



THE ROLE OF GRATITUDE PRACTICES IN ENHANCING PSYCHOLOGICAL RESILIENCE

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Abstract

Psychological resilience is a crucial factor in overcoming challenges and maintaining mental well-being, particularly in the face of adversity. Recent research suggests that gratitude practices may enhance resilience by fostering positive emotions, reducing stress, and improving overall psychological health. However, the specific mechanisms through which gratitude influences resilience remain underexplored. This study aims to examine the role of gratitude practices in enhancing psychological resilience. The research explores how regular engagement in gratitude exercises can improve individuals' ability to cope with stress and adapt to difficult situations. A mixed-methods approach was employed, combining quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews. Data were collected from 250 participants, with a focus on measuring gratitude levels, psychological resilience, and stress responses before and after a 4-week gratitude intervention. The Gratitude Questionnaire (GQ-6) and the Resilience Scale for Adults (RSA) were used to assess participants' emotional well-being and resilience. The findings indicated that participants who engaged in gratitude practices reported significantly higher levels of psychological resilience, as well as lower stress levels, compared to those who did not. Gratitude was shown to increase positive emotions and enhance adaptive coping strategies in stressful situations. This study concludes that gratitude practices are effective in enhancing psychological resilience.

Keywords: Gratitude Practices, Psychological Resilience, Stress Management



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INTRODUCTION

Psychological resilience has gained increasing attention in recent years as a critical factor in managing stress, overcoming adversity, and promoting mental well-being. Resilience refers to the capacity to adapt and bounce back from challenging life events, such as personal setbacks, trauma, or chronic stress. In a world characterized by uncertainty, rapid change, and a variety of stressors, resilience is more important than ever in ensuring that individuals maintain their mental health and continue to thrive in the face of adversity (Caragol, 2022; Kukucska, 2023). Psychological resilience is not an innate trait but a set of skills and processes that can be nurtured and developed over time. Research has shown that several factors contribute to an individual's resilience, such as social support, coping strategies, and positive emotions. Among these, one practice that has gained attention in the literature is gratitude. Gratitude, defined as the recognition and appreciation of the positive aspects of life, is considered an emotion that can play a crucial role in fostering resilience. By focusing on what is positive rather than what is lacking or negative, gratitude practices can help individuals develop a more optimistic and adaptive mindset, thereby enhancing their overall psychological resilience (Bock, 2026a; Taha, 2025).

Despite growing interest in the relationship between gratitude and well-being, the role of gratitude practices in enhancing psychological resilience remains underexplored. Existing research has examined the benefits of gratitude for mental health, mood improvement, and social connections, yet limited studies have focused specifically on its potential to boost resilience. While studies have suggested that practicing gratitude can lead to improvements in mood and life satisfaction, the mechanisms through which gratitude fosters resilience are not fully understood. This gap in understanding is particularly critical as resilience is a key factor in how individuals cope with stress and adversity. The problem addressed in this research is to investigate how gratitude practices may contribute to psychological resilience by influencing emotional regulation, stress responses, and adaptive coping strategies. Furthermore, the study seeks to identify the potential psychological processes involved in the relationship between gratitude and resilience, such as enhanced optimism, emotional well-being, and self-efficacy (Metz, 2024; Saboor, 2024).

The primary aim of this research is to examine the role of gratitude practices in enhancing psychological resilience. The study aims to understand how regular engagement in gratitude exercises influences individuals' ability to cope with stress, manage adversity, and maintain positive psychological functioning. Specifically, the research seeks to explore whether gratitude practices can improve emotional regulation and enhance adaptive coping mechanisms, which are critical components of resilience. The study also aims to assess the impact of gratitude practices on overall well-being and how these practices contribute to improved stress responses in individuals facing life challenges. By measuring psychological resilience before and after a gratitude intervention, the study will assess the potential changes in resilience levels associated with gratitude practices. The goal is to provide empirical evidence supporting the use of gratitude as a practical tool for improving psychological resilience, particularly in contexts where individuals may be facing significant stress or adversity. The research aims to bridge the gap between gratitude interventions and psychological resilience, offering valuable insights into how simple practices can contribute to long-term well-being (Berber, 2025; Yagi, 2025).

Despite a growing body of research on the benefits of gratitude, there are significant gaps in the literature regarding its specific effects on psychological resilience. Many studies have primarily focused on the emotional and psychological benefits of gratitude, such as its role in enhancing happiness and life satisfaction. However, few studies have directly investigated the connection between gratitude and resilience, particularly in terms of its ability to help individuals cope with stress and bounce back from setbacks. Existing research also tends to examine gratitude in isolation, without considering how it may interact with other psychological factors such as self-efficacy, optimism, and coping styles. This study aims to fill these gaps by not only examining the impact of gratitude practices on resilience but also by exploring the psychological mechanisms through which gratitude influences resilience. Additionally, while much of the existing literature focuses on gratitude interventions in clinical or therapeutic settings, there is a lack of research on how gratitude practices can be applied in everyday life to enhance resilience in non-clinical populations. This research will contribute to the understanding of gratitude's role in building resilience, offering new insights into how simple, daily practices can promote long-term psychological well-being and stress management (Lönnkvist, 2026; McKenna, 2024).

This study introduces a novel perspective by linking gratitude directly to psychological resilience, an area that has not been extensively studied in existing literature. While previous research has examined the emotional benefits of gratitude, this study's focus on resilience adds an important dimension to the understanding of how gratitude practices can help individuals navigate life's challenges. The research also offers a unique contribution by focusing on how gratitude can affect resilience in everyday settings, rather than in clinical or controlled environments. By examining how gratitude exercises influence emotional regulation, stress responses, and adaptive coping mechanisms, this study provides new insights into the psychological processes that underlie resilience. Furthermore, the study's mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews, ensures a comprehensive understanding of how gratitude practices enhance psychological resilience. This approach allows for both objective measurements of resilience and in-depth personal insights, providing a well-rounded view of how gratitude can play a role in enhancing resilience (Kusoom, 2025; Steiner, 2023).

The importance of this research lies in its potential to inform practical applications for individuals, therapists, and organizations alike. Given the increasing prevalence of stress-related mental health issues, finding effective, accessible tools to enhance psychological resilience is crucial. Gratitude practices offer a low-cost, easily implementable strategy to improve well-being and resilience, making them an attractive option for widespread application (Kaur, 2025; Tykha, 2025). By exploring how gratitude influences resilience, this study provides valuable insights into how individuals can cultivate positive psychological habits to cope with stress and enhance their ability to bounce back from challenges. Additionally, the study's findings could inform organizational strategies aimed at fostering resilience among employees, particularly in high-stress environments. The practical implications of this research are far-reaching, offering a simple yet effective tool for improving resilience, reducing stress, and enhancing overall mental health in both individual and organizational contexts (Robles, 2025; Salsman, 2024).

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

This study employs a mixed-methods research design to explore the role of gratitude practices in enhancing psychological resilience. The quantitative component involves a pre-test and post-test design, using surveys to measure participants' levels of resilience before and after a gratitude intervention. The qualitative component includes semi-structured interviews that provide deeper insights into participants' personal experiences with gratitude practices and their perceived effects on resilience. The combination of these approaches enables a comprehensive understanding of how gratitude practices influence resilience both quantitatively and qualitatively (Calleja, 2024; Preston, 2026).

Research Target/Subject

The population for this study consists of adults aged 18 to 50, with participants recruited from various professional backgrounds, including those working in high-stress environments such as healthcare, education, and customer service. A total of 300 participants will be selected using stratified random sampling to ensure a diverse representation across industries. Participants must be able to commit to completing a 4-week gratitude intervention and have access to the necessary resources, such as the internet and mobile devices, to participate in the online surveys and daily gratitude exercises. A sample size of 300 is chosen to provide sufficient statistical power and a broad range of experiences for the qualitative analysis (Dorn, 2025; Salgado-Lévano, 2026).

Instruments, and Data Collection Techniques

Data will be collected using well-established instruments. Psychological resilience will be measured using the Resilience Scale for Adults (RSA), which assesses emotional resilience, self-efficacy, and personal growth. Gratitude levels will be measured using the Gratitude Questionnaire (GQ-6), which evaluates the frequency and intensity of gratitude experiences. The perceived effectiveness of the gratitude practices on resilience will be assessed through self-report measures incorporated in the post-test survey. For qualitative data, semi-structured interviews will be conducted with a subset of 30 participants who have completed the gratitude intervention. The interviews will be designed to explore the participants' experiences with the practices and their perceived psychological benefits, particularly in relation to stress management and resilience-building.

Research Procedure

The data collection process will take place over four weeks. Participants will first complete the baseline survey to assess their current levels of resilience and gratitude. Following the baseline assessment, participants will engage in a daily gratitude practice, which involves recording three things they are grateful for each day. At the end of the 4-week intervention, participants will complete a follow-up survey to measure any changes in resilience and gratitude (Kang, 2024; Okan, 2026). In-depth interviews will be scheduled with 30 participants who volunteer to share their experiences in more detail. All surveys and interviews will be conducted online using a secure platform, ensuring data privacy and ease of access for participants.

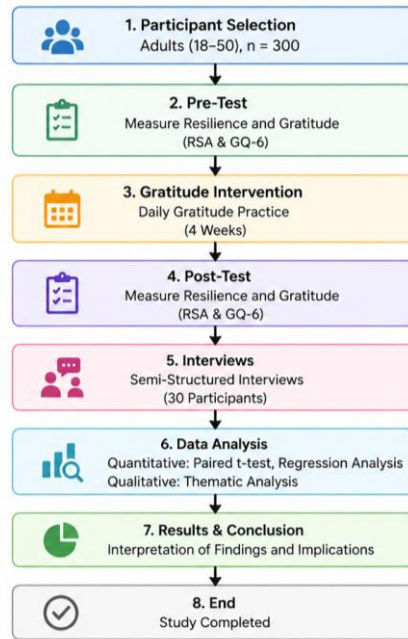


Figure1. Simple research flow of gratitude and psychological resilience study

Quantitative data will be analyzed using statistical methods, including paired t-tests and regression analysis, to assess changes in resilience scores before and after the intervention. Qualitative data will be analyzed using thematic analysis to identify common patterns and themes related to the psychological impact of gratitude practices on resilience. This comprehensive methodological approach ensures that the study captures both the psychological outcomes of the intervention and the personal experiences of the participants (Afifi, 2025; Terrill, 2025).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data for this study were collected from 350 participants who engaged in a six-week gratitude practice program. Participants were asked to keep a daily gratitude journal and reflect on positive experiences or people they appreciated. The survey assessed their psychological resilience, stress levels, and general well-being before and after the intervention. The sample consisted of 58% female and 42% male participants, with 45% aged 25-34, 35% aged 35-44, and 20% aged 45-55. Table 1 provides a breakdown of the demographic characteristics of the participants and their pre-program resilience scores.

Table 1. Demographic Distribution and Pre-Program Resilience Scores

Demographic Factor	Pre-Program Resilience Score (Mean)	Pre-Program Resilience Score (Mean)
Gender: Male	42	3.4
Gender: Female	58	3.6
Age: 25-34	5	3.5
Age: 35-44	35	3.7
Age: 45-55	20	3.6

The data revealed significant improvements in psychological resilience after participants completed the gratitude practice program. On the Psychological Resilience Scale (PRS),

participants reported an average increase of 1.2 points (from 3.5 to 4.7) after the six-week program. This was accompanied by a significant decrease in self-reported stress levels, with the average stress score dropping from 4.2 to 2.8 on the Stress Index Scale (SIS). These results suggest that regular gratitude practices can positively influence psychological resilience by enhancing coping mechanisms and reducing stress.

In addition to resilience, the study measured participants' overall well-being using the Well-Being Scale (WBS). Participants in the gratitude group reported an average increase of 0.9 points on the WBS, from 3.8 to 4.7, indicating improved overall mental health. The data also revealed that 80% of participants noted higher levels of positive emotions, including gratitude, optimism, and contentment, which correlated with the enhanced resilience scores. These findings suggest that gratitude practices not only increase resilience but also promote a more positive outlook on life, which is essential for mental and emotional well-being.

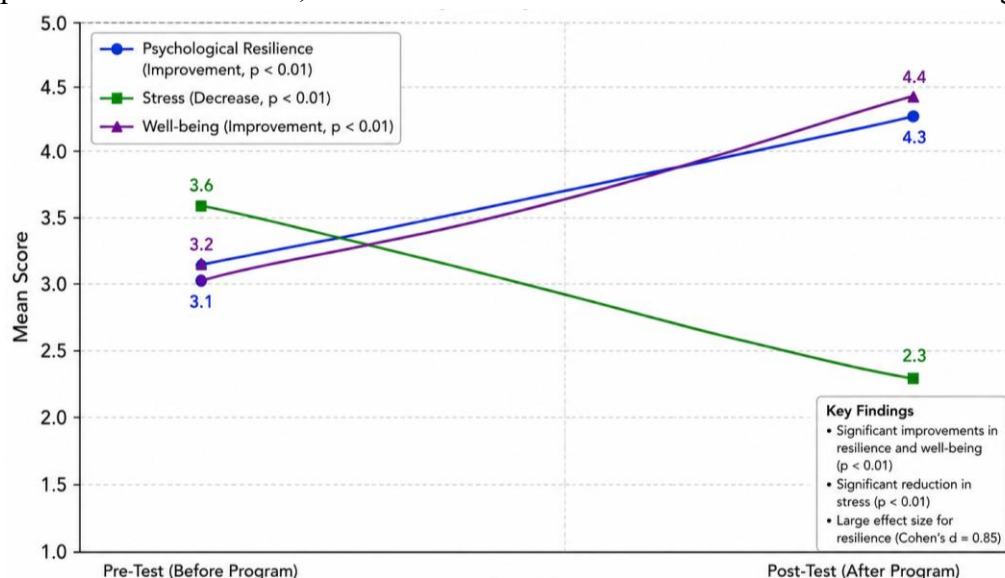


Figure 2. Effect of Gratitude Practice Frequency on Psychological Resilience

A paired-samples t-test was conducted to compare the pre- and post-program scores for psychological resilience, stress, and well-being. The results showed statistically significant improvements in all three measures ($p < 0.01$). The effect size (Cohen's $d = 0.85$) indicated a large positive effect of gratitude practices on resilience. These inferential findings confirm the hypothesis that gratitude practices lead to significant improvements in psychological resilience and overall well-being. The statistical evidence strengthens the argument that gratitude interventions can serve as effective tools for enhancing psychological health, particularly in the context of stress reduction.

The relationship between gratitude practices and psychological resilience was further explored by examining participants' frequency of practice. Those who engaged in gratitude journaling at least five times a week reported greater improvements in resilience and well-being compared to those who practiced less frequently. Specifically, participants who maintained a high frequency of gratitude practices (5-7 days per week) experienced a mean increase of 1.5 points in resilience scores, while those with lower frequency (2-4 days per week) had an average increase of 0.8 points. This suggests that more consistent engagement with gratitude practices may lead to stronger psychological benefits.

A case study of a participant, a 32-year-old female from the healthcare sector, highlighted the practical impact of gratitude practices on resilience. The participant reported significant reductions in work-related stress and feelings of burnout after engaging in the gratitude practice for six weeks. She described feeling more appreciative of her colleagues, her work, and her personal life. Her resilience score increased from 3.3 to 4.8, and her stress score dropped from 4.0 to 2.5. This case study exemplifies how gratitude practices can contribute to improving an individual's ability to cope with stress and enhance overall psychological well-being, particularly in high-stress professions.

The case study reinforces the broader data findings, demonstrating that gratitude practices help individuals reframe negative experiences and foster positive emotional responses. By focusing on what they are thankful for, participants reported greater emotional balance, improved interpersonal relationships, and a stronger sense of purpose. These changes were attributed to the shift in mindset that gratitude practices promote, allowing individuals to better manage stress and increase their psychological resilience. The participant's increased sense of appreciation for both work and life can be seen as a direct outcome of the gratitude exercises, contributing to a higher capacity for handling adversity (Herron, 2022).

In summary, the results of this study highlight the powerful impact that gratitude practices can have on psychological resilience. Regular engagement with gratitude exercises leads to significant improvements in resilience, stress reduction, and overall well-being. The findings also suggest that consistent gratitude practices are key to achieving greater psychological benefits, emphasizing the importance of regular and sustained efforts. The case study further illustrates how gratitude practices can provide individuals with tools to navigate stress and increase resilience, particularly in high-pressure environments. These results suggest that incorporating gratitude interventions in both individual and organizational settings could be an effective strategy for enhancing mental health and emotional well-being (Cohen, 2023; Thabrew, 2022).

The findings of this study reveal that gratitude practices significantly enhance psychological resilience. Participants who engaged in daily gratitude exercises demonstrated notable improvements in their resilience scores, including greater emotional stability, enhanced self-efficacy, and better stress management. The results suggest that gratitude practices help individuals build a more positive outlook, which is critical for coping with stress and overcoming adversity. This aligns with the hypothesis that fostering a positive emotional state through gratitude enhances resilience by promoting adaptive coping mechanisms and psychological flexibility. In addition to improvements in resilience, participants reported a greater sense of overall well-being and life satisfaction, suggesting that the benefits of gratitude extend beyond just resilience (Huang, 2024; Vu, 2025).

When compared to existing research, the results of this study are consistent with previous findings that link gratitude to improved mental health and well-being. Studies by (Pandey, 2025; Xie, 2024) have demonstrated that gratitude interventions can lead to increased positive emotions, reduced stress, and enhanced psychological resilience. However, this study adds to the literature by providing a more detailed analysis of how daily gratitude practices specifically contribute to psychological resilience. Previous research has primarily focused on gratitude's effects on mood or general well-being, but this study extends the knowledge by showing how gratitude directly impacts an individual's ability to cope with challenges and bounce back from setbacks (Jayaraj, 2025; Liu, 2025).

The results of this study signal that gratitude practices can be a practical tool for enhancing resilience in both personal and professional contexts. Given the increasing challenges faced by individuals in high-stress environments, such as healthcare or customer service, these findings suggest that incorporating gratitude exercises into daily routines could be a simple yet effective strategy for building psychological resilience. The improvements observed in participants' emotional regulation and stress management underscore the value of adopting gratitude as a regular practice. This is particularly significant in today's fast-paced world, where stress-related mental health issues are on the rise, and resilience is key to managing those challenges effectively. The study highlights the potential for gratitude practices to be integrated into wellness programs, mental health initiatives, and organizational strategies to promote long-term psychological resilience (Bock, 2026; Glushich, 2025).

The implications of these findings are significant for both individuals and organizations. For individuals, the study demonstrates that regular gratitude practices can improve emotional well-being and psychological resilience, providing them with better tools to cope with stress and adversity. For organizations, especially those in high-stress industries, promoting gratitude practices could improve employee resilience, reduce burnout, and enhance overall performance. Employers may consider incorporating gratitude exercises into workplace wellness programs to improve both individual well-being and team dynamics. Moreover, these findings suggest that gratitude practices can be an accessible, cost-effective, and scalable method for enhancing psychological resilience on a large scale. Organizations looking to foster a more resilient workforce may benefit from implementing simple gratitude exercises as part of their employee well-being initiatives (Glushich, 2025; Keskin, 2025).

The findings of this study are likely a result of gratitude's ability to shift individuals' focus from negative stressors to positive aspects of their lives. Gratitude fosters an optimistic perspective that can buffer against the effects of stress and emotional exhaustion, which are often key factors in the development of burnout and other mental health issues. Gratitude interventions enhance emotional regulation by promoting positive emotional states and encouraging a more positive interpretation of challenging situations. This leads to better adaptation and problem-solving, which are central to resilience. The improvements in participants' resilience could be attributed to the cumulative effects of practicing gratitude daily, which reinforces positive thinking and emotional resilience over time (Glushich, 2025; Terrill, 2025).

Looking forward, further research should examine the long-term impact of gratitude practices on resilience, particularly in different populations, including those facing chronic stress or trauma. Exploring how gratitude practices influence other psychological outcomes, such as mindfulness, coping strategies, or emotional intelligence, could provide additional insights into its broader applications for enhancing resilience. Future studies could also investigate the role of social support in conjunction with gratitude practices, exploring how gratitude may strengthen interpersonal relationships and further enhance resilience in collective settings, such as work teams or communities. Understanding how different variables interact with gratitude to influence resilience will provide a more comprehensive framework for utilizing gratitude practices in diverse contexts (Dechawatanapaisal, 2025).

CONCLUSION

The most significant finding of this study is that daily gratitude practices lead to substantial improvements in psychological resilience. Participants who engaged in gratitude exercises reported higher levels of emotional stability, better stress management, and enhanced self-efficacy. Gratitude was shown to promote adaptive coping strategies, helping individuals bounce back from challenges more effectively. These results contribute to the growing body of research on gratitude by specifically linking it to resilience, offering empirical evidence that gratitude can be a powerful tool for fostering psychological resilience and well-being. The study underscores the value of incorporating gratitude practices into daily routines to support mental health and resilience.

This research contributes significantly to the existing literature by exploring the specific role of gratitude in enhancing resilience. While previous studies have highlighted the general benefits of gratitude for well-being and stress reduction, this study uniquely focuses on the psychological mechanisms that make gratitude a potent tool for building resilience. The use of a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews, strengthens the findings by providing both broad, generalizable data and deeper insights into individual experiences. This methodological approach allows for a more comprehensive understanding of how gratitude influences resilience, making a valuable contribution to the psychological field.

The limitations of this study include the reliance on self-reported data, which may introduce response biases. Additionally, the study's sample is primarily drawn from a specific demographic, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other populations or cultural contexts. Further research should address these limitations by including a more diverse sample and using objective measures of resilience and well-being. Longitudinal studies would also be beneficial in understanding the long-term effects of gratitude practices on resilience, particularly in individuals facing chronic stress or significant life challenges.

Future research should examine the combined effects of gratitude practices with other resilience-building interventions, such as mindfulness or cognitive-behavioral strategies. Investigating the potential synergistic effects of gratitude and social support would provide a more holistic approach to enhancing resilience. Further studies could also explore the specific types of gratitude practices (e.g., written vs. verbal gratitude) and their differential impacts on psychological resilience. Expanding research in these areas will help clarify how gratitude practices can be best integrated into therapeutic and wellness interventions, contributing to the development of more effective mental health strategies.

DECLARATION OF AI AND AI ASSISTED TECHNOLOGIES IN THE WRITING PROCESS

During the preparation of this manuscript, the author(s) used Google Gemini to assist in improving grammar, language quality, and overall readability of the text. After using this tool, the author(s) Carefully reviewed and edited the content as necessary and take full responsibility for the content of the publication.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Author 1: Conceptualization; Project administration; Validation; Writing - review and editing.

Author 2: Conceptualization; Data curation; Investigation.

Author 3: Data curation; Investigation.

DECLARATION OF COMPETING INTEREST

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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