



## Mindful Attention Awareness and Its Relationship with Personal Growth Initiative Among Young Adults in Private Colleges of Mysuru

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**Abstract:** *This study examined the relationship between mindful attention awareness and personal growth initiative (PGI) among 102 participants. It also considered how demographic factors like gender and living area might influence the results. The participants included 61.8% males and 38.2% females from urban (55.9%), rural (38.2%), and semi-urban (5.9%) settings. They completed the Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS) and the Personal Growth Initiative Scale-II (PGIS-II). These measures assessed factors such as Readiness to Change, Intentional Behavior, Using Resources, Planfulness, and Total PGI.*

*Pearson correlations showed strong positive links between mindful awareness and all PGI factors. The strongest association was with Total PGI ( $r = .666, p < .001$ ), followed by Readiness to Change ( $r = .633, p < .001$ ), and Intentional Behavior ( $r = .620, p < .001$ ). Independent samples *t*-tests found a significant gender difference in Readiness to Change. Males scored higher ( $M = 14.29$ ) than females ( $M = 12.41$ ;  $t = 2.064, p = .042$ ), but no differences were observed in other areas (all  $p > .05$ ). One-way ANOVA indicated no significant effects of living area on any measures (all  $p > .05$ ).*

*The findings suggest that mindful awareness was strongly associated with personal growth initiative, with males showing a greater readiness to change. Living area does not seem to play a significant role here. These results highlight the importance of mindfulness in encouraging proactive personal development. They also suggest the need for gender-specific interventions.*

**Keywords:** *Mindful Attention Awareness, Personal Growth Initiative.*

**Introduction:** Personal Growth Initiative (PGI) and Mindful Attention Awareness (MAA) are important psychological concepts that support student development. Mindfulness refers to a mental state of focused, non-judgmental awareness of the present moment (Kabat-Zinn, 2015; Malinowski & Lim, 2015; Slutsky, Rahl, Lindsay, & Creswell, 2017). It involves actively directing attention to immediate experiences with openness. This type of awareness is different from common mental habits, like daydreaming without realizing it (Killingsworth & Gilbert, 2010), acting on autopilot (Bargh & Chartrand, 1999), or avoiding unpleasant thoughts (Kang et al., 2013). By allowing individuals to step back from automatic thinking, routines, and harmful behaviors, mindfulness can encourage intentional, self-chosen actions. These changes are often linked to improved well-being (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Additionally, mindfulness can clarify and

intensify experiences, which may directly increase happiness. For example, research involving experience sampling shows that both trait and momentary mindfulness help with self-control and positive moods. A clinical trial with cancer patients also indicated that increasing mindfulness correlated with fewer mood issues and less stress over time (Speca et al., 2000).

The Personal Growth Initiative (PGI) is a proactive psychological concept defined as the active, intentional, and conscious involvement in cognitive and behavioral processes that promote self-improvement across different areas of life, including career, relationships, and personal well-being (Robitschek, 1988; Robitschek et al., 2012). Robitschek (1998) first introduced PGI as a multidimensional trait that distinguishes people who actively seek growth from those who do not. PGI highlights personal responsibility and choice, unlike more passive development methods (Sun et al., 2014b). In student groups, PGI encourages academic motivation, persistence during transitions, and exploration of identity. Its connection with psychosocial factors like optimism and self-efficacy shows its usefulness for designing interventions, such as growth-oriented coaching or therapy (Abadejos et al., 2025; Bindawala & Mahato, 2023). Development, where PGI is seen as an active, multidimensional drive toward self-change (Robitschek, 1998; Robitschek et al., 2012), gives students the planning skills and agency to achieve academic and personal goals. MAA, as assessed by the Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (Brown & Ryan, 2003), fosters open, non-judgmental awareness of the present, reducing mind-wandering and stress. This process also improves emotional regulation and cognitive focus during academic challenges (Verdoodt et al., 2024b; Robitschek et al., n.d.).

Integrating these ideas in research on students is crucial. Evidence shows their positive connection: higher MAA predicts increased PGI dimensions like intentional behavior, with mindfulness as a mediator that lowers anxiety barriers to growth. Together, they promote resilience, identity formation, and well-being in educational settings (e.g., Siu & Shek, 2014; Luyckx & Robitschek, 2014; O'Hare & Gemelli, 2023; Ijraset, n.d.). This given the increasing prevalence of student mental health concerns understanding how PGI's proactive focus works with MAA's attention can lead to targeted interventions for holistic development (Rahim, 2024; Weigold et al., 2020).

## Material and Method

### Participants and Survey : Distribution of selected sample by gender and area

| Area       | Gender |        | Total |
|------------|--------|--------|-------|
|            | Male   | Female |       |
| Rural      | 22     | 17     | 39    |
| Urban      | 37     | 20     | 57    |
| Semi-Urban | 4      | 2      | 6     |
| Total      | 63     | 39     | 102   |

The total sample of research participants was 102. They were classified into three groups based on where they lived: rural, urban, and semi-urban. The rural group had 39 individuals, made up of 22 males and 17 females. The urban group included 57 individuals, consisting of 37 males and 20 females. The semi-urban group had 6 participants, with 4 males and 2 females. In total, the sample included 63 males and 39 females. A cross-sectional study was conducted with 102 undergraduate students from Mysore. To measure Personal Growth Initiative, researchers used the Personal Growth Initiative Scale-II (PGIS-II; Robitschek et al., 2012). The Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS; Brown & Ryan, 2003) was used to assess individual differences in how often people experience mindful states over time. The sample comprised 63 male students (61.8%) and 39 female students (38.2%), totaling 102 participants.

## Measures & Interpretation

**The Personal Growth Initiative Scale-II (PGIS-II)**, developed by Robitschek et al.(2005), is a strong self-report tool for measuring how actively someone seeks personal growth. It looks at the different aspects of personal growth initiative (PGI) through four main factors: Readiness for Change, Intentional Behaviour, Using Resources, and Plan/Planfulness. Researchers widely use the PGIS-II in studies on positive psychology, especially among adults and students focused on self-development and well-being.

The scale has 20 items rated on a 6-point Likert scale (1 = Disagree strongly to 6 = Agree strongly). Scores range from 20 to 120, with higher scores showing a stronger PGI. Subscale scores are calculated separately: Readiness for Change (5 items, range 5-30), Intentional Behaviour (5 items, range 5-30), Using Resources (5 items, range 5-30), and Plan/Planfulness (5 items, range 5-30). Participants answer based on their current views on personal growth.

**The Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS)**, developed by Brown and Ryan in 2003, is a reliable self-report tool that measures trait mindfulness by assessing how often people experience mindful states in their daily lives. It emphasizes being aware of momentary experiences and measures mindlessness, or acting on autopilot. The MAAS is often used in mindfulness research for clinical, educational, and general populations.

The scale includes 15 items rated on a 6-point Likert scale (1 = Almost always to 6 = Almost never), with higher scores indicating higher mindfulness. Total scores range from 15 to 90, with a mean around 4.2-4.7 in non-clinical groups. The items address attention to physical sensations, emotions, thoughts, and actions without judgment.

**Data analysis:** The data collected from the Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS) and Personal Growth Initiative Scale-II (PGIS-II) questionnaires were analyzed using various statistical methods. These included a cross tabulation of domicile and gender, frequency distribution tables for demographic variables, and descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations). Additional analyses involved Pearson's product-moment correlation to assess relationships between mindful awareness and PGI factors, an Independent Samples t-Test to compare gender group means, and a One-Way ANOVA to examine differences across domicile categories (urban, rural, semi-urban).

## Results

**Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for MAAS and PGIS-II Scales**

| Variable             | N   | Mean | Std. Deviation | Range  |
|----------------------|-----|------|----------------|--------|
| MAAS Total           | 102 | 58.4 | 12.3           | 25-85  |
| Total PGI            | 102 | 92.7 | 15.6           | 45-120 |
| Readiness to Change  | 102 | 13.6 | 3.2            | 5-25   |
| Intentional Behavior | 102 | 22.1 | 4.1            | 8-30   |
| Using Resources      | 102 | 28.4 | 5.2            | 10-30  |
| Planfulness          | 102 | 24.3 | 4.8            | 7-30   |

Participants showed moderate mindfulness (MAAS  $M=58.4$ , above typical population means of  $\sim 4.2$  per item) and strong overall PGI (Total  $M=92.7/120=77\%$  max). They particularly excelled in Using Resources

(M=28.4/30=95% max). Lower Readiness scores suggest a need for intervention, while high resource use points to existing growth strengths in this proactive sample.

**Table 2: Pearson’s Product Moment Correlations between MAAS and PGIS-II Factors (df=100)**

| Variable 1 | Variable 2            | Correlation (r) | p-value |
|------------|-----------------------|-----------------|---------|
| MAAS       | Total PGI             | .666            | <.001   |
| MAAS       | Readiness to change   | .633            | <.001   |
| MAAS       | Intentional Behaviour | .620            | <.001   |
| MAAS       | Using Resources       | .589            | <.001   |
| MAAS       | Planfulness           | .512            | <.001   |

Strong positive correlations ( $r=.512-.666$ , all  $p<.001$ ) show that mindful awareness is an important predictor of PGI. The shared variance ( $r^2$ ) ranged from 26% - 44% . The largest effects on the Total and Readiness domains suggest that mindfulness significantly boosts the motivation to start change. This supports theories that connect focusing on the present moment to proactive development.

**Table 3 : Mean MAAS and PGI Scores by Gender and Independent Samples t-test Results .**

| Variables           | Gender | N  | Mean  | Std. Deviation | t-value | p-value |
|---------------------|--------|----|-------|----------------|---------|---------|
| Readiness to change | Female | 39 | 12.41 | 3.4            | 2.064   | .042    |
|                     | Male   | 63 | 14.29 | 2.9            |         |         |
| Total PGI           | Female | 39 | 89.2  | 16.1           | 1.23    | .221    |
|                     | Male   | 63 | 94.8  | 15.0           |         |         |
| MAAS                | Female | 39 | 57.1  | 12.8           | 0.81    | .422    |
|                     | Male   | 63 | 59.2  | 12.0           |         |         |

Only Readiness to Change showed significance  $t(100)=2.06$ ,  $p=.042$ ) with males averaging 15% higher. Non-significant trends favour males across PGI (effect sizes  $d=0.20-0.35$ ). This suggests subtle gender patterns in initiative without broader disparities. Equal mindfulness removes confounds, isolating readiness as uniquely benefiting males.

**Table 4: Mean MAAS and PGI Scores by Domicile and One-Way ANOVA Results**

| Variables | Domicile   | N  | Mean | Std. Deviation | F    | P    |
|-----------|------------|----|------|----------------|------|------|
| Total PGI | Urban      | 57 | 93.1 | 15.2           | 0.51 | .610 |
|           | Rural      | 39 | 91.8 | 16.4           |      |      |
|           | Semi-urban | 6  | 94.5 | 14.8           |      |      |
| MAAS      | Urban      | 57 | 58.7 | 12.1           | 0.07 | .943 |
|           | Rural      | 39 | 58.0 | 12.8           |      |      |
|           | Semi-urban | 6  | 57.8 | 11.5           |      |      |

One-way ANOVA revealed no significant differences across domicile for any variable (all  $p>.05$ ).

## Discussion

**Major findings :** A majority of participants (n=63, 61.8%) were male, while 38.2% (n=39) were female. The domicile distribution included urban (55.9%, n=57), rural (38.2%, n=39), and semi-urban (5.9%, n=6). The mean score on the Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS) was 58.4 (SD=12.3), indicating moderate mindfulness levels. The average score on the Personal Growth Initiative Scale-II (PGIS-II) was 92.7 (SD=15.6), showing strong overall personal growth initiative, with the highest subscale in Using Resources (M=28.4, SD=5.2).

- Pearson correlations showed strong positive relationships between MAAS and all factors of PGIS-II. The strongest relationships were with Total PGI ( $r=.666, p<.001$ ), Readiness to Change ( $r=.633, p<.001$ ), and Intentional Behavior ( $r=.620, p<.001$ ). No weak or negative correlations were found across the variables.
- Gender differences appeared only in Readiness to Change ( $t=2.064, p=.042$ ), with males scoring higher (M=14.29, SD=2.9) than females (M=12.41, SD=3.4). There were no significant differences in MAAS ( $p=.422$ ), Total PGI ( $p=.221$ ), or other subscales (all  $p>.05$ ). A one-way ANOVA showed no domicile effects on any variable (e.g., Total PGI  $p=.610$ ; MAAS  $p=.943$ ).
- A primary finding is the strong positive link between mindful attention awareness and personal growth initiative. This suggests that increased mindfulness encourages proactive self-development in all areas of PGI. Previous studies (e.g., Brown & Ryan, 2003; Robitschek et al., 2012) highlight mindfulness as a key factor for intentional change, resource use, and planning. These factors may help prevent stagnation in personal growth.

The gender analysis showed that males are more ready to change, although the effect size was modest (Cohen's  $d=0.41$ ). There were no significant differences in mindfulness or PGI between genders. This supports previous research that suggests slight male advantages in initiative-driven traits (e.g., Robitschek & Cook, 2005), likely tied to socialization that encourages assertiveness, while females performed similarly overall. The differences in female scores might indicate various coping styles.

Where people lived had no impact on the results. Urban, rural, and semi-urban groups were similar across all measures. This goes against the idea that rural environments create barriers to growth. It suggests that mindfulness and PGI are strong traits that can exist regardless of location in this sample.

Overall, the findings emphasize the potential of mindfulness training to improve PGI. This could inform programs such as university workshops or apps that promote awareness. Tailored programs for gender could help increase female readiness, while the results that show no differences based on location suggest wide applicability. Universities should incorporate mindfulness into their courses to encourage growth-oriented mindsets.

The study highlights mindful awareness as a vital factor for personal growth in young adults. As self-development becomes more important amid modern stresses, these results support promoting mindfulness proactively. Educational institutions can create specific initiatives, such as mindfulness sessions for females to improve readiness and scalable digital tools for everyone, to boost PGI. Strengthening campus wellness through group practices encourages collective growth and closes demographic gaps. Including these practices in student life can reduce overthinking, improve intentionality, and develop resilient, growth-focused individuals.

**Conclusion:** This study shows strong positive relationships between mindful attention awareness and personal growth initiative (PGI) factors. The strongest connections are with total PGI ( $r=.666, p<.001$ ), readiness to change ( $r=.633, p<.001$ ), and intentional behavior ( $r=.620, p<.001$ ). Males showed significantly

higher readiness to change than females ( $t=2.064$ ,  $p=.042$ ), but there were no gender differences in overall mindfulness or other PGI areas. Domicile (urban, rural, semi-urban) had no effect across all measures, suggesting these psychological traits didn't significantly differ across domicile group in this sample. These findings support existing research on mindfulness as a key factor in encouraging proactive growth. It helps individuals move away from autopilot behaviors and actively pursue development. The small gender difference in readiness hints at complex social influences, while the lack of location impact suggests that mindfulness can enhance PGI for everyone. Future research could use prospective designs to explore causality and look into factors like resilience or emotional regulation. More diverse samples across cultures and age groups would improve the findings' applicability. Applied studies of mindfulness programs could show real benefits for increasing PGI and supporting student well-being in schools.

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