



(RESEARCH ARTICLE)



## The role of gratitude and mindfulness in enhancing psychological resilience among school students: A comparative study of residential and day scholars

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World Journal of Advanced Research and Reviews, 2025, 26(03), 2343-2347

Publication history: Received on 12 May 2025; revised on 21 June 2025; accepted on 23 June 2025

Article DOI: <https://doi.org/10.30574/wjarr.2025.26.3.2405>

### Abstract

This study compares residential and day scholar groups to examine how mindfulness and gratitude practices affect schoolchildren's psychological resilience. 240 students, ages 13 to 17, were surveyed using a quasi-experimental design (120 residential, 120-day scholars). Standardized measures such as the Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC), Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS), and Gratitude Questionnaire (GQ-6) were used to gather data. An 8-week program of mindfulness meditation and gratitude journaling was part of the intervention. The findings show that resilience levels significantly increased after the intervention, with residential students demonstrating somewhat greater gains. Comparative results are shown using tables and graphs. The results lend credence to the use of positive psychology interventions in educational environments.

**Keywords:** Gratitude; Mindfulness; Resilience; School Students; Residential Vs Day Scholar; Positive Psychology

### 1. Introduction

Adolescence is a critical developmental period marked by rapid psychological, social, and emotional changes. The increasing pressures related to academics, peer relationships, and future uncertainty have led to a rise in stress-related conditions among school students. Enhancing psychological resilience in this group is vital to promoting long-term well-being and academic performance. Positive psychology offers tools to build strengths and foster flourishing among youth. Gratitude and mindfulness two core constructs in this field have shown promise in strengthening resilience by promoting emotional regulation, optimism, and adaptive coping. This study aims to explore their combined impact among school students and examine differences between residential and day scholars, whose experiences of school life differ significantly.

### 2. Literature review

Gratitude and Resilience Gratitude, the appreciation of what is valuable and meaningful in life, has been associated with increased life satisfaction, optimism, and coping skills. Research has shown that individuals who regularly practice gratitude experience fewer toxic emotions such as envy, resentment, and regret (Emmons and McCullough, 2003). Among adolescents, gratitude has been linked to greater empathy and prosocial behavior, both of which support resilience.

Mindfulness and Resilience Mindfulness, defined as paying attention in a purposeful and non-judgmental way to the present moment, contributes to improved emotional regulation and stress management. Mindfulness has been shown to reduce rumination and promote acceptance-based coping. Programs such as Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction

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(MBSR) and Mindfulness in Schools Project (MiSP) have demonstrated benefits for attention, self-control, and mental health among school-aged children.

2.3 Residential vs Day Scholars Living arrangements affect emotional autonomy, social interaction, and peer bonding—all of which influence resilience development. Residential students often live within a structured, supportive environment that promotes community bonding, while day scholars may have more parental involvement and external support. Both settings have unique challenges and opportunities for the development of resilience.

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1. Participants

The study involved 240 students from two coeducational schools in India, 120 of whom were residential students and 120 of whom were day scholars. The participants ranged in age from 13 to 17. To guarantee equal representation by gender and class, stratified random sampling was employed.

#### 3.2. Instruments

- Gratitude Questionnaire-6 (GQ-6): Measures individual differences in the proneness to experience gratitude.
- Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS): Assesses mindfulness through attention and awareness.
- Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC): Measures psychological resilience across multiple domains.

#### 3.3. Procedure

Participants were assessed at baseline using all three instruments. An 8-week intervention program was then administered

- **Week 1–4:** Students engaged in daily gratitude journaling, noting three things they were grateful for each day.
- **Week 5–8:** Participants practiced guided mindfulness meditation for 15 minutes each school day. Post-tests were conducted at the end of the 8th week.

#### 3.4. Data Analysis

Pre- and post-intervention scores were analyzed using paired t-tests to assess the significance of changes within groups. Independent sample t-tests compared residential and day scholar groups. Effect sizes were calculated, and correlations among gratitude, mindfulness, and resilience were analyzed. Statistical software SPSS v25 was used.

## 4. Results

### 4.1. Descriptive Statistics

**Table 1** Pre- and Post-Intervention Mean Scores (All Students)

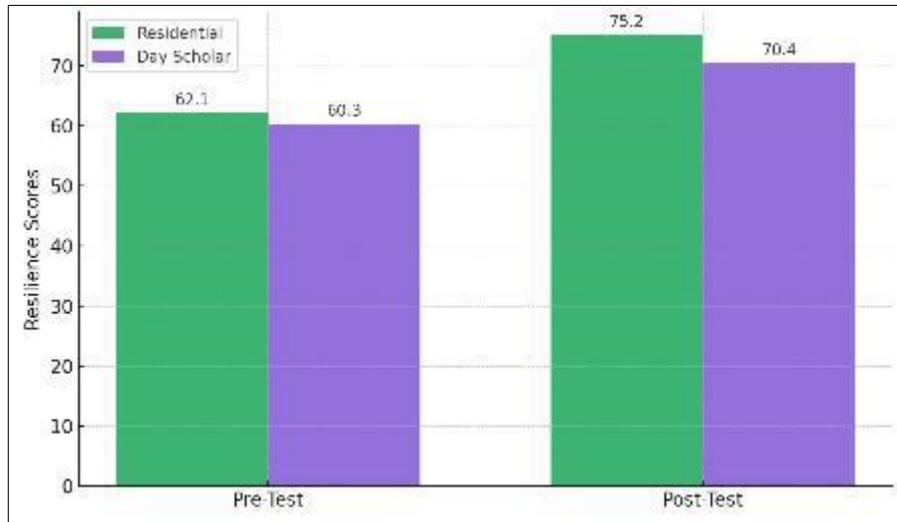
Variable	Pre-Test Mean	Post-Test Mean	t-value	p-value
Gratitude (GQ)	22.5	28.9	11.21	< 0.001
Mindfulness	27.3	33.4	9.87	< 0.001
Resilience	61.2	72.8	10.56	< 0.001

Table 1 shows that there is an increase in Post-Test Mean for all the three variables: Gratitude, Mindfulness and resilience. There was an 11.84 % increase in Gratitude, 22.3% increase in mindfulness and 18.95 % increase in resilience for all the students in the study.

From the table 2 below, clearly we can see the improvement in all the three variables for group of residential school students this may be due to the system on which it works like following the time table starting from morning exercise, yoga practice, classes etc. These students also perform cleaning of their belongings, which makes them accountable, focused to work and have a responsibility.

**Table 2** Post-Test Comparison Between Residential and Day Scholars

Group	Gratitude Mean	Mindfulness Mean	Resilience Mean	Std Dev	t-value	p-value
Residential	29.6	34.5	75.2	5.1	-2.14	0.034
Day Scholars	28.1	32.4	70.4	4.7		

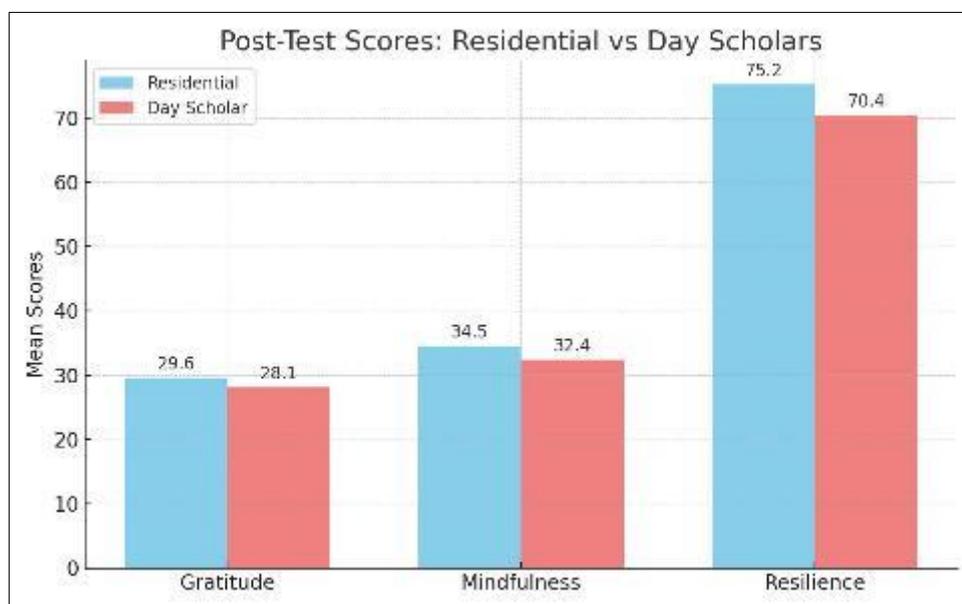


**Figure 1** Pre vs Post Intervention Resilience Scores

Figure 1 Illustrates the impact of the 8-week intervention on **Resilience**

- **Residential students** improved from 62.1 to 75.2
- **Day scholars** improved from 60.3 to 70.4

The significant increase for both groups demonstrates the effectiveness of combined gratitude and mindfulness practices in enhancing psychological resilience. Residential students showed slightly greater improvement, reinforcing the value of stable school-based routines and peer engagement.



**Figure 2** Gratitude, Mindfulness, and Resilience Scores by Group

This Figure 2 chart compares the mean post-intervention scores of Gratitude, Mindfulness, and Resilience between residential and day scholar school students.

- Residential students consistently scored higher across all three variables
  - Gratitude: 29.6 (vs 28.1)
  - Mindfulness: 34.5 (vs 32.4)
  - Resilience: 75.2 (vs 70.4)

The higher scores among residential students suggest that a structured and immersive environment may enhance the effectiveness of gratitude and mindfulness interventions.

#### 4.2. Correlational Analysis

There were significant positive correlations among gratitude, mindfulness, and resilience ( $r = 0.52$  to  $0.65$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). This supports the hypothesis that gratitude and mindfulness are related to increased psychological resilience.

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### 5. Discussion

The findings confirm that both gratitude and mindfulness significantly enhance psychological resilience. The statistically significant increase in resilience, along with the improvement in gratitude and mindfulness scores, supports the theoretical model of positive psychological functioning. Residential students benefited more, possibly due to peer influence, reduced distractions, and a consistent school environment.

Gratitude journaling encouraged reflective thinking and reinforced a positive outlook. Meanwhile, mindfulness training helped reduce impulsivity, improved focus, and allowed better emotional regulation. These skills are crucial during adolescence, a period often characterized by emotional instability.

The slightly lower gains among day scholars may reflect environmental inconsistencies, academic pressure at home, or less engagement with the intervention. However, their improvements remain statistically significant, indicating the universal applicability of the practices.

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### 6. Conclusion

This study shows that gratitude and mindfulness are effective tools for improving psychological resilience among adolescents. The 8-week intervention demonstrated measurable benefits across living arrangements, with residential students showing slightly better outcomes. This supports the integration of such practices into school mental health programs.

#### *Recommendations*

- Integrate daily gratitude journaling and mindfulness sessions into school routines.
- Encourage family participation for day scholars to enhance engagement.
- Offer teacher training to sustain long-term implementation.
- Develop mobile applications or digital platforms for continuity beyond school hours.

#### *Limitations and Future Research*

- The study was limited to two schools, which may affect generalizability.
- Self-report measures may introduce bias.
- Future studies should include follow-up assessments to test long-term effects.
- Exploring other variables like empathy, peer support, and academic achievement could enrich the understanding.

#### *Implications for Educational Psychology*

This research has implications for educational policy and mental health programming in schools. A strength-based approach using gratitude and mindfulness can improve student well-being, academic motivation, and classroom behavior. School psychologists can use these findings to advocate for early intervention programs and social-emotional learning (SEL) curricula.

## **Compliance with ethical standards**

### *Disclosure of conflict of interest*

On behalf of all the authors, the corresponding author declare that there is no conflict of interest for publishing the article and they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

### *Statement of informed consent*

Author declares that they took consent from all individual participants for the study.

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