



Gratitude Makes You Strong: Exploring the Influence of Gratitude and Resilience on Working Students

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Abstract: This study aims to investigate the influence of gratitude on resilience in working students. Working students often face tough challenges related to dual roles, which can affect students' psychological well-being, so it is important to understand the factors that can support students' mental resilience. This study uses a quantitative design with an ex-post facto type, the sampling technique used is purposive sampling, the sample size is 370 working students. The instruments used are the Gratitude Scale and the Resilience Scale. The results showed that there was a significant positive influence between gratitude on resilience in working students with a significance value of 0.001 ($P < 0.05$). The higher the level of gratitude that students have, the higher the level of resilience that students show in facing life's challenges. The discussion of these findings indicates that gratitude acts as a psychological factor that strengthens students' resilience in undergoing dual roles as workers and students, and helps students to interpret challenges more positively. This study contributes to the development of psychological intervention strategies to improve the resilience of working students by strengthening gratitude as part of students' psychological well-being.

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INTRODUCTION

Working students are a unique group in higher education, who not only struggle to meet academic demands, but also face the pressures of the work responsibilities they carry (Tumin et al., 2020). This phenomenon is increasingly widespread along with increasing economic needs, demands for financial independence,

and the desire to gain work experience during studies (Shava & Chinyamurindi, 2019). On the one hand, this condition shows the character of active and productive students. However, on the other hand, students who work are faced with complex psychological and academic challenges, such as fatigue, stress, and role conflict (Owen et al., 2018; Razak et al., 2019). This condition requires students who

work to have high adaptability in facing pressure from two different worlds the academic world and the work world (Monteiro et al., 2020).

Students must be able to divide their time effectively, maintain focus on studying amidst physical fatigue, and still fulfill professional responsibilities (Remenick & Bergman, 2021). Not infrequently, working students experience role conflict, namely confusion in determining priorities between college assignments and work obligations. When the demands of these two roles clash, students are at risk of experiencing chronic fatigue, prolonged stress, and decreased motivation to learn (Boatman & Long, 2018; Calma et al., 2019). In addition, limited rest time and lack of social support can also worsen their psychological condition. Working students often face the stigma of being less focused or not totally committed to their studies, even though many of them actually show high enthusiasm, maturity, and independence (Nunes et al., 2022).

Globally, the trend of students working shows a significant increase. In the United States, data from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) in 2024 noted that almost 43% of students worked part-time or full-time jobs in addition to studying (Irwin et al., 2024). In Europe, a report from Eurostudent in 2021 showed that around 55% of students work during their studies (Mandl & Menz, 2024). In Indonesia, data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) in 2022 noted that 10.76% of students were actively working (BPS, 2022). Although working provides economic benefits and experience, research shows that working students have a higher risk of academic stress, decreased academic performance, and mental health disorders

(Barbayannis et al., 2022; Summer et al., 2025).

In Padang City, the phenomenon of students working is also a real thing. Based on observation data from several private and state universities on December 2-6, 2024, many students study while working in the formal or informal sectors. This condition creates a different dynamic of campus life from regular students. Initial interviews conducted with 10 students working at one of the universities in Padang on December 9-10, 2024 showed that the majority of them experienced chronic fatigue, difficulty managing time between work and study, and felt they did not get adequate social support, both from the work environment and academics. These problems ultimately have an impact on their psychological well-being and their fighting spirit in completing their studies.

In this context, resilience becomes one of the important keys for working students to be able to survive and thrive amidst these double pressures. Resilience is the psychological capacity to adapt positively to the difficulties and pressures of life (Yudiati et al., 2025). Resilience is an individual's ability to survive, recover, and adapt positively when faced with pressure, challenges, or difficult situations in life (Kantabutra & Ketprapakorn, 2021). This concept reflects a person's psychological capacity to not only recover from adversity, but also to grow stronger after experiencing it (Southwick et al., 2014). Resilience does not mean being free from adversity, but rather the ability to “bounce” back after experiencing severe stress or challenging experiences. Resilience includes the capacity to maintain emotional balance, develop solutions to problems faced, and learn from difficult experiences to grow stronger (Pahwa & Khan, 2022). Students

who have high resilience tend not to give up easily, are able to think positively when facing difficulties, and have adaptive coping strategies. However, resilience is not formed just like that (García-Crespo et al., 2021; Tokbaeva & Achtenhagen, 2023). One of the psychological factors that plays a role in the formation of resilience is gratitude (Scott et al., 2021).

Gratitude according to Emmons et al., (2003) is an individual who has a high sense of gratitude tends to be more optimistic, has better emotional regulation, and finds it easier to see positive meaning in difficulties. Gratitude or gratitude is a form of positive emotion that arises when someone realizes and acknowledges that he has received kindness, help, or positive things, either from other people, the environment, or his life experiences (Mangone, 2019). Gratitude is a multidimensional concept that not only involves an emotional response to the kindness received, but also includes cognitive and behavioral aspects that encourage a person to appreciate life more holistically (Fagley, 2018). According to Wood et al., (2010) Gratitude is a general tendency of individuals to feel and express appreciation for the good things in their lives, both large and small. In addition to being a reaction to the gifts of others, gratitude can also appear as a life attitude that encourages someone to focus more on the positive aspects of everyday life (Komase et al., 2021).

Gratitude has been empirically proven to contribute to various aspects of psychological well-being, including strengthening resilience (Arnout & Almoied, 2021). This is in line with research by Zainoodin et al., (2021) showed a significant relationship between gratitude and resilience. Individuals with high levels

of gratitude are able to recover from stress more quickly and tend to have more constructive coping. Finley (2018) found that gratitude plays a role in reducing the effects of academic stress and increasing emotional resilience in college students. Zhao and Ji (2024) also found that students who have high levels of gratitude show stronger adaptability in the face of academic pressure. Similar studies have also shown by Calleja et al., (2024) who found that gratitude was positively related to the resilience of first-year college students experiencing transitional stress. In addition, research by Llenares et al., (2020) among young workers also shows that gratitude plays a role in forming a resilient and optimistic mindset amidst work pressure. These studies show that gratitude is not only beneficial in the context of spirituality or happiness, but also plays an important role in forming the resilient character of individuals, including working students.

Various studies have been conducted related to the variables of gratitude and resilience, and how both contribute to an individual's psychological well-being. However, the author has not found any research that specifically examines the effect of gratitude on resilience in working students, especially in Padang City. Working students have a double burden, namely having to divide their time and energy between academic demands and work responsibilities. This condition makes students more susceptible to stress, fatigue, and the risk of low mental resilience. In the field, not a few working students feel overwhelmed and unable to balance between college and work, so that some of them experience a decrease in learning motivation and even choose to drop out of college. Seeing this reality, resilience is an important ability that must be possessed so that students can survive and complete their studies. Meanwhile, gratitude is believed to be one of the

important factors that can strengthen resilience, because individuals who have gratitude tend to be more optimistic, focus on positive things, and are able to manage stress in an adaptive way. Therefore, it is important to further examine the extent to which gratitude affects resilience in working students in Padang City.

METHOD

This research uses a quantitative approach with an ex-post facto type, namely non-experimental quantitative research conducted to investigate the causal relationship between variables, but the researcher does not provide direct treatment or manipulation of the independent variables because the events or data studied have occurred in the past (Putra et al., 2024). This study uses 2 variables, namely: gratitude as an independent variable and resilience as a dependent variable. The population in the study amounted to. The population in this study was 11,735 students from one of the universities in Padang City. The subjects of the study were active students who worked in Padang City, with a total of 370 people consisting of male and female students. The sampling technique used purposive sampling, which is a sample determination technique based on certain criteria set by the researcher. The criteria in this study include students who work part-time or full-time during their studies, Age between 18-25 years. Gratitude is measured using the gratitude scale in this study is compiled based on the concept put forward by Watkins et al., (2003) with aspects such as sense of abundance, appreciation of others, and simple pleasures. Meanwhile, the resilience scale refers to the theory Reivich and Shatté (2002) which includes seven aspects, namely emotional regulation, impulse control, optimism, empathy, self-efficacy, reaching out, and causal analysis. Data analysis in this study using the SPSS version 25 application began with a prerequisite test in the form of a normality and linearity test. After the prerequisite test was met, a hypothesis test

was carried out using simple linear regression analysis to see the effect of gratitude on resilience.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Demographics of subjects in this study are working students aged 19-23 years and consist of male and female which can be seen in table 1.

Table 1. Subject Demographic Data

Demographic Data	N	Percentage
Gender		
Male	286	77.3%
Female	84	22.7%
Age		
19 years old	11	3.0%
20 years	110	29.7%
21 years	86	23.2%
22 years	150	40.5%
23 years	13	3.5%

This study involved a total of 370 participants. Based on gender, the majority of participants were male, which was 286 people (77.3%), while females numbered 84 people (22.7%). Judging from the age of the participants, most were in the 22 year old age range, which was 150 people (40.5%). The age of 20 years was the second largest age group with 110 people (29.7%), followed by the age of 21 years as many as 86 people (23.2%). Meanwhile, participants aged 23 years numbered 13 people (3.5%), and the age of 19 years was the smallest number, which was 11 people (3.0%). Furthermore, the categorization of research data can be seen in table 2.

Table 2. Categorization Data for Each Variable

Variables	Score	Amount	Category	%
Gratitude	79.95 < X	75	Very high	20.3
	66.65 < X < 79.95	69	Tall	18.6
	53.35 < X < 66.65	141	Currently	38.1
	40.05 < X < 53.35	62	Low	16.8

	X<40.05	23	Very Low	6.2
	X ≥ 98	140	Very high	37.8
	79 ≤ X < 98	53	Tall	14.3
Resilience	61 ≤ X < 79	91	Currently	24.6
	42 ≤ X < 61	84	Low	22.7
	X ≤ 42	2	Very Low	0.5

The distribution of scores on the gratitude variable shows that most participants are in the moderate category, which is 141 people (38.1%). Followed by the very high category of 75 people (20.3%), the high category of 69 people (18.6%), the low category of 62 people (16.8%), and the very low category of 23 people (6.2%). In the resilience variable, the largest distribution is in the very high category, which is 140 people (37.8%). Furthermore, 91 people (24.6%) are in the moderate category, 84 people (22.7%) are in the low category, 53 people (14.3%) are in the high category, and only 2 people (0.5%) are in the very low category.

The results of the normality test using Kolmogorov-Smirnov showed that each variable in this study had a P value > .05 based on unstandardized residual data, so that the normality assumption was met. The unstandardized residual score showed a significance value of .190 (P> .05) which means that the unstandardized residual data is normally distributed. Then the results of the linearity test analysis obtained a significance value in the Deviation from Linearity component of .112. (p> .05), which indicates that there is no significant deviation from the linear model between the gratitude and resilience variables. Thus, it can be concluded that the relationship between the two variables can be statistically explained through a linear relationship model. In addition, the

Linearity component showed significant results (F = 403.671; p < .001), which indicates that the linear model provides a good representation of the relationship between gratitude and resilience. Furthermore, the results of the linear regression test between gratitude and resilience can be seen in Table 3

Table 3. F Test Results

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	107448.738	1	107448.738	371,899	.000
	106322.138	368	288,919		
	213770.876	369			

Based on Table 3, it is known that the calculated F value is 371,899 with significance (p) = .000. This significance value is much smaller than the significance level of .05, which indicates that the regression model used in this study is statistically significant. So gratitude makes a significant contribution to resilience. Furthermore, the T-test results can be seen in Table 4.

Table 4. T-Test Results

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	12,713	3,796		3.349	.001
GR	1.126	0.058	0.709	19,285	.000

Based on Table 4, it is known that the t value for the gratitude variable is 19.285 with a significance value (p) = .000. This high t value, accompanied by a p value far below .05, indicates that the effect of gratitude on resilience is statistically significant. This means that there is strong evidence that gratitude significantly contributes to predicting the level of resilience. Furthermore, the results of the

Determination Coefficient can be seen in Table 5.

Table 5. Results of the Determination Coefficient test

R	R-square (R ²)	Adjusted R square
0.709	0.503	.501

Based on Table 5, the R value is 0.709, which indicates that there is a strong positive relationship between gratitude and resilience. The R-square (R²) value of .503 indicates that 50.3% of the variability in resilience can be explained by the gratitude variable. Meanwhile, the Adjusted R Square value of .501 indicates that after adjusting for the number of predictor variables and samples, the model still explains about 50.1% of the variation in resilience.

Gratitude variable research data category, the results show that the majority of students who work have a moderate level of gratitude. Students who work have a moderate level of gratitude because students are able to realize positive things in life even though they have to face pressure from dual responsibilities as students and workers (Komase et al., 2021). Students show their gratitude for the support of their families, co-workers, and the campus environment which makes it easy to complete academic tasks (Tantomo & Suparman, 2021). However, the heavy workload and academics sometimes make students less able to reflect on the things they can be grateful for every day (Cardon & Wong, 2024). Gratitude in students who work is shown by an attitude of appreciating free time, help from others, and valuable experiences from working while studying. This is in line with research Imai (2024) which states that students who work still have a sense of gratitude in sufficient levels, because students are able to see the positive side of the challenges they face. Research by Nicklin et al., (2019) also found that working students tend to develop gratitude gradually as a result of the process of adapting to the pressures of working and

studying simultaneously.

Furthermore, in the resilience categorization, the results show that the majority of students who work have resilience in the very high category. This shows that students who work are able to survive and recover from various pressures and obstacles in their lives, both in academic and work contexts. Very high resilience in students who work is characterized by behavior that remains enthusiastic even though facing physical and mental fatigue, the ability to manage time independently between lectures and work, and the ability to continue to achieve academic goals even when faced with many challenges (Najwa et al., 2023). Students who work also demonstrate the ability to adapt and solve problems calmly and wisely, and make difficult experiences into learning experiences that shape personal strength (Tumin et al., 2020). This is in line with research Fullerton et al., (2021) who found that working students have high resilience because the demands of dual roles make students accustomed to managing stress in an adaptive way. Research from Ryan et al., (2019) also stated that working students showed strong psychological resilience because they had high motivation in achieving education and improving their economic conditions independently.

The results of the hypothesis test show that there is a significant positive influence between gratitude and resilience in working students, so the hypothesis in this study is accepted. This shows that the higher the gratitude of working students, the higher the level of resilience they show in facing various life challenges. Gratitude allows students to view challenges as part of a process that brings lessons and personal growth. Students who are able to be grateful for the little things in their daily lives, such as support from family, the opportunity to study while working, and simple achievements, tend to have stronger resilience in dealing with academic and work pressures (Zainoodin et al., 2021). In line with research Wood et al., (2010)

which shows that gratitude acts as a character strength that supports individual resilience in facing life's difficulties. Research Toepfer et al., (2012) also found that individuals who have high levels of gratitude are better able to construct positive meaning from difficult situations, which ultimately increases resilience. The study Hahn et al., (2024) shows that students who work and have high gratitude tend to be stronger in dealing with pressure, recover more easily from failure, and are able to maintain their mental health better. This finding is supported by research Zainoodin et al., (2021) which shows that gratitude is positively correlated with resilience in working students. The gratitude that is present in students makes them more accepting of the situation, more adaptable to the challenges of dual roles as students and workers, and have the spirit to continue moving forward. Research Garg and Sarkar (2020) also shows that grateful working students tend to be able to develop a more positive outlook on life and are less likely to give up. Gratitude is a source of psychological strength that helps working students to survive under pressure and even grow from the difficult experiences they face (Bono & Sender, 2018). Gratitude in the context of working students also serves as a foundation for building long-term mental resilience (Basit et al., 2024). Gratitude for learning opportunities, supportive social environments, and personal accomplishments gives students the strength to navigate challenging days with a more patient, reflective, and resilient attitude (López-Aymes et al., 2020). Gratitude encourages working students to interpret their struggles in a more positive way, which ultimately increases their resilience capacity in dealing with stress and the burden of complex roles (Mangone, 2019).

The implications of this study indicate that gratitude plays an important role in increasing resilience in working

students. Grateful students tend to be better able to cope with the pressures of dual roles as workers and students, and have stronger resilience. Therefore, developing a gratitude strengthening program in the campus environment can be an effective strategy in supporting students' mental resilience. However, because this study only involved a limited sample and did not consider other factors such as type of work and social support, further research is needed to expand the understanding and generalization of these findings.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that there is a significant positive influence between gratitude and resilience in working students. Students who have a sense of gratitude tend to be able to withstand academic and work pressures, and demonstrate a high adaptive ability in managing life's challenges. Gratitude helps students to interpret difficult experiences positively, increase mental resilience, and strengthen motivation in carrying out dual roles. These findings indicate that developing an attitude of gratitude can be an important approach to improving the resilience of working students. For future research, it is recommended to expand the sample by involving students from various majors and universities to strengthen the generalization of these findings. In addition, it is important to consider other factors that can affect resilience, such as the type of work, social support, and coping strategies used by working students. Further research could also explore the relationship between gratitude and other psychological factors, such as emotional intelligence and self-efficacy, to provide a more comprehensive understanding of how gratitude plays a role in improving mental resilience.

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