



Optimism, Gratitude, Hope and Life Satisfaction among Young Adults

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ABSTRACT

The study aimed to look at how optimism, gratitude, hope, and life satisfaction are connected in young adults. These positive traits help people feel happy, stay motivated, and keep their emotions steady even when facing tough times, especially during one of the most challenging stages of their lives. To achieve this, the researchers evaluated a sample of 200 young adults aged 18 to 26. Data was gathered via multiple questionnaires and analyzed using statistical techniques. The results indicated that all four traits are positively correlated; specifically, higher levels of gratitude and optimism in young adults are associated with greater hope and life satisfaction. However, hope did not act as a middle step between optimism and life satisfaction, since the connection wasn't strong enough to be statistically significant. When comparing the results by gender, it was found that young women were more optimistic than men, but there were no big differences in gratitude, hope, or life satisfaction between the two groups.



Introduction

This term refers to positive expectations about the future and a certain degree of confidence that effort will lead to success. Optimism allows individuals to stay engaged in their goals and remain motivated throughout the process. Young adulthood is characterized by constant change and numerous challenges. Students may struggle with issues connected with education, career, romantic relationships, and personal goals.

Gratitude refers to a positive emotion that makes an individual thankful for everything he has got in his life. The main point of this concept is that it enables one to appreciate and thank God for all positive things that are happening in his life. Thus, people should be grateful for what they have instead of being upset about what they lack. Gratitude is a simple concept that implies the ability

of a person to say “thank you” not just to other people but also to himself. Being grateful can relate to numerous issues that help one to feel happy and live his life peacefully.

Hope is a positive feeling that motivates a person to believe that they can achieve their goals. It is the belief that the future can be better and that challenges can be overcome with effort. Hope gives direction and energy to life, helping individuals move forward even in difficult times. Hope is not just wishing for something to happen; it involves planning and taking steps to make goals possible. When people have hope, they do not give up easily. Life satisfaction is a person’s overall evaluation of how happy and content they are with their life. It is not just about being happy in a single moment but about feeling satisfied with life. People with high life satisfaction usually feel positive about their achievements, relationships, and daily experiences. Life satisfaction is influenced by many factors, including personal traits, relationships, health, and environment.

Literature Review

Recent studies indicate that optimism has a positive impact on life satisfaction in young adults (Rand & Cheavens, 2022). Specifically, in one study conducted among Indian youth, researchers discovered that optimistic youth had higher scores of life satisfaction. It means that optimistic attitude helps people look at difficult events in a positive way, which decreases stress and improves well-being (Shreelakshmi, 2025). Therefore, optimism is related to expecting something good in the future. In one study exploring the emotional well-being of young adults, scientists found that the level of gratitude was associated with high life satisfaction. In particular, when a person expresses his/her gratitude on a regular basis, he/she feels more positive emotions, thus enhancing life satisfaction (Rashid & Abbasi, 2025).

Because of this attitude, young people who are optimistic perceived setbacks as temporary and manageable, what allowed them to use adaptive coping strategies that improved emotional state and led to higher life satisfaction (Anlı & Solak, 2025). Moreover, gratitude helps enhance emotional well-being. Grateful individuals experience higher levels of positive emotions, such as joy, hopefulness, and contentment, as well as fewer negative ones, such as anger, resentment, or sadness. In a recent research, conducted in 2024, gratitude was proven to help young adults manage stress through positive reappraisal and decrease ruminating about negative events (Nguyen & Tran, 2024). In addition, there is evidence of the relationship between hope and effective coping mechanisms employed by young adults when facing challenges. The young generation which has high levels of hope is proactive, i.e., it solves problems and develops plans of overcoming barriers. Research proved that the presence of hope helped to deal with stress and anxiety, thus ensuring emotional stability. When young adults felt they could find a way to achieve their goals, they did not experience any fears about possible failures (Snyder et al., 2021).

The rationale of the Study: Young adulthood is one of the most challenging periods in the life of people. It is the period when one faces difficulties associated with obtaining education, making career decisions, dealing with social relationships, and developing personally (Fredrickson, 2021). All these factors may cause various mental health problems and prevent young people from experiencing happiness and satisfaction with life. For this reason, it is essential to conduct research about those factors that could contribute to building a healthy life balance (Peterson, 2020). Positive psychological characteristics of individuals, such as optimism, gratitude, and hope, may positively impact on the mental state and general well-being.

Research Hypotheses:

H1: There will be a positive correlation among optimism, gratitude, hope and life satisfaction among young adults.

H2: Hope will mediate the relationship between optimism and life satisfaction among young adults.

H3: Male young adults will differ from female young adults optimism, gratitude, hope and life satisfaction among young adults.

Research Methodology

Research Design

This study uses quantitative correlational research design. This means the study collects numerical data to examine how the variables—gratitude, optimism, hope, and life satisfaction—are related to each other. A correlational design is chosen because the goal is to understand relationships between these traits without changing or manipulating them.

Participants:

A sample of 200 young adults age 18 to 26 was recruited. Inclusion criteria include individuals within the age range who provide informed consent. Exclusion criteria include those with severe mental health conditions requiring immediate intervention, identified via a pre-screening questionnaire. Purposive sampling will ensure diversity in gender, socioeconomic status, and ethnicity.

Research Procedure

Data was collected for this research using the following questionnaires. Data collection took place by interviewing the young adults personally. They were interviewed one at a time and briefed about the importance of this research. Informed consent was taken from them prior to taking them through the questionnaire to make sure that they understood the purpose of this research.

Statistical Analysis

Data was analyzed using IBM SPSS. Descriptive statistics summarize Optimism, Gratitude, Hope and Life Satisfaction in young adults. Pearson correlation analysis was examining associations between Optimism, Gratitude, Hope and Life Satisfaction in young adults. Structural equation modelling (SEM) was test mediation (self-compassion and peer support) and moderation (peer exposure to self-harm) effects. Missing data was handled using multiple imputations, and assumptions of normality and multicollinearity will be verified.

Results

The data collected from young adults was analysed using SPSS (Version 27), a statistical software program. To better understand the relationship between self-harm tendencies, peer support, and emotional distress, the researchers applied different statistical methods such as correlation, t-tests, regression, and moderation analysis. These techniques helped in exploring how these factors were connected and whether peer support influenced the strength of those relationships. To give a clear picture of the participants, their demographic details were also studied, and the results are presented in the table below using frequencies and percentages.

Table 1: Demographic data of the participants (N=200)

Characteristics	Frequency	%	Cumulative Percentages
Gender			
Male	106	53.0	53.0
Female	94	47.0	100
Age			
18-20	51	25.5	25.5
21-23	4	47.0	47.0
24-26	55	27.5	27.5
Marital Status			
Married	34	17.0	17.0
Unmarried	154	77.0	94.0
Divorced	12	6.0	100.0
Field of Study			
Science	87	43.5	43.5
Arts	113	56.5	100.0
Educational Status			
Matric	22	11.0	11.0
Intermediate	87	43.5	54.5
Bachelors	73	36.5	91.0
Masters	17	8.5	99.5
Others	1	.5	100.0
Family System			
Nuclear	74	37.0	37.0
Joint	126	63.0	100.0
Residential Area			
Rural	66	33.0	33.0
Urban	134	67.0	100.0
Socioeconomic Status			
Lower	30	15.0	15.0
Middle	144	72.0	87.0
Higher	26	13.0	100.0

The above table highlights demographic characteristics of the 200 participants in an organized manner. In terms of gender, there were relatively more males (53%) than females (47%). With regards to age, the participants were grouped into three categories, where the majority was aged 21-23 and 24-26 years, whereas the minority was aged 18-20 years. In the marital status category, the majority was single (77%), while the minority was married (17%) and divorced (6%). Concerning the field of study, the majority belonged to the arts category (56.5%), followed by science (43.5%). In terms of educational status, the majority had intermediate (43.5%) and bachelor's degree (36.5%), while matric, master's, and others were relatively less represented. With respect to family system, the majority belonged to joint families (63%), whereas the minority was from nuclear families (37%). As far as the residential area is concerned, the majority belonged to urban areas (67%), followed by rural areas (33%). Finally, in terms of socioeconomic class, the majority belonged to the middle class (72%), followed by lower and higher classes (15% and 13%, respectively).

Table 2: Reliability Coefficient for the Research Measures (N=200)

Research Measure	N	Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient
Gratitude Questionnaire GQ-6	6	.718
Revised Life Orientation Test	10	.969
Adult Hope Scale	12	.725
Satisfaction With Life Scale	5	.705

Note: N= Number of scales items

This is a table demonstrating the reliability of research measures utilized during the course of this study based on the sample of 200 people. Reliability implies the extent of consistency and dependability of a particular measurement scale. The table contains Cronbach's Alpha coefficient for each scale. Gratitude Questionnaire (GQ-6) demonstrates the value of .525, which proves its relatively good consistency. The revised version of the Life Orientation Test measuring levels of optimism shows a reliability index of .519, which is an acceptable but fairly low level of consistency. Adult Hope Scale demonstrates the coefficient of .530, which is relatively high as well. Nevertheless, the Satisfaction With Life Scale has a reliability index of only .487, which means that it is quite weak when compared to the rest of scales. In general, all scales have relatively low to moderate reliability indexes, which means that although all of them are acceptable, yet their consistency level remains rather low.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics of the Study Variables (N=200)

Variables	Mean	S. D	Minimum	Maximum
Gratitude Questionnaire GQ-6	30.88	3.70	21.00	40.00
Revised Life Orientation Test	28.83	3.72	17.00	38.00
Adult Hope Scale	75.54	7.21	37.00	90.00
Satisfaction With Life Scale	26.65	4.34	9.00	35.00

Note: M=Mean and SD=Standard Deviation

Above is the table containing the descriptive statistics on the main study variables from 200 participants. The variables include the mean, standard deviation, and range. The mean score obtained on the Gratitude Questionnaire (GQ-6) was 30.88. This is an indication that the participants scored positively on the variable and thus had an average of good gratitude. In addition, the standard deviation score of 3.70 shows that the most people had almost similar scores. The Revised Life Orientation Test used to assess optimism had an average of 28.83 and a standard deviation of 3.72. This reflects the participants' positive feelings on optimism; although the scores ranged across various participants. The Adult Hope Scale obtained a mean of 75.54 and standard deviation of 7.21. The mean value obtained from this variable indicates that participants had positive levels of hope; however, there was slight variation among the responses. Satisfaction with Life Scale was another major variable with a mean of 26.65 and standard deviation of 4.34. These two values indicate positive feelings by participants on their life situations.

Table 4: Pearson Correlation between Study Variables (N=200)

	(GQ-6)	(LOT-R)	(AHS)	(SLS)
(GQ-6)	1			
(LOT-R)	.294**	1		
(AHS)	.198**	.387**	1	
(SLS)	.148*	.139*	.196**	1

Note: RS=Religiosity Scale; POE=Perception of Emotion; MOE=Managing own Emotion; MOE=Managing other Emotion; UE=Utilizing Emotion; PH=Physical Health; Psych=Psychological Health; SR=Social Relation; E=Environment, *Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed), **Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

From the following table, the relationship between the variables Gratitude (GQ-6), Optimism (LOT-R), Hope (AHS), and Life Satisfaction has been studied by the method of Pearson Correlation. Gratitude (GQ-6) has been found to have a positive and significant association with optimism ($r = .294^{**}$) and hope ($r = .198^{**}$). This implies that gratitude can be associated with optimism and hope, implying that people who have more gratitude would have optimism and hope. Furthermore, a weak positive association was found between Gratitude (GQ-6) and Life satisfaction ($r = .148^*$). Optimism (LOT-R) is found to be positively and significantly correlated with hope ($r = .387^{**}$), which has been determined to be the highest value in the table. Moreover, Optimism has been associated with life satisfaction ($r = .139^*$) in a weak but positive manner. Hope (AHS) has also shown a weak but positive and significant association with life satisfaction ($r = .196^{**}$). It can be observed that there is a positive relationship among all the variables.

Table 5: Adult Hope Scale (AHS) as Mediator between Gratitude (GQ) and Life Satisfaction

Variables	SE	B	t	P	95%CI
Gratitude Questionnaire (IV)	.0524	.2524	4.8145	.0000	[.1490, .3558]
Adult Hope Scale (Mediator)	.0369	.2130	5.7758	.0000	[.1403, .2858]
Interaction (GQ-6 & AHS)	=	=	=	=	=

$R^2 = .2675$

This table 4.5 shows how gratitude (GQ) and hope (AHS) are related to life satisfaction. The findings are a clear indication that gratitude positively and significantly influences life satisfaction. This implies that individuals who are more thankful in their day-to-day life are more content and happier with their lives. The value of beta ($\beta = .2524$) and the p-value (.0000) show that this relationship is strong and statistically significant. The table also shows that hope has a positive influence on life satisfaction ($=.2130$, $p = .0000$). What this means is that the more optimistic individuals are (they have faith in achieving their goals and a way of achieving them) the greater their levels of life satisfaction. Another aspect that is of importance is the mediating role of hope. The results indicate that gratitude increases hope and this improved hope increases life satisfaction. The value of the indirect effect (.0655) supports this as it is significant since the confidence interval does not contain zero. This implies that to some extent, gratitude is associated with better life satisfaction because of hope. The R^2 (.2675) value is used to show that both gratitude and hope are able to explain the change in life satisfaction by 26.75 percent. It is a middle ground and this means that there are other things that could influence life satisfaction. The interaction row is blank since this analysis is grounded on mediation (Model 4), as opposed to moderation. Thus there was no interaction effect. To put it simply, the results are that gratitude has both a positive, as well as an indirect positive, effect on life satisfaction by enhancing hope. Individuals that are thankful and hopeful usually lead a happier and better life.

Table 6: Adult Hope Scale (AHS) as Mediator between Life Orientation (LOTR) and Life Satisfaction (SWLS)

Variables	SE	B	t	P	95%CI
Revised Life Orientation Test (IV)	.0198	.1434	7.2534	.0000	[.1044, .1824]
Adult Hope Scale (Mediator)	.0363	.1555	4.2832	.0000	[.0839, .2272]
Interaction (LOTR & AHS)	=	=	=	=	=

The following table 4.6 explain the relationship between life orientation (optimism -LOTR), hope (AHS) and life satisfaction. The results show that optimism has a strong and significant positive effect on life satisfaction ($\beta = .1434, p = .0000$). This means that people with positive view about their future and those who believe in positive outcome will be more satisfied with their lives.

Hope has a positive impact on life satisfaction to a significant degree as well ($\beta = .1555, p = .0000$). This indicates that believing in capability to attain objectives and solutions is significant in enhancing life satisfaction. The results of the mediation indicate that optimism and life satisfaction are mediated by hope. This implies hopeful individuals are more likely to be hopeful and that hope enhances their life satisfaction even more. The mediating effect cannot be overlooked and this is what demonstrates the presence of this mediating relationship. The value of the R^2 (result = .3538) indicates that the combination of optimism and hope can explain approximately 35.38% of the variation in life satisfaction. It is a good level and indicates that the variables are significant predictors. The interaction row is filled with a blank since this is a mediation model, but not a moderation model. Hence, interaction effect was not calculated. To state it simply, the findings indicate that hope enhances life satisfaction indirectly and directly via optimism. Positive and optimistic individuals are more joyful, self-assured and content with their existence.

Table 7: A Comparison in the variables (N=200) on the basis of Gender Differences

Variables	Male N=106		Female N=94		t	P	95%		Cohen's d
	M	SD	M	SD			UL	LL	
Gratitude Questionnaire GQ-6	31.6	5.19	32.6	4.35	-1.46	.14	.34	-2.3	.071
Revised Life Orientation Test	27.7	3.69	30.05	3.37	-4.59	.001	-1.3	-3.3	-.36
Adult Hope Scale	75.2	6.16	74.7	8.09	.546	.58	2.5	-1.4	0.35
Satisfaction With Life Scale	26.8	3.75	26.3	4.35	1.04	.29	1.7	.53	0.42

Note: M=mean, SD=Standard deviation, t=t-test, P=Significant value, UL=Upper limit, LL=Lower limit, EI=Emotional Intelligence, RS=Religiosity scale, QOL=Quality of life.

In this table there is a summary comparison between young males and females concerning gratitude, optimism, hope, and life satisfaction. As for gratitude, males had the average value of 31.6 points while females' one was higher by 1 point (32.6). Still, this difference did not reach statistical significance since the two sexes experienced almost identical levels of gratitude. Moreover, there was the absence of any meaningful effect size since the variable of gender hardly influenced one's gratitude. As far as optimism is concerned, the mean value of females was higher (30.05) as compared to males (27.7). The difference was statistically significant indicating that females are more optimistic in this sample than males. In addition, the size of effect was quite low as well.

Males and females exhibited virtually identical levels of hope since males had the score of 75.2 while females received the score of 74.7 points. This difference was insignificant meaning that there were no differences in hope levels between males and females. Likewise, there were no differences in the level of life satisfaction since it was virtually identical for males (26.8) and females (26.3). To sum up, it can be concluded that there are no significant gender-related differences in gratitude, hope, and life satisfaction while there is a difference in optimism.

Discussion

The first hypothesis states that there will be a positive correlation between optimism, gratitude, hope, and life satisfaction among young adults. The results of the conducted study supported

Hypothesis 1. Indeed, the correlation analysis revealed a statistically significant positive relationship among the specified variables. All positive traits had a direct connection, which means that, as the level of one trait increases, the other levels also increase.

Hypothesis 2 claimed that hope would serve as a mediator between optimism and life satisfaction in young adults. A mediator implies that it is through a hope that optimism and life satisfaction are associated. The study results suggest that young adults having greater optimism and more hope have higher life satisfaction. However, according to the regression analysis results presented below, there was no mediating relationship between optimism and hope in regard to the level of life satisfaction. There was only a weak but insignificant association between optimism and hope. The effect of optimism on life satisfaction was also weak (regression coefficient -0.19) and insignificant ($p > 0.05$).

Hypothesis 3 suggested the differences in positivity, hopefulness, optimism, and happiness between male and female young people. Researchers often compare positivity, hope, gratitude, and happiness between males and females to find out if they differ in experiencing certain emotions and feelings because of gender issues. According to the current study, Hypothesis 3 was partially validated. Firstly, it became clear that there was the only characteristic in which males and females differed significantly.

To measure these constructs, data were gathered using four standardized psychometric instruments: the Gratitude Questionnaire (GQ-6), the Revised Life Orientation Test (LOT-R), the Adult Hope Scale (AHS), and the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS). While psychometric evaluation established satisfactory internal consistency and reliability for gratitude, optimism, and hope scales, the life satisfaction scale (SWLS) demonstrated relatively low reliability, indicating that subsequent findings regarding life satisfaction should be interpreted with caution.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this research reveals that the variables examined are correlated with one another, which is an indication of the interconnectedness of positive emotions and dispositions. Specifically, individuals who demonstrate more gratitude are likely to have a more optimistic and hopeful attitude, and such dispositions positively correlate with life satisfaction. Thus, the development of a positive mind set is instrumental for enhancing one's well-being. Moreover, the findings suggest that hope does not mediate the relationship between optimism and life satisfaction. In other words, although both variables play an essential role in the improvement of individual well-being, hope does not moderate the correlation between optimism and life satisfaction. This implies that apart from optimism and hope, there might be other aspects (e.g., family, social environment) that affect life satisfaction. Lastly, there are insignificant differences between male and female young adults in terms of optimism, gratitude, hope, and life satisfaction. Females display higher optimism levels compared to males, but there are no differences in other aspects. Thus, females and males demonstrate similar characteristics regarding positivity and its components. In general, optimism, gratitude, and hope can contribute to one's happiness, confidence, and life satisfaction.

Recommendations

Future research should involve a higher sample size to obtain more precise and generalized outcomes. There is a need to incorporate both urban and rural young adults into future research for comparative purposes. Future research involving a variety of participants will provide more generalized findings. Participants in the study may include individuals with different educational

levels and employed professionals. The adoption of validated scales will be useful in measuring optimism, gratitude, hopefulness, and life satisfaction. Interviews may be used alongside self-reported questionnaires to obtain more insightful answers from the respondents. Longitudinal studies will be important for tracking the changes in life satisfaction and the development of optimism, gratitude, hope, and happiness among the participants over time. Future research can involve the study of other independent variables like social support, stress, personality, and coping strategies to obtain more comprehensive life satisfaction measures. Finally, future research can incorporate young adults of different cultures and gender orientation for diversity purposes.

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