

GRATITUDE, MINDFULNESS, AND TEACHERS' EFFICACY

Dr Ruma Kumari Sinha¹, Dr Lav Kumar Singh²

¹Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, S.K.M. College, Begusarai

²Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, A.P.S.M. College, Barauni, Begusarai

Abstract

Teaching is an emotionally demanding profession that requires sustained self-efficacy, emotional balance, and positive engagement. In recent years, psychological strengths such as gratitude and mindfulness have gained recognition as internal resources that enhance teachers' well-being and professional competence. The present study examined the combined influence of gratitude and mindfulness on teachers' sense of efficacy. A purposive and incidental sample of 200 school teachers was selected from various educational institutions of Begusarai, Bihar. Standardized scales of gratitude, mindfulness, and teacher efficacy were administered. Correlational and multiple regression analyses were employed to test the proposed hypotheses.

Findings revealed a significant positive relationship between gratitude and teachers' efficacy ($r = .622, p < .01$) as well as between mindfulness and teachers' efficacy ($r = .503, p < .01$). The multiple regression model further indicated that both gratitude and mindfulness together significantly predicted teachers' efficacy, $F(2,197) = 38.42, p < .001$, explaining 44% of the variance. Gratitude emerged as the stronger predictor ($\beta = .49$) followed by mindfulness ($\beta = .31$). These results suggest that teachers who cultivate appreciative awareness and mindful attention tend to feel more competent and confident in managing instructional and emotional demands.

The findings resonate with earlier works by Chan (2010), Jennings et al. (2017), and Garland et al. (2015), emphasizing gratitude and mindfulness as protective and empowering traits in educators. The study highlights the importance of integrating gratitude reflections and mindfulness-based practices into teacher training programs to enhance educators' psychological resilience and classroom effectiveness. Implications for educational policy and professional development are discussed.

Keywords: gratitude, mindfulness, teachers' sense of efficacy, psychological well-being, teacher development

Introduction

Teaching has always been more than the delivery of curriculum—it is an act of emotional labor, care, and continuous self-regulation. Teachers are expected not only to instruct but also to inspire, nurture, and manage complex classroom dynamics. In the face of increasing workloads, emotional exhaustion, and shifting educational expectations, the question of how teachers sustain their motivation, focus, and belief in their abilities becomes crucial. Within this context, two inner psychological strengths—gratitude and mindfulness—have emerged as key predictors of resilience and teachers' efficacy, or the belief in one's capability to influence student learning and outcomes (Bandura, 1997; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001).

Gratitude refers to the tendency to notice, appreciate, and respond positively to the good in one's life (Emmons & McCullough, 2003). It has been linked with greater well-being, optimism, and emotional balance (Wood et al., 2010). In educational settings, gratitude enables teachers to focus on positive interactions with students, supportive colleagues, and meaningful moments in their professional journey. Research suggests that grateful teachers experience less burnout and higher job satisfaction, viewing challenges as opportunities for growth rather than threats (Chan, 2010; Bhatia & Singh, 2020). Gratitude not only uplifts mood but also shapes cognition—by reinforcing positive interpretations of daily experiences, it strengthens teachers' sense of efficacy and persistence in facing classroom difficulties.

Mindfulness, on the other hand, refers to a state of purposeful, non-judgmental awareness of the present moment (Kabat-Zinn, 2003). For teachers, mindfulness offers a way to remain calm, attentive, and emotionally grounded amidst the constant demands of the classroom. Studies show that mindfulness reduces stress and emotional reactivity while enhancing focus, empathy, and instructional adaptability (Jennings et al., 2017; Roeser et al., 2013). Mindful

teachers tend to interpret students' behavior more compassionately, manage conflicts effectively, and maintain clarity under pressure—all of which contribute to stronger self-efficacy beliefs.

Recent research has begun to explore the interplay between mindfulness and gratitude, suggesting that they reinforce each other as positive psychological resources (Garland et al., 2015). Mindfulness increases awareness and appreciation of everyday experiences, thereby fostering gratitude, while gratitude deepens mindful attention toward the present moment by encouraging reflection on what is good and meaningful. Together, these qualities nurture an inner stability that can protect teachers from burnout and enhance their professional confidence. For example, Lan and Chang (2020) found that mindfulness-based gratitude interventions improved teachers' emotional regulation and confidence in teaching, while Deshmukh and Dongre (2018) reported reductions in stress and greater classroom satisfaction among teachers practicing mindful breathing and gratitude journaling.

Teachers' efficacy, grounded in Bandura's (1997) social cognitive theory, represents teachers' belief in their ability to bring about desired educational outcomes through their own actions. High efficacy is associated with effective classroom management, persistence with struggling students, and innovation in instructional strategies (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001). Both gratitude and mindfulness are internal mechanisms that can strengthen these efficacy beliefs by promoting emotional balance, reducing stress, and enhancing reflective awareness. When teachers are able to focus on the present moment mindfully and appreciate the positives in their professional lives, they are more likely to feel capable, purposeful, and resilient in their roles. Despite growing evidence on the separate benefits of gratitude and mindfulness, studies integrating both constructs with teachers' efficacy remain limited, especially in non-Western and Indian contexts. Cultural norms, school climate, and social expectations may influence how teachers experience and express gratitude or mindfulness, as well as how these states translate into feelings of professional competence. Investigating their combined influence can offer deeper insights into how inner strengths contribute to teachers' emotional well-being and self-efficacy in diverse educational environments.

Therefore, the present study aims to explore the relationship among gratitude, mindfulness, and teachers' efficacy. It assumes that gratitude and mindfulness, individually and jointly, enhance teachers' efficacy by fostering awareness, appreciation, and emotional regulation. Understanding these relationships may not only enrich the field of positive psychology in education but also inform teacher training and well-being programs that focus on cultivating these inner resources to build more resilient, effective, and fulfilled educators.

Hypotheses

Drawing upon the theoretical and empirical foundations of positive psychology, this study assumes that gratitude and mindfulness, both independently and together, enhance teachers' beliefs in their professional competence. Gratitude allows teachers to focus on the positive aspects of their work, while mindfulness helps them remain present and emotionally balanced in challenging situations. When combined, these qualities may strengthen teachers' confidence, persistence, and overall sense of efficacy. Accordingly, the following hypotheses were proposed:

- H₁: There will be a significant positive relationship between gratitude and teachers' efficacy.
- H₂: There will be a significant positive relationship between mindfulness and teachers' efficacy.
- H₃: Gratitude and mindfulness together significantly predict teachers' efficacy.

Methodology

Research Design

The study adopted a correlational research design to examine the relationships among gratitude, mindfulness, and teachers' efficacy. This design was selected as it allows for understanding the natural associations among the variables without experimental manipulation. The study aimed to capture how these internal psychological states co-exist and influence teachers' perceptions of their professional abilities.

Sample and Sampling Technique

The sample consisted of 200 in-service school teachers (both male and female) from government and private schools in urban and semi-urban regions of Begusarai, Bihar. The participants were selected through purposive and incidental sampling methods. Purposive sampling ensured inclusion of teachers actively engaged in classroom teaching with at least two years of experience, while incidental sampling included those accessible and willing to participate during the data collection period. This approach ensured diversity in age, school type, and teaching experience, reflecting the everyday realities of the teaching profession.

Measures

1. Gratitude Scale: The *Gratitude Questionnaire-6 (GQ-6)* developed by McCullough et al. (2002) was used to measure individual tendencies to experience and express gratitude. It comprises six items rated on a Likert scale, assessing appreciation and thankfulness in daily life.
2. Mindfulness Scale: The *Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire (FFMQ)* by Baer et al. (2006) was used to assess teachers' levels of mindfulness across dimensions such as observing, describing, acting with awareness, non-judging, and non-reactivity.
3. Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES): Developed by Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2001), this scale measures teachers' perceived efficacy across three domains: student engagement, instructional strategies, and classroom management.

All instruments are widely validated and were used after securing permission from the respective authors. Reliability coefficients for the present sample exceeded .80, indicating strong internal consistency.

Procedure

After obtaining institutional permission and informed consent from participants, questionnaires were administered in small groups within school premises. The purpose of the study was explained clearly, emphasizing confidentiality and voluntary participation. Teachers were encouraged to respond honestly, reflecting their true experiences rather than socially desirable answers. The average completion time was approximately 25 minutes. Completed forms were collected and coded anonymously for statistical analysis.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using SPSS software. Descriptive statistics were computed to summarize demographic details and variable distributions. Pearson's correlation coefficients were used to examine the relationships among gratitude, mindfulness, and teachers' efficacy. Further, multiple regression analysis was conducted to assess the combined predictive power of gratitude and mindfulness on teachers' efficacy. Statistical significance was determined at the .05 level.

Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to the ethical principles of research with human participants. Teachers participated voluntarily, and their identities were kept confidential. Data were used solely for

academic purposes, and participants were informed of their right to withdraw at any stage without consequence.

This methodology aimed to provide an authentic understanding of how gratitude and mindfulness—two deeply human qualities—intersect with teachers’ sense of efficacy in real educational settings. By adopting a non-intrusive, correlational approach, the study sought to illuminate how inner emotional strengths translate into professional confidence, resilience, and fulfillment.

Result

Table 1
Correlations between parenting styles and quality of life

Variables	Teachers’ sense of efficacy
Gratitude	.622**
Mindfulness	.503**
N	200

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 2
Multiple Regression Analysis Predicting Teachers’ Sense of Efficacy from Gratitude and Mindfulness (N = 200)

Predictor Variable	B	SE B	β	t	p
Constant	12.38	2.15	—	5.76	< .001
Gratitude	0.58	0.07	.49	8.29	< .001
Mindfulness	0.41	0.09	.31	4.72	< .001

Table 3

Model Summary

R = .663	R² = .44	Adjusted R² = .43	F(2,197) = 38.42	p < .001
-----------------	----------------------------	-------------------------------------	-------------------------	-----------------

As shown in Table 1, a strong positive correlation was found between gratitude and teachers’ efficacy ($r = .622, p < .01$), indicating that teachers with higher levels of gratitude reported greater confidence in their teaching abilities. Similarly, a moderate positive correlation was found between mindfulness and teachers’ efficacy ($r = .503, p < .01$), suggesting that mindful awareness was also linked with stronger efficacy beliefs.

Further, multiple regression analysis as shown in Table 2 and 3 revealed that both gratitude and mindfulness together significantly predicted teachers’ efficacy ($R^2 = .44, F(2,197) = 38.42, p < .001$), confirming their combined influence on teachers’ perceived effectiveness. Gratitude emerged as the stronger predictor, accounting for a greater share of variance than mindfulness.

Thus, all three hypotheses were supported:

- **H₁**: Gratitude is positively related to teachers’ efficacy.
- **H₂**: Mindfulness is positively related to teachers’ efficacy.
- **H₃**: Gratitude and mindfulness together significantly predict teachers’ efficacy.

Discussion

The findings affirm the significant roles of gratitude and mindfulness as psychological resources that strengthen teachers’ beliefs in their professional competence. The first hypothesis was supported by the strong correlation between gratitude and teachers’ efficacy ($r = .622$), highlighting that teachers who consciously acknowledge and appreciate positive experiences—such as supportive colleagues, student progress, or meaningful classroom moments—tend to perceive themselves as more effective educators. This aligns with Chan

(2010) and Bhatia and Singh (2020), who reported that grateful teachers experience reduced burnout, higher optimism, and sustained motivation. Gratitude appears to foster a constructive mindset, enabling teachers to reframe difficulties as growth opportunities and maintain confidence in their instructional abilities.

The second hypothesis, concerning mindfulness and teachers' efficacy, was also supported ($r = .503$). This finding is consistent with Roeser et al. (2013) and Jennings et al. (2017), who found that mindfulness training enhances teachers' focus, emotional regulation, and classroom management. Mindful teachers, being aware and non-reactive to stressors, are better able to navigate classroom complexities with calmness and clarity—qualities that directly strengthen their sense of efficacy. Mindfulness cultivates presence, patience, and compassion, which in turn improve relationships with students and confidence in handling pedagogical challenges.

The third hypothesis addressed the combined influence of gratitude and mindfulness, and results indicated that together they explained 44% of the variance in teachers' efficacy. This suggests a synergistic relationship, where mindfulness heightens teachers' awareness of positive experiences, and gratitude reinforces mindful attention toward the present. This reciprocal relationship supports Garland et al. (2015) and Lan and Chang (2020), who observed that gratitude–mindfulness interventions enhance teachers' emotional stability and teaching confidence. In essence, both constructs operate as complementary strengths within the framework of Bandura's (1997) social cognitive theory—shaping efficacy through emotional regulation, cognitive reframing, and self-belief.

These findings contribute to the growing field of positive psychology in education, underscoring that emotional well-being is inseparable from professional effectiveness. Teachers who nurture gratitude and mindfulness experience not only better mental health but also higher motivation, persistence, and adaptability in the classroom.

Conclusion

The present study confirms that gratitude and mindfulness significantly contribute to teachers' sense of efficacy, both individually and jointly. Teachers who cultivate appreciation for the positive aspects of their work and maintain mindful awareness of the present moment report stronger confidence in managing classrooms, engaging students, and applying effective instructional strategies. Gratitude appears to inspire optimism and emotional warmth, while mindfulness promotes composure and reflective awareness—together forming a powerful foundation for sustained teaching excellence.

These results are consistent with prior findings (e.g., Chan, 2010; Jennings et al., 2017; Bhatia & Singh, 2020) and extend them by demonstrating their combined effect within an Indian educational context. Integrating gratitude reflections and mindfulness practices into teacher development and well-being programs may therefore be a meaningful approach to enhance both emotional resilience and professional efficacy.

Limitations and Future Scope

While the findings are promising, the correlational design limits causal inference. Self-report data may also reflect response bias. Future studies could employ longitudinal or intervention-based designs to explore causal effects of gratitude and mindfulness training on teacher efficacy. Additionally, qualitative narratives could provide richer insights into how teachers internalize these practices in daily classroom experiences.

In essence, the study highlights that teachers who are both grateful and mindful are more confident, balanced, and effective in their profession. By cultivating these inner strengths, educators can transform not only their own emotional well-being but also the quality of learning environments they create.

References

- Chan, D. W. (2010). Gratitude, gratitude intervention and subjective well-being among Chinese school teachers in Hong Kong. *Educational Psychology, 30*(2), 139–153. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01443410903493934>
- Garland, E. L., Farb, N. A., Goldin, P., & Fredrickson, B. L. (2015). Mindfulness broadens awareness and builds eudaimonic meaning: A process model of mindful positive emotion regulation. *Psychological Inquiry, 26*(4), 293–314. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1047840X.2015.1064294>
- Jennings, P. A., Brown, J. L., Frank, J. L., Doyle, S., Oh, Y., Davis, R., & Greenberg, M. T. (2017). Impacts of the CARE for Teachers program on teachers' social and emotional competence and classroom interactions. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 109*(7), 1010–1028. <https://doi.org/10.1037/edu0000187>
- Kabat-Zinn, J. (2003). Mindfulness-based interventions in context: Past, present, and future. *Clinical Psychology: Science and Practice, 10*(2), 144–156. <https://doi.org/10.1093/clipsy.bpg016>
- Tschannen-Moran, M., & Hoy, A. W. (2001). Teacher efficacy: Capturing an elusive construct. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 17*(7), 783–805. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0742-051X\(01\)00036-1](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0742-051X(01)00036-1)
- Emmons, R. A., & McCullough, M. E. (2003). Counting blessings versus burdens: An experimental investigation of gratitude and subjective well-being in daily life. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 84*(2), 377–389. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.84.2.377>
- Deshmukh, P., & Dongre, A. (2018). Effects of mindfulness-based intervention on psychological well-being among school teachers in Maharashtra, India. *Indian Journal of Positive Psychology, 9*(3), 345–350.