FACULTY OF EDUCATION
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SPECIAL EDUCATION

ADAPTING MINDFULNESS MEDITATION FOR IMMIGRANT AT-RISK YOUTH: ASSESSING WELLBEING OUTCOMES IN A SWEDISH SCHOOL SETTING

Fatima Gul Jahan

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Supervisor:	Dawn Sanders
Examiner:	Giulia Messina Dahlberg

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Abstract

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Abstract

In Sweden, many young immigrants and refugees face emotional difficulties, social marginalisation, and high levels of stress, all of which have an impact on their general wellness. Although mindfulness-based techniques in schools are becoming more popular, little is known about how effective such interventions are for at-risk immigrant students in multicultural settings. This study aims to assess the efficacy and cultural suitability of a mindfulness meditation program for at-risk high school immigrant youth in Gothenburg, Sweden. Standardised Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire was used to extract wellbeing data from 17 students before and after the intervention using an explanatory mixed methods approach.In- depth semi-structured interviews with four students were conducted afterwards to learn more about their experiences with the program. Results show better sleep, less stress, better emotional control, and a stronger feeling of self-awareness among participants. Self-esteem, resilience, love, internal serenity, and the value of self-awareness are examples of qualitative themes. Education professionals, school counsellors, and legislators interested in trauma-sensitive, inclusive mental health programs can benefit from this study. It emphasises how mindfulness programs that are culturally relevant might help vulnerable immigrant youths with their emotional health and school integration.

Foreword

This thesis is more than just an academic assignment. It reflects a strong personal journey that I am deeply grateful to for the encouragement, sacrifice, and support of several people and communities.

I want to start by sincerely dedicating this work to my late husband, Dr. Mohammad Kamrul Islam. Our marriage opened the door for me to pursue my goals of further education and an international scholarship in a patriarchal society where women frequently struggle to educate themselves.I give thanks to my two sons, who are my unsung heroes. They shadowed their father's encouraging attitude after the loss, so I could carry on this research.

This thesis topic is very personal to me. I began practicing mindfulness at a young age, following the long-lasting pain of my own family not acknowledging my right to an education. After being introduced to mindfulness in my birthplace of Chittagong, Bangladesh, I have been practicing it for almost two decades. I was inspired by my own experience to look into how it may give hope to communities who are in pain.So I selected this topic for a vulnerable group here in Sweden.

This study would not have been possible without the kind assistance of my supervisor, Dawn Sanders, who provided academic guidance, flexibility, and encouragement,Swedish recreational teachers, school representatives,the incredible immigrant participants who welcomed me with such openness; and Prof. Girma Berhanu (H.W. help project researcher).

My profound gratitude goes out to my classmates, including Fatemeh Nasari and Chireen Abu Amir, who have become my academic family. Throughout this process, their frequent check- ins, encouragement, and emotional support were invaluable.

Lastly, I would like take this opportunity to reflect and thank the larger ecosystem that enabled this effort. With its support of intellectual endeavours, beautiful scenery, and calm university libraries, Swedish society provided me with the peaceful places I needed to think, regain strength, and develop a sense of visibility. This full support system was required.

Thank you to everyone who lovingly and carefully held my hand, both named and unnamed. You own this thesis just as much as I do.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 The Growing Crisis in Adolescent Mental Health

Adolescence is a time of great transition, characterised by physical development, turbulent feelings, and changing social and cognitive abilities. The difficulties faced by young people from immigrant and refugee backgrounds are frequently made worse by structural obstacles, cultural dissonance, and ongoing misidentification experiences. The World Health Organisation [WHO], 2017a; Merikangas et al., 2010) reports that anxiety, depression, and suicidality are on the rise in many nations, indicating a growing mental health crisis among young people. Effective, culturally sensitive early treatments are therefore desperately needed.

This study employs Axel Honneth's Theory of Recognition to analyse mindfulness-based interventions (MBIs) (Houston, 2015). It investigates how mindfulness techniques may promote emotional health and cultivate feelings of compassion, respect, and social value when tailored to the cultural and developmental realities of immigrant at-risk youth.

1.2 Background and Context

Between the ages of 14 and 16, adolescents are in a transitional stage between early and late adolescence. At this point, problems of identity, belonging, and purpose become more profound as ongoing neurodevelopment, hormonal changes, and changing social roles come together (Patton et al., 2016). All young people struggle with these processes, but adolescents who are immigrants are particularly affected. These include controlling the effects of prejudice, coping with economic or social disadvantage, and adapting to new languages and cultural norms (Gudiño et al., 2008; Mood et al., 2016).

The psychological wellness of immigrant and native-born youth in Sweden continues to differ despite the country's advanced social welfare measures (Berry, 1997; Portes & Zhou, 1993). After being resettled, adolescents from refugee backgrounds have been found to have high rates of psychological distress and behavioural issues (Davidson et al., 2004; Bean et al., 2007b; Fazel et al., 2012). According to Hjern (2012), settlement in socially and economically deprived groups, family separation, exposure to war, and unclear asylum

procedures are all contributing causes. These conditions frequently coexist with institutionalised exclusion in educational institutions, where immigrant students may experience social and academic marginalisation (Tan, 2016).

Early and easily accessible mental health support is something that schools are well positioned to offer (WHO, 2017b; Dray et al., 2014). Particularly, mindfulness-based interventions have demonstrated potential in enhancing teenagers' emotional control, attentiveness, and stress resistance (Kabat-Zinn, 1994; Weare, 2013; Zenner et al., 2014). According to Chambers et al. (2009) and Hayes & Feldman (2004), mindfulness might lessen maladaptive coping mechanisms like rumination and suppression by promoting nonjudgmental awareness of thoughts and feelings.

Research also indicates that MBIs' efficacy differs depending on age and cultural setting. According to Carsley et al. (2017), the impacts on younger teens are less consistent, whereas older adolescents (ages 15–18) typically have stronger consequences. Because cultural values influence how emotions are controlled and expressed, mindfulness techniques may need to be modified in order to be effective with immigrant children traversing various cultural contexts (Butler et al., 2007; Soto et al., 2011).

Few studies specifically address teenagers who are both structurally marginalised and at risk for developmental problems. Because of this, educators and practitioners have little direction when it comes to putting culturally sensitive mindfulness programs into place for vulnerable immigrant adolescents in educational settings. By investigating an adapted mindfulness program for immigrant adolescents aged 14 to 16 at a Swedish school and analysing its impact on identity development and wellbeing via the prism of recognition theory, this thesis fills that knowledge vacuum.

Three associated gaps are addressed by this study. In the first place, it recognises that most MBIs were developed using Western frameworks and did not account for the cultural origins, values, and life experiences of immigrant teenagers. Second, it discusses a lack of Nordic research examining mindfulness practices for underprivileged schoolchildren. Thirdly, it applies Honneth's recognition theory to investigate whether and how mindfulness could assist immigrant teenagers in feeling included, respected, and dignified. Although this study was implemented in a school environment, it does not aim to investigate immigrant

youth's academic challenges or achievements. Instead, the school setting simply provided access to participants, with the focus placed squarely on the adolescents' emotional wellbeing and lived experiences.

1.3 Problem Statement

Immigrant youths in Swedish schools frequently face a variety of interrelated issues that could impede their academic success, mental health, and social integration. Behavioural issues, depressive symptoms, and feelings of marginalisation are often associated with academic challenges (Mood et al., 2016). Despite these expectations, many young people and their families choose not to use traditional mental health therapies. Language challenges, cultural stigma, a lack of knowledge with Swedish health facilities, and cultural differences in the perception and expression of distress can all contribute to this mismatch (Tan, 2016; Guo et al., 2014).

School-based mindfulness programs provide potentially affordable and easily accessible assistance. But their effectiveness depends on how well they adapt to participants' life experiences and how well-received they are in their culture. Without proper adaptation, these initiatives may fail to engage immigrant kids and may even alienate or interact with them in an irrelevant way (McKeering & Hwang, 2018). As research on culturally relevant MBIs for immigrant teenagers is still in its infancy, this problem is especially noticeable in Swedish schools situated in high-risk neighbourhoods.

1.4 Objectives and Research Questions

This study aims to assess the effects of an eight-week mindfulness meditation program tailored to the cultural norms of immigrant at risk children in a Swedish school. Axel Honneth's Theory of Recognition, which argues that social worth, respect, and care are critical to human growth and well-being, serves as the program's framework.

Research Question 1 (RQ1)

What changes in mindfulness and emotional wellbeing are observed in immigrant youth after participating in the program?

- Sub-question 1 (SRQ1): How do gender, grade level, country of birth and frequency of practice influence variations in students' mindfulness and wellbeing outcomes?
- Sub-question 2 (SRQ2): How do individual Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire (FFMQ) profiles reflect positive or negative changes in mindfulness dimensions following the intervention?

Research Question 2 (RQ2)

How do students from immigrant backgrounds describe their experiences of the mindfulnes program, and how do these experiences related to students' emotional wellbeing, sense of identity, and relationships?

- Sub-question 3 (SRQ3): How do the qualitative findings complement or contrast with the quantitative data in understanding students' experiences and outcomes?

1.5 Purpose and Significance

This study's primary goal is to thoroughly investigate the effects of an eight-week mindfulness meditation program designed especially for young immigrants in a Swedish educational environment. Using a mixed-methods approach, the study combines semi-structured qualitative interviews with a standardised quantitative measure called the Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire (FFMQ). Both quantifiable improvements in mindfulness and wellness as well as the individual experiences that led to such improvements can be captured thanks to this approach.

The study fills a significant gap in the Nordic mindfulness literature by concentrating on a group that is both structurally marginalised and developmentally at risk. The study is to investigate how the modified curriculum could enhance students' feeling of dignity, agency, and belonging in addition to determining whether it enhances emotional health.

The study applies Honneth's Theory of Recognition to mindfulness practice, which is a novel theoretical contribution. This lens emphasises how therapies can function as sociocultural supports that affirm people through respect, empathy, and social value in addition to being psychological tools.

In the real world, the results might offer educators, school counsellors, and legislators evidence-based recommendations for creating scalable, cost-effective solutions that work with regular school schedules. These methods could be used in conjunction with current student support programs, particularly in schools that serve underprivileged students. The study also supports larger global initiatives to advance fairness and social inclusion, which are in line with Sustainable Development Goals like inclusivity and safe learning zones (SDG 4).

Through elevating the perspectives of young immigrants, this study guarantees that suggestions for future mindfulness initiatives stay rooted in the experiences of the people they are intended to assist. This helps to close the gap between theory, empirical data, and culturally aware practice.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter presents an overview of the literature relevant to the present study, which investigates a culturally adapted mindfulness-based intervention (MBI) for immigrant at-risk youth in a Swedish school. The review begins by situating mindfulness within educational settings internationally before narrowing to the Nordic context. It then examines existing evidence from Nordic school-based mindfulness programs and highlights the limited attention given to immigrant adolescents. The chapter introduces Axel Honneth's theory of recognition as a framework for understanding how mindfulness may address the misrecognition often experienced by immigrant youth. It concludes by synthesizing these strands to define the specific knowledge gap this study addresses.

2.1 **Mindfulness in International and Nordic Contexts**

Over the past three decades, research on mindfulness in education has grown considerably, with interventions shown to improve students' attention, emotional regulation, and resilience. International evidence indicates benefits in reducing anxiety and depressive symptoms among adolescents, though outcomes are variable and often moderated by individual characteristics such as baseline emotional regulation and executive functioning (Carsley et al., 2017; Zenner et al., 2014).

Within Nordic context, the literature remains limited but promising. Studies from Sweden and Finland suggest that mindfulness programs can support psychological resilience, reduce anxiety, and improve wellbeing among adolescents (Saarinen et al., 2022; Laundy et al., 2021). Yet such findings are often modest, and program effectiveness depends on developmental stage and gender. Importantly, research with immigrant youth in Sweden demonstrates that cultural adaptation is critical: linking mindfulness practices to familiar traditions significantly enhanced engagement and receptivity (Osman et al., 2020). Despite these insights, large-scale research in culturally diverse Nordic classrooms remains scarce, and most existing studies involve relatively homogeneous student populations.

2.2 Conceptual Foundations of Mindfulness in Education

Mindfulness, rooted in Buddhist traditions, has been secularized and operationalized in Western contexts as "the awareness that emerges through paying attention on purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgmentally to the unfolding of experience moment by moment" (Kabat-Zinn, 1990, p. 145). In educational settings, mindfulness is typically introduced through short practices designed to cultivate attentional control, emotional balance, and psychological wellbeing (Schonert-Reichl & Roeser, 2016).

Four main rationales underpin its use in schools. First, a clinical rationale, focusing on alleviating stress, anxiety, and emotional difficulties. Second, a salutogenic rationale, promoting resilience and positive mental health. Third, an academic rationale, enhancing concentration, cognitive performance, and self-regulation. Finally, a pedagogical rationale, positioning mindfulness as a tool for cultivating empathy, compassion, and social responsibility in classrooms (Meiklejohn et al., 2012; Grossman, 2015). This final rationale connects mindfulness to broader values of inclusive education and makes it particularly relevant for culturally diverse contexts.

2.3 The Nordic Educational Context and Adolescent Wellbeing

The Nordic educational model is internationally recognized for its emphasis on equity, inclusivity, and student welfare. These values make Nordic schools a fertile ground for universal wellbeing interventions such as MBIs (Terjestam, 2011).

Adolescence is a critical developmental period: heightened brain plasticity creates both vulnerability to stress and receptivity to interventions (Greenberg & Harris, 2012). In Sweden, stress and psychological distress among adolescents have risen, with academic pressure frequently cited as a contributing factor (Terjestam, 2011). Preventive, school-based strategies that address emotional wellbeing are therefore increasingly important.

2.4 Evidence from Nordic School-Based Mindfulness Interventions

Although still limited, Nordic studies offer valuable insights. Terjestam (2011) demonstrated that an eight-week meditation program in Swedish schools reduced emotional symptoms and improved overall wellbeing, with particularly strong effects among female students who reported better peer relationships and enhanced school satisfaction. Extending this work, the

"Compas" program—integrating mindfulness, compassion training, and reflective discussion—showed significant gains in effortful control, social relationships, and perceived wellbeing, with benefits especially marked among younger adolescents (Terjestam et al., 2016).

However, international findings advise caution. The large-scale MYRIAD trial in the UK found that the standard mindfulness curriculum (.b) did not produce significant improvements compared to regular teaching and, in some cases, was associated with slight adverse effects among at-risk students (Montero-Marin et al., 2022). Finnish studies have also highlighted how baseline psychological characteristics moderate outcomes, with adolescents high in catastrophizing or low in executive functioning benefitting most (Saarinen et al., 2022). These findings stress the importance of tailoring interventions to developmental, psychological, and cultural contexts, rather than assuming universal effectiveness.

2.5 Immigrant Youth, Schools, and the Potential for Recognition

For immigrant adolescents, the challenges of adolescence are often intensified by acculturative stress, discrimination, and the negotiation of multiple cultural identities (Bean et al., 2007). Such difficulties can be theorized as *misrecognition*—a failure to provide the care, respect, and social esteem essential for building a secure self-identity. As Honneth (1995, p. 163) writes, "The experience of being disrespected is not only a personal humiliation; it is also a threat to the identity-formation of the individual." Schools, as key sites of socialization, are therefore central arenas where recognition or misrecognition is enacted.

Honneth's theory illuminates how mindfulness can provide restorative recognition. In a supportive group, students' inner experiences can be validated in non-judgmental ways, offering emotional recognition (care). Structured and inclusive practices can affirm each participant's dignity and equality, providing legal recognition (respect). Through cultivating compassion and mutual understanding, mindfulness can also foster social recognition (esteem), allowing immigrant youth to be valued for their contributions. As Honneth (1995, p. 92) emphasizes, "The experience of being recognized by another person is the means by which individuals acquire a positive attitude toward themselves."

For this to be effective, cultural adaptation is crucial. Defined in this study (see Chapter 4, Methodology), adaptation entails aligning program content, language, and examples with the

lived experiences of immigrant youth (Osman et al., 2020; Chu et al., 2021). This means addressing salient issues such as acculturative stress, identity negotiation, and exclusion, so that practices feel relevant and empowering rather than foreign or imposed. When adapted in this way, mindfulness becomes not just a psychological tool but a practice of recognition, affirming dignity and belonging within the school context.

2.6 Mindfulness in Education for Sustainable Development

As a tool of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and as a goal unto itself, education is essential to sustainable development. By doing so, it can increase awareness and develop the abilities, drive, and skills required to tackle sustainability issues (Rieckmann et al., 2017; Wamsler et al., 2012). In the end, education is viewed as a means for people to reach their full potential and advance society (Klafki, 2000; Foster, 2001). SDG 4 reflects these two viewpoints by emphasising safe and inclusive learning settings (Target 4.A), increasing access to education and training (Target 4.4), and empowering students to contribute to sustainable development (Target 4.7). In order to meet these goals, learning environments must be founded on moral precepts like justice, respect, and non-violence. They must also include areas for critical reflection on developmental pathways. In this regard, mindfulness has drawn interest as a cutting-edge teaching strategy to enhance learning and well-being (Schonert-Reichl & Roeser, 2016). Although it has been used extensively in general education, its application in Education for Sustainable Development(ESD) is relatively new (Wamsler et al., 2018). Researchers contend that mindfulness can promote thoughtful and moral approaches to sustainability, improve human-nature relationships, and encourage pro-social and pro-environmental behaviour (Gugerli-Dolder et al., 2013; Greenwood, 2013; Sameshima & Greenwood, 2015; Wamsler, 2019). Teaching and learning for sustainability can thus be incorporated into a "learning system" that increases the group's ability to overcome obstacles (Sol & Wals, 2015).Using five essential components:observing, describing, acting with awareness, nonjudgment, and nonreactivity,mindfulness is specifically examined in this study in relation to the wellbeing of immigrant students (Baer et al., 2006).

Summary and Knowledge Gap

Nordic research provides preliminary evidence that MBIs can improve adolescent wellbeing, though their effects are moderated by developmental, gender, and psychological factors (Terjestam, 2011; Terjestam et al., 2016; Saarinen et al., 2022). Broader European evidence further warns against universal, standardized programs, highlighting the risk of limited benefits or even harm among vulnerable groups (Montero-Marin et al., 2022). Most significantly, the experiences of immigrant youth remain virtually absent from this literature, despite their well-documented vulnerabilities.

This thesis addresses that omission by investigating a culturally adapted mindfulness program for immigrant adolescents in Sweden. By integrating empirical evaluation with Honneth's theory of recognition, it seeks to understand not only whether mindfulness improves wellbeing, but also how it can counteract misrecognition and foster essential human needs for care, respect, and social esteem in diverse educational settings.

Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework

In Chapter 1, the challenges of discrimination, exclusion, and identity struggles were described as central difficulties confronting immigrant youth. These challenges highlight the need for a theoretical framework that captures the social and psychological injuries that occur when individuals are denied validation by their communities and institutions. This chapter introduces Axel Honneth's Theory of Recognition as the primary lens for the study (See figure 1). Recognition theory offers a way to understand how identity develops through intersubjective relations and how the denial of recognition produces experiences of exclusion and suffering (Honneth, 1995). Building on critical interpretations from scholars such as Pilapil (2015) and Pada (2017), this chapter further develops a theoretical link between recognition and mindfulness, proposing that mindfulness may help immigrant youth navigate experiences of misrecognition.

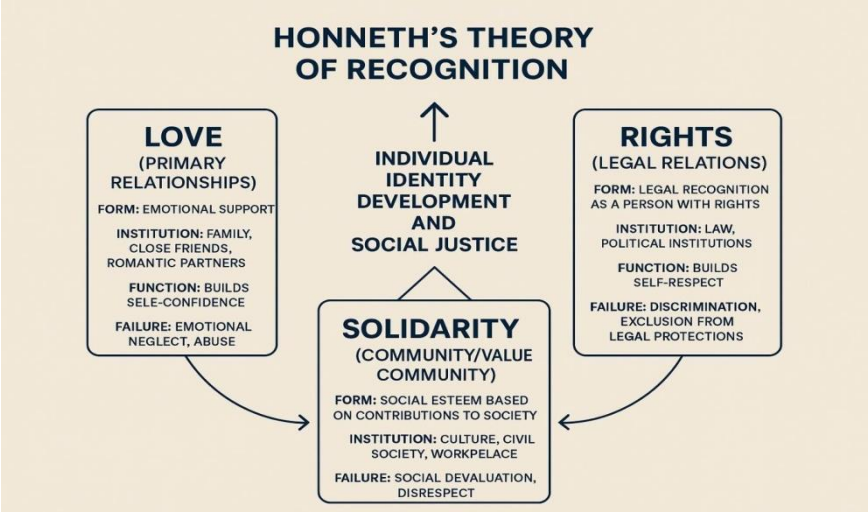

Figure 1. Theory of Recognition.

3.1 Axel Honneth and the Paradigm of Recognition

Axel Honneth (1949), a leading figure of the Frankfurt School of critical theory, situates social analysis in the human need for recognition. For Honneth (1995), selfhood is not an isolated achievement but emerges intersubjectively: individuals become who they are through being recognized by others. His famous assertion that *"recognition precedes cognition"*

underscores this point-our ability to know ourselves and relate to the world depends upon being seen, heard, and affirmed (Honneth, 1995).

In his seminal work, *The Struggle for Recognition*, Honneth (1995) describes identity as dependent upon validation in three key spheres of social life. He explains that an individual can "unfold a practical identity to the extent that he is capable of reassuring himself of recognition by a growing circle of communicative partners" (p. 92). From this perspective, the widespread social exclusion experienced by many immigrant adolescents is not simply a sociological issue but a moral injury that undermines the intersubjective basis of self-development.

3.2 Recognition as Negotiation

The psychological and emotional challenges faced by immigrant youth should not be understood only as private mental states. Rather, they reflect negotiations between the self and the broader social environment, where competing valuations of worth are constantly at play. Honneth's Theory of Recognition provides an interpretive lens for analyzing these negotiations, which occur both within the individual and in interaction with others (Honneth, 1995).

Recognition is thus not a fixed state but an ongoing process of negotiation. Selfhood emerges in the interplay between how one perceives oneself and how others acknowledge (or fail to acknowledge) that selfhood. For immigrant youth, these negotiations are intensified by conflicting expectations between heritage culture and host society, and by experiences of what Honneth (1995) terms *misrecognition*—the denial of adequate social affirmation.

Mindfulness may create conditions for recalibrating these negotiations by offering practices that foster self-awareness, emotional regulation, and compassionate interaction. The intervention does not supply recognition directly, but it may equip participants with internal resources that strengthen their capacity to engage in these negotiations under adverse social conditions. As Pilapil (2015) notes, struggles for recognition are also linked to material distribution, indicating that the psychological and economic dimensions of immigrant youth's experiences are deeply interconnected.

3.3 Three Dimensions of Recognition Negotiation

Honneth's three recognition spheres provide a framework for examining distinct dimensions of selfhood, each of which can be related to facets of mindfulness.

Emotional recognition (care)

This sphere establishes the foundation of self-confidence. It emerges in intimate relationships where emotional needs and vulnerabilities are validated (Honneth, 1995). Migration often disrupts these relationships for immigrant youth through separation from family and community. Mindfulness facets such as *Non-Judging* and *Acting with Awareness* may help recalibrate these negotiations by supporting emotional self-awareness and reducing self-criticism (Baer et al., 2006).

Legal-juridical recognition (respect)

This sphere underpins self-respect and is affirmed through institutional recognition of rights and equal treatment (Honneth, 1995). Immigrant youth often face discriminatory practices that erode their sense of equality. Mindfulness skills such as *Non-Reactivity* may help preserve self-respect by enabling considered responses rather than reactive withdrawal when confronted with disrespect (Pada, 2017).

Social esteem (worth)

This sphere grounds self-worth in communities of value, where individuals seek acknowledgment for their contributions (Honneth, 1995). Immigrant adolescents often encounter the devaluation of their cultural background in dominant hierarchies. Mindfulness facets such as *Observing* and *Describing* may assist them in articulating strengths and cultural identities that are otherwise overlooked (Pilapil, 2015).

3.4 Structural Constraints in Recognition Negotiations

Recognition struggles are not negotiated on equal terms. Pilapil (2015) highlights that struggles for recognition are always bound up with struggles over material redistribution, revealing how economic and cultural hierarchies intersect. Pada (2017) further observes that misrecognition is particularly damaging when institutional practices contradict professed

inclusive values, leaving young people caught in systems that promise equality but reproduce exclusion.

For immigrant youth, this means negotiations for recognition occur within structural conditions that limit their bargaining power. Mindfulness cannot eliminate such structural inequalities, but it may provide internal and relational resources that help young people navigate these conditions more effectively. This integrated perspective avoids reducing recognition struggles to individual psychology alone, while acknowledging the real agency that individuals can exercise even under constraint.

3.5 Mindfulness Through the Lens of Recognition

Bringing recognition theory into dialogue with mindfulness enables new analytical approaches for this study. First, the framework directs attention to whether mindfulness skills such as *Non-Judging* and *Non-Reactivity* influence how immigrant adolescents process misrecognition (Baer et al., 2006; Honneth, 1995). Second, it highlights how group-based practice may facilitate new forms of peer recognition, with *Acting with Awareness* and *Describing* helping to establish supportive forms of acknowledgment that differ from those available in broader social contexts (Pilapil, 2015). Finally, *Observing* may support awareness of experiences of misrecognition that participants would otherwise overlook or suppress.

The framework also remains open to complexity: mindfulness may support recognition in some dimensions while leaving others unchanged. For some students, new skills may reinforce resilience in the face of exclusion; for others, structural inequalities may still overpower their efforts (Pada, 2017). Recognition theory provides the conceptual tools to analyze these diverse outcomes.

3.6 Summary: Recognition as Negotiation

This chapter has presented recognition as negotiation, a dynamic process through which immigrant youth establish and maintain their sense of self amid challenging social conditions (Honneth, 1995; Pilapil, 2015). By integrating Honneth's three recognition spheres with the Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire (Baer et al., 2006), the study builds a theoretical framework that recognizes both agency and constraint. This framework allows for a nuanced

analysis of how mindfulness interventions may foster resilience, not by bypassing social realities, but by equipping immigrant adolescents to renegotiate recognition in contexts where it is often denied.

The following methodology chapter will explain how this framework informs the study's research design, data collection, and analytical strategies.

Chapter 4: Research Design

This chapter outlines methodological approach and research study design undertaken to investigate the impact of mindfulness practices on immigrant youth in Sweden. The study is built upon a pragmatic philosophical foundation, which prioritizes practical, real-world problem-solving over strict adherence to a single methodological ideology (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). This worldview is particularly suited to the complex school setting, where a flexible approach is necessary to understand both the measurable outcomes and the nuanced lived experiences of the participants, bridging the gap between numbers and narratives (Morgan, 2007).

4.1. Mixed Method Study Design and Rational

The "real-world" context of this research, conducted within a school setting, presents significant challenges for traditional empirical paradigms, primarily the difficulty in controlling for extraneous variables (Robson, 2002; Condelli & Wrigley, 2004). In light of this complex environment, a sequential explanatory mixed methods design was selected as the most possible and pragmatic design for this study (Creswell, 2003; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004).

Proponents of purely quantitative methods argue that only statistical evidence can provide the rigorous, generalisable data required by policy makers to endorse interventions. However, reducing the complex experience of mindfulness to numerical data alone risks lacking the explanatory power needed to understand *how* and *why* any observed effects occurred (Denscombe, 1998). Conversely, while qualitative methods generate rich, subjective data with high explanatory power (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000), the constraints of this specific study—namely a small sample size (n=17) and a short intervention period (8 weeks)-limit the generalisability and statistical power of a purely quantitative design and narrow the scope of a standalone qualitative inquiry.

Therefore, the aim of combining methodologies is to complement and expand the findings (Greene, Caracelli, & Graham, 1989). The quantitative component (the FFMQ questionnaire) provides a standardised measure to identify potential patterns and changes in mindfulness facets, offering a degree of replicability. The qualitative component (e.g., semi-structured

interviews) is then essential for clarifying these results, providing depth, context, and meaning to the numerical data, and exploring the subjective experiences of the participants.

This approach acknowledges that the research does not seek to identify a universal "truth" but to richly explore the subjective perspectives of a specific group of pupils learning mindfulness in their school. The mixed methods design mitigates the inherent weaknesses of either approach used alone: it compensates for the limited generalizability of the small quantitative sample with deep qualitative insight, and it grounds the rich qualitative narratives within a structured quantitative framework. Ultimately, this strategy aims to yield information that is both meaningful for understanding individual experience and robust enough to inform practitioners and future research, despite the acknowledged constraints of time and scale.

4.2 Study Context

A socioeconomically disadvantaged district in Gothenburg, sets the stage for this study on mindfulness interventions for immigrant youth at risk. Since 2015, the Swedish Police haveclassified it as a särskilt utsatt område (Nationella Operativa Avdelningen,2015) a vulnerable area due to ongoing social and economic challenges and the influence of criminal networks that complicate law enforcement. The district has long had a diverse population. In 2005, this parts of northeastern Gothenburg were home to a significant immigrant community, and public sale of khat (a kind of leafy drug) was openly observed.Today, the area continues to face serious challenges. Educational levels are low: in the western part, only 16% of residents have completed at least three years of post-secondary education, far below the city average. About one-third of students leave compulsory school without the grades needed for secondary education as compared to one-fifth across Gothenburg.Unemployment is high, at 56%, and the community has experienced repeated incidents of gang-related violence, including shootings and car bombings. This study took place in one of its local schools that serves around 550 students in grades 4 to 9. The school provides a unique environment to explore how mindfulness-based interventions (MBIs) might improve the emotional wellbeing of vulnerable adolescents.

4.3 Participants

Participants in this study were purposefully selected from the Homework Activities in a University setting project at the University of Gothenburg. This initiative engages school-aged youth from immigrant-dense suburban neighbourhoods in weekly academic mentoring sessions. The adolescents who attend come from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds, with neighbourhoods characterised by spatial segregation, high unemployment, and under-resourced schools. Many belong to immigrant or minority families and collectively speak multiple languages, which places them at risk of academic underachievement and social exclusion. This university-based setting aligns well with the aim of the thesis, as it provides an environment conducive to fostering recognition, belonging, and wellbeing, which are central considerations in adapting mindfulness meditation within Honneth's theory of recognition. Within this broader context, seventeen students from Grades 7, 8, and 9 participated in the study, with the largest group drawn from Grade 8. The sample included both male and female students. No gender-specific questions were included in the questionnaires.

The participants represented a wide range of challenges. One student was court-involved, three had significant absenteeism and related academic difficulties, two received school-based mentoring, eight came from divorced families, and two reported experiences with addiction in their households. The inclusion criteria required proficiency in English, since the mindfulness lessons and questionnaires were delivered in English, and availability to participate during the school's leisure class period, when the intervention was scheduled.

The selection of participants was conducted collaboratively with a senior school teacher who had volunteered with the university project since its inception. Leveraging the teacher's deep familiarity with the students' academic and personal circumstances ensured that the group authentically reflected the study's criteria, which focused on immigrant youth who could provide rich insights into the potential of mindfulness interventions. This collaborative approach was essential for navigating the specific cultural and administrative context of the Swedish school system and ensured that the selection was ethically grounded in the existing trust between the teacher and the students

4.4 Study Procedure

In line with the sequential explanatory strategy described by Creswell (2017), this study was conducted in two clear phases(See, Figure 1) In the quantitative phase pre mindfulness intervention session, students completed self-rated questionnaires assessing their baseline wellbeing. After eight weeks of weekly mindfulness sessions (total16) focused on breathing exercises, guided meditations, and reflective discussion, the same questionnaires were administered (post intervention) again to capture any changes. Phase 2 was carried out for qualitative data collection. After the intervention, I conducted semi-structured interviews with selected participants to gain deeper insights into their experiences.

As Creswell (2017) and Morse (1991) note, this kind of design is especially helpful when the researcher wants to use qualitative data to explain or expand on quantitative findings. In this case, the qualitative phase helped answer key questions like: What was it about mindfulness that made a difference? How did students respond emotionally and behaviourally? What challenges did they experience? Data collection involved self-rated questionnaires and students semi-structured interviews. Although both quantitative and qualitative data were collected, analytical priority was given to the qualitative strand to deepen the interpretive understanding.

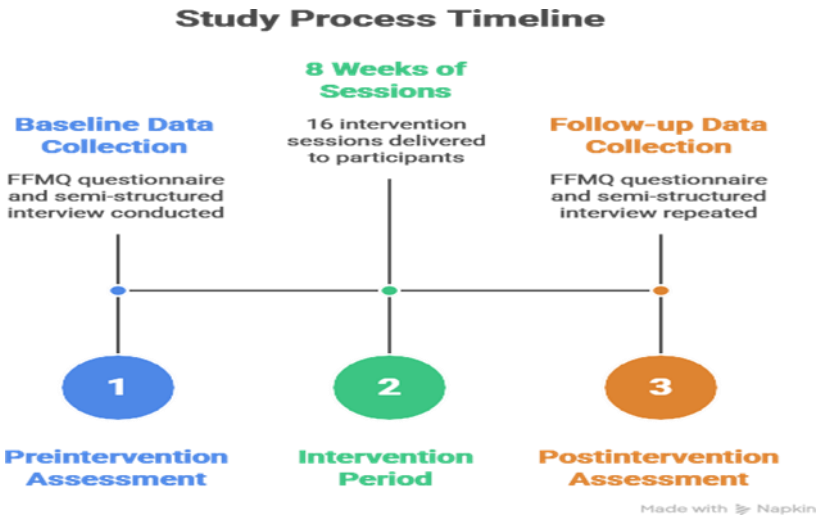

Figure 1: Mindfulness Intervention timeline

In order to facilitate communication, a WhatsApp group was created that included participants and the researcher. This allowed the researcher to share reminders regarding session times, allocated rooms,and planned themes.

4.5 Questionnaires as a Quantitative Tool

Questionnaires are a widely utilised method of data collection in educational and psychological research, offering a systematic way of gathering information about individuals' attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours (Denscombe, 1998; Borg & Gall, 1989). They are particularly advantageous in that they provide a standardised format of written questions, ensuring consistency across respondents, and allow data to be expressed numerically for subsequent analysis (Denscombe, 1998). This makes them useful for drawing comparisons and identifying patterns of change within a given population. However, questionnaires have also been criticised for their limited explanatory power, as they may not adequately capture the complexity of emotions, attitudes, and behaviours (Denscombe, 1998). In addition, participants' interpretations of questions may vary depending on subjective perspectives (Burr, 2003), while issues of honesty, engagement, and return rates can further limit reliability (Jordan, 1998). To address these limitations, established procedures for enhancing data quality in cross-cultural research were followed (e.g., Hilton & Skrutkowski, 2002). The researcher personally distributed and collected the questionnaires to ensure a 100% completion rate. To maximise comprehension and validity, a bilingual approach was implemented: all items were explained in Swedish by two recreational teachers familiar to the participants, and subsequently in English by the researcher. This procedure was intended to reduce misinterpretation and ensure response accuracy.

In this study, the Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire (FFMQ; Baer et al., 2006) was selected as the quantitative instrument because of its comprehensive measurement of mindfulness across five domains: observing, describing, acting with awareness, non-judging of inner experience, and non-reactivity to inner experience. Unlike other measures such as the MAAS, which conceptualises mindfulness as a single construct, or the KIMS, which covers fewer dimensions, the FFMQ provides a broader and more nuanced framework, making it particularly suitable for assessing the diverse impacts of mindfulness practice on adolescents. The original 39-item version has been validated internationally, including in Swedish contexts (Baer et al., 2008), supporting its cultural relevance for immigrant youth in Sweden. To enhance its suitability for the adolescent sample and the time-constrained school setting, a 14-item short-form was adopted. While a specific 14-item version was created for this study, this decision aligns with the common practice of using short-form instruments to reduce

participant burden and improve engagement in field research (e.g., Ziegler & Bühner, 2009). This version retained reverse-coded items to preserve psychometric integrity and introduced a "Never" option to the Likert scale to reduce central tendency bias and provide a clearer anchor, a strategy recommended to improve reliability in self-report measures (Weijters et al., 2010). The Swedish-speaking teachers provided translation support when necessary, ensuring the tool was both accessible and culturally sensitive.

Finally, the inclusion of the FFMQ within a mixed methods design enabled the collection of numerical data to track measurable changes in mindfulness while also complementing the qualitative data, which provided richer insight into the lived experiences of immigrant youth. This integration allowed for both breadth and depth in addressing the research questions.

4.5 Semi-Structured Interviews as Qualitative tool

Interview Design and Rationale

Semi-structured interviews were employed as the primary qualitative instrument to gather in-depth, nuanced data on participants' experiences. This approach was selected for its capacity to balance focus and flexibility, allowing for the exploration of predefined themes while remaining open to emergent perspectives (Gillham, 2001). As "a conversation with a purpose" (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009, p. 57), this method was particularly suited to exploring the emotional and psychosocial experiences of immigrant teenagers, attending to context and highlighting resilience (Galletta & Cross, 2013). The interview protocol followed a three-segment structure (adapted from Galletta & Cross, 2013): an opening segment with broad, open-ended questions to build trust; a middle segment focusing on specific themes linked to the study's aims and the FFMQ facets; and a closing segment allowing for broader reflection and respectful closure.

Participant Selection

From the initial pool of 17 questionnaire respondents, eight students volunteered for interviews. Four participants (two male, two female, grades 7–9) were selected based on voluntary informed consent, psychosocial vulnerability, consultation with school personnel, and English proficiency (Figure 2).

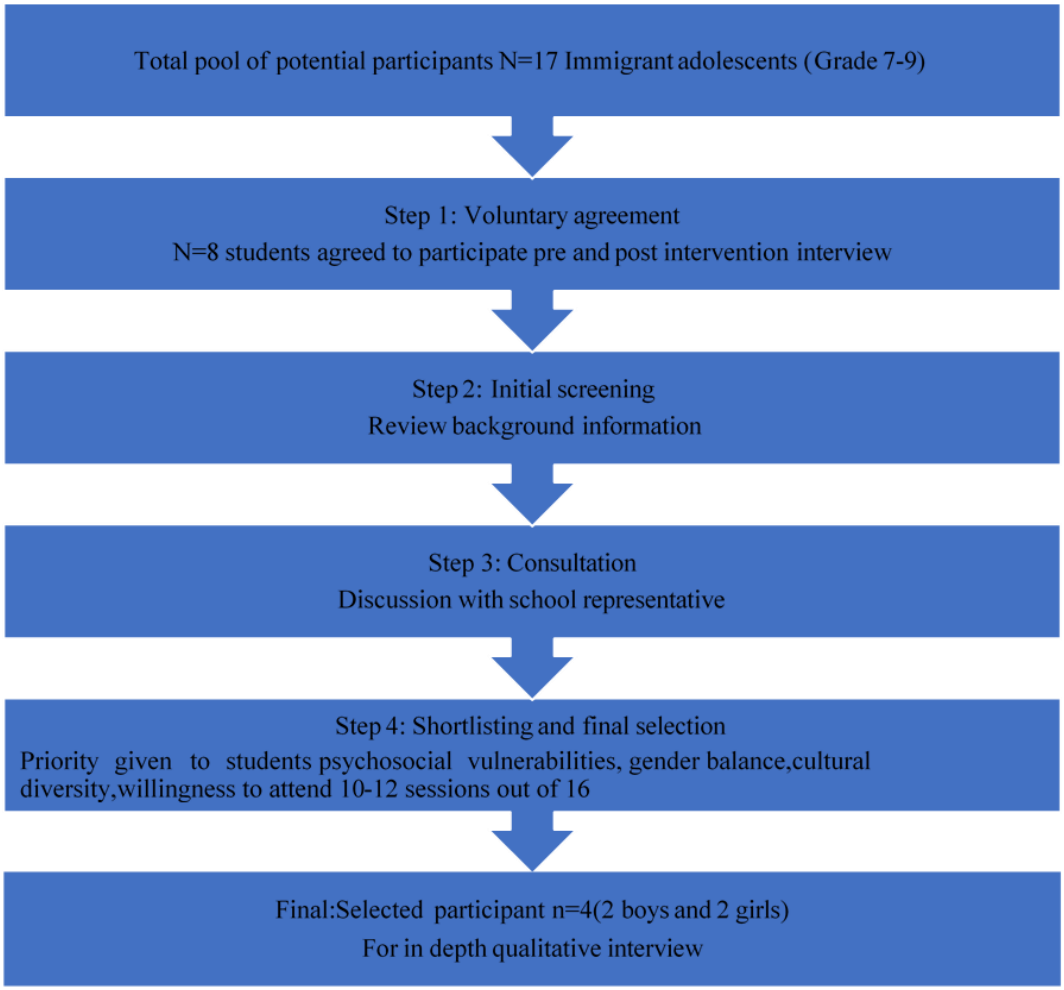

Figure2: Flowchart of Interview Participant Selection Process

This strategy ensured diverse representation of challenges and backgrounds while adhering to ethical obligations of inclusivity and sensitivity to vulnerability (Cohen et al., 2011). Each participant was interviewed twice (pre- and post-intervention), resulting in eight interviews lasting 15-20 minutes. All interviews were conducted face-to-face in English, audio-recorded with consent, and transcribed verbatim. A Swedish teacher was present to assist with rephrasing questions when needed to ensure comprehension. The demographic and psychosocial profiles of these participants are presented in Table 1. This strategic approach aligned with the ethical obligation to enable inclusive participation while acknowledging participant vulnerability (Cohen et al., 2011), and ensured the selected cohort embodied the diverse experiences of immigrant youth navigating personal, social, and educational challenges.

Table 1: Qualitative interview participants Demographic and Psychosocial Profile

Pseudonym	Age	Gender	Cultural Background	Family Context	Pre-Intervention Challenges
P1	15	Male	Turkish-born, long-term resident	Large family; unemployed elder brother	Academic struggles, social exclusion, sleep disturbances, existential anxiety
P2	15	Female	Mixed African & European	Divorced parents; lives with father	Racial identity conflict, negative self-image, perceived familial inequity
P3	16	Female	Lebanese origin	In social care; estranged from parents	Profound social isolation, academic disengagement, behavioural withdrawal
P4	16	Male	Syrian Sudanese background	Single-parent home with stepfather	Attentional deficits, coupled with high motivation and curiosity

The interviews explored students' prior knowledge of mindfulness meditation, sources of stress, coping strategies, feelings of care and recognition, and expectations regarding the upcoming sessions.

Additionally, contextual observations were recorded during the sessions, particularly regarding students' body language and their reactions to being called out for the interviews. Interviews took place in a school setting prior to being fixed by school representative.

Researcher Positionality and Reflexivity

The researcher brought relevant experiential and professional background to this study, including a 45-hour mindfulness certification in 2002, 16 years of teaching experience in international schools, and ongoing volunteer work with marginalized youth in Bangladesh. A reflexive approach was central to mitigating power dynamics and building rapport. The researcher shared aspects of her personal biography which included experiences of grief, migration, and reliance on mindfulness practices to foster empathy, mutual openness, and a less hierarchical interaction (Berger, 2015; Tracy, 2010). The interview setting was designed to be familiar and non-threatening, with careful attention to language, non-verbal cues, and ethical principles of confidentiality, voluntary participation, and the right to withdraw (Cohen et al., 2011). Contextual observations and reflexive notes were recorded during interviews to enrich data interpretation.

4.6 Mindfulness Intervention: Procedure

Before the intervention began, the researcher held a briefing session with the school principal and teaching staff to explain the study's objectives and introduce mindfulness practices. The intervention consisted of a structured eight-week mindfulness programme, specifically designed for immigrant adolescents and grounded in the theoretical frameworks of the Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire (FFMQ; Baer et al., 2006) and Honneth's theory of recognition. Sessions were conducted twice weekly in AM and PM session (Mondays and Thursdays), each lasting 30–35 minutes, and were facilitated by the researcher.

Each session followed a consistent structure: a 10–15 minute introductory practice (e.g., body scan or quiet meditation, occasionally accompanied by calming music), theme-based discussions and symbolic activities, and a 10–15 minute guided meditation. The curriculum integrated evidence-based mindfulness practices , such as mindful breathing, sitting meditation, body scans, and loving-kindness exercises—with culturally and developmentally adapted symbolic activities designed to foster self-awareness, emotional regulation, and interpersonal recognition.

The programme was organized into eight thematic modules (see Table 2), each aligning with facets of the FFMQ and dimensions of recognition. For instance, Week 1 focused on relaxation and self-awareness through body scans and reflective discussion, while Week 3, titled "Connection versus Division," used metaphors such as scissors and needles to stimulate reflection on social bonds and conflict. Later sessions encouraged integration of mindfulness into daily life and reflection on personal purpose within broader existential contexts. Theme 2 'Healing the past', Theme 3 'Connection vs Division' and Theme 4 'The Dot' were merged with Theme 7 and Theme 8.This adjustment was made based on students preference and high engagement. This flexibility aimed to provide supportive and culturally responsive environment.

Table 2: Mindfulness Intervention theme and schedule

Week / Session	Theme	Aim (Linked to FFMQ & Honneth's Recognition)	Key Activities
Week 1 – Morning	Theme 1: Relaxation and Self-Awareness	To cultivate self-awareness, recognize bodily tension, and promote relaxation. *(FFMQ: Observing, Acting with Awareness; Honneth: Self-Respect)*	- Group discussion: "How often do you visit yourself?" - Identify areas of physical tension - Body scan with color visualization - Share tension locations and associated color
Week 1 – Afternoon	*Theme 1 (Continued)*	To deepen the mind-body connection and support stress release.	- Guided breathing meditation - Body scan relaxation - Reflective sharing of experiences
Week 2 – Morning	Theme 2: Healing the Past and Empowering the Future	To acknowledge and release painful memories, fostering emotional empowerment and non-attachment. *(FFMQ: Non-Reactivity; Honneth: Self-Recognition)*	- Write brief descriptions of past painful experiences - Visualization: rowing to the center of a lake and releasing memories - Reflective discussion
Week 2 – Afternoon	*Theme 2 (Continued)*	To transform emotional energy and reinforce personal agency.	- Visualization of memories as light balls rising - Realization: emotions hold no power unless given power - Tear and release memory notes (symbolic ritual)
Week 3 – Morning	Theme 3: Connection vs Division (Scissors and Needle)	To develop awareness of interpersonal dynamics and value of unity. *(FFMQ: Acting with Awareness; Honneth: Solidarity)*	- Show and discuss symbolic images: scissors vs needle - Explore metaphors of cutting vs stitching relationships
Week 3 – Afternoon	*Theme 3 (Continued)*	To realize the importance of social cohesion and collective strength.	- Threading beads demonstration (needle unites, scissors divide) - Share Nelson Mandela's story - Guided visualization: aerial view meditation
Week 4 – Morning	Theme 4: The Cosmic Perspective (The Dot)	To foster humility and perspective by recognizing one's place in the universe. *(FFMQ: Observing; Honneth: Self-Respect)*	- Watch galaxy video with ambient music - Reflect on personal scale within the cosmos
Week 4 – Afternoon	*Theme 4 (Continued)*	To reduce perceived stress through cosmic detachment and perspective.	- Guided journey from Earth to space - Meditation: self-positioning within the universe - Deep breathing with cosmic background music
Week 5 – Morning	Theme 5: Visualization and Future Self (The Clap and Cheers)	To visualize success and cultivate motivation and self-esteem. *(FFMQ: Acting with Awareness; Honneth: Esteem & Recognition)*	- Write and reflect on ideal future self - Group sharing of dreams and aspirations
Week 5 – Afternoon	*Theme 5 (Continued)*	To embody joy and reinforce internal motivation.	- Cheerful music activity - Visualization: standing in a stadium, receiving applause - Guided imagery of achievement and recognition
Week 6 – Morning	Theme 6: Self-Reflection and Acceptance (The Mirror)	To enhance self-recognition and acceptance without judgment. *(FFMQ: Observing, Non-Judgment; Honneth: Self-Respect)*	- Silent mirror gazing (2–3 minutes) - Observe and reflect on thoughts/emotions - Discussion on self-acceptance
Week 6 – Afternoon	*Theme 6 (Continued)*	To deepen compassion and internal acknowledgment.	- Guided meditation on self-acceptance - Sharing insights beyond physical appearance

Week / Session	Theme	Aim (Linked to FFMQ & Honneth's Recognition)	Key Activities
Week 7 – Morning	Theme 7: Gratitude and Compassion *(Merged with Theme 2: Healing the Past)*	To cultivate empathy and emotional solidarity through gratitude. *(FFMQ: Acting with Awareness, Non-Reactivity; Honneth: Solidarity)*	- List people or events to be grateful for - Silent gratitude meditation - Visualization: sending love and thanks to others
Week 7 – Afternoon	*Theme 7 (Continued) (Merged with Theme 3: Connection vs Division)*	To strengthen social bonds through acts of kindness and recognition.	- Group sharing of gratitude lists - Partner activity: offering kind messages - Meditation on compassion and interconnection
Week 8 – Morning	Theme 8: Integration and Life Purpose *(Merged with Theme 6: Self-Reflection (the mirror)*	To synthesize the mindfulness journey and explore individual purpose. *(FFMQ: Acting with Awareness; Honneth: Self-Respect & Solidarity)*	- Reflect on 8-week journey - Write a personal life purpose statement - Guided visualization: living one's purpose
Week 8 – Afternoon	*Theme 8 (Continued) Merged with Theme 4: The Dot (Cosmic Journey)*	To internalize mindfulness as a lifelong practice by connecting life purpose with a broader cosmic perspective. *(FFMQ: Observing; Honneth: Self-Respect)*	- Silent meditation on purpose and cosmic contribution - Visualization of one's role in the larger universe - Closing circle: share insights and affirmations - Final gratitude music and deep breathing

4.7 Ethical Considerations

Before research

Prior to data collection, I obtained consent from the young participants themselves. Since informed consent must be based on information that is understandable and developmentally appropriate, I provided clear oral instructions in English, while Swedish recreational teachers supported by giving parallel explanations in Swedish to ensure accessibility. This was especially important, as Beresford (1997) emphasizes that information provided to children should be suited to their developmental stage and capacities. I emphasized that participation was voluntary, that participants could withdraw at any stage, and that their decision would not affect their schooling or relationships with teachers or myself. As Robson (1993) notes, children in vulnerable groups may not fully grasp every aspect of research participation, so my role as the researcher was to simplify, clarify, and reinforce choice. Following the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), I also treated participants as rights-bearing individuals, entitled not only to protection but also to freedom of expression and participation in decisions that affect them. During Research

During Research

Recognizing the unequal power relations that exist between adult researchers and young participants (Kirk, 2007), I took deliberate steps to minimize this imbalance. All sessions were conducted within school premises in spaces designated by the administration, which provided a sense of familiarity and safety. However, if any participant expressed discomfort with the location, I immediately cancelled the session and rescheduled it in consultation with both the student and the school administration, ensuring that the new place was acceptable to the participants. This flexibility reduced the sense of obligation and highlighted the voluntary nature of participation (McCrum & Bernal, 1994). I also avoided the presence of teachers during the actual interviews to prevent students from feeling pressured to provide answers that might align with adult expectations. At the beginning of each session, I reminded participants that there were no "right" or "wrong" answers and that they could skip questions or stop the interview at any point. In addition, I remained attentive to non-verbal cues of discomfort, pausing or stopping sessions if necessary.

A critical dimension of the ethical approach involved the handling of sensitive pre-existing information and the teacher's role in participant selection. Highly personal data concerning family background or psychosocial vulnerabilities were not solicited directly from students, but were provided by a trusted teacher based on established pastoral relationships. This protocol was essential for both purposeful sampling and proactive duty of care, allowing the researcher to anticipate potential triggers while avoiding the harm of intrusive questioning. To address the ethical risks of teacher-led selection, such as unconscious bias, a multi-stage process was implemented: initial self-selection by students was followed by consultation with the teacher against objective criteria—including baseline scores, gender, and cultural diversity—before final selection was confirmed by the researcher. This ensured that the process was transparent, equitable, and ultimately defended the voluntary nature of each participant's involvement, respecting their vulnerability without compromising their agency.

Confidentiality was another central concern. To protect participants, I anonymized all data by assigning pseudonyms and removing references to schools or sensitive migration details. Digital recordings and transcripts were stored on an encrypted, password-protected device accessible only to me, while any handwritten notes were kept securely. As Beresford (1997) argues, disclosure of children's information can put their rights at risk, so maintaining confidentiality was a priority. Furthermore, given that discussions about migration, identity,

or belonging could evoke strong emotions, I framed questions carefully to avoid unnecessary distress and kept the option of support from school counselors open if needed.

After Research

Ethics after research were equally important. In the analysis and dissemination of findings, I ensured that the voices of young immigrants were represented respectfully, avoiding language or framing that could reinforce stereotypes or stigmatization. Quotations were selected with care to protect anonymity and to highlight participants' agency rather than their vulnerabilities. In presenting the results, I emphasized the structural and contextual factors shaping their school experiences rather than placing responsibility on the students themselves. This approach aligns with the principle that children in research should be regarded as active agents and not passive objects of study (Christensen & James, 2008). In addition, digital data will be securely stored for a limited period in line with institutional requirements and then permanently deleted to ensure participants' long-term privacy.

4.8 Quantitative Data Analysis

Quantitative data were collected between January and March 2025. Following automated export to Excel, data were manually entered into SPSS for statistical analysis. Initial descriptive analyses characterized the socio-demographic profile of the participant cohort. Given the small sample size (n=17) and the nature of the Likert-scale data, which did not meet assumptions of symmetry or equal intervals between scale points, non-parametric statistical methods were selected to avoid misinterpretation and maintain analytical rigor (Pallant, 2020).

To evaluate intervention effects, Wilcoxon Signed-Rank tests were conducted to compare pre- and post-intervention scores on the mindfulness questionnaire. Additionally, Mann-Whitney U tests were employed to examine group differences based on gender and time since course completion, while Kruskal-Wallis H tests assessed potential variations in outcomes across grade levels (Seven, Eight, and Nine). This suite of non-parametric analyses ensured robust examination of changes in mindfulness facets and subgroup differences without relying on assumptions of normal distribution.

4.9 Qualitative Data Analysis

Thematic Analysis (TA), as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006), was employed to analyse qualitative data derived from interviews and observational notes. This method was selected for its flexibility in identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within the data, while remaining compatible with the study's pragmatic and constructivist-informed approach. To enhance methodological rigour and transparency, the analysis adhered to Braun and Clarke's six-phase guide, with explicit acknowledgement of the researcher's position and theoretical commitments throughout the interpretive process.

Analysis commenced with repeated listening to recordings and verbatim transcription to ensure accuracy and familiarity with the data. Transcripts were systematically reviewed and initially coded in Microsoft Word, with annotations made in adjacent columns to capture salient features relevant to the research questions. These codes were subsequently collated and grouped into potential themes and sub-themes, which were then refined and organised into thematic maps to illustrate relationships and prevalence across the dataset. Throughout this process, themes were continually reviewed for coherence and validity in relation to the entire dataset, leading to the consolidation of overlapping themes. Finally, defined themes were clearly named and substantiated with illustrative extracts in the reporting phase, ensuring that the findings remained grounded in participants' own accounts and clearly addressed the research objectives.

Chapter 5: Results

5.1 Quantitative Result

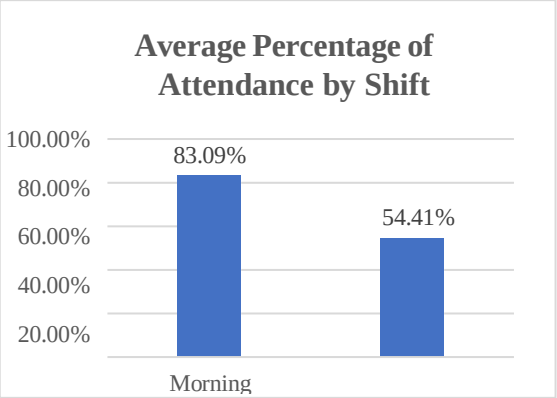

Figure 4: Average % of attendance by shift

The socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents (N=17) illustrate a diverse sample of immigrant and at-risk youth within the Swedish school. The largest proportion of participants were from grade nine (52.9%) and aged 15 (41.2%). Gender representation within the sample was relatively balanced, with 52.9% boys and 47.1% girls. Although a large majority (76.5%) were born in Sweden, most (82.4%) identified with a country of origin different from their birth country, highlighting their immigrant or minority backgrounds. This socio-demographic profile highlights both the cultural diversity and complex identities represented in the sample, which are essential considerations in examining how mindfulness meditation interventions may be adapted to support wellbeing outcomes among immigrant youth in Swedish schools (Table 3).

Table 3: Socio demographic profile of the respondents (N=17)

Variable name	Category	N	%
Grade	Seven	3	17.60%
	Eight	5	29.40%
	Nine	9	52.90%
Age	Thirteen	3	17.60%
	Fourteen	5	29.40%
	Fifteen	7	41.20%
	Sixteen	2	11.80%
Gender	Boy	9	52.90%
	Girl	8	47.10%
Country of birth	Sweden	13	76.50%
	Croatia	1	5.90%
	Zambia	1	5.90%
	Turkey	1	5.90%
	Saudi arabia	1	5.90%
Birth country and origin country	Same	3	17.60%
	Different	14	82.40%

The attendance percentage for 17 participants across two sessions: morning and afternoon reveals that attendance was significantly higher and more consistent in the morning sessions (83.1%) than in the afternoon (54.4%), suggesting that students were more engaged and receptive earlier in the day, making morning a more effective time for mindfulness activities.

A significant number of participants showed perfect attendance in the sessions, specifically, six participants had 100% attendance in the morning. Of this group, three participants maintained 100% attendance in the afternoon as well. On the other hand, two participants had 0% attendance in the afternoon, meaning they did not attend any of those sessions, despite both having strong attendance in the morning (87.5% and 100%, respectively). (Annex Table 1)

The discussion and meditation session by shift and theme demonstrate that while all the respondents participated in both discussion and meditation session, the relaxation and self-awareness theme got higher participation than any other theme (Table 4). For example, in themes such as "Healing the Past and Empowering the Future", "Visualization and Future Self (The Clap and Cheers)", and "Integration and Life Purpose (Merged with Theme 6: Self- Reflection (the mirror)", meditation engagement ranged from 88% to 94%, compared to 59%– 71% for discussion. On average, 12 students participated in meditation compared to 9 in discussion, that means meditation sessions had about 1.33 times higher participation than discussion sessions. Moreover, morning sessions showed stronger overall involvement than afternoons. (Annex Table 2)

Table 4: Distribution of the respondents participated in the discussion and meditation session by shift and theme (N=17)

		Discussion		**Meditation**	
Theme	Shift	N	Percent of cases	N	Percent of cases
Theme 1: relaxation and self-awareness	Morning	17	100.0%	17	100.0%
Theme 1 (continued)	Afternoon	9	52.9%	9	52.9%
Theme 2: healing the past and empowering the future	Morning	11	64.7%	15	88.2%
Theme 2 (continued)	Afternoon	8	47.1%	8	47.1%
Theme 3: connection vs division (scissors and needle)	Morning	8	47.1%	12	70.6%
Theme 3 (continued)	Afternoon	5	29.4%	8	47.1%

Theme 4: the cosmic perspective (the dot)	Morning	8	47.1%	13	76.5%
Theme 4 (continued)	Afternoon	6	35.3%	7	41.2%
Theme 5: visualization and future self (the clap and cheers)	Morning	10	58.8%	16	94.1%
Theme 5 (continued)	Afternoon	6	35.3%	7	41.2%
Theme 6: self-reflection and acceptance (the mirror)	Morning	10	58.8%	12	70.6%
Theme 6 (continued)	Afternoon	7	41.2%	11	64.7%
Theme 7: gratitude and compassion (merged with theme 2: healing the past)	Morning	12	70.6%	13	76.5%
Theme 7 (continued) (merged with theme 3: connection vs division)	Afternoon	13	76.5%	13	76.5%
Theme 8: integration and life purpose (merged with theme 6: self-reflection (the mirror)	Morning	12	70.6%	15	88.2%
Theme 8 (continued) merged with theme 4: the dot (cosmic journey)	Afternoon	7	41.2%	11	64.7%
	Average	9		12	

From the Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire (FFMQ) subscales were calculated (after reverse coding where necessary) by combining all the items mean score [(Observing = mean of Q1+Q2+Q3, describing = mean of Q4+Q5, Acting with Awareness = mean of Q6+Q7+Q8, non-judging of inner experience = mean of Q9+Q10+Q11, non-reactivity to inner experience = mean of Q12+Q13+Q14) / 5]. Table 5 represents descriptive statistics for FFMQ subscale scores before and after intervention program. On average, participants' scores increased across all five mindfulness dimensions, with the largest gains found in Observing, Describing and Non-reactivity to inner experience category. (Annex Table 3)

Table 5**:** Descriptive Statistics for FFMQ Subscale and Total Scores (N = 17)

Subscale	**Pre intervention**		**Post intervention**		**Mean score changed**
	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.	
Observing	3.22	1.38	4.00	0.82	0.78
Describing	2.91	1.30	3.59	0.88	0.68
Acting with awareness	3.00	1.28	3.10	0.85	0.10
Non-judging of inner experience	3.33	1.49	3.53	0.89	0.20
Non-reactivity to inner experience	2.82	1.34	3.61	0.75	0.78
Total mindfulness score	3.06	1.36	3.56	0.84	0.51

Note. Scores are based on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Never True, 5 = Always True). Higher scores indicate greater mindfulness.

A series of Wilcoxon signed-rank tests (Table 6) were conducted to compare pre- and post-intervention scores on the mindfulness questionnaire items. Significant improvements were observed for several items: post-scores were higher than pre-scores for Q2 (Z = -3.25, p = .001), Q3 (Z = -2.43, p = .015), Q4 (Z = -2.59, p = .010), Q12 (Z = -2.40, p = .016), Q13 (Z = -2.40,

p = .016), and Q14 (Z = -2.21, p = .027). In contrast, changes for other items were not statistically significant (all p > .05). These results suggest that the intervention was effective in enhancing certain aspects of mindfulness and wellbeing, particularly in areas related to emotional regulation and self-reflection, while effects were less pronounced in other domains.

Table 6: Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test Results for Pre- and Post-Intervention Scores (N = 17)

Items	Questions	Z	p (2-tailed)	Sig.	Effect size (r)	Interpretation
Q1	I notice changes in my thoughts and feelings throughout the day.	-1.65	0.099	N.s.	0.4	Medium (n.s.)
Q2	I pay attention to sensations, such as the wind on my face or the sun on my skin	-3.25	0.001	p < .01	0.79	Large, significant
Q3	I am aware of the sounds around me, like birds chirping or cars passing by.	-2.43	0.015	*p < .05*	0.59	Large, significant
Q4	I am good at describing how i feel at any given moment	-2.59	0.01	*p < .05*	0.63	Large, significant
Q5	I can express what is happening in my mind when i'm upset or stressed.	-1.78	0.075	N.s.	0.43	Medium (n.s.)
Q6	I find myself doing things without paying attention.	-1.18	0.236	N.s.	0.29	Small (n.s.)
Q7	I eat meals without paying attention to what i'm eating.	-0.97	0.33	N.s.	0.24	Small (n.s.)
Q8	I find myself preoccupied/busy with other things while doing tasks.	-0.95	0.34	N.s.	0.23	Small (n.s.)
Q9	I criticize/blame myself for having irrational or inappropriate emotions.	-1.63	0.102	N.s.	0.4	Medium (n.s.)
Q10	I get frustrated/less confident with myself when i'm feeling anxious or sad.	-2.25	0.024	*p < .05*	0.55	Large, significant
Q11	I judge my thoughts and feelings as good or bad.	-0.61	0.545	N.s.	0.15	Small (n.s.)
Q12	I find it easy to stay calm when i'm feeling upset.	-2.4	0.016	*p < .05*	0.58	Large, significant
Q13	I can let go of thoughts that are bothering me.	-2.4	0.016	*p < .05*	0.58	Large, significant
Q14	I can observe my feelings without being caught up in them.	-2.21	0.027	*p < .05*	0.54	Large, significant

Note. Effect size (r) calculated as Z / √N. n.s. = not significant.

Based on the Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire (FFMQ) items, mean mindfulness score is calculated by combining all the items with respective category (Q1+Q2+Q3=Observing, Q4+Q5=Describing, Q6+Q7+Q8 = Acting with Awareness, Q9+Q10+Q11 = non-judging of inner experience, Q12+Q13+Q14 = non-reactivity to inner experience). After that, a Wilcoxon signed-rank test was conducted to examine changes in five mindfulness-related subscales from pre- to post-intervention. Overall, significant improvements were found in Observing, Describing, and Non-reactivity subscales, with effect sizes ranging from moderate to large.

Results demonstrate that, in Observing, post-test scores (M = 4.00, SD = 0.66) were significantly higher than pre-test scores (M = 3.22, SD = 1.09), Z = –3.33, p = .001, r = .81, indicating a large effect. In terms of Describing category, post-test scores (M = 3.59, SD = 0.80) were significantly higher than pre-test scores (M = 2.91, SD = 1.15), Z = –2.43, p = .015, r = .59, indicating a moderate effect. Acting with Awareness sub-scales has no significant difference was observed, Z = –0.82, p = .414, r = .20. Same things happened for the non-judging of inner experience items, no significant difference was found, Z = –1.11, p = .266, r = .27. Non-reactivity to inner experience post-test scores (M = 3.61, SD = 0.54) were significantly higher than pre-test scores (M = 2.82, SD = 1.10), Z = –2.81, p = .005, r = .68, indicating a large effect (Table 7).

These findings suggest that the intervention was effective in improving Observing, Describing, and Non-reactivity dimensions of mindfulness, while Acting with Awareness and Non-judging remained relatively stable.

Table 7: Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test Results for Pre–Post Mindfulness Subscales (N = 17)

Subscales	Pre m (sd)	Post m (sd)	Z	p	Effect size (*r*)	Interpretation
Observing	3.22 (1.09)	4.00 (0.66)	–3.33	.001	.81	Large
Describing	2.91 (1.15)	3.59 (0.80)	–2.43	.015	.59	Moderate
Acting with awareness	3.00 (1.09)	3.10 (0.71)	–0.82	.414	.20	Small (ns)
Non-judging of inner experience	3.33 (1.24)	3.53 (0.71)	–1.11	.266	.27	Small (ns)
Non-reactivity to inner experience	2.82 (1.10)	3.61 (0.54)	–2.81	.005	.68	Large

Note. Effect size calculated as $r = Z / \sqrt{N}$. Interpretations follow Cohen's (1988) guidelines: small (.10), moderate (.30), large (.50).

The Kruskal-Wallis H test was conducted to determine if there were statistically significant differences in the pre- and post-intervention mindfulness facet scores across the three grade levels (Seven, Eight, and Nine). The significance level was set at $\alpha=0.05$, a statistically significant difference was found only for the Acting with Awareness facet ($\chi^2(2)=6.35, p=.042$). This result suggests that the distributions of 'Acting with Awareness' scores were not the same across the grade levels after the intervention. Also, pairwise comparisons were performed to identify which specific grade levels differed. The results of the pairwise comparisons revealed a significant difference between Grade Seven and Grade Nine ($p=.036$), with the significance value adjusted by the Bonferroni correction for multiple tests. No other significant differences were found between the grade levels for this facet. The average rank of grade seven was 15.00, while the average rank for grade nine was 6.89. This indicates that post-intervention scores for Acting with Awareness were significantly lower for students in grade nine compared to those in grade seven.

A Kruskal-Wallis H test was conducted to investigate whether there were significant differences in the pre- and post-intervention mindfulness facet scores among different age groups (13, 14, 15, and 16 years old). The analysis found no statistically significant differences across age groups for any of the five mindfulness facets, either before or after the intervention. These results indicate that, at the start of the study, the mindfulness levels of the participants were similar regardless of their age.

A Kruskal-Wallis H test, which is equivalent to a Mann-Whitney U test when comparing two groups, was performed to examine whether there were statistically significant differences in the pre- and post-intervention mindfulness facet scores between boys and girls. The significance level for the test was set at $\alpha=.05$. Before the intervention, a statistically significant difference was found in the Acting with Awareness facet between boys and girls ($\chi2(1)=4.30, p=.038$). The results (Table 8) indicate that the pre-intervention 'Acting with Awareness' scores were not distributed the same for both genders. Based on the descriptive data, boys had a higher median rank than girls for this facet. For all other pre-intervention facets, there were no significant differences observed between genders.

Table 8. Kruskal-Wallis H Test Results for Pre- and Post-Intervention Mindfulness Facet Scores by Grade, Age and Gender Level (N=17)

Variable	Mindfulness facet	Pre-intervention			Post-intervention		
		Df	$\chi 2$	P-value	Df	$\chi 2$	P-value
Grade	Observing	2	3.542	0.170	2	3.807	0.149
	Describing	2	4.653	0.098	2	4.013	0.134
	Acting with awareness	2	1.29	0.525	2	6.345	0.042*
	Non-judging of inner experience	2	0.488	0.783	2	1.044	0.593
	Non-reactivity to inner experience	2	1.724	0.422	2	4.737	0.094
Age	Observing	3	4.944	0.176	3	4.195	0.241
	Describing	3	4.963	0.175	3	4.304	0.230
	Acting with awareness	3	3.828	0.281	3	7.263	0.064
	Non-judging of inner experience	3	6.924	0.074	3	5.61	0.132
	Non-reactivity to inner experience	3	2.609	0.456	3	4.77	0.189
Gender	Observing	1	0.002	0.961	1	0.242	0.623
	Describing	1	0.194	0.659	1	0.804	0.370
	Acting with awareness	1	4.299	0.038*	1	0.162	0.688
	Non-judging of inner experience	1	3.745	0.053	1	2.568	0.109
	Non-reactivity to inner experience	1	2.709	0.100	1	0.022	0.883

Note: Significant findings ($p<.05$) are highlighted in bold. The null hypothesis (H_0) states that the distribution of scores is the same across all categories.

The analysis of the mean score changes after the intervention reveals varying impacts across the different mindfulness questionnaire items (Figure 5). Positive changes were observed in a majority of the questions, indicating an overall increase in mindfulness-related skills. The largest positive change was found in Q2, which asks about paying attention to sensations like wind or sun, with a significant mean score increase of 1.24. Other questions showing substantial positive changes include Q3 (awareness of sounds, 0.65), Q4 (describing feelings, 0.76), Q5 (expressing mind's state, 0.59), and Q14 (observing feelings without getting caught up, 0.88).

In contrast, some questions, particularly those related to negative or judgmental behaviours, showed a decrease in mean scores. The largest negative change was in Q7 (eating without paying attention, -0.24), and a smaller negative change was seen in Q11 (judging thoughts as good or bad, -0.1). Overall, the results imply that the mindfulness program successfully improved participants' ability to observe, describe, and non-reactively engage with their inner and outer experiences, while also reducing the tendency for inattentiveness and self-criticism.

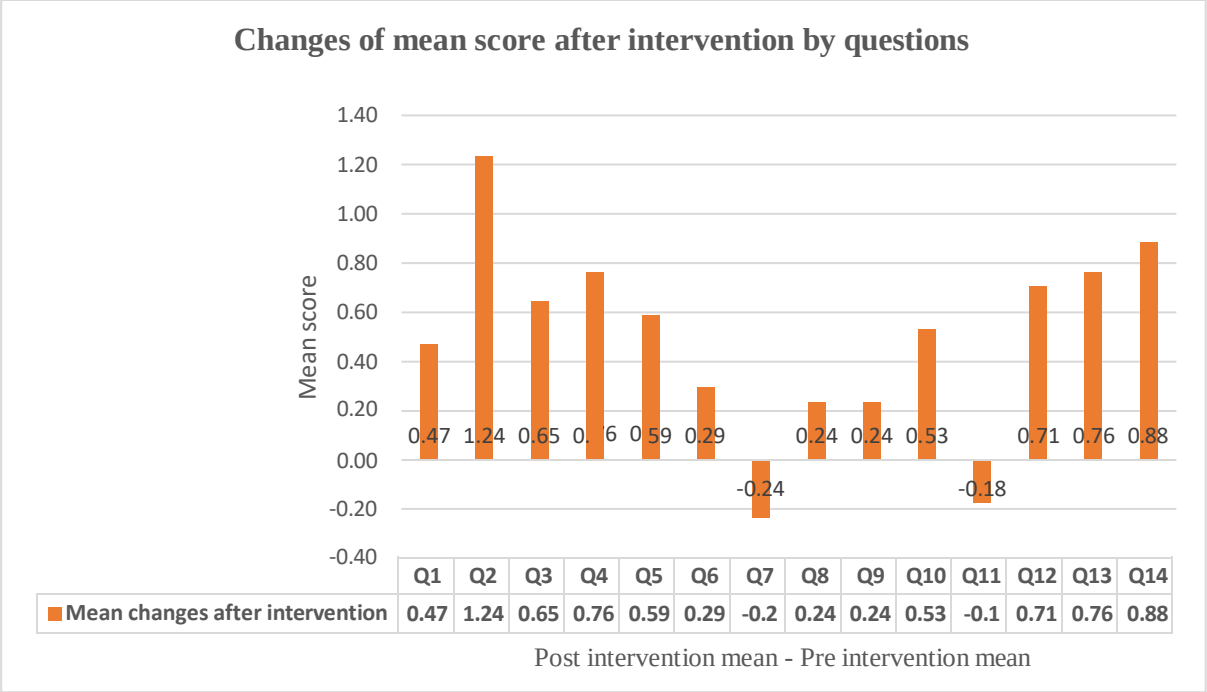

Figure 5: Changes of mean score after intervention by questions

A Kruskal-Wallis H test (Table 9) was conducted to determine if there were statistically significant differences in the pre- and post-intervention mindfulness facet scores based on participants' country of birth (Sweden or Others). The analysis included 13 participants born in Sweden and 4 born in other countries. The significance level for the test was set at α=0.05. The results revealed no statistically significant differences across country of birth for any of the five mindfulness facets, either before or after the intervention.

Table 9: Kruskal-Wallis H Test Results for Pre- and Post-Intervention Mindfulness Facet Scores by Country of Birth (N=17)

Mindfulness facet	**Pre intervention**			**Post intervention**		
	Df	$\chi 2$	P-value	Df	$\chi 2$	P-value
Observing	1	0.119	0.73	1	3.651	0.056
Describing	1	1.756	0.185	1	0.055	0.815
Acting with awareness	1	0.864	0.353	1	2.185	0.139
Non-judging of inner experience	1	3.319	0.068	1	1.179	0.278
Non-reactivity to inner experience	1	0.052	0.82	1	0.655	0.418

Note: The null hypothesis (H_0) states that the distribution of scores is the same across both categories (Sweden-born and Other-born)[1]. The significance level is .050.

A Kruskal-Wallis H test (Table 10) was conducted to investigate whether there were statistically significant differences in the pre- and post-intervention mindfulness facet scores based on whether participants' birth country was the same as their origin country. The analysis included 3 participants for whom the countries were the same and 14 for whom they were different. The significance level for the test was set at $\alpha=0.05$. The results indicated no statistically significant differences across any of the five mindfulness facets, either before or after the intervention.

Table 10. Kruskal-Wallis H Test Results for Pre- and Post-Intervention Mindfulness Facet Scores by Birth and Origin Country (N=17)

Mindfulness facet	**Pre intervention**			**Post intervention**		
	Df	$\chi 2$	P-value	Df	$\chi 2$	P-value
Observing	1	0.497	0.481	1	1.345	0.246
Describing	1	2.174	0.14	1	0.038	0.845
Acting with awareness	1	0.506	0.477	1	1.909	0.167
Non-judging of inner experience	1	1.027	0.311	1	0.036	0.849
Non-reactivity to inner experience	1	0	1	1	2.002	0.157

5.2 Qualitative Result

5.2.1 Pre-Intervention Narratives

The pre-intervention interviews were conducted with four selected students: P1, P2, P3, and P4. They all represent unique cultural, psychosocial, and academic challenges. Their voices offer important insight into the lived realities of immigrant youth navigating issues of belonging, identity, and wellbeing in a Swedish school setting. By situating these narratives within the broader framework of Honneth's Recognition Theory, the interviews highlight the interconnections between misrecognition, alienation, and the search for self-esteem and social integration.

a) P1

P1 is a fifteen-year-old boy of Turkish origin. His daily life was marked by insecurity and exclusion. He has been living in Sweden since first grade and was struggling with both academic achievement and feelings of cultural belonging. His poor performance in English and mathematics weighed heavily on him. His perception was that his English teacher disliked him because of his immigrant background. He articulated a sense of invisibility in school, noting

that although his immigrant friends accepted him, he often felt unacknowledged by teachers and disconnected from Swedish peers.

At home, the situation was more difficult. His unemployment elder brother instilled in him an additional layer of worry about the future: *"I feel insecure… if my brother (a good student) is jobless, what about me?"* P1 has sleeping problems at nights and always has racing thoughts. When asked what he expected from mindfulness, he admitted that he had never heard of meditation before: *"I thought it was something for monks. My teacher said it could help me focus and get good sleep, so maybe I can get better grades and good sleep."* His response reflected both skepticism and a hope that mindfulness might provide a path toward peace of mind and academic improvement. In line with Honneth's concept of social recognition, P1's narrative revealed an urgent desire to be valued both academically and culturally, and a fear of exclusion tied to his ethnic and linguistic differences.

b) P2

P2, also fifteen, offered a deeply personal account sourced from identity conflict. Her African father and French mother were divorced, and she had two sets of half siblings. Living with her father and grandmother, she described her home environment as chaotic, filled with constant arguments with half-siblings. Her reflections were dominated by feelings of rejection and resentment: *"I hate looking like an African… my younger sister looks like my mother, fair and blonde. I don't like anyone touching my hair."* At this time, she touched her hair happily and said, several times she had to straighten her hair just not to look African.

P2's cultural belonging was a main tension in her narrative. While she strongly connected herself with Swedish culture, her father and grandmother pressured her to maintain African traditions. This tension left her at a loss: *"Who am I? French, African, or Swedish?"* She expressed feelings of constant negativity, admitting that minor setbacks quickly escalated into catastrophic thoughts: *"my boy friend left me, I think its because I'm not good… if my friend smiles with some other classmates, I think she doesn't like me anymore."* Her pre-intervention outlook was characterized by emotional instability, fragile self-esteem, and uncertainty over her identity. Her teacher motivated her to join the mindfulness sessions. She assumed after the session she might get back her boyfriend back (laughingly).

c) P3

P3, a sixteen-year-old girl from Lebanon, provided perhaps the briefest and most guarded interview. Living in social housing after separation from her parents, she described herself as alienated and without close connections: *"I am no one… I'm me, that's it."* Her father's struggles with addiction and her mother's absence in another country had left her with minimal parental support. She frequently skipped school, performed poorly academically, and smoked regularly. Although she had been receiving school counselling, she admitted that she felt terrible almost all the time and did not know why. She seemed angry, uninterested and involved with her phones throughout the discussion. There was little eye contact during the conversation.

When introduced to mindfulness, P3 was dismissive: *"It cannot help me. It's for monks."* Her response reflected both a lack of familiarity with contemplative practices and a deeper skepticism born out of repeated disappointment with support systems. Within Honneth's theoretical lens, her narrative epitomizes misrecognition, as she reported feeling excluded from relationships of love, respect, and esteem in almost all domains of her life. Despite her apparent disinterest at the pre-intervention stage, her inclusion in the study was critical, as she approached a contrasting perspective to those more open to mindfulness.

d) P4

P4 was a sixteen-year-old with mixed Syrian and Sudanese heritage. He was from a single parent family which seemed bothered him, as he thinks this is unusual in his culture). But he showed curiosity and openness about mindfulness practice. He presented himself as motivated to experiment with new approaches to self-regulation. Unlike others, he did not show aggression toward mindfulness. Instead, he was honest to admit that he had never heard of it before but was eager to try: *"I am interested to experience how it might help me."*

Although P4 gets easily distracted, he appeared more optimistic about the potential benefits of mindfulness than his peers. His narrative reflected a moderate mindfulness baseline, and his willingness to engage positioned him as a participant open to recognition through new practices of self-awareness. Within the group, Abraham was highly motivated by mindful practice as a tool for enhancing focus and restructuring daily routines.

5.2.2 Narrative Synthesis

Taken together, the pre-intervention interviews reveal a consistent theme of alienation and misrecognition among immigrant youth in Sweden. P1's and P2's accounts reflected struggles of cultural belonging and academic exclusion, while P3's narrative highlighted the profound effects of neglect and disconnection. P4na, though less burdened by self-rejection, revealed the challenges of distraction and fractured family ties. All four narratives foreground the role of identity, family, and cultural recognition in shaping how immigrant adolescents experience themselves and their surroundings. In relation to the Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire, their reflections mirrored deficits in observing (lack of attention to present experience), describing (difficulty articulating emotions), and non-reactivity (tendency to be overwhelmed by thoughts and conflicts). Their participation in mindfulness sessions was therefore not only a methodological requirement but also an opportunity to explore whether guided meditation could create avenues for recognition, self-esteem, and resilience in contexts of displacement and uncertainty.

5.2.3 Emerging Themes

A. Initial Understanding of Mindfulness

Students had limited prior exposure to mindfulness, often drawing from what teachers briefly introduced in class. Most of them associated it with breathing and sitting quietly. P1student said:

"It's probably a way to hypnotise people."

Another grade P4 boy linked mindfulness to Buddhist traditions:

"It's a practice that monks do to become peacebuilders in society… like the Dalai Lama in the hills. Do we also have to go to snowy hills for this?"

A P2 girl expressed skepticism but also curiosity:

"I cannot sit quietly for a minute… but my teacher said it will help me sit calmly. I wanted to see the magic."

This range of responses highlights both skepticism and openness, indicating mixed expectations toward the intervention.

B. Sources of Stress and Emotional Challenges

Academic struggles and family dynamics emerged as central stressors. Two boys (P1 & P4) described strong stress from schoolwork. P1 elaborated on his broader difficulties:

"My father wants me to behave in a certain way, but I don't like it… I think my English is bad and my teacher never recognises my effort. Math is also poor. It's been five years in Sweden, but it doesn't feel like home."

He also expressed a sense of displacement and longing for his homeland:

"You know the morning, the bright sun… you open your eyes and sunlight hits your eyes… it's heavenly. I don't like the dark mornings here. It makes me feel blue. I cannot sleep well at nights. But I never had these difficulties back in my country. I hate waking up all nights".

P2 noted frustration with family expectations:

"My father always asks me to make coffee for him when I'm home. I don't like it. I put too much coffee so he doesn't ask me again. He never asks my other half siblings. He is always unfair. Im black like my father, they are like my mother white (nationality is hidden here)".

These accounts point to tensions in identity, belonging, and intergenerational expectations.

C. Experiences of Care, Value, and Recognition

When asked about what makes them feel cared for or valued, participants frequently emphasized the importance of peers and teachers rather than family members. For example, P2 explained:

"I feel valued only when I am with my friends. They listen to me. My teacher says I am a born leader."

Such accounts point to the central role of peer recognition in shaping identity and self-worth within the school context. According to Honneth (1995), experiences of social value of

being acknowledged for one's unique contributions are fundamental to developing self-esteem. Here, the participant highlights how validation from friends and a teacher fostered a sense of competence and belonging.

In contrast, other students described moments of misrecognition. One participant expressed resentment about being selected for the interview:

"I didn't want to feel different. All my class looked at me. Everyone has problems, why did you choose me?"

This response reveals how being singled out for participation could feel stigmatizing, suggesting a perceived lack of respect and equality compared to peers.

This episode illustrates the fragility of recognition for at-risk youth. Instead of experiencing the interview as an act of care, the student interpreted it as a moment of exposure and misrecognition. Three of them felt being set apart from the group raised feelings of isolation. Within Honneth's (1995) framework, the absence of recognition in this moment reduced their sense of respect and social value. This highlights the importance of conducting interventions in ways that safeguard dignity and minimize perceived stigmatization.

D. Coping Strategies

Participants described a variety of strategies for managing stress and negative emotions, with most cantering on music, movies, social media, and peer interactions. These strategies highlight both adaptive and less adaptive attempts to meet emotional needs, and they can be understood through the lens of recognition theory.

Creative expression and digital platforms were common. One student explained:

"Doing makeup and making TikTok videos help me relax."

As she laughed and fixed her makeup during the interview, she also described playful exchanges with classmates:

"Sometimes I find it good to tease my classmates… they tease me, I do too. My friend, she

feels shy. I don't. My boyfriend left me, so I left him too. I never feel sorry for that."

These behaviours can be interpreted as attempts to assert social value, seeking recognition through visibility, humour, and self-presentation. Makeup and Tik Tok videos provided platforms for self-expression and identity construction in ways that felt empowering to her.

Friends were also identified as essential sources of care and recognition. Another participant explained:

"When I'm with my friends, I don't feel upset. They understand me. They listen to me."

Her offer to bring more classmates to the study, *"Do you need more people to interview? I can help. If I tell my friends, they will come"*. This approach further reflects the importance of peer validation and belonging in shaping her sense of self-worth.

However, not all coping strategies are aligned with positive recognition. P3 reported vaping as a form of stress relief, she reported that she had sleeping difficulties.

"It relaxes me."

Teachers noted that she is often absent from class and already in contact with the school counselor. During the interview she expressed withdrawal and weary:

"I don't care about anything… I just came to this session so I can sleep well."

In Honneth's (1995) terms, this reflects an experience of misrecognition, where the absence of consistent support and respect in other domains of life may have contributed to her reliance on avoidance and risky behaviours.

Taken together, these narrations reveal that coping strategies are deeply intertwined with students' search for recognition. Peer networks and digital spaces often provide care and social value, while the lack of recognition in family and school contexts may push some students toward withdrawal or less adaptive behaviours.

E. Expectations and Reservations about the Program

Several students expressed doubts about whether mindfulness could be effective. P3 laughed while stating:

"No one, nothing can make me feel calmer."

Another student questioned the researcher's role:

"Do you think we have problems? Are you a monk? Are you a psychiatrist to fix our problems?"

Such responses reveal ambivalence and, in some cases, resistance, pointing to the importance of cultural sensitivity and building trust.

5.2.4 Summary of Pre-Intervention Findings

The pre-intervention data showed (see table 11) that students viewed mindfulness program with mixed levels of understanding and varying expectations. While some associated mindfulness with calmness and curiosity, others had doubt or resistance. Stress was primarily linked to academic pressures, intergenerational conflict, and feelings of cultural dislocation. Students reported getting care and recognition mainly from peers and selected teachers, rather than from family. Coping strategies centered on music, digital media, and friendships. These insights set a baseline for understanding how the mindfulness intervention might shape experiences of recognition, emotional wellbeing, and coping in the post-intervention phase.

Table 11: Pre-intervention findings based on theme

Theme	Sub-theme	Illustrative Quote(s)	Link to Recognition Theory
A. Initial Understanding of Mindfulness	Limited or distorted knowledge	*"It's probably a way to hypnotise people."* (Grade 7 boy)	Lack of familiarity; skepticism shows distance from practice but curiosity signals openness to recognition through new knowledge.
	Cultural/religious associations	*"It's a practice that monks do… like the Dalai Lama in the hills. Do we also have to go to snowy hills for this?"* (Grade 9 boy)	Connects mindfulness to moral authority and peacebuilding; reflects search for respect and meaning.
	Skepticism with curiosity	*"I cannot sit quietly for a minute… but my teacher said it will help me sit calmly. I wanted to see the magic."* (Grade 9 girl)	Shows resistance but also hope for transformation; expectation of care.
B. Sources of Stress and Emotional Challenges	Academic struggles	*"My English is bad, and my teacher never recognises my effort. Math is also poor. It's been five years in Sweden, but it doesn't feel like home."* (Grade 9 boy)	Misrecognition in school context; lack of respect and validation lowers self-confidence.

Migration-related loss & displacement	*"You open your eyes and sunlight hits you… it's heavenly. I don't like the dark mornings here. It makes me feel blue."* (Grade 9 boy, Arab background)	Expresses longing for homeland; lack of cultural recognition in Sweden.
Family tensions	*"My father always asks me to make coffee… I put too much so he doesn't ask me again."* (Grade 8 girl)	Absence of care within family dynamics; coping through small acts of resistance.

Theme	Sub-theme	Illustrative Quote(s)	Link to Recognition Theory
C. Experiences of Care, Value, and Recognition	Peer and teacher recognition	*"I feel valued only when I am with my friends. They listen to me. My teacher says I am a born leader."* (Grade 8 girl)	Peers and teachers provide social value and care, strengthening identity.
	Feeling singled out/stigmatized	*"I didn't want to feel different. All my class looked at me. Everyone has problems, why me?"*	Misrecognition: being set apart undermined respect and equality.
	Visible distress in interview	*"Why me?"* (Student distressed when classmates peered in during session)	Illustrates fragility of recognition; intervention experienced as exposure rather than care.
D. Coping Strategies	Creative/digital expression	*"Doing makeup and making TikTok videos helps me relax."*	Self-expression as search for social value and visibility.
	Peer support	*"When I'm with my friends, I don't feel upset. They understand me."*	Peers provide care and belonging, compensating for lack of recognition elsewhere.
	Risk behaviours & disengagement	*"It relaxes me."* (Grade 9 girl, on vaping) *"I don't care about anything… I just came to this session so I can sleep well."*	Reflects misrecognition: absence of consistent care and respect leads to avoidance and risky coping.
E. Expectations and Reservations about the Program	Doubts about effectiveness	*"No one, nothing can make me feel calmer."* (Grade 8 girl)	Ambivalence reveals skepticism about whether mindfulness can provide care.
	Questioning researcher's role	*"Do you think we have problems? Are you a monk? Are you a psychiatrist to fix our problems?"*	Resistance to being pathologized; signals concern over misrecognition and labelling.

5.2.5 Post-Intervention Result

Four immigrant students in a Swedish high school who took part in an eight-week mindfulness program for 10-12 sessions were interviewed to share their experiences. The questions asked about their feelings during the sessions, their assumptions before and after, any positive changes, and their overall views. The interviews give insight into how mindfulness can work for teenagers with migrant backgrounds.

At the start, some students were unsure if mindfulness would be useful. One boy said, *"At first it felt strange, like just sitting there doing nothing, but later I started to like it."* Another student admitted, *"In the beginning I wasn't sure if I would like it, but it surprised me."* These comments show that while there was doubt at first, the students grew more comfortable over time.

The timing of sessions mattered for them. Two preferred mornings because it gave them energy for the day. As one girl put it, *"I enjoyed the morning sessions more because they gave me a fresh start for the day."* The others preferred evenings, saying it helped them relax. One student explained, *"I preferred the evening sessions—it was like relaxing before sleep."*

The practice itself was often valued more than the discussions. *"The meditation practice was the most helpful for me. The discussion was okay, but sometimes I didn't know how to explain myself in Swedish,"* one student said. For some, however, discussions helped them feel connected. *"I liked when we talked in groups, because I could hear how others felt. It made me feel more included,"* said another.

Before the program, the students' thought mindfulness was something only monks or adults did, or that it required a special setting. *"I thought meditation was something for monks or religious people. Now I see I can do it anywhere, even in my room or bus,"* said one boy. Another girl said, *"Before this, I imagined meditation happens in mountains, like in movies. Now I know it can happen even in our school classroom."* These comments show how their understanding shifted.

Even though they learned it can be done anywhere, some parts were hard. Sitting still and dealing with racing thoughts were the main difficulties. *"The hardest part was to stop thinking about my problems at home,"* said one student. Another explained, *"The most difficult part was my mind running everywhere, but the guided voice helped."*

All four students noticed some positive changes. Many mentioned sleep. One boy said, *"I noticed I sleep better now. Before I stayed awake with my phone, but after practice I fell asleep faster."* Another girl added, *"My sleep improved, and I feel less nervous in class."* Beyond sleep, they felt calmer and more able to handle emotions. *"When I felt angry, the breathing helped me not explode,"* explained one participant. Another shared, *"The topic on self-kindness was very important, because sometimes I feel different here in Sweden, and it helped me accept myself."*

When asked about overall experience, all four gave positive feedback. *"My experience is good. I would tell my friends to try it, because it helps with stress,"* said one. Another added, *"I really liked it. I would recommend it to my friends who feel stressed about school."* They also wanted to continue practicing in their own way. Some suggested improvements. *"For future, maybe more short practices during school breaks would help,"* said one boy. Another suggested, *"Maybe add more languages for guided meditations, so everyone understands better."*

In summary, these interviews show that immigrant teenagers (see Table 12) can benefit from mindfulness practice in school. They began with doubts but found it calming and useful. They reported better sleep, less stress, and more control over emotions. They also learned that mindfulness does not require special places or traditions. With small adjustments, such as shorter practices, use of different languages, and more school-based opportunities, mindfulness can be a helpful tool for young people adjusting to new cultures and school life.

Table 12: Post intervention Emerging Themes

Theme	Insights from Participants
Preferred session time	P1 & P3 preferred afternoons/afternoons (relaxing end of day). P2 & P4 preferred mornings (fresh start).
Useful part of session	Most found meditation practice more useful than discussions. Discussions helped inclusion (P3, P2).
Pre vs. post assumptions	Initially, though, mindfulness was only for monks, adults, or isolated places → shifted to seeing it as practical, usable anywhere (school, home).
Difficulties	Sitting still, racing thoughts, body scanning, language barriers during discussions.
Positive changes	Better sleep (P1, P2, P4), calmer moods, improved patience, better handling of negative emotions.
Most effective practices/topics	Breathing practice, handling negative thoughts, self-kindness, acceptance.
Overall experience	All positive. All would recommend it to friends. All want to continue, with adjustments.
Suggestions	Shorter guided sessions, audio in Swedish language, involving the whole classroom, adding music, more frequent school breaks practice.

Chapter 6: Discussion

This chapter synthesizes the findings from both the quantitative and qualitative results of the study and interprets them through the lens of Axel Honneth's Theory of Recognition. The aim is not only to evaluate the effectiveness of the mindfulness intervention but also to understand how immigrant youth experienced recognition such as emotionally, socially, and institutionally. The discussion part is organized with the two central research questions and concludes with a triangulated analysis from qualitative and quantitative results that connects statistical outcomes, lived narratives from respondents and theoretical insights.

6.1 Quantitative Findings: Measuring Mindfulness and Tracing Recognition

The quantitative result of this study employed the Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire (FFMQ) to assess changes in mindfulness related capacities among 17 immigrant adolescents before and after an eight-week intervention. The results revealed statistically significant improvements in some key dimensions such as Observing, Describing, and Non-reactivity to Inner Experience facets that are closely tied to emotional regulation, self-awareness, and internal recognition.

6.1.1 Overall Score Trends and Subscale Shifts

The total mindfulness score increased from a mean of 3.06 (SD = 1.36) to 3.56 (SD = 0.84) that indicates a moderate overall improvement. However, the most meaningful insights emerged from the subscale analysis. Those are presented below:

Observing showed the largest gain ($\Delta M = 0.78$) with students reporting greater awareness of sensory and emotional stimuli. This was statistically significant ($Z = -3.33$, $p = .001$, $r = .81$), suggesting a robust effect size.

Describing improved by 0.68 points ($Z = -2.43$, $p = .015$, $r = .59$) indicating enhanced ability to articulate internal states.

Non-reactivity increased by 0.78 points ($Z = -2.81$, $p = .005$, $r = .68$) reflecting improved emotional regulation and reduced impulsivity.

These findings suggest that the intervention was specifically effective in cultivating attentional presence and emotional literacy skills that are foundational to both psychological wellbeing and the internalization of recognition.

6.1.2 Item-Level Insights and Emotional Shifts

At the item level here, several questions demonstrated significant change. For example, Q2 ("I pay attention to sensations, such as the wind on my face or the sun on my skin") increased by 1.24 points, which is the highest individual gain.

Secondly, Q4 ("I am good at describing how I feel at any given moment") and Q14 ("I can observe my feelings without getting caught up in them") also showed strong improvements ($\Delta M = 0.76$ and 0.88 respectively).

These shifts suggest that the students became more attuned to their embodied experiences and more capable of naming and navigating their emotions. In Honneth's terms, this reflects a movement toward emotional recognition, where individuals begin to "relate to themselves as subjects of feelings" (Honneth 1995:129) rather than as passive recipients of external judgment.

6.1.3 Gender, Grade-Level, and Country of Birth Variations

The Kruskal-Wallis H test revealed a statistically significant difference in the Acting with Awareness subscale across grade levels ($\chi^2(2) = 6.35$, $p = .042$) with Grade Seven students scoring higher than Grade Nine. This may reflect increasing differences in attentional control or the impact of exam-related stress among older students. Interestingly, gender differences were also observed in pre-intervention in the same subscale ($\chi^2(1) = 4.30$, $p = .038$) with boys reporting higher scores than girls.

The Kruskal-Wallis H test revealed a statistically significant difference in Awareness subscale across grade levels ($\chi^2(2) = 6.35$, $p = .042$) with Grade Seven students scoring higher than Grade Nine. This may reflect developmental differences in attentional control or the impact of academic pressure and exam-related stress among older students. Younger participants may have found it easier to engage with mindfulness practices due to fewer competing demands and greater openness to experiential learning.

Gender differences were also observed in the pre-intervention phase. Boys reported higher scores than girls in Acting with Awareness ($\chi^2(1) = 4.30$, $p = .038$) suggesting that male participants may have entered the program with slightly stronger baseline attentional skills. However, post-intervention scores showed more convergence, indicating that the program may have helped reduce gender disparities in mindfulness engagement.

To further explore cultural dimensions, a Kruskal-Walli's test was conducted to compare mindfulness outcomes based on country of birth (Sweden vs. Other) and whether participants' birth country matched their country of origin. The results showed no statistically significant differences across any of the five mindfulness facets ($p > .05$). However, the Observing subscale approached significance post-intervention ($\chi^2 = 3.651$, $p = .056$), suggesting a trend worth exploring in future studies.

This near-significant result may point to subtle differences in how students from different cultural backgrounds engage with sensory awareness and embodiment. It is possible that immigrant youth, particularly those navigating cultural displacement, experience mindfulness as a way to reconnect with their bodies and emotions in a context that often renders them invisible. As Honneth (2008, p. 44) argues, "Reification is the result of a forgetting of recognition, a loss of the affective relation to oneself and others." Mindfulness may help counter this detachment by restoring emotional presence across cultural lines.

Taken together, these findings suggest that while age and gender may influence initial engagement with mindfulness, the intervention was broadly effective across demographic groups. The lack of significant differences by country of birth reinforces the idea that recognition through mindfulness is not culturally exclusive but potentially universal in its emotional and relational impact.

6.1.4 Attendance and Engagement Patterns

Attendance data revealed a clear preference for morning sessions with an average participation rate of 83.1% compared 54.4% in the afternoon. This may be attributed to scheduling conflicts, fatigue or competing academic demands. Notably, meditation sessions continuously drew higher engagement with an average of 12 students participating in meditation. This suggests that embodied, experiential practices were more accessible and reasonable for participants than verbal reflection, an important consideration for program design.

6.1.5 Linking Quantitative Change to Recognition Theory

The observed improvements in mindfulness facets can be interpreted not only as psychological gains but also as indicators of internal recognition. According to Honneth, recognition is not merely an external social act but also a process of self-relation. The ability to observe one's emotions without avoidance (Q14) describe feelings clearly (Q4) and remain non-reactive under stress (Q12–Q13) reflects a reconstitution of self-confidence

and self-respect which are two pillars of recognition theory.

Here, the FFMQ becomes more than a diagnostic tool to serve as a proxy for measuring how recognition is being restored. As Honneth (2008, p. 44) argues, “the experience of being recognized is the condition for the development of a practical relation-to-self.” The quantitative data supports the hypothesis that mindfulness when that is culturally adapted and ethically delivered can facilitate this relational transformation.

6.2 Qualitative Findings: Narratives of Recognition, Resistance, and Emotional Repair

The qualitative result of this study comprises pre- and post-intervention interviews with four immigrant adolescents that offers a textured and emotionally resonant account of how mindfulness was experienced in a Swedish school setting. These narratives do not merely explain individual responses to the intervention but also, they reveal how recognition or its absence is lived and negotiated by those youths who are navigating complex intersections of migration, identity and institutional belonging. Through their voices I gain insight into the moral and relational dimensions of wellbeing.

6.2.1 Pre-Intervention: Misrecognition and Emotional Dislocation

Before the mindfulness sessions began students described lives marked by emotional turbulence, cultural conflict, and social exclusion. For example, firstly, P1, spoke of feeling “invisible” in school and expressed anxiety about his future, “If my brother is jobless, what about me?” His narrative reflected a deep sense of academic and existential insecurity compounded by perceived ethnic bias from teachers. Secondly P2, expressed a painful identity conflict, “I hate looking like an African… my younger sister looks like my mother, fair and blonde.” Her rejection of her own racial features and longing for acceptance revealed the internalization of cultural misrecognition.

Thirdly P3’s account was more guarded but equally touching. Living in social care and alienated from her parents she described herself as “no one,” a phrase that harshly expresses the erosion of self-worth. Fourthly P4 was still more optimistic, admitted to frequent distraction and emotional instability yet showed curiosity about mindfulness as a possible tool for self-regulation.

These narratives align closely with Honneth’s (1995) conception of misrecognition as a source of moral injury. When individuals are denied emotional care, institutional respect or social esteem, their capacity for self-confidence, self-respect, and self-esteem is

compromised. The students from pre-intervention reflections illustrate how these deficits are evident in feelings of alienation, anxiety, and identity confusion.

6.2.2 Post-Intervention: Emergent Recognition and Emotional Shifts

Following the eight-week mindfulness program, all four participants reported meaningful changes in their emotional states, coping strategies, and self-perception. For example, P1 noted improved sleep and reduced racing thoughts while P4 described feeling "calmer" and "less angry." P2, who had initially expressed skepticism, shared that the breathing exercises helped her "not explode" when overwhelmed. P3, despite her initial resistance, admitted that the sessions made her feel "less terrible," and she began attending more regularly.

These shifts suggest that mindfulness functioned as a form of emotional recognition that Honneth (2008) calls the "reawakening of affective self-relations." By encouraging students to observe their emotions without judgment and to engage in self-kindness then the program helped restore a sense of inner dignity. For example, the practice of mirror gazing encouraged reflections on self-acceptance, while the "Cosmic Perspective" module allowed students to position their struggles within a broader existential frame and reduce feelings of isolation.

Notably, students also reported feeling more connected to their peers during group discussions. One participant remarked, "I liked it when we talked in groups… it made me feel more included." This experience of solidarity reflects Honneth's third form of recognition that is social esteem where individuals feel valued for their unique contributions within a shared community.

6.2.3 Recognition Interrupted: Stigma and Structural Constraints

Despite these gains, the qualitative data also revealed moments where recognition was disrupted. Several students expressed discomfort by being singled out for participation. One asked, *"Why me?"* during her interview, interpreting the experience as stigmatizing rather than supportive. This reaction highlights the fragility of recognition in institutional settings and the importance of ethical implementation. As Honneth (1995:163) notes, "Recognition must be experienced as an act of affirmation, not as a gesture of separation."

Moreover, language barriers and cultural unfamiliarity with mindfulness practices can pose challenges. Some students associated meditation with religious rituals or "monks in snowy hills," reflected that limited past contact and initial doubt. These misunderstandings

highlight the need for culturally responsive education and multilingual help in future interventions.

6.2.4 Thematic Synthesis: Recognition as Process, Not Product

Across the interviews, five core themes emerged such as

- Initial Skepticism and Curiosity: Students began with limited or distorted understandings of mindfulness but were open to experimentation.
- Sources of Stress: Academic pressure, family conflict, and identity struggles were common stressors.
- Experiences of Recognition: Peer validation and teacher encouragement were key sources of emotional support.
- Coping Strategies: Music, social media, and peer interaction were primary tools, with mindfulness gradually integrated.
- Transformative Moments: Breathing exercises, guided visualizations, and symbolic activities facilitated emotional breakthroughs.

These themes reflect a dynamic process of recognition as one that unfolds gradually that is shaped by context and requires both internal and external affirmation. The student's narratives illustrate that recognition is not a static achievement but a relational journey that is often marked by setbacks, resistance, and moments of profound insight.

6.3 Triangulation of Findings: Numbers, Narratives, and Theory

Triangulation in mixed-methods research is not merely a methodological exercise, it is a way of reverencing the complexity of human experience. In this study, triangulation served to integrate three distinct but interrelated strands: the statistical outcomes from the Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire (FFMQ), the lived narratives of immigrant youth, and the conceptual insights drawn from Axel Honneth's Theory of Recognition. Together, these elements form a multidimensional picture of how mindfulness is culturally adapted and ethically delivered.

6.3.1 Mindfulness as a Mechanism for Recognition: Theoretical Confirmation and Nuanced Contributions

The present findings demonstrate substantial alignment with existing theoretical frameworks while introducing important nuances to our understanding of mindfulness as a mechanism for fostering recognition among vulnerable youth. Quantitative results revealed statistically significant improvements across three FFMQ facets—Observing, Describing, and Non-reactivity—thereby supporting previous research indicating mindfulness cultivates foundational attentional and emotional regulatory capacities (Baer et al., 2006; Zenner et al., 2014). More significantly, qualitative data extended this understanding by elucidating how these developed skills function as mechanisms facilitating internal recognition processes.

This contribution nuances Honneth's (1995) primarily intersubjective framework by demonstrating how mindfulness training can initiate an intrapersonal process of recognition. Participants began relating to their own emotional experiences with increased curiosity and reduced judgment, effectively extending toward themselves the emotional care often absent in their external social environments. This finding aligns with and extends Berila's (2016) work conceptualizing mindfulness as a practice of radical self-acceptance, particularly for marginalized populations.

The significant improvement in the Describing facet warrants particular attention. While previous research has emphasized mindfulness's observational and regulatory benefits (Hölzel et al., 2011), this study suggests that for immigrant adolescents navigating complex linguistic and cultural displacements, the ability to articulate internal states represents a crucial reclamation of voice and agency. This finding adds an important linguistic and communicative dimension to our understanding of mindfulness benefits for this demographic, directly connecting to Honneth's concept of moral respect through the development of self-representational capacity.

6.3.2 Contextual Implementation: Navigating Structural and Developmental Realities

The observed discrepancy between quantitative attendance patterns and qualitative engagement preferences presents a compelling case study in implementation science. Higher morning attendance (83.1% versus 54.4% afternoon) contrasted sharply with expressed preferences for afternoon sessions, reflecting the well-documented implementation paradox in school-based interventions (Durlak & DuPre, 2008). This divergence highlights the tension between institutional constraints—scheduling convenience, curricular demands—and optimal conditions for authentic participant engagement.

The contrast between high meditation participation and stated preference for discussion activities further illustrates the complex relationship between effortful skill-building and immediately rewarding engagement. Meditation, while effectively building regulatory capacity, represents an effortful practice that novice practitioners often find challenging (Lomas et al., 2017). Discussion groups, conversely, leverage social connection—a primary motivator for adolescents (Blakemore & Mills, 2014)—providing more immediate relational validation. This suggests that the intervention successfully engaged participants in both transformative skill-building (through meditation) and socially affirming experiences (through discussion), each serving complementary functions within the recognition process.

Developmental considerations further contextualize these findings. The significant difference in Acting with Awareness between grade levels ($\chi^2(2) = 6.35$, $p = .042$) aligns with existing literature indicating increased academic and social pressures may challenge mindfulness practice in older adolescents (Zoogman et al., 2015). This underscores the importance of developmental sensitivity in program implementation and assessment.

6.3.3 Cultural Transferability and Contextual Adaptation

The lack of significant outcome differences based on country of birth supports the cross-cultural applicability of mindfulness's core mechanisms while simultaneously highlighting the critical importance of contextual adaptation. These findings align with Kabat-Zinn's (2003) assertion regarding mindfulness's universal applicability while emphasizing—as diversity-informed scholars advocate (Magee, 2019)—that effective implementation requires careful attention to cultural and contextual framing.

The study's approach—incorporating bilingual support, culturally adaptable metaphors, and trauma-sensitive frameworks—likely facilitated this successful transferability. However, the near-significant trend in Observing ($p = .056$) among certain cultural groups suggests nuanced differences in how mindfulness is embodied and experienced across cultural contexts. While the fundamental benefits appear universally accessible, their specific manifestations and relative salience may vary considerably, representing a fertile area for future investigation.

This complex interplay between universal mechanisms and culturally-specific manifestations underscores the importance of developing mindfulness interventions that balance fidelity to core principles with flexibility in implementation approaches. The findings suggest that effective programs must be both theoretically grounded in mindfulness principles and responsive to the particular cultural, developmental, and institutional contexts in which they are imp

6.3.4 Visualizing Triangulation: A Conceptual Matrix

To illustrate this integration (table 14) the following table summarizes how each mindfulness facet aligns with student narratives and recognition dimensions:

Table 13: Triangulation of Quantitative and Qualitative findings

Mindfulness facet (FFMQ)	Quantitative change	Qualitative insight	Recognition dimension (honneth)
Observing	↑ significant ($z = –3.33$, $p = .001$)	"I started noticing the wind and sounds around me."	Emotional care (self-awareness)
Describing	↑ moderate ($z = –2.43$, $p = .015$)	"I can say how I feel now, not just stay quiet."	Moral respect (voice and agency)
Non-reactivity	↑ significant ($z = –2.81$, $p = .005$)	"Breathing helped me not explode when angry."	Emotional care (self-regulation)
Acting with awareness	— no significant change	"I still get distracted, but I try to focus more."	Social esteem (intentionality)
Non-judging of inner experience	— no significant change	"I'm learning not to blame myself so much."	Emotional care (self-compassion)

This matrix not only proves position across methods but also reinforces the theoretical claim that recognition is both an internal and external process.

Chapter 7: Limitations and Conclusion of the Study

This study gave useful results, but there were also some important challenges. These limitations help us understand what worked well and what could be better in future research

7.1. Language and Conceptual Understanding

A primary limitation was the language barrier between the English-speaking researcher and the Swedish-fluent participants. Although a Swedish teacher was present to facilitate, the use of the English FFMQ and interview questions risks measurement error and reduced conceptual validity. Participants may have misinterpreted nuanced terms in the questionnaire (e.g., "observing," "non-judging"), potentially inflating or dampening score changes. Similarly, in interviews, the depth of emotional expression might have been constrained as participants navigated between their internal Swedish thoughts and external English responses. This limitation necessitates caution in making definitive claims about the precise magnitude of the changes observed.

7.2 Sample Size and Diversity

The small sample size (N=17) limits the statistical power and generalizability of the quantitative findings. While the group's demographic diversity is a strength in terms of representing varied experiences, it makes it difficult to control for confounding variables. The significant difference found between grade levels in 'Acting with Awareness' may be real, but with a larger sample, we could more reliably determine if this was due to developmental age, exam pressure, or other factors. The findings, therefore, are best viewed as generating strong hypotheses for future research rather than offering conclusive evidence.

7.3 Scheduling Conflicts and Absenteeism

The quantitative data clearly showed higher attendance in morning sessions (83.1%) than afternoon sessions (54.4%). The preference for afternoon sessions expressed qualitatively by some participants directly conflicts with this attendance data. My observation provides the critical context: national exam schedules for Grades 8 and 9 and a pre-existing pattern of high absenteeism are the likely causes. This negative correlation between preference and attendance is a powerful example of how systemic school structures and individual student histories can directly impact intervention fidelity and outcomes. It suggests that the observed results might have been more pronounced with consistent attendance and highlights the challenge of implementing such programs in real-world educational settings.

7.4 Stigmatisation and The Whole-class Dilemma

The qualitative reports of students feeling stigmatised by being singled out ("*Why me?*") reveal a critical ethical and methodological challenge. The participants' preference for whole-class implementation underscores the tension between research design and ecological validity. Being pulled out of class marked them as different, potentially reinforcing the very feelings of misrecognition the intervention aimed to alleviate. This likely contributed to absenteeism and may have initially heightened anxiety, meaning the positive results emerged *despite* this initial hurdle. Future school-based interventions must carefully weigh the research benefits of a selected group against the psychological cost of stigmatisation.

7.5 Theme Engagement and Program Delivery

My observation is that some themes were more engaging than others is reflected in the varying attendance figures for different thematic sessions. This variability is a natural part of any multi-component intervention but indicates that a more flexible program, perhaps allowing for more student choice in themes, could enhance engagement and effectiveness.

initial benefits of such programs are sustained over time and how they influence academic and social trajectories beyond the immediate end of the intervention.

7.6 Concluding Synthesis

A fundamental limitation of this study emerges from its methodological approach in relation to the core principle of Honneth's theory: that recognition is inherently reciprocal and constituted through intersubjective exchange. As Honneth (1995) argues, "the reproduction of social life is governed by the imperative of mutual recognition, because one can develop a practical relation-to-self only when one has learned to view oneself, from the normative perspective of one's partners in interaction, as their social addressee" (p. 92). By focusing exclusively on immigrant adolescents, this research captured only one dimension of the recognition process-the intrapersonal development of self-relation as either a result of, or precondition for, social recognition.

The methodological decision to employ self-report measures (FFMQ) and first-person interviews, while valuable for illuminating participants' internal experiences, necessarily rendered the "partners in interaction", non-immigrant peers and teachers were left unexamined elements in the recognition dynamic. Consequently, while the study can hypothesize about recognition processes, it cannot empirically trace the actual dyadic or collective mechanisms through which recognition is mutually granted, refused, or negotiated in everyday school interactions.

This limitation points to a crucial direction for future research: including a comparative cohort of non-immigrant youth would enable investigation of whether mindfulness training fosters not only the capacity to receive recognition but also to grant it. Thereby, providing a more complete understanding of how mindfulness might facilitate the "imperative of mutual recognition" at the heart of Honneth's framework and essential for successful intercultural integration in educational settings.

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Annexure:

Annex Table 1: Percentage of attendance by shift

	Percentage of Attendance	
Participants	Morning	Afternoon
Participant 1	75%	100%
Participant 2	100%	12.50%
Participant 3	87.50%	0%
Participant 4	87.50%	25%
Participant 5	100%	100%
Participant 6	87.50%	87.50%
Participant 7	100%	100%
Participant 8	100%	100%
Participant 9	62.50%	50%
Participant 10	87.50%	12.50%
Participant 11	37.50%	62.50%
Participant 12	75%	50%
Participant 13	100%	25%
Participant 14	50%	62.50%
Participant 15	87.50%	50%
Participant 16	75%	87.50%
Participant 17	100%	0%
Average	83.08%	54.41%

Annex Table 2: Percentage of participants by theme

Theme	Shift	N	Percent of cases
Theme 1: relaxation and self-awareness	Morning	17	100.00%
Theme 1 (continued)	Afternoon	9	52.90%
Theme 2: healing the past and empowering the future	Morning	15	88.20%
Theme 2 (continued)	Afternoon	9	52.90%
Theme 3: connection vs division (scissors and needle)	Morning	12	70.60%
Theme 3 (continued)	Afternoon	8	47.10%
Theme 4: the cosmic perspective (the dot)	Morning	13	76.50%
Theme 4 (continued)	Afternoon	8	47.10%

Theme 5: visualization and future self (the clap and cheers)	Morning	16	94.10%
Theme 5 (continued)	Afternoon	7	41.20%
Theme 6: self-reflection and acceptance (the mirror)	Morning	12	70.60%
Theme 6 (continued)	Afternoon	9	52.90%
Theme 7: gratitude and compassion (merged with theme 2: healing the past)	Morning	13	76.50%
Theme 7 (continued) (merged with theme 3: connection vs division)	Afternoon	13	76.50%
Theme 8: integration and life purpose (merged with theme 6: self-reflection - the mirror)	Morning	15	88.20%
Theme 8 (continued) merged with theme 4: the dot (cosmic journey)	Afternoon	11	64.70%

Annex Table 3: Pre -Post intervention FFMQ comparison

Questions	**Pre intervention**				**Post intervention**				**Mean changes**
	Mean	Median	Mode	Std. Dev.	Mean	Median	Mode	Std. Dev.	
I notice changes in my thoughts and feelings throughout the day.	3.29	4	4	1.45	3.76	4	3	0.83	0.47
I pay attention to sensations, such as the wind on my face or the sun on my skin	3.00	3	3	1.27	4.24	4	5	0.83	1.24
I am aware of the sounds around me, like birds chirping or cars passing by.	3.35	4	4	1.41	4.00	4	4	0.79	0.65
I am good at describing how i feel at any given moment	3.00	3	2	1.27	3.76	4	3	0.97	0.76
I can express what is happening in my mind when i'm upset or stressed.	2.82	3	3	1.33	3.41	3	3	0.80	0.59
I find myself doing things without paying attention.	2.71	2	2	1.26	3.00	3	3	0.79	0.29
I eat meals without paying attention to what I'm eating.	3.76	4	4	1.35	3.53	3	3	1.01	-0.24
I find myself preoccupied/busy with other things while doing tasks.	2.53	3	3	1.23	2.76	3	3	0.75	0.24
I criticize/blame myself for having irrational or inappropriate emotions.	3.71	4	5	1.26	3.94	4	3	0.90	0.24
I get frustrated/less confident with myself when i'm feeling anxious or sad.	3.12	3	2	1.58	3.65	3	3	1.06	0.53
I judge my thoughts and feelings as good or bad.	3.18	3	5	1.63	3.00	3	3	0.71	-0.18
I find it easy to stay calm when i'm feeling upset.	3.06	3	5	1.60	3.76	3	3	0.90	0.71
I can let go of thoughts that are bothering me.	2.71	3	3	1.26	3.47	3	3	0.72	0.76
I can observe my feelings without getting caught up in them.	2.71	3	3	1.16	3.59	4	3	0.62	0.88

Annex 4: Pre-Intervention Interview Questions

1. Background and Expectations
    - What do you know about mindfulness or meditation?
    - Have you ever tried it before?
    - What do you expect from these sessions?
2. Stressors and Emotional Experiences
    - What makes you feel frustrated, angry, sad, or depressed?
    - How do you usually cope with stress or negative feelings?
    - Do you have difficulties with sleep, concentration, or schoolwork?
3. Relationships and Belonging
    - How do you feel about your relationships with teachers, parents, and friends?
    - Do you feel that you are understood and respected in school and at home?
    - How do you see yourself in relation to your cultural background and identity?
4. Perceptions of Mindfulness
    - How do you think mindfulness might help your thoughts, emotions, or schoolwork?
    - What have you heard from others (friends, teachers, family) about mindfulness?

Annex 5: Post-Intervention Interview Questions

1. Overall Experience
    - Did you like the sessions?
    - Which session did you like the most and why?
2. Practice Beyond the Classroom
    - Did you practise any of the exercises at home or outside the classroom?
    - If yes, in what situations and how did it feel?
3. Changes and Observations
    - What kind of changes have you noticed in yourself since the sessions started?
    - Have your relationships with friends, teachers, or family changed in any way?
    - Do you think differently about yourself now compared to before?

4. Sharing and Recommendation
    - Did you discuss mindfulness or share the practices with anyone else?
    - Would you recommend mindfulness sessions to your classmates or others? Why or why not?
5. Difficulties and Improvements
    - Was there anything that bothered you during the mindfulness practice?
    - What could be improved to make the sessions more useful for you?

Annex Table 6: Five facet mindfulness questionnaires

Items	Questions	Category
Q1	I notice changes in my thoughts and feelings throughout the day.	Observing
Q2	I pay attention to sensations, such as the wind on my face or the sun on my skin	Observing
Q3	I am aware of the sounds around me, like birds chirping or cars passing by.	Observing
Q4	I am good at describing how i feel at any given moment	Describing
Q5	I can express what is happening in my mind when i'm upset or stressed.	Describing
Reverse Q6	I find myself doing things without paying attention.	Acting with awareness (reverse score)
Reverse Q7	I eat meals without paying attention to what i'm eating.	Acting with awareness (reverse score)
Reverse Q8	I find myself preoccupied/busy with other things while doing tasks.	Acting with awareness (reverse score)
Reverse Q9	I criticize/blame myself for having irrational or inappropriate emotions.	Non-judging of inner experience (reverse score)
Reverse Q10	I get frustrated/less confident with myself when i'm feeling anxious or sad.	Non-judging of inner experience (reverse score)
Reverse Q11	I judge my thoughts and feelings as good or bad.	Non-judging of inner experience (reverse score)
Q12	I find it easy to stay calm when I'm feeling upset.	Nonreactivity to inner experience
Q13	I can let go of thoughts that are bothering me.	Nonreactivity to inner experience
Q14	I can observe my feelings without getting caught up in them.	Nonreactivity to inner experience

In 5-point Likert scale: Always true (5)/ often true (4)/ sometimes true (3) / rarely true (2) / never true (1)