

## The role of mindfulness in resilience of undergraduate students

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### ABSTRACT

Mindfulness and resilience have been found to share a strong relationship with psychological wellbeing among students. Literature indicates a strong link between the two as well. The current research aims to study the role of mindfulness on resilience along with its different dimensions among undergraduate students living in Noida region of Uttar Pradesh-India. For this study, two hundred undergraduate participants ageing between eighteen to twenty-five years (mean age = 19.53, SD= 1.07) were purposively selected. Result revealed a significant association between mindfulness and resilience and, a significant impact of mindfulness on resilience too. Out of the eight, seven dimensions were significantly associated except one which was the sense of control. Similarly, a significant impact of mindfulness was found on different dimensions of resilience except for the sense of control. Findings support the fact that these two aspects can work together and ease down development-related strains or efforts leading to many more benefits.

**Keywords:** *Mindfulness, Resilience, Undergraduate, Students, India*

Positive psychology is the scientific study of optimal human functioning (Alex Linley, et al., 2006) which helps in understanding strengths, knowledge about human growth and many other aspects. Out of these, two important aspects are mindfulness and resilience. Literature suggests that young adults are often found to have low levels of both mindfulness and resilience (Benada and Chowdhry, 2017) possibly because this part of life is filled with many challenges related to the academics and professional life. Both being an important predictor of psychological well-being (Frederickson, 2009) might help in overcoming such challenges and prevent any psychological dysfunction.

### *Mindfulness*

Mindfulness can be defined as paying attention in a particular way, on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally; nurturing greater awareness, clarity and acceptance of present-moment reality (Kabat-Zinn, 1994). It has five dimensions: non-reactivity to inner experience, observing, acting with awareness, describing and non-judging of experience (Iani, et al., 2016). In recent years, studies have been conducted to find out the psychological benefits of mindfulness. Multiple mindfulness-based therapies and programs have displayed

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a wide variety of psychological (e.g., reduced depression and anxiety), physiological (e.g., increased immune functioning), and neurological benefits (e.g., increased dopamine release) for clinical and non-clinical populations (Baer, et al., 2006; Kabat-Zinn, 2003; Kuyken, et al., 2008; Ma, and Teasdale, 2004; Takahashi, et al., 2005).

### ***Resilience***

Resilience can be understood as the capability to effectively adapt, over time, to life-altering or stressful situations. It is a successful adaptation to adverse circumstances (Ahern, et al., 2006). Two major situations that build up resilience in people: The type of hardship that the person has to go through and how well they adapted in the course of or after that hardship. A resilient person can be characterized as using coping strategies to adapt in stressful situations, having an internal locus of control, socializing well, constructing a good self-image and being optimistic (Benada, and Chowdhry, 2017) Resilience has eight dimensions: using supportive relationships, role model, future aspiration, sense of control, commitment, problem-solving, giving and maintaining relationship and self-awareness (Mampane, 2006)

Both mindfulness and resilience are related to psychological well-being (Fredrickson, 2009). The study also suggests a considerable association between resilience and mindfulness with the latter being an important predictor of resilience (Chavers, 2013). Incorporating mindfulness training helps in building up resilience (Jha, et al., 2010) and people use both resilience and mindfulness as their coping strategies to manage their anxiety, diseases, stress and negative behavior for improving life satisfaction and happiness levels (Benada, and Chowdhry, 2017).

### ***Current study***

In India where young adults are considered to be one of the most valued resources, research has found that there is a high prevalence of mental health disorders among them (Sunitha, and Gururaj, 2014). The level of resilience and mindfulness found in young adults is very low, which directly affects their psychological well-being, thus affecting their academic performance as well (Benada and Chowdhry, 2017). Hence, mindfulness and resilience are two quite important factors for the psychological well-being of young adults which can help them to fulfil their professional as well as academic goals. Existing literature suggests the enhancement of resilience with mindfulness. The young adult students have to balance out between many situations i.e. academic load, study/life balance and financial liabilities resulting in more a chance of acquiring mental health issues (Pidgeon and Keye, 2014; Keye and Pidgeon, 2013). Thus, resilience can be very important as this stage of life could be complex and demanding. Mindfulness is positively associated with positive affect and shows enhanced resilience (Davidson, et al., 2003; Ryan and Deci, 2001) and considering all these facts, the current research aims to study the role of mindfulness on resilience along with its different dimensions among undergraduate students living in Noida. The following hypotheses were constructed to empirically test the association among these variables:

1. There will be a significant association between mindfulness and resilience.
2. There will be a significant association between mindfulness and different dimensions of resilience.
3. Mindfulness as a predictor will have a significant impact on resilience.
4. Mindfulness as a predictor will have a significant impact on different dimensions of resilience.

## METHODOLOGY

### Sample

For this study, two hundred undergraduate participants residing in the Noida region of Uttar Pradesh-India for more than eight years were purposively selected out of which, ninety-eight were males and one hundred two were females. Participants aged between eighteen to twenty-five years (mean age=19.53, SD= 1.07). The annual income of eighty-four participants was between four to five lakh per annum and, one hundred sixteen participants were more than six lakh per annum.

### Instruments

Two measures were used in this study:

- 1. Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire (FFMQ)** was developed by Baer, et al. (2006) to explore the facets of mindfulness, along five dimensions - observing, describing, act with awareness, non-judging and non-reactivity to inner experience. The questionnaire consists of 39 items with a 5-point Likert scale (1 being never or rarely true and 5 being very often or always true).
- 2. Resilience scale:** was developed by Mampane (2006) to assess resilience, along eight dimensions - using supportive relationships, role model, future aspiration, sense of control, commitment, problem-solving, giving and maintaining relationships and, self-awareness. The questionnaire consisted of 25 items with a 5-point Likert scale, with 1 being never or rarely true and 5 being very often or always true.

### Data Analysis

Calculation of scores for all the variables was done on MS excel and the data was analyzed with the help of SPSS. 'SPSS statistics' was used for the computation of Pearson's correlation coefficients and the linear regression. 'SPSS AMOS' was used for computation of regression weights along with the preparation of the path diagram in the later part.

## RESULTS

*Table 1 Pearson's correlation between mindfulness and resilience (and dimensions of resilience)*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1 Mindfulness		.47**	.36**	.24**	.29**	.04	.50**	.50**	.27**	.33**
2 Resilience	.47**		.80**	.50**	.68**	.51**	.77**	.72**	.70**	.85**
3 Using supportive relationship	.36**	.80**		.37**	.46**	.28**	.53**	.47**	.61**	.55**
4 Role model	.24**	.50**	.37**		.37**	.18*	.30**	.30**	.29**	.40**
5 Future aspiration	.29**	.68**	.46**	.37**		.26**	.46**	.40**	.39**	.68**
6 Sense of control	.04	.51**	.28**	.18*	.26**		.33**	.36**	.28**	.41**
7 Commitment	.50**	.77**	.53**	.30**	.46**	.33**		.60**	.37**	.56**
8 Problem solving	.50**	.72**	.47**	.30**	.40**	.36**	.60**		.43**	.49**
9 Giving and maintaining relationship	.27**	.70**	.61**	.29**	.39**	.28**	.37**	.43**		.57**
10 Self-awareness	.33**	.85**	.55**	.40**	.68**	.41**	.56**	.49**	.57**	

Table one represents the correlation between mindfulness, resilience and different dimensions of resilience. The coefficient of correlation between resilience and mindfulness

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was found to be significant positive ( $r = 0.47$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Further, there was a positive significant association between mindfulness and dimensions of resilience: Using supportive relationships ( $r = 0.36$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), role model ( $r = 0.24$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), future aspirations ( $r = 0.29$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), commitment ( $r = 0.50$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), problem solving ( $r = 0.50$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), giving and maintaining relationships ( $r = 0.27$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) and, self-awareness ( $r = 0.03$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). However, the dimension: sense of control ( $r = 0.04$ ,  $p > 0.01$ ) did not showed a significant association with mindfulness.

**Table 2 Stepwise regression between mindfulness as a predictor of resilience**

Criterion:	Predictor: Mindfulness					
	B	S.E.	t	$\beta$	R <sup>2</sup>	F
Resilience	0.522	0.069	7.598**	0.475	0.226	57.731**

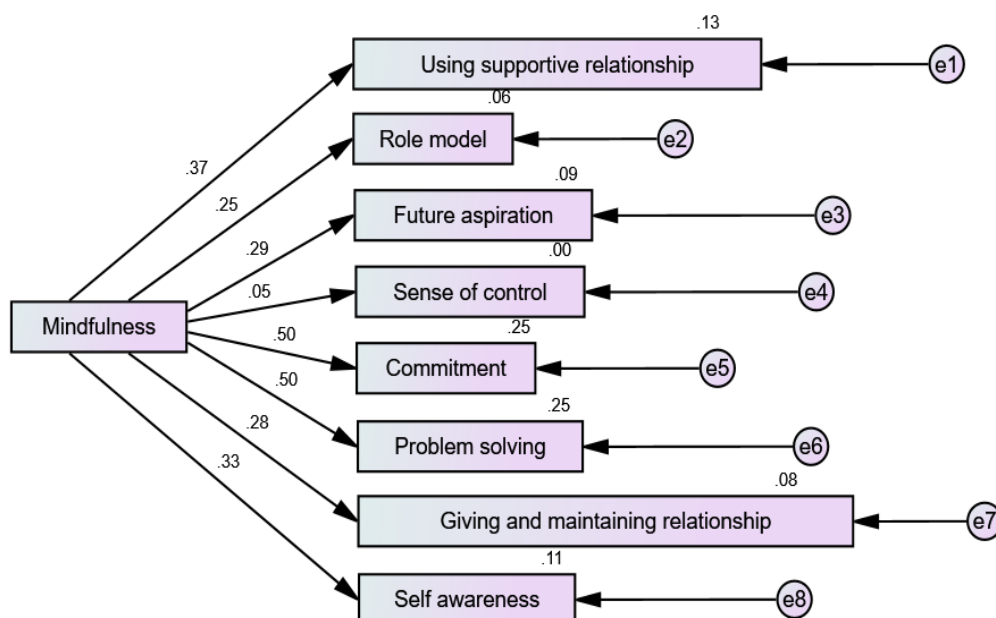
Table two represents the stepwise regression between mindfulness as a predictor of resilience. The impact of mindfulness on resilience was about twenty-two per cent ( $R^2 = 0.22$ ).

**Table 3 Regression weights and squared multiple correlations of mindfulness as a predictor of different dimensions of resilience**

Criterion:	Predictor: Mindfulness					
	B	S.E.	P	$\beta$	R <sup>2</sup>	$\chi^2$
Using supportive relationship	0.086	0.016	***	0.365	0.133	503.234 (df=28, p<0.01)
Role model	0.019	0.005	***	0.249	0.062	
Future aspiration	0.020	0.005	***	0.295	0.087	
Sense of control	0.005	0.007	0.492	0.049	0.002	
Commitment	0.102	0.012	***	0.504	0.254	
Problem solving	0.077	0.009	***	0.503	0.253	
Giving and maintaining relationship	0.034	0.008	***	0.276	0.076	
Self-awareness	0.090	0.018	***	0.335	0.112	

Table three represents the standardized and unstandardized regression weights between mindfulness as a predictor and different dimensions of resilience. It was found that mindfulness as a predictor had around thirteen per cent impact ( $R^2 = 0.13$ ) on using supportive relationship, six per cent impact ( $R^2 = 0.06$ ) on role model, nine per cent impact ( $R^2 = 0.08$ ) on future aspiration, twenty five per cent impact ( $R^2 = 0.25$ ) on commitment, twenty five per cent impact ( $R^2 = 0.25$ ) on problem solving, eight per cent impact ( $R^2 = 0.07$ ) on giving and maintaining relationship, eleven per cent impact ( $R^2 = 0.11$ ) on self-awareness and no impact significant ( $R^2 = 0.00$ ) on sense of control. Figure one represents the path diagram or the model of mindfulness as a predictor of different dimensions of resilience.

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*Figure 1 Path diagram of mindfulness as a predictor of different dimensions of resilience*

## DISCUSSION

This research aimed to study the relationship between mindfulness and resilience among the undergraduate students of Noida region. Results revealed a significant association between resilience and mindfulness, supporting our first hypothesis. Similar results were found in another research that studied the relationship between resilience and mindfulness (Chavers, 2013). The analysis further revealed a significant relationship between mindfulness and the different dimensions of resilience. It was found that out of the eight dimensions of resilience, using supportive relationship, role model, future aspiration, commitment, problem-solving, giving and maintaining relationship and, self-awareness had a significant association with mindfulness while the sense of control was not significantly associated with mindfulness. Thus, our second hypothesis was partially accepted. These results indicate that as mindfulness increases, the resilience among undergraduate students also increases and it also increases all except one dimension (sense of control) of resilience.

Mindfulness as a predictor had a significant impact on resilience which confirmed our third hypothesis and similar results were found in another research too (Chavers, 2013). These results indicate that an increase in mindfulness affects the resilience among undergraduate students. Finally, supporting our fourth hypothesis (partially), mindfulness as a predictor had a significant impact on seven dimensions of resilience namely: using supportive relationships, role model, future aspiration, commitment, problem-solving, giving and maintaining relationship and self-awareness. But no significant impact was found on the sense of control. These results indicate that an increase in mindfulness affects all except one (sense of control) dimensions of resilience too.

## CONCLUSION

A study conducted on nursing students indicated that due to the low levels of resilience and mindfulness, it is important to study such topic in university students to prevent psychological dysfunction which could lead to a dip in their academic performance (Benada, and Chowdhry, 2017). Another research on university students found that mindfulness and resilience share a positive relationship and, both of these variables predicted psychological

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well-being. It also showed that cultivating mindfulness and resilience in university students is important as it improves their ability to effectively overcome the various complex challenges and demands which student faces in their university life (Pidgeon and Keye, 2014). In such an advanced era, our study supports the fact that these two aspects can work together and ease down development-related strains and efforts. While tweaking the levels of resilience and mindfulness, we could also contribute to the happiness and well-being thereby, preventing psychological dysfunction; as mindfulness and resilience are extremely important for the mental well-being of the students (Fredrickson, B.L., 2009). If young students have good mental health, it will help them to achieve their academic and professional goals leading to a better life and, a successful contribution to the community and the country.

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### **Conflict of Interest**

The author declared no conflict of interest.

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