INVESTIGATING THE INTERACTION BETWEEN ACADEMIC RESILIENCE AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING DEMOTIVATION

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Abstract

English learning demotivation is a salient phenomenon that debilitates students' learning motivation. Although a plethora of research has tried to discover possible factors leading to students' ESL/EFL demotivation, few research studies have attempted to investigate the interaction of academic resilience with English learners' demotivation. To close this lacuna, the present quantitative research studied 234 college students' academic resilience and its interaction with their English learning. To collect the data, two close-ended questionnaires on English learning demotivation and academic resilience were adopted from studies by Kikuchi (2011), and Wagnild (2009), respectively. All participants' responses were analyzed in SPSS through correlation and a series of simple linear regressions. The results showed that academic resilience had a significant and negative interaction with English language learning demotivation. These results support the stance that fostering students' resilience can enable them to bounce back in the face of academic setbacks. These findings imply that EFL/ESL teachers should help their students focus on building resilience against the forces that diminish their L2 learning interest. English language teachers can enhance learners' persistence (i.e., perseverance) by encouraging them to set clear learning objectives and engage in self-regulated learning. English language learners should also be assisted in enhancing their problem-solving skills, which can promote their self-reliance. Besides, learners' own awareness of the practical importance of English in the context of Pakistan can also provide them with a reason to study the English language.

Keywords: *academic resilience, perseverance, English learning demotivation*

Introduction

Due to the growing recognition of the importance of the English language, language learning demotivation is also gaining significant research attention in different social contexts. English language learning demotivation is a salient phenomenon and it needs to be addressed especially in a context where English is predominantly used in the academics. In English language learning context, demotivation has been found as a major construct causing debilitating impact on students' English language proficiency motivation in learning English language (Ghonsooly et al., 2017; Song & Kim, 2017). This study identified a problem that a majority of the past studies have studied demotivation phenomenon as a as an individual construct, very little is known about how demotivation interacts with academic resilience (Kim, 2009; Kim & Kim, 2017; Shin & Kim, 2017). In fact, prior researchers have found that academic resilience impacts students' language

learning motivation, language proficiency, academic success (Abolmaali & Mahmudi, 2013; Clark & Scroth, 2010; Erfani & Mardan, 2017; Kwek, Bui, Rynne, & So, 2013). Additionally, previous research (Ghonsooly et al., 2017; Kikuchi, 2011; Kim, 2011; Kim & Kim, 2017) agrees on the point that 'demotivation' is one of the prominent factors that negatively affects students' motivation to learn the English language. Prior studies have also concluded that English language learning demotivation is the result of internal and external factors (Kikuchi, 2011). However, the variability in previous findings also suggests that demotivation is context-specific and, therefore, it should be researched in different social contexts (Sakai & Kikuchi, 2009). The present study was carried out in the context of Pakistan in general and the Balochistan province of Pakistan in particular. As individual difference (ID) variables are regarded as the most consistent predictors of language learning success (Dörnyei & Skehan, 2003), the present study investigates demotivation phenomenon according to students' ID i.e., academic resilience.

English learning resilience is defined as "the internal power to overcome difficulties in adverse English learning situations" (Shin & Kim, 2017, p. 69). English language learning resilience is a relatively new concept; therefore, few studies are available on the relationship between academic resilience and L2 demotivation (Kim, Kim, & Kim, 2018; Shin & Kim, 2017). This relationship is worth researching because academic resilience and L2 demotivation seem to stand at two different edges and negatively correlated (Shin & Kim, 2017). For example, demotivation retards students' L2 learning and exerts a negative impact on their L2 motivation (Kikuchi, 2011), while academic resilience refers to "students' ability to deal effectively with academic setbacks, stress, and study pressure" (Martin, 2002, p.35). Hence, students with high resilience tend to be in a better position to bounce back from academic adversities caused by demotivating factors (Kim & Kim, 2017).

Academic resilience has not been profusely researched in relation to English language learning demotivation. To date only few studies exist on the relationship between academic resilience and L2 demotivation that have been carried out in the context of South Korea (Kim et al., 2018; Shin & Kim, 2017), and a study in the context of Pakistan that was carried out on the university students (Pathan et al., 2021). The results of these studies are not enough to draw solid conclusions especially in other contexts, such as Pakistan. Research needs to investigate this issue thoroughly in different contexts so that students may be helped to strive in the face of demotivation (Shin & Kim, 2017). The present research addresses this gap by proposing the following research question and a hypothesis:

1. To what extent, if any, does academic resilience interact with college students' English language learning demotivation?

Ho1: College students' academic resilience significantly and negatively interacts with their English language learning demotivation.

Literature Review

Academic Resilience and Language Learning Demotivation

Prior studies have found that teacher misbehaviours, ineffective course contents and teaching materials, undue importance to L2 grammar/grammar-based teaching, defective teaching methods, classroom environment, lack of confidence, and poor grades negatively impact L2 learners' motivation (Ghonsooly et al., 2017; Hamada, 2008; Kaivanpanah & Ghasemi, 2011; Kikuchi, 2011; Rastegar et al., 2012). Additionally, the recent wave of research has shown a major concern for the students who experience language learning demotivation. In this regard, prior research (Kim et al., 2018; Shin & Kim, 2017) has focused on the concept of resilience in relation to EFL learners' demotivation. Resilience is generally defined as "the process of, capacity for, or outcome

of successful adaptation despite challenging or threatening circumstances" (Howard & Johnson, 2000 as cited in Martin & Marsh, 2006, p. 264). It refers to good outcomes in the face of hardships, difficulties and threatening environment (Masten, 2001). In the educational context, resilience is the heightened likelihood of a student attaining academic success in the face of vulnerabilities and adversities.

In the English language learning context, resilience is defined as "the internal power to overcome difficulties in adverse English learning situations" (Shin & Kim, 2017, p.69). Resilience, as an individual differences factor, can affect second/foreign language learning. Reviewing research on individual differences, Dörnyei and Skehan (2003) also found individual differences as the most consistent predictors for success in EFL/ESL learning. Academic resilience has also been conceptualized with motivation (Martin, 2002). Although academic resilience and motivation have almost similar features, they do not overlap. For example, L2 learners' motivation may be reduced due to the impact of demotivating factors. Martin (2002) developed a model of students' academic enhancement by combining the concept of academic resilience and theories on academic motivation, including need achievement and self-worth motivation theory, attribution theory, control theory, self-efficacy theory, motivation orientation theory, and expectancy x value theory. Martin (2002, p. 36) asserts, "The purpose of developing this model is to integrate a number of theoretical perspectives, synthesize motivation and academic resilience, and articulate a framework that can be used by educators and understood by students." The findings of this study concluded that learners who obtain high scores on boosters and low scores on guzzlers are considered resilient and effectively deal with academic setbacks, schoolwork pressure, and stress. On the contrary, learners who obtain low scores on boosters and high scores on guzzlers are not considered resilient, as they do not effectively bounce back from academic setbacks and fail to deal with schoolwork pressure. The following Figure 1 illustrates the motivation boosters and guzzlers for low- and high-resilient students.
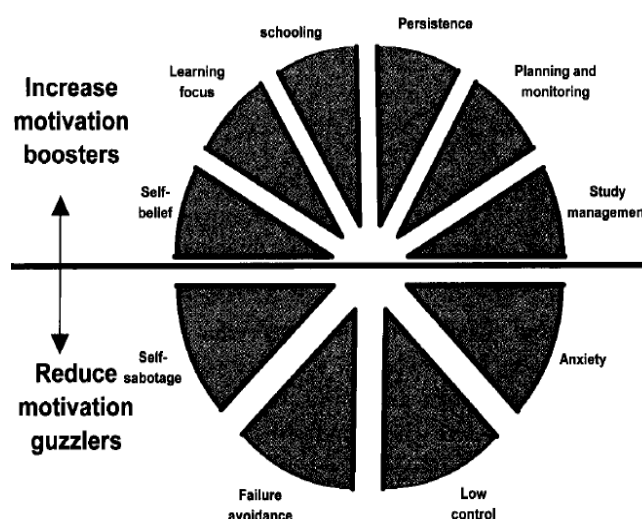

Figure 2.1. Motivation and academic resilience: Developing a model for student enhancement. Adopted from (Martin, 2002, p.41). *Australian Journal of Education*, *46*(1), 34-49.

In another study, Kim and Kim (2017) investigated the factors that constitute academic resilience among students and this study also examined the relationship of resilience with students' motivated

behavior and proficiency level. The questionnaire consisted of three parts, (1) resilience, (2) motivated behavior in English learning, and (3) the participants' background information such as grade was administered to1620 secondary Korean school learners. The data were analyzed in SPSS and AMOS. The findings suggested that sociability, empathy persistence, perceived happiness, and self-regulation were the key factors making secondary students resilient towards an effective learning. Additionally, the findings of this study also found a positive relationship between resilience and motivated behavior whereas there was a weak relationship between resilience and the proficiency level of students.

Demotivation has also been investigated in relation to academic resilience (Kim et al., 2018; Shin & Kim, 2017). The primary aim of Shin and Kim's (2017) study was to investigate the relationship between resilience, motivation and demotivation. The self-made questionnaire was administered among 187 Grade 6 elementary students in South Korea. The questionnaire consisted of three parts: 20-item resilience questionnaire, 18-item motivation questionnaire, and 25-item demotivation questionnaire. To analyze the data, descriptive statistics were conducted in SPSS, and confirmatory factor analysis, Pearson correlation analysis, and structural model analysis were conducted in AMOS 23. The findings identified three factors that constituted students' academic resilience: Optimism, Self-control, and Sociality. The findings also revealed that resilience had a positive impact on students' motivation and a negative impact on students' demotivation to learn English. The findings of this study imply that fostering resilience among students can help them cope with their L2 demotivation.

In another study, Kim et al. (2018) explored the components that influenced EFL demotivation and resilience among school students in South Korea. Using topic-centered narrative interview method, this qualitative study interviewed 23 students (elementary: 8, junior high school: 7, high school: 8) and 9 EFL teachers (elementary: 4, junior high school: 3, and high school. The recorded interviews were transcribed and analyzed according to the guidelines of the 'Grounded theory'. The findings revealed that teachers' proficiency, excessive afterschool learning programs at private institutes, and over-emphasis on grammatical components in English lessons were the leading source of demotivation respectively for elementary school, junior high school, and high school EFL students. Additionally, this study identified social support, emotional regulation, clear learning goals, and tenacity that fostered students' academic resilience and curbed their EFL demotivation. These findings implicates that resilience plays its role in making students resilient to ESL/EFL demotivation.

The research studies reviewed above are evident that demotivation is a salient phenomenon and has its pernicious impact on students' EFL/ESL motivation. The scanty existing knowledge on the relationship between academic resilience and demotivation reviewed above also reveal that resilience interacts with EFL/ESL demotivation.

As demotivation is context-specific (Kikuchi, 2015) and resilience is one of the individual differences factors, the findings of these two studies (Kim et al., 2018; Shin & Kim, 2017) in the South Korean context cannot be generalized to other contexts, including Pakistan. Additionally, the results of studies based on a small number of high school students cannot be generalized to college students. Hence, this study aims to investigate the interaction of academic resilience with college students' demotivation to learn the English language.

Research Methodology

The present research followed a quantitative research, which is advantageous chiefly because it can produce generalizable results, is less-time consuming, and offers good value for money

(Creswell, 2014, Dörnyei, 2007, Gay & Mills, 2015). Additionally, the quantitative method has also been used in the previous researches to ESL/EFL demotivation, and academic resilience (Jahedizadeh et al., 2016; Kaivanpanah & Ghasemi, 2011; Kim & Kim, 2017). Additionally, at the outset of a quantitative study, "researchers state the hypotheses and specify the research procedures that will be used to carry out the study" (Gay & Mills, 2015, p. 7). Similarly, the current study proposed the following hypothesis:

> Ho1: College students' academic resilience significantly and negatively interacts with their English language learning demotivation.

Research Instruments

English Language Learning Demotivation Questionnaire

A 40-item questionnaire designed by Kikuchi (2011) was used for a data collection. The questionnaire was based on a 4-point Likert-type scale (1 = not true, 4 = true) that measured students' demotivation related to teacher behaviors, characteristics of classes, class environment, class materials, loss of interest, and experiences of failure. Concerning the reliability of the questionnaire, Kikuchi (2011) used Rasch analysis (RA) to establish reliability and validity of the questionnaire. RA is a family of statistical techniques which is mostly used to determine the validity and reliability of tests and surveys (Bramley, 2015). The findings revealed that all the items in the questionnaire were fit to measure six demotivating factors. Additionally, to measure the reliability of the questionnaire, Kikuchi (2011) used Rasch person reliability (Rp) that measures the internal consistency of questionnaire items. The Rp is analogous to Cronbach's alpha and the internal reliability o f a measure is considered satisfactory when the Rp score is 0.67 or higher. The score of Rp calculated for the class materials factor was 0.91, for the lack of interest factor was 0.74, for the experiences of failure factor was 0.86, for the characteristics of classes factor was 0.89, for the teacher behaviors factor was 0.91, and for the class environment factor was 0.76.

Resilience Scale

The resilience Scale (RS) (Wagnild, 2009) was used to measure the resilience level of college students. The prior studies have shown that RS has good internal consistency reliability with Cronbach's alpha coefficient ranging from 0.85 to 0.94 (Wagnild, 2009, p. 33). RS has also been administered across students with different ethnicities, ages, and educational level (Narayanan, Onn, & Cheang, 2016; Neill & Dias, 2001; Wildermuth, 2014).

RS is a self-report questionnaire that follows a strength-based approach measuring "resilience as a positive characteristic that enhances individual adaptation" (Wagnild & Young, 1993, p. 167). The RS consists of 25 items based on 7-point Likert-type scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). The scale measures five characteristics of resilience: (a) perseverance, (b) self-Reliance, (c) Meaning (purposeful life), (d) extensional aloneness (authenticity) (e) equanimity (Wagnild, 2009). Example items of this scale included "When I am in a difficult situation, I can usually find my way out of it" and "I keep interested in things". The following Table 1 shows the distribution of items in the RS:

Table 1 *Classification of Items in Resilience Scale*

Item No	Characteristics of resilience
2, 9, 13, 18, 23	Self-Reliance
4, 6, 11, 15, 21	Meaning (purposeful life)
7, 12,16,19,22	Equanimity

1, 10, 14, 20, 24	Perseverance
3, 5, 8, 17, 25	Extensional aloneness

Population and Sample

"A population is a group of individuals who have the same characteristic" (Creswell, 2012, p.143). The population of the present study referred to government college students of Quetta, the capital city of Balochistan, Pakistan. At this level, English is taught as a compulsory subject and also used as a medium of instruction for the science subjects. A total of 234 randomly selected college students agreed to participate in the survey. Their demographic information is illustrated in Table 2:

Table 2. *Participants' Demographic Information*

Demographic Characteristics		College Students
Gender	Males	120 (51.3%)
	Females	114 (48.7%)
Total		234
Age		17 to 23 years
English language learning experience		10 to 12 years

Data Analysis

To answer the proposed research question and test the hypothesis of the present study, a series of simple linear regressions were performed in SPSS to unravel how the independent variable (resilience) interacts with the dependent variables (demotivating factors). This test is also useful for determining the extent of variance in dependent variables (demotivating factors) explained by the independent variable (resilience) (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). Additionally, the Pearson correlation test was also performed to examine the interrelationship between the independent and dependent variables of the study.

Data Collection Procedure

The data collection was carried out after seeking participants' and institutional consent. The questionnaire was divided into three parts. The first part required study participants to report their demographic information. The second and third parts of the questionnaire consisted of statements on English learning demotivation and resilience, respectively. Prior to data collection, all participants were encouraged to maintain honesty in their responses, and they were also assured that their responses would remain confidential and would not be shared with anyone. Additionally, in the proposed study, ethical issues were addressed according to the ethical guidelines set by the American Psychological Association (APA, 2017). The ethical considerations ensured the privacy and confidentiality of participants' responses and informed consent.

Results

Prior to performing the regression analyses, the assumptions of multicollinearity was addressed. To assess multicollinearity in the data, the correlation between independent and dependent variables was examined according to thresholds (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2012). For example, the correlation between independent variables should not exceed (r.7). Additionally, independent variables should have at least some relationship with the dependent variable preferably (r.3). This assumption was met as illustrated in Table 3 in which all the independent variables were correlated below (r =.7), and they also exhibited some relationship with dependent variables (r =.3).

Table 3. *Correlation between Independent and Dependent Variables*

No	Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1	SR	-										
2	MN	.48*	-									
3	EQU	.52*	.49*	-								
4	PER	.50*	.49*	.57*	-							
5	EA	.48*	.45*	.45*	.35*	-						
6	TB	-.45*	-.46*	-.42*	-.36*	-.37*	-					
7	CC	-.43*	-.48*	-.41*	-.42*	-.37*	.44*	-				
8	CE	-.46*	-.44*	-.42*	-.43*	-.41*	.45*	.59*	-			
9	CM	-.41*	-.49*	-.44*	-.36*	-.40*	.49*	.38*	.43*	-		
10	LI	-.48*	-.54*	-.46*	-.45*	-.41*	.52*	.65**	.62*	.53*	-	
11	EF	-.43*	-.47*	-.42*	-.46**	-.42*	.54*	.39*	.35*	.53*	.44*	-

Note: SR = self-reliance; MN = meaning; EQU = equanimity; PER = perseverance; EA = existential aloneness; TB = Teacher behaviours; CC = characteristics of classes; CE = class environment; CM = classroom materials, LI = lack of interest; EF = experiences of failure; *.Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

The results displayed in Table 4 indicate the interaction of resilience with college learners' demotivating factors in learning English. The predictive model accounted for 29.6% of the variance in demotivation related to teacher behaviors (R^2 = .299, R^2adj = .296, $F(1, 232)$ = 99.12, $p < .001$). Academic resilience showed a significant and negative interaction with the demotivator (β = -.547, t = -9.96, $p < .001$). The effect size, f^2 = .42, calculated using Cohen's formula (f^2 = $R^2/1-R^2$), revealed that overall resilience had a large negative interaction with learners' demotivation associated with teacher behaviors.

The model was also significant (R^2 = .306, R^2adj = .303, $F(1, 232)$ = 102.33, $p < .001$) and explained 30.6% of the variance in characteristics of classes as a source of demotivation for college

students. The academic resilience (β = -.55, t = -10.12, p < .001) significantly and negatively interacted with the characteristics of classes, with a large effect size (f^2 = .44).

Additionally, the predictor model was also significant (R^2 = .318, R^2adj = .315, F(1, 232) = 108.35, p < .001) and accounted for 31.8% of the variance in college learners' demotivation associated with their class environment. The resilience (β = -.56, t = -10.41, p < .001) significantly and negatively predicted classroom environment-related demotivation with a large effect size (f^2 = .46).

As for classroom materials, the model explained 30.7% of the variance (R^2 = .307, R^2adj = .304, F(1, 232) = 102.60, p < .001). The resilience (β = -.55, t = -10.13, p < .001) showed significant and negative predictive power for class materials as a source of demotivation, with a large effect size (f^2 = .44).

Additionally, the predictive model also significantly accounted for 37.6% of the variance in lack of interest as one of the causes of demotivation for EFL college students (R^2 = .376, R^2adj = .374, F(1, 232) = 140.01, p < .001). The resilience (β = -.61, t = -11.83, p < .001) significantly and negatively predicted learners' demotivation associated with their lack of interest in learning the English language, with a large effect size (f^2 = .60). Finally, the model also significantly explained approximately 33.2% of the variance in learners' demotivation caused by their experiences of failure (R^2 = .332, R^2adj = .329, F(1, 232) = 115.48, p < .001). The resilience (β = -.58, t = -10.75, p < .001) showed significant and negative predictive power for learners' experiences of failure, with a large effect size (f^2 = .49). Given the impact of resilience on the English language learners' causes of demotivation, the results of simple linear regression test showed that resilience was the potential source for college students to cope with pernicious impacts of the demotivating factors on their English language learning motivation.

Table 4 *Impact of Academic Resilience on College Students' Causes of Demotivation*

	TB		CC		CE		CM		LI		EF	
	β	t	β	t	β	t	β	t	β	t	β	t
Resilience	-.547	-9.96*	-.55	-10.12*	-.56	-10.41*	-.55	-10.13*	-.61	-11.83*	-.58	-10.75*
F (1, 232)	99.12		102.33		108.35		102.60		140.01		115.48	
R^2	.299		.306		.318		.307		.376		.332	
R^2adj	.296		.303		.315		.304		.374		.329	

Note: TB = Teacher behaviours; CC = characteristics of classes; CE = class environment; CM = classroom materials, LI = lack of interest; EF = experiences of failure; *p< 0.001

Discussion

The results revealed that resilience impacted all the six demotivating factors. Similar findings are also reflected in previous studies (Kim et al., 2017; Shin & Kim, 2017). The results portray the fact that resilience enables ELLs to cope with language learning demotivation. These results also correspond with Martin and Marsh's (2006) view that resilience exerts a positive effect on students' class participation. Additionally, resilience also seems to contribute to language learners' motivation (Kim et al., 2019) and it also develops language learners' capabilities to deal with language learning setbacks (demotivation) (Kim et al., 2017).

The fact suggests that resilience fosters and sustains L2 motivation (Rouse, 2001), the present study delineates resilience as a potential construct to lower Pakistani students' possible reasons for demotivation. In addition to some external factors, such as parental support, and peer and community support, the classroom learning environment has been identified as an important variable that fosters language learners' resilience (Waxman et al., 2012). Contrarily, the results of the present research portray the fact the prevailing classroom environment is not favourable for the Pakistani ELLs. The use of obsolete teaching methods, reliance on teaching and learning materials irrelevant to students' language learning needs, and insufficient language learning facilities affect language learners' motivation. As a result, these learners put least efforts to gain proficiency in the target language (Pathan et al., 2021). Also, demotivation-related factors are substantial obstacles for students in achieving academic success. In this regard, teachers have to equally responsible to help their students be resilient against those adverse learning obstacles by providing them "caring and supportive relationships, positive and high expectations, and opportunities for meaningful participation" (Mitchell, 2007, as cited in Waxman et al., 2012, p.68). The present study found a negative interrelationship between resilience (Rutter, 1987) and language learning demotivation. As the results of the present study showed that there is a significant and negative association of resilience with learners' causes of demotivation, therefore it is implied that both resilience and demotivation should be seen as opposite sides of a continuum as in the case between L2 motivation and L2 demotivation (Xaypanya et al., 2017). It is because it is not always the case that demotivated learners quit their language learning journey, but despite experiencing adverse language-learning conditions, they strive on attaining their language learning goals. Hence, resilience may be a means to regain L2 motivation in the face of L2 demotivation. Therefore, prior research (Hassaskhah et al., 2015; Xaypanya et al., 2017) seem to portray the on-sided story of L2 demotivation while disregarding the force that keeps learners resolute and determined in English learning. Furthermore, in the light of evidence garnered in the present research and the view that "it would be difficult, if not impossible, to prevent demotivation by completely eliminating all demotivating factors from the learning context of EFL learners" (Kim et al., 2019, p.371), L2 demotivation needs to be explored in relation to resilience rather than as an independent construct.

Implications

Given the results of the present study, English language teachers need to realize the importance of English language learning motivation and devise strategies to address the demotivation of their students. English language teachers can enhance learners' L2 motivation "by providing an enjoyable learning environment and encouraging young learners' autonomy in learning English" (Kim et al., 2019, p. 386). English language teachers should also focus on English language learners' resilience against the forces that diminish their L2 learning interest. English language teachers can enhance learners' persistence (i.e., perseverance) by encouraging them to set clear

learning objectives and self-regulated learning (Martin & Marsh, 2006). English language learners should also be assisted to enhance their problem-solving skills that can promote their self-reliance. Besides, learners' own awareness of the practical importance of the English in the context of Pakistan can also provide them a meaning to study the English language. Teachers should encourage students' learning efforts and should make students realize that their learning mistakes are "diagnostic information about how to improve, and can be important ingredients for future success" (Martin & Marsh, 2006, p.278). Cultivating such a realization amongst language learners may not cause their self-denigration (a lack of confidence demotivating factor).

Future Research

The present study employed a quantitative research design with a strong emphasis on quantitative data gathered through questionnaires with predefined resilience characteristics; however, there might also be other factors leading to students' resilience. Therefore, it would be appropriate to use a sequential exploratory mixed-methods approach with a strong emphasis on qualitative data to explore the constituents of students' resilience first; then, the qualitative findings can be used as a guide to constructing a questionnaire that can be validated on a large sample using rigorous statistical techniques in a quantitative phase.

Conclusion

The present study addressed research gap that prior researche (Kaivanpanah & Ghasemi, 2011; Rastegar et al., 2012) had attempted to draw the correlation of EFL/ESL demotivation across gender, anxiety and proficiency level of EFL/ESL learners, but a little was known how demotivation phenomenon interacted with learners' academic resilience (Kim, 2009; Shin & Kim, 2017). Using a quantitative method research design, the present research studied Pakistani EFL students' demotivation in relation to resilience. Simple linear regression analyses showed that resilience was significantly and negatively related to the factors driving demotivation among Pakistani college students. These results implied that the increase in language learners' resilience decreased their EFL/ESL demotivation.

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