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Efficacy of Attentional Awareness Program in Enhancing Resilience and Wellbeing Among Children

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Abstract

Background: *Childhood is a critical period in forming the cognitive, emotional, and psychological foundations that shape an individual's lifelong well-being. In today's rapidly changing world, children face a variety of stressors vs and distractions that can impede their development attention awareness, well-being, and overall resilience. By promoting attention skills and resilience, attention awareness programs can provide children with essential tools to cope with challenges and setbacks, developing their ability to cope with challenges and grow from their experiences.*

Objective: *This study aimed to investigate the effectiveness of attentional awareness program as an intervention to enhance mindfulness, resilience and wellbeing among children.*

Study type, settings and duration: *An experimental study was carried out at public sector schools in Faisalabad. This research was based on two phases. Phase-I was the recruitment of participants on baseline measures. Phase-II was experimental study. Recruitment of participants started in April 2023, experimental study was carried out in August 2023 and post-measurements were taken in September, 2023.*

Results: *The results indicate that participation in the attentional awareness program significantly improved wellbeing F (1,34) = 5.45, p <.000, η^2p =.14 and attention awareness F (1,34) =125.79, p <.000, η^2p=.78 among children. The results revealed that the attention awareness program led to a statistically significant increase in children's resilience F (1,34) =3.90, p <.00', η^2p =.10.*

Conclusion: *This study underscores the importance of incorporating attentional awareness practices into educational and psychological interventions for children. By practicing them with skills to manage stress, regulate emotions, and enhance focus, attentional awareness programs*

can contribute to the development of resilient and emotionally well-adjusted individuals, better prepared to face life's challenges.

Key words: *Attentional awareness program, mindfulness, Resilience, Wellbeing, Children*

Introduction

Childhood is a developmental period that marks the time when children develop a sense of competence and personal growth. From pressure to achieve academically to the constant flow of information from technology, children face a range of stressors that require innovative approaches to support their cognitive and emotional development (Hussain et.al. 2023). Attentional awareness programs are promising in enhancing children's ability to cope with stress, develop resilience, and maintain positive mental health. Attentional awareness, the practice of being aware of one's present thoughts and actions, has become one of the focuses of research in the field of wellbeing. Attention awareness practices involve focusing attention on your breathing, body sensations, or external stimuli, are associated with changes in brain activity and structure (Biegel, 2009).

Resilience can be defined as the ability to adapt and thrive in the face of adversity, while well-being refers to a positive state of physical, mental, and emotional health. Resilience and well-being are both key factors in determining long-term outcomes for children, particularly in terms of academic success, social relationships and overall quality of life (Masten, 2014). In a world that is constantly changing and unpredictable, the ability to adapt and overcome challenges is critical. The role of resilience in children's development is crucial as it helps them overcome obstacles, develop coping skills, and build a sense of agency and control over their lives. Research shows that resilient children are more likely to have better academic performance, mental health and social skills than less resilient children are.

A child's well-being has a significant impact on his or her overall development, functioning, and future outcomes. Resilience is closely linked to children's well-being (spence, 1996). In other words, children who are more resilient tend to have higher levels of well-being than those who are less resilient. Children, which maintain positive relationships with their parents and peers, do well academically, and are physically healthy, tend to have higher levels of well-being. Children's well-being is affected by a variety of factors, which can be broadly divided into different areas. These factors often referred to as antecedents; contribute to a child's overall quality of life, development, and well-being. Families play a vital role in shaping children's well-being (Iqbal et al. 2021). A supportive and nurturing home environment characterized by love, positive communication, and emotional security has a significant impact on a child's emotional and social development (Hamdani et al.,2023).

By examining aspects of resilience such as resilience, toughness and stress management, the researchers sought to determine how these attention awareness programs enhance resilience in children and explore how participation in attention awareness programs could improve children's overall well-being. The study aimed to measure improvements in mental health, emotional balance and overall life satisfaction, emphasizing the holistic nature of well-being.

Methodology

The present experimental study aimed to investigate the effectiveness of Attention Awareness Program in enhancing resilience and wellbeing among children. This research is based on two

phases. Phase-I is the recruitment of participants on baseline measures. Phase-II is experimental study. Recruitment of participants started in April 2023, experimental study was carried out in August 2023 and post-measurements were taken in September, 2023.

Phase-I: This research seeks to contribute to the existing literature by examining the potential of an Attention Awareness Program to improve children's attentional skills, resilience, and overall psychological wellbeing. Attention awareness is appropriate in the developing years for children aged 4 years and above and paws b (MISP, 2009) is designed for the 7 to 11 years aged children that are studying in 4^{th} grade, 5^{th} grade and 6^{th} grade in Faisalabad. So the target population was children with age range of seven to eleven years enrolled in four, five and six class in school. Participants within the age range of 7 years to 11 years studying in the public sector schools were recruited. Children that given their consent and consent by their parents were also taken were included. Children with target age range were included in initial study and the children who did not given their consent, not meeting age criteria or having any kind of psychopathology were excluded.

Mindful attention awareness scale (Brown & Ryan, 2003) was used to measure the attention awareness among children. The Mindful Attention Awareness Scale is a 15-item 6-point Likert scale, higher scores on this scale show higher level of mindfulness state while lower scores showed mindless state.

Child youth resilience measure (Jefferies et al.,2015) was used to measure resilience among children. The scale comprise of 17 items rated on 5-point Likert scale and used for individuals aged 5 to 23. The higher scores indicate higher resilience level and low scores indicate low resilience.

Stirling children wellbeing scale (Liddle & Carter, 2015) was used to measure the wellbeing of children in study at baseline. To conduct this study, a permission letter was takenfrom the head of Department of Applied Psychology. Then it was submitted higher authorities of the university to collect initialdata. Further ethical approval was obtained from school and parents of children in which it was clearly mentioned that this study has no harm and participation is voluntarily. They can withdraw from study at any point. The confidentiality of the participants will be maintained.

Phase-II: The objective of the experimental study was to evaluate the efficacy of attention awareness program to enhance the outcome measures in children. MISP program was used in this study. It is designed for children to increase their mindfulness and wellbeing. (MISP, 2009). The experimental study was conducted in two steps. First step was the cultural adaptation of the program and second step included empirical evaluation of MISP program in school setting. The utilization of experimental design was an appropriate choice in terms of manipulating and isolating a single variable and evaluating its efficacy on outcome measures and establishing causation.

Validation of the program according to Pakistan culture and norms was main focus and the process of translation of interventions also took place for the ease of researcher and participants. The goal of this phase was to make the interventions more accessible and culturally relevant. In the process of adapting the original mindfulness in school project interventions, the committee incorporated the reviews and information gathered from the educationists, Ph.D. scholars and

experts. The researcher selected a sample of (N=312) young children and screened them based on the attention awareness scale criteria. Children who scored low on the attention awareness scale (>2.00) were chosen to participate in the study and were randomly assigned to either the experimental group or the control group.

The sample finally comprised 36 children who achieved low scores on the attention awareness scale. These 36 children were divided into two groups with the help of randomization: the experimental group, which received the mindfulness interventions, and the control group, which participated in normal curricular lessons, primarily involving classroom activities. The mindfulness program consisted of twelve weekly lessons. The length of these lessons was adjusted to fit within the school's normal lesson duration. The lessons were designed to be flexible and varied, allowing for adaptation into either twelve 30 to 60-minute sessions or six longer sessions when grouped in pairs. This flexibility was likely to accommodate the school term's length and allow for follow-up assessments at a later term.

Over the course of the program, a variety of mindfulness practices were taught to the children in the experimental group. These practices included short unguided exercises like breath counting, "stop and be present," mindfulness of routine daily activities (such as walking mindfully), and observing thought traffic. A homework manual likely guided the students, encouraging them to practice these mindfulness techniques at home in a structured manner outside of the formal lessons. Meanwhile, the control group continued with their regular curricular lessons, focusing on classroom projects and standard academic activities. The study's design and implementation allowed researcher to investigate the impact of the mindfulness program on the attention awareness of the participating children. By comparing the outcomes of the experimental and control groups, it was assessed whether the mindfulness intervention had any significant effects on attention and awareness compared to the regular classroom activities.

Allocation of participants was based on attention awareness measure. Children who scored low on attention awareness scale (>2.00) were screened out and allocated to experimental study. It was ensured that assignment of participants to the experimental group and control group was done randomly, with equal number of participants in control and experimental group, with

same age and equal socioeconomic status (see Figure).

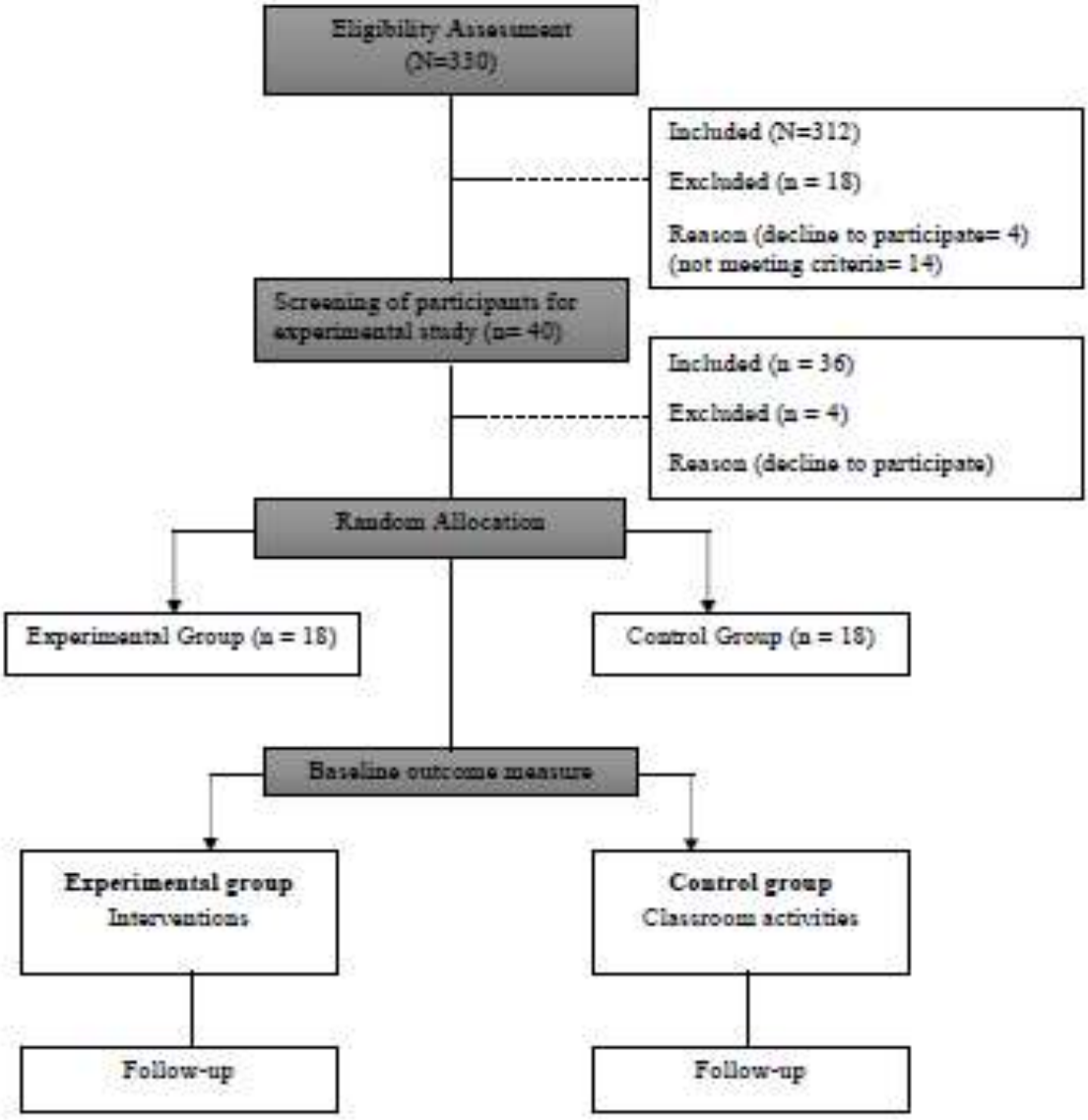


Figure 1: consort diagram of Allocation of Participants on the Basis of Baseline Measures

Results

Table 1 manifests inter-correlation of all the scales (and sub-scales) used in the study and demonstrates that Attention Awareness Scale has significant correlation with emotional outlook, emotional state, and social desirability and significant negative correlation with wellbeing and resilience. Resilience has significant correlation with wellbeing scale.

Table 2 findings revealed that in model I, demographics were added but only monthly income contributed and it generated variance of 3%. In second model, attention awareness scale was

added that contributed and generated a variance of 5% that lead to overall variance of 17%. In model III, the change in variance created by interpersonal resilience and caregiver resilience.

Table 3 findings show a significant mean difference in attention awareness across experimental and control group in time and interaction of group and time. It reveals that pre-test scores of experimental group increased in post-test of attention awareness (as shown in figure 2) while η^2 value tells us effect size is larger. Results above shows significant mean difference in pre-test scores of resilience across control and experimental group. Findings indicate that pre-test scores of resilience increased in the post-test with small effect size in experimental group (as shown in figure 3). Results revealed a significant mean difference in wellbeing across experimental and control group with a small effect size that shows wellbeing has increased with mindfulness intervention as the graph showing increase (Figure 4). The graphs suggest change in the in the pre-test attention awareness, resilience and wellbeing scores of experimental group with the post-test scores. Pre-test scores of attention awareness, resilience and wellbeing shows substantial increase in scores of post-test in experimental group.

Table 1:Inter-correlation Matrix of Attention Awareness, Resilience and Wellbeing among Children at baseline (N=312)

	Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1	AA	--							
2	EO	.09	--						
3	ES	.08	.16**	--					
4	SD	.09	.08	.26**	--				
5	WB	.13*	.66**	.77**	.54**	--			
6	IR	.31**	.34**	.33**	.25**	.46**	--		
7	CR	.33**	.15**	.32**	.27**	.37**	.50**	--	
8	TR	.37**	.30**	.37**	.30**	.48**	.91**	.82**	--

Note. AA= attention awareness, EO= emotional outlook, ES= emotional state, SD=social desirability, WB=wellbeing, IR= interpersonal resilience, CR=caregiver resilience, TR= resilience
***p < .001, **p < .01, *p > .05

Table 2: Hierarchical regression showing significant Predictors of Wellbeing at the Time of Baseline in Children (N=312)

						95% of C.I for B			
Predictors	Model*B*	*SE*	*β*	*t*	*p*	*LB*	*UB*	R^2	ΔR^2
Step 1								.03	.03
Constant	66.2	3.84		17.2	.000	58.6	73.7		
Monthly income	-1.1	.47	-.14	-2.31	.02	-2.01	-.16		
Step 2								.05	.017
Constant	69.8	4.11		16.9	.000	61.7	77.9		
Monthly income	-1.15	.46	-.15	-2.46	.01	-2.07	-.23		
Attention awareness	-1.29	.55	-.14	-2.33	.02	-2.38	-.20		
Step 3								.29	.24
Constant	29.9	5.39		5.55	.000	19.3	40.5		

Gender	-2.11	.76	-.15	-2.75	.006	-3.62	-.60
Monthly income	-1.19	.40	-.16	-2.93	.004	-1.99	-.39
Inter-resilience	.58	.08	.43	7.22	.000	.42	.74
Caregiver resilience	.32	.11	.18	3.07	.002	.11	.53

Note. CI = confidence interval, LB = lower boundry, UB = upper boundry, Only significant results present

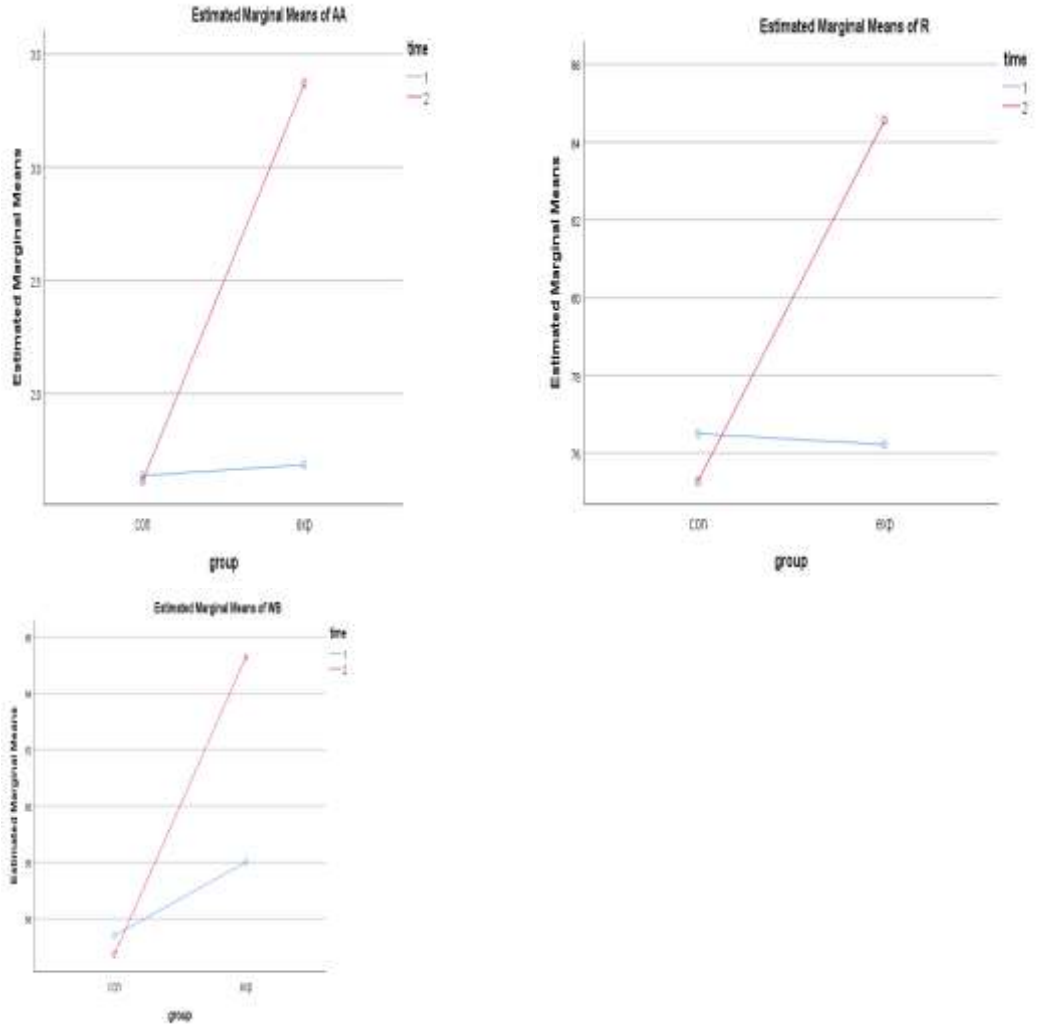
Step 1 F(df) = 1.74 (6,305), p <.001. Step 2 F(df) = 2.29(7,304), p <.001. Step 3 F(df) = 13.71(9,302), p<.001

Table 3: Mean, Standard Deviation and Repeated Measure Analysis of Variance comparing attention awareness, resilience and wellbeing between experimental and control group on pre and post assessment among children

Groups					Repeated Measure ANOVA						
	Control		Experimental		Group		Time		Time x Group		
	Baseline *M(SD)*	Post-test *M(SD)*	Baseline *M(SD)*	Post-test *M(SD)*	*F*	*p*	*F*	*p*	*F*	*p*	η^2p
AA	1.64(.28)	1.61(.26)	1.69(.15)	3.37(.47)	142	.000	125.8	.000	132.60	.000	.79
TR	76.5(6.9)	75.2(8.1)	76.2(10.5)	84.6(.85)	6.64	.01	3.90	.05	7.05	.01	.10
WB	55.3(4.9)	54.7(5.6)	58.0(7.5)	65.2(4.48	25.3	.000	5.45	.02	7.87	.008	.14

Note: AA = Attention Awareness, TR = Resilience, WB = Wellbeing

Figure 2



DISCUSSIONS

The present study was carried out to evaluate the effectiveness of attention awareness program in enhancing resilience and wellbeing among children. The findings of the study, after combining all the data showed a variety of results. After evaluating these results interesting results came out of the way, 82 % children said that they enjoyed the course and intervention given to them. Most of the students said they will practice these interventions in future which they have learnt, especially deep breathing and decision making practices. From the pre and post wellbeing scores, it was seen that there was no significant difference in the wellbeing of children before and after but it was clear that children enjoyed the sessions and they portrayed interest in it by practicing it at home. They reported that there was high feelings of calmness and relaxation after these interventions. Moreover, they used these techniques while they felt angry, nervous in making a decision, and during their sports activities where they needed to be calm down and concentration skills were improved (MISP, 2003)

Research shows that children's resilience and well-being are closely related (Fergus & Zimmerman, 2005; Masten & Tellegen, 2012). Children who demonstrate higher levels of resilience tend to achieve better emotional, social, and academic outcomes (Masten, 2014).The main hypothesis of this study is that attentional awareness programs would improve mindfulness, resilience, and well-being in children. Repeated measure two factor ANOVA results showed the effectiveness of program in enhancing mindfulness, resilience and wellbeing across group and time. The graphs show that mindfulness program paws b. (MISP, 2009) was effective in enhancing mindfulness, resilience and wellbeing among children. The study aimed to examine the efficacy of an attentional awareness program in enhancing children's well-being, with a specific focus on resilience. (Zoogman et al.,2014) examined the impact of school based mindfulness program on the wellbeing of school children. This program included mindfulness interventions and awareness exercises that resulted in improved wellbeing and reduced symptoms of stressors among participating children. The findings indicate that attention awareness program helped children better manage their emotions and enhanced their overall wellbeing. A study explored the effects of a mindfulness-based program on children. The program included a mindfulness intervention that significantly improved participants' health and reduced aggressive behaviour. Furthermore, the study found that mindfulness-based interventions enhanced children's resilience and problem-solving skills. These increases in cognitive abilities are an important component of resilience because they enable children to adapt and find effective solutions in the face of adversity.

Further correlational results of the current study showed that there was correlation between study variables. Attention awareness was found significantly correlated with resilience and wellbeing at baseline. Research validated the hypothesis that with increase in mindfulness there would be higher level of resilience and wellbeing among children (Masten & Coatsworth, 1998) found in their study that children with higher attentional awareness skills were better able to cope with challenging situations, ultimately contributing to their resilience. 2010). Resilience has been consistently associated with improved child well-being (Luthar et al., 2000). It also showed that well-adjusted children were more likely to exhibit positive mental health and psychosocial well-being. Furthermore, supporting literature provides compelling evidence supporting the hypothesis that there is indeed a correlation between attentional awareness, resilience, and well-being in children. Understanding these relationships has important implications for interventions and programs designed to promote children's mental health and overall well-being.

It was hypothesized that attentional awareness and resilience would predict children's well-being. The literature supports the hypothesis that attentional awareness and resilience predict children's well-being. Mindful awareness contributes to health, while resilience allows children to bounce back from challenges, ultimately promoting their overall health (Ifthikhar et al.,2025). The interplay between these factors highlights their critical role in child development and mental health. Research shows that children's awareness of attention is closely related to their overall health. Research demonstrated that children with better attentional regulation skills tend to have higher well-being. This suggests that the ability to focus and control attention is a critical factor in predicting children's health (Davidson et al., 2007). Resilience, the ability to adapt to

and recover from adversity, has been consistently associated with higher levels of well-being in children. Children's well-being spans all levels, including emotional, social and psychological aspects. A study showed that attentional awareness and resilience not only predict individual well-being but also promote positive relationships and academic success, further emphasizing their importance to children's overall well-being (Diener et al., 2009). Interventions designed to improve children's attentional awareness skills may indirectly enhance their resilience, thereby promoting better mental health and well-being outcomes. Schools and educational programs can incorporate strategies for teaching attention regulation techniques, which have been shown to increase attentional awareness and adaptability (Schonert-Reichl et al., 2015).

Conclusions

The present study was carried out to evaluate the effectiveness of attention awareness program in enhancing mindfulness, resilience and wellbeing among children. Moreover, it was intended to determine demographic differences and mediating role of resilience between attention awareness and wellbeing at baseline.

This study supports the hypothesis that resilience will mediate the relationship between attentional awareness and well-being among children." Several studies provide empirical support for the hypothesis that resilience mediates the relationship between attentional awareness and well-being in children. The study also examined demographic differences among children. Results showed that attentional awareness significantly predicted children's well-being, while resilience also significantly predicted children's well-being (emotional outlook, emotional state, social desirability). Pre- and post-analyses of experimental studies indicate that attentional awareness interventions enhance children's resilience and well-being. Qualitative data showed that children enjoyed the lessons and interventions provided to them and showed satisfactory responses.

Limitations and suggestions

Despite the encouraging findings, this study have some limitations. The duration of the intervention was less that may affect the generalizability of the results.

Future studies should consider larger and more diverse samples, as well as longer-term follow-up, to assess the durability of observed improvements in resilience and well-being.

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