

Research article

The Mediating Role of Gratitude in the Relationship Between Mother-Child Relationship Quality and Mindful Parenting Among Modern Mothers

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Abstract

Parenting in today's world presents mothers with numerous role demands, societal expectations, and heightened stress, which can negatively impact the quality of interactions with their children. This study explores a mediation model outlining how gratitude influences the connection between the quality of the mother-child relationship and mindful parenting. A quantitative cross-sectional design was utilized, involving 257 mothers selected through purposive sampling based on criteria such as living with their children and being actively engaged in caregiving. Data were gathered using the Mindfulness in Parenting Questionnaire (MIPQ), Gratitude Questionnaire (GQ-6), and Child-Parent Relationship Scale (CPRS), all of which underwent adaptation and psychometric validation. Mediation analysis was performed to evaluate the proposed model. The findings showed that the quality of the mother-child relationship did not exert a significant direct effect on mindful parenting; however, it did have a notable indirect effect through gratitude, which acted as a complete mediator ($\beta = 0.162$, $p < 0.001$). These results indicate that gratitude serves as a psychological mechanism that translates relational experiences into more mindful, reflective, and adaptive parenting practices. This study advances theory by strengthening the mindful parenting framework within positive psychology and offers practical implications for designing parenting interventions that foster gratitude among mothers in contemporary society.

Keywords: Mindful Parenting; Parent-Child Relationship; Gratitude; Modern Mothers

1. Introduction

Raising children in the contemporary world presents numerous challenges for mothers, including societal expectations, job responsibilities, and the need to meet family demands (Fernandes et al., 2020). In the Indonesian cultural setting, mothers have intricate roles, including being the primary caregivers for their children, meeting family needs, participating in social activities, and, for working mothers, fulfilling responsibilities at work (Syahid, 2015). As reported by the BPS survey (2022), 68% of working mothers in urban areas experience parenting-related stress, attributed to juggling dual workloads and insufficient social support. Additionally, data from a survey by the Health Office (2021) indicates that 55% of mothers in urban settings struggle to balance their work and parenting duties, which negatively impacts the quality of their relationships with their children.

The trend of contemporary mothers entering the workforce is growing alongside societal shifts and families' financial needs. Statistically, the rate of female labor force participation in Indonesia is expected to reach 52.58% by 2024 (The Global Economy.com). This situation forces mothers to fulfill dual responsibilities as both primary earners and child caregivers (Cooklin et al., 2015). According to a report from the Center for Gender and Child Studies at Universitas Airlangga (2021), mothers frequently feel caught between their traditional roles as homemakers and their modern roles as career professionals. This leads to heightened stress and conflicts in parenting (Cooklin et al., 2015; Moreira et al., 2019).

Maternal parenting stress is a psychological response that occurs when the challenges of parenting surpass the resources available to the individual (Deater-Deckard, 1998). This stress experienced by mothers can stem from various factors including the characteristics of the child (Lucero et al., 2015), the developmental stage of the child (Quittner et al., 1990), experiences of anxiety and depression (Corthorn & Milicic, 2016; Hsieh & Stright, 2012), a mother's misunderstanding of her children's needs (Moscatelli & Rubini, 2011), the health conditions of the children (Lestari & Widyawati, 2018), and the quality of the mother-child relationship (Benedetto & Ingrassia, 2018). Challenges in communication with children can also elevate parenting stress and depression in mothers, leading to a reduced quality of interactions between mothers and children, which in turn affects the mothers' ability to care for their children effectively (Moreira et al. 2020; Parent et al., 2020).



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Elevated societal standards regarding maternal responsibilities intensify this parenting issue. Studies indicate that mothers in Indonesia face considerable cultural pressure to meet caregiving expectations, often resulting in maternal burnout, especially emotional fatigue and decreased confidence in their parenting abilities (Novianti et al., 2025). These expectations are reinforced by idealized parenting standards on social media, creating unrealistic benchmarks that pressure mothers and contribute to feelings of inadequacy (Arybowo & Widhiasti, 2024). A national survey revealed that mothers are three times more likely than fathers to take on childcare responsibilities, with 71.5% of families indicating that women are the main supporters of their children's home-schooling; among these, half also participated in paid employment (UNICEF et al., 2021). A significant association exists between work-family conflict and increased levels of anxiety, depression, and parenting stress, which negatively impacts the ability to parent attentively (Wahyuni et al., 2024). Additionally, parenting stress fully mediates the relationship between external support and work-family conflict among Indonesian working mothers (Kesumaningsari et al., 2026). Based on KPAI data (2020), the highest reports involve children affected by issues related to problematic parenting, familial conflicts, or motherhood, totaling 519 cases, a significant rise from 133 cases in 2019. During 2021, there were 423 reported cases, followed by 415 cases in 2022. This information indicates that the occurrence of problematic parenting cases in Indonesia has increased by over 50% each year. Therefore, it underscores the significance of mothers adopting effective parenting strategies to foster more positive interactions with their children.

Effective parenting involves mothers caring for children with an approach tailored to each child's unique qualities. Through effective parenting, mothers can shape their children's behavior to meet specific goals. This aligns with mindful parenting, a conscious and non-judgmental way of interacting with children (McCaffrey et al., 2017). Mindful or mindfulness-based parenting has proven effective in lowering parenting stress (L. Duncan, 2007; Nurhamidah & Retnowati, 2018; Pollak, 2019) and enhancing the psychological well-being of both mothers and children (Dahlan, 2016). A warm, responsive, and emotionally bonded parent-child relationship enables parents to be more attuned to their children's needs, facilitating the practice of awareness, empathy, and emotional regulation. In contrast, relationships marred by conflict, poor communication, or emotional distance can hinder parents' full engagement in daily interactions. Research indicates that high-quality, positive relationships are strongly linked to higher levels of mindful parenting, as they help parents better manage their emotions and respond adaptively to their children's behavior (Bögels & Restifo, 2014).

The quality of the parent-child relationship is crucial for practicing mindful parenting. Studies indicate that a secure attachment enhances mindful practices, especially attentive listening and non-judgmental acceptance (Siegel & Hartzell, 2013). Relationships characterized by openness, security, and two-way communication are linked to lower parental emotional reactivity and better self-regulation in parenting (Lippold et al., 2015). This environment supports mindful parenting, enabling mothers to be fully present, listen carefully, and respond without judgment. Moreover, children's openness fosters emotional closeness, which helps parents develop empathy and acceptance in daily interactions (Corthorn & Milicic, 2016). Therefore, greater child openness increases the likelihood of parents, especially mothers, practicing mindful parenting effectively.

Mothers who practice mindful parenting tend to view their children's experiences more positively, seeing children as teachers of life's diverse sensations (M. Kabat-Zinn & Kabat-Zinn, 2014). These sensations include happiness, sadness, disappointment, and cheerfulness. Each carries its own meaning and reflects the unique qualities of every child (McKee et al., 2018). Additionally, gratitude, a key element of positive psychology, is known to significantly support mindful parenting (Hidayati et al., 2024).

Mindful parenting is determined by how the mother's perspective is more positive toward the environment and gives meaning to every event experienced with the child (Hidayati et al., 2024). Emmons and McCullough (2003) show that gratitude helps individuals better appreciate the positive aspects of life, including relationships with others. Gratitude toward mothers can affect mothers and children by helping mothers accept children's conditions more unconditionally (Hussong et al., 2020). In the context of parenting, mothers who practice gratitude tend to view parenting challenges more positively, which in turn strengthens emotional relationships with children (Nguyen et al., 2020).

Rash, Matsuba, and Prkachin (2011) discovered that gratitude can serve as a stress buffer, particularly for mothers facing everyday pressures. While numerous studies have shown that the quality of parent-child relationships influences mindful parenting, research exploring positive psychological factors as mediators remains limited, as most prior studies focus on direct relationships (Duncan et al., 2009; Parent et al., 2016). The discussion does not explore how internal psychological

states influence this connection. Gratitude has been recognized as a psychological factor that enhances subjective well-being, emotional regulation, and social relationships (Emmons & McCullough, 2012). Nonetheless, its mediating role in parenting, especially among contemporary mothers balancing multiple roles, remains underexplored. Most existing research on gratitude and mindful parenting has been conducted in Western contexts, with scant evidence from collectivist societies like Indonesia (Nguyen et al., 2020; Hidayati et al., 2024). Additionally, previous mediation studies have mainly focused on self-compassion or emotion regulation rather than gratitude (Moreira et al., 2016). Typically, the focus has been on general or clinical populations, often neglecting modern mothers who juggle caregiving and professional responsibilities, facing challenges such as role overload, limited time, and parenting guilt (Cooklin et al., 2015; Fernandes et al., 2020). Consequently, this study contributes novel insights by examining a comprehensive model linking parent-child relationships with mindful parenting, with gratitude serving as a mediator among modern Indonesian mothers.

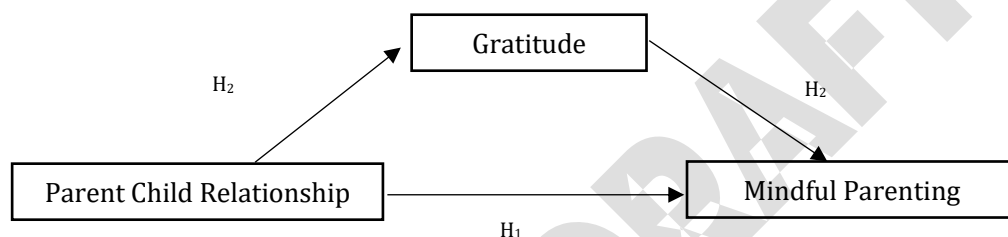


Figure 1. Hypotheses and Conceptual Frameworks

The proposed framework combines three main constructs: mother-child relationship quality, gratitude, and mindful parenting, based on two complementary theories: attachment theory and the broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions. According to attachment theory (Bowlby, 1969), secure, warm parent-child bonds foster emotional security and open communication, allowing parents to respond more sensitively and responsively to their children. This creates an environment that supports mindful parenting behaviors such as non-judgmental acceptance, emotional regulation, and being fully present during interactions (Siegel & Hartzell, 2023). Meanwhile, the broaden-and-build theory (Fredrickson, 2004) posits that positive emotions such as gratitude broaden individuals' thought-action repertoires and build enduring personal resources. In this framework, warm mother-child relationships are thought to foster feelings of gratitude, as mothers acknowledge and value the significance of their bond with their children (Emmons & McCullough, 2003). This gratitude, in turn, functions as a psychological mechanism that enhances mindful parenting by increasing awareness of positive aspects of parenting, reducing emotional reactivity, and fostering non-judgmental acceptance of children's behaviors (Hidayati et al., 2024; Nguyen et al., 2020). Integrating these perspectives suggests that mother-child relationship quality influences mindful parenting through an internal affective-cognitive pathway, where gratitude serves as the mechanism that transforms relational warmth into sustained mindful parenting practices (Kabat-Zinn & Kabat-Zinn, 2014).

Building on this conceptual framework, the study suggests two hypotheses: (H1) The quality of the mother-child relationship positively influences mindful parenting; and (H2) Gratitude mediates the indirect effect of this relationship quality on mindful parenting. The reasoning behind H2 is that warm relationships evoke gratitude as an emotional response, which then boosts mothers' abilities in emotion regulation, unconditional acceptance, and present-moment awareness in parenting. This pathway is supported by prior research (Nguyen et al., 2020; Hidayati et al., 2024) and the broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions (Fredrickson, 2001). Consequently, the study aims to contribute to family psychology theory and offer practical insights for creating mindfulness-based parenting programs for modern mothers.

2. Research Methods

This study uses a non-experimental quantitative approach with a cross-sectional design. To test the proposed theoretical model, a mediation analysis technique is applied. This approach was chosen because it can test model fit and analyze causal relationships between latent variables, including direct and indirect influences, making it suitable for testing the effect of the quality of mother-child relationships on mindful parenting mediated by gratitude.

The study included 257 mothers recruited through purposive sampling. The inclusion criteria for participants were: (1) biological mothers, (2) living in the same household as their children, (3) actively involved in childcare, and (4) willing to complete a full questionnaire. This purposive sampling technique was used because the target population has specific characteristics that must

be met to address the research objectives (Etikan, 2016). Prior to data collection, the study received ethical approval from LP2M Maulana Malik Ibrahim State Islamic University Malang (No. 1315/LP2M/TL.00/04/2026). Data collection was conducted online via Google Forms from May 2 to July 30, 2025. The first page of the questionnaire contained informed consent. Participation began after respondents agreed. After collection, the data underwent a cleaning stage to ensure completeness before analysis.

In this research model, the mother-child relationship quality functions as an exogenous (predictor) variable, gratitude acts as a mediator, and mindful parenting is the endogenous (outcome) variable. Mindful parenting is characterized as a parenting approach rooted in mindfulness, focusing on awareness, acceptance, managing emotional reactions, and being responsive to children's needs (Kabat-Zinn & Kabat-Zinn, 2021; McCaffrey et al., 2017). The quality of the mother-child relationship pertains to emotional interaction patterns, reflecting the degree of closeness and conflict within the parenting bond (Driscoll & Pianta, 2011). Additionally, gratitude is seen as an affective-cognitive trait involving acknowledgment and appreciation of life's positive aspects, which is believed to foster more conscious parenting and healthier mother-child relations (McCullough et al., 2002; Hidayati et al., 2024).

Data collection involved distributing a self-report questionnaire directly, with an average charging time of 15 minutes. Mindful parenting was assessed using the adapted Mindfulness in Parenting Questionnaire (MIPQ) (McCaffrey, 2015), gratitude was evaluated through the Gratitude Questionnaire (GQ-6) (McCullough et al., 2003), and the quality of mother-child relationships was measured by the Child-Parent Relationship Scale (CPRS) (Pianta, 1992). These three tools have been validated in the Indonesian context via a standard cross-cultural adaptation process, including forward-and-back translation, expert review, and psychometric testing, confirming their suitability for use.

The instrument's reliability was evaluated using the McDonald Omega coefficient (ω), with values above 0.70 deemed acceptable (see Table 1). Construct validity was assessed through Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) to verify that each indicator accurately reflects the latent construct. A good model fit is indicated by RMSEA < 0.06, CFI and TLI > 0.90, and SRMR < 0.08 (see Table 2) (Hu & Bentler, 1999). To determine item validity, criteria include a positive factor loading coefficient and a z-value > 1.96 (Umar & Nisa, 2020). CFA loadings are shown in Table 3. Confirming validity and reliability via CFA is essential before proceeding to further analyses.

Table 1. Reliability of Measurement Tools

	Gratitude	Parent-Child Relation	Mindful Parenting
McDonald Omega (ω)	0.816	0.736	

Table 2. Goodness Of Fit CFA

	CFI	TLI	RMSEA	SRMR
Gratitude	0.998	0.995	0.022	0.023
Parent-Child Relation	0.971	0.965	0.056	0.069
Mindful Parenting	0.914	0.904	0.06	0.058

Table 3. Validity of Measurement Tools

Variable	Loading Factor Range	Std. Error	Z-Value	P-Value	Remarks
Gratitude	0.518-0.739	0.054-0.064	9.907-17.951	<0.001	Valid
Parent-Child Relation	0.446-0.940	0.017-0.066	6.916-56.849	<0.001	Valid
Mindful Parenting	0.652-0.938	0.034-0.062	6.701-54.033	<0.001	Valid

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Results

Mediation analysis using JASP version 0.19.2.0 was conducted to test the influence of mother-child relationships on mindful parenting, with gratitude as a moderation variable, among 257 respondents; the data distribution is shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Respondent Demographics (N = 257)

Characteristics	Demographics	Respondent	Percentage (%)
Age	20 – 29 Years	5	1.95
	30 – 59 Years	252	98.05
Number of Children	1	70	27.24
	2	142	55.25
	3	30	11.67
	4	11	4.28
	5	4	1.56
	SMP	1	0.4
Final Education	SMA	96	37.35
	S1	154	59.92
	S2	6	2.33
	Housewives	121	47.08
Employment	Private	51	19.84
	Entrepreneurship	36	14.01
	Honorary (Contract Employee)	28	10.89
	PNS	20	7.78
	Day Laborer	1	0.39

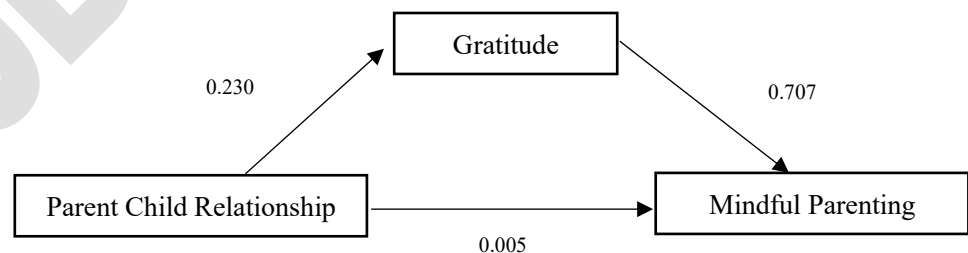
The respondents are predominantly mothers, with 98.05% between 30 and 59 years old. Of these, 142 (98.05%) have two children, and 154 (59.92%) have a bachelor's degree as their highest level of education. They are directly involved in parenting, and working mothers are employed as civil servants, entrepreneurs, private-sector employees, honorary staff, and day laborers, totaling 136 (53%).

The assumption test conducted is a normality test, indicated by the skewness values of each variable (-1.170, 0.052, -1.611), which all fall within the ± 2 range. Therefore, it is concluded that all variables are normally distributed (Kim, 2013).

Table 5. Mediation Analysis Results

		Estimate	P	Note
Direct Effects	PCR → MP	0.005	0.905	Insignificant
Indirect Effects	PCR → G → MP	0.162	< 0.001	Significant
Total Effects	PCR → MP	0.061	0.006	Significant
Path Coefficients				
	G → MP	0.707	< 0.001	Significant
	PCR → MP	0.005	0.905	Insignificant
	PCR → G	0.230	< 0.001	Significant

Notes. PCR=Parent Child Relationship; MP=Mindful Parenting; G=Gratitude

**Figure 2.** Mediation Analysis Model

The mediation analysis indicated complete mediation among the Parent-Child Relationship, Mindful Parenting, and Gratitude. Specifically, the direct impact of the Parent-Child Relationship on Mindful Parenting was not significant ($p = 0.905 > 0.05$), whereas the indirect impact through Gratitude was significant ($p < 0.001$) (see Table). This suggests that a strong mother-child relationship enhances the mother's gratitude, which in turn increases her mindfulness.

3.2. Discussion

The results indicated that the mother-child relationship did not significantly directly impact mindful parenting. This is noteworthy because it contrasts with earlier research that found a direct link between mother-child relationships and mindful parenting practices. Research by Duncan et al.,

(2009) states that warm and attentive relationships significantly predict better mindful parenting in mothers. Additionally, research indicates that the quality of mother-child relationships correlates with more responsive and mindful parenting behaviors (Garcia & Grau, 2018). Research by Zhang (2025) shows that mindful parenting plays a protective role in mother-child relationships. In addition, Lucas-Thompson et al. (2021) found that the quality of the mother-child relationship correlates with dispositional mindfulness. However, the differing results suggest that positive relationships do not automatically translate into conscious parenting practices without specific psychological mechanisms.

The minimal direct impact of the mother-child relationship on mindful parenting can be understood through attachment theory and self-regulation. In this context, attachment theory has two roles. First, it explains why relationship quality is a significant predictor. Secure attachment, marked by warmth and trust, fosters an environment that supports sensitive parenting (Siegel & Hartzell, 2023). Secondly, attachment theory clarifies that a positive relationship alone isn't enough; relational experiences must be internalized both cognitively and emotionally to impact behavior. Without internalization, warmth alone won't lead to mindful parenting, which requires awareness, emotional regulation, and non-judgmental acceptance (Bröning & Brandt, 2022). Self-regulation theory explains that positive experiences do not inherently lead to conscious behaviors without internal processing. Mindful parenting is affected by internal factors like positive emotions and the ability to reflect (Ahemaitijiang et al., 2021), and affects psychological resources more than relationship quality alone (Moreira et al., 2016). Therefore, gratitude acts as the internal process that converts relational warmth into reflective parenting, which clarifies why the direct effect was not significant without this mediator.

In contrast, the results show that the quality of parent-child relationships significantly affects mindful parenting through gratitude, indicating a strong indirect influence. These findings are consistent with several previous studies that identify gratitude as an important mediator in positive psychology processes. Research has found that gratitude mediates the relationship between *self-compassion* and *mindful parenting*, suggesting that positive emotions play a role in increasing parenting awareness (Nguyen et al., 2020). The study by Hidayati et al., (2025) on mothers in Indonesia also proves that gratitude mediates the influence of social support on *mindful parenting*. Other research suggests that mother-child relationships increase gratitude, further impacting an individual's adaptive functioning (Li et al., 2022). These findings were validated in another study that found that gratitude is the primary mediator in *the mother's* mindful parenting model (Hidayati et al., 2024).

These results align with the research of Hidayati et al. (2025) and Yung et al. (2019). Positive emotions in every situation with children create mindful interactions that support optimal affection and attention for children. Child-parent relationships alone are not enough to support mindful parenting because these interactions can reflect two models: relationships marked by anxiety and relationships marked by openness and warmth (Pianta, 2003). Therefore, without internal affective processes such as gratitude, a positive mother-child relationship is not necessarily internalized into a mindful parenting practice that emphasizes awareness, acceptance, and emotional regulation.

Research indicates that gratitude can serve as a mediating factor in the parent-child relationship within the context of mindful parenting. Mothers' positive emotions influence how they respond to each child's unique behavior throughout parenting. The mother-child bond manifests in two different forms: one characterized by warmth and the other by anxiety. Without positive emotions, this relationship may lack quality and adversely affect mindfulness in parenting, as mothers associate "wisdom" with their parenting approach. According to positive psychology, warm relationships foster gratitude, which is both affective and cognitive. When mothers experience meaningful connections, they are more likely to develop feelings of appreciation, thankfulness, and purpose in their parenting roles (Hidayati et al., 2024).

This study further clarifies the mediating role of gratitude through Fredrickson's (2001, 2004) broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions. The theory states that positive emotions like gratitude help widen people's momentary thought-action repertoires, which in turn develop lasting personal resources such as psychological resilience, social bonds, and cognitive flexibility. In parenting, when mothers feel gratitude, their focus shifts from immediate stressors to noticing positive elements in their relationship with their children. This broader focus allows mothers to think more creatively about parenting issues, explore different responses to their children's behaviors, and stay emotionally adaptable during tough times. Over time, this expanded awareness fosters important psychological resources like emotional regulation, patience, and perspective-taking, which are key to mindful parenting (Emmons & McCullough, 2003; Fredrickson, 2004). Therefore, gratitude not only boosts mothers' well-being but also enhances their cognitive and

emotional abilities. This allows them to parent more mindfully, with increased awareness, acceptance, and responsiveness. This framework clearly explains why gratitude fully mediates the connection between the quality of the mother-child relationship and mindful parenting.

Gratitude is described as a positive emotion (Fredrickson, 2004). According to the theory of expanding positive emotions, positive emotions broaden people's attention and encourage more creative thinking, leading to actions that benefit others. Emmons & McCullough (2012) state that gratitude is closely related to self-regulation of emotions and attitudes toward others. Mothers with high gratitude tend to have greater self-awareness of their emotions and the skills to regulate them in parenting. Gratitude also prompts mothers to consider their children's feelings, making it less likely to judge and more likely to show unconditional love and appreciation. Gratitude can transform the quality of relationships and support mindful parenting (Nguyen et al., 2020).

A grateful mother recognizes the significance of others in life and accepts their importance. In the spiritual realm, this experience can be seen as God's will or destiny. Thus, a grateful mother perceives her child as a manifestation of God's will. Within faith traditions, children are often viewed as God's entrusted gift. This faith-based recognition elevates mothers to a position of trust from God. Understanding and valuing the maternal role in relationships with children motivates mothers to fulfill their duties wholeheartedly. When mothers develop awareness and appreciation of their role, they commit sincerely to raising and nurturing their children. Gratitude leads mothers to view every interaction positively. Mindful parenting treats the child as a teacher who offers new insights through their behaviors (Kabat Zinn & Kabat Zinn, 2014).

In the modern era, these findings are especially relevant for mothers due to shifting cultural norms and parenting practices. Today's mothers deal with multitasking demands, elevated social expectations, and digital distractions, all of which can hinder their full engagement in parenting (Zhang, 2025). Unlike the more collective approach of earlier times, modern mothers often nurture within an individualistic setting that is full of performative expectations. In this context, gratitude serves as a vital psychological resource, enabling mothers to sustain a positive outlook and find meaning despite the multifaceted demands of their roles. Research by Hidayati et al., (2025) shows that in Indonesian mothers, gratitude functions as a psychological buffer in mindfulness practices. Thus, mindful parenting in the modern era depends not only on relationships but also on the mother's ability to manage positive emotions reflectively.

This study has several limitations that warrant in-depth examination. Firstly, the cross-sectional design restricts the ability to determine causal relationships and understand the long-term psychological processes linking mother-child relationship quality, gratitude, and mindful parenting. Because parenting relationships are dynamic and evolve, a longitudinal approach would better capture these changes. Secondly, data collection relied solely on self-report questionnaires, which may introduce subjective biases such as social desirability or variability in respondents' self-reflection skills. Third, the study did not account for other relevant contextual factors like parenting stress, spousal support, economic conditions, or the burden of managing multiple roles, all of which can influence mindful parenting according to existing literature. Future research should consider a mixed-method approach combining quantitative and qualitative techniques to enrich statistical findings with a deeper understanding of mothers' subjective experiences related to gratitude and mindfulness. Additionally, further studies should investigate other positive emotion mediators—such as self-compassion, emotion regulation, spirituality, meaningful life, and eudaimonic well-being—that could enhance mindful parenting as a reflective and relational skill (Moreira et al., 2016). Experimental research on positive emotion interventions, particularly gratitude exercises and parenting meanings, is also needed to strengthen empirical evidence and inform the development of parenting programs.

This study's main insight is that gratitude fully mediates the link between mother-child relationship quality and mindful parenting, particularly among modern Indonesian mothers. Theoretically, it enhances the mindful parenting model by positioning gratitude as a crucial emotional factor, complementing previous theories focused more on emotional bonds and regulation. Practically, the results suggest that parenting programs should not only aim to improve relationship quality but also systematically incorporate gratitude exercises. Adding gratitude reflection modules to mindfulness-based parenting programs can boost their effectiveness. Overall, this research offers a meaningful advancement in developing family psychology interventions that are both contextually relevant and effective.

4. Conclusion

This research indicates that the quality of the mother-child bond does not directly influence mindful parenting but operates through an internal psychological process, specifically gratitude, which serves as a full mediator. The results suggest that warm, safe, and open relationships alone are insufficient to foster mindful parenting without an affective-cognitive internalization in mothers. Gratitude acts as a crucial mechanism that converts relational experiences into skills for emotion

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AI Declaration

This article is the original work of the author without using AI-tools for writing sentences and/or creating/editing tables and figures in this manuscript".

Author Contributions

Conceptualization: First Author, Second Author; **Third Author methodology:** First Author, Second Author, Fourth Author; **investigation:** First Author, Second Author; **writing original draft preparation:** First Author, Second Author; **writing review and editing:** First Author, Second Author; **visualization:** First Author, Second Author. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest that could have influenced the results of this study, and they affirm their commitment to maintaining the highest standards of scientific integrity.

Data availability

No new data were generated or analyzed in this study. All data supporting the findings are derived from previously published sources and are available within the article and its supplementary materials.

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regulation, non-judgmental acceptance, and present-focused engagement during caregiving. Consequently, this study advances the theoretical framework of mindful parenting by integrating relational and positive psychology perspectives, highlighting gratitude as the key mediator. For modern mothers juggling multiple roles and social pressures, these findings emphasize the importance of internal psychological resources in cultivating adaptive, reflective, and mindfulness-based parenting.

These results suggest that daily parenting effectiveness depends not just on how well mothers interact with their children, but also on their ability to see the parenting experience in a positive light. Mothers who cultivate gratitude are often better at managing negative feelings, responding patiently to their children's actions, and being fully present during simple interactions like listening to stories, helping with learning, or addressing difficult behaviors. Practices such as daily reflection, recalling positive moments with children, and finding deeper meaning in motherhood can serve as effective ways to foster mindful parenting. Overall, cultivating gratitude in everyday life can enhance mother-child relationships, foster a warmer and more conscious parenting environment, and support children's healthy development.

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