cognitive perspectives, which posit that environments characterized by structure, autonomy support, and positive relationships enhance students' sense of competence and control over learning (Fan & Williams, 2018; Gaxiola-Romero et al., 2020). When students experience clear expectations, fair rules, and supportive teacher–student and peer relationships, they are more likely to adopt adaptive cognitive and metacognitive strategies and persist in the face of academic challenges. This is particularly important for students with visual impairment, who often encounter additional barriers related to accessibility, instructional adaptation, and social participation (Hunt et al., 2024; Yadav, 2024). A positive school climate may therefore serve as a compensatory resource that strengthens self-regulatory skills in this population.

The inverse relationship between academic self-regulation and academic self-handicapping found in the present study is also consistent with prior empirical evidence. Students with higher levels of self-regulation tend to engage proactively with academic tasks, manage setbacks effectively, and attribute outcomes to controllable factors, thereby reducing the need for self-protective behaviors (Fatmala, 2025; Nuryana & Wahyuni, 2025; Valenzuela et al., 2020). In contrast, students with limited self-regulatory capacities may be more prone to procrastination, avoidance, and self-handicapping as means of coping with perceived academic demands (Ruben-Clapper, 2021; Tentama & Jayanti, 2019). The present findings extend this literature by demonstrating that self-regulation not only predicts self-handicapping directly but also serves as a mediating process linking environmental perceptions to maladaptive academic strategies.

Importantly, the mediating role of academic self-regulation underscores the interplay between contextual and intrapersonal factors in shaping academic behavior. While a positive school climate alone may reduce evaluative threat, its impact appears to be partially channeled through the development of students' self-regulatory competencies. This pattern is consistent with previous studies that have identified self-regulation as a mediator between classroom or school environment variables and academic well-being or achievement outcomes (Arbazi & Fouladchang, 2022; Ramazanpour et al., 2019; Tarahi & Jafarzadeh, 2021). The present study contributes to this line of research by situating academic self-handicapping within this mediational

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framework, particularly among students with visual impairment.

From the perspective of inclusive education, these findings carry significant implications. Students with visual impairment often report mixed perceptions of school climate, influenced by factors such as teacher preparedness, peer attitudes, and availability of accommodations (Hunt et al., 2024; Nwobodo & Agusiobo, 2018). When inclusive practices are effectively implemented and students perceive their environment as equitable and supportive, their motivational and self-regulatory resources are strengthened, reducing the likelihood of maladaptive coping strategies (Alraddadi & Zebehazy, 2025; Duka et al., 2024). Conversely, perceived deficiencies in school climate may undermine self-regulation and increase vulnerability to self-handicapping behaviors, with potential long-term consequences for academic persistence and psychological well-being (Farahani et al., 2018; Zhang, 2022).

The findings of the present study also align with broader evidence linking positive school climate to reduced problem behaviors and improved mental health outcomes across diverse student populations (Aldridge et al., 2018; Reaves et al., 2018). By extending this evidence to the domain of academic self-handicapping and to students with visual impairment, the study highlights the importance of considering both environmental quality and self-regulatory processes in understanding academic risk behaviors. Moreover, the use of structural equation modeling allowed for the simultaneous examination of direct and indirect effects, providing a more nuanced understanding of these relationships than bivariate analyses alone.

5. Conclusion

Overall, the results support an integrative model in which perceived school climate influences academic self-handicapping both directly and indirectly through academic self-regulation. This model is theoretically consistent with self-worth protection theories of self-handicapping (Losova, 2025; Schwinger et al., 2022) and social–contextual models of learning that emphasize the role of environmental affordances in shaping motivational and regulatory processes (Aldridge & Blackstock, 2024; De Smul et al., 2020). For students with visual impairment, whose academic experiences are shaped by both personal and contextual challenges, this integrative framework offers valuable insights into the mechanisms underlying maladaptive academic behaviors.

6. Limitations & Suggestions

Despite its contributions, the present study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the cross-sectional design precludes causal inferences regarding the relationships among perceived school climate, academic self-regulation, and academic self-handicapping. Second, the reliance on self-report measures may have introduced response biases, such as social desirability or shared method variance. Third, the use of convenience sampling limits the generalizability of the findings to all students with visual impairment. Finally, potential moderating variables, such as severity of visual impairment or type of educational placement, were not examined.

Future studies are encouraged to employ longitudinal or experimental designs to clarify the causal pathways among school climate, self-regulation, and self-handicapping. Researchers may also explore additional mediators or moderators, such as self-efficacy, academic emotions, or perceived teacher support, to further refine the proposed model. Expanding research to diverse cultural contexts and comparing students with different types of disabilities could also enhance the generalizability and explanatory power of future models.

From a practical standpoint, the findings highlight the importance of improving school climate and fostering academic self-regulation among students with visual impairment. Educational policymakers and practitioners should prioritize inclusive practices that promote fairness, safety, and supportive relationships within schools. Interventions aimed at strengthening students' self-regulatory skills, such as goal-setting and metacognitive strategy training, may be particularly effective in reducing self-handicapping behaviors and enhancing academic outcomes.

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Declaration of Interest

The authors of this article declared no conflict of interest.

Ethical Considerations

The study protocol adhered to the principles outlined in the Helsinki Declaration, which provides guidelines for ethical research involving human participants.

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Transparency of Data

In accordance with the principles of transparency and open research, we declare that all data and materials used in this study are available upon request.

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Authors' Contributions

S.K. developed the study concept, designed the structural model, and supervised data collection among students with visual impairment. H.-P.S. contributed to methodological refinement, statistical analysis using SEM, and validation of the measurement instruments. N.S. conducted data preparation, performed initial analyses, and assisted in interpreting the findings and drafting the manuscript. All authors participated in critical revision and approved the final version of the article.

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