



Exploring the Healing Power of Gratitude: Investigating the Relationship between Gratitude and Life Satisfaction among Diabetic Patients

Javeria Javed¹, Syeda Asma Gillani^{2*}, Hira Sabir³, Ishrat Shaheen⁴, Maryam Azim⁵ & Tayyaba Dilpazeer⁶

¹⁻⁶University of Azad Jammu & Kashmir, Muzaffarabad

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Corresponding Author:

Syeda Asma Gillani

Email:

asmagillani2011@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Gratitude has been increasingly recognized as a most important component for psychological wellbeing. The current study investigates the association of Gratitude with Life Satisfaction which examines gratitude for prediction of satisfaction with life. Based on theories including Gratitude as a Moral Emotion theory, Gratitude as a virtue theory, self-determination theory of life satisfaction and satisfaction with life scale theory also predicted positive association between the two variables. A sample of 200 diabetic patients were taken, they completed a survey assessing gratitude, life satisfaction and demographic variables. The final results conclude that gratitude is strongly associated or linked with the life satisfaction. Results showed a notable positive association between Independent and Dependent variable. Moreover, regression analysis showed that increased gratitude causes increased life satisfaction. While the study has some limitations, future studies could delve deeper into the relationship of both variables across the diverse cultural settings or sample may not be the figurative of the broader population limiting the generalizability of findings.



Introduction

Gratitude is the powerful and multidimensional emotion and in the field of positive psychology it has a great importance (Emmons, 2007). Gratitude involves the acknowledgement of the great things of life which comes from the external and internal resources (Wood, Joseph, & Linley, 2007). “And remain steadfast, because those who will do good deeds God will reward them” (Quran 11:115) (Muhsin khan, 1984).

Individuals experience a range of advantages including mental health, stronger social relationships, and increased resilience when they focus on the things that they are grateful for (Seligman, Steen,

Park, & Peterson, 2005). Remember when Allah said “ I will give you even more blessings If you thank me” (Quran 14:7) (Abdullah Yusuf Ali, 1934).

Gratitude is a powerful emotion involves a feeling of appreciation, recognition of good things of life and thankfulness (Emmons & Kneezel, 2005). “Those who are grateful to him, God promises to increase his blessings for him”.(Quran 14:7) (Muhsin Khan, 1984)

It is a positive emotion that is linked to various benefits, including improved mental health, stronger social relationships, and increased resilience (Wood, Froh, & Geraghty, 2010).

Gratitude, often described as a complex psychological state, encompasses an emotional response to receiving benefits or positive outcomes from others, recognizing this as an act of kindness or favor (McCullough, Emmons, & Tsang, 2002). Beyond mere thankfulness, gratitude manifests a deeper acknowledgment of interconnectedness and mutual support within social relationships (Emmons & McCullough, 2003). “We showed him the right path, but his decision is to be grateful or not”. (Quran 76:3) (Abdullah Yusuf Ali, 1934). Research indicates that gratitude is not only a spontaneous emotional reaction but also an essential element of various psychological and social frameworks, contributing to overall well-being and life satisfaction (Emmons & McCullough, 2003; Seligman et al., 2005; Wood et al., 2010).

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That has been explored by research that people experience happiness and less depressed when they practice gratitude (Seligman et al., 2005). Gratitude helps us appreciate our lives and find meaning in our experience (Emmons & McCullough, 2003). We start to see the world in a positive light when we focus on what we are grateful for. (Lyubomirsky et al., 2005). We begin to realize that life is precious, and that every moment is an opportunity to experience joy and wonder.

Life satisfaction is a multidimensional and powerful concept that includes the overall evaluation of individuals life as a whole. (Diener, 1984). It encompasses various aspects of life, including relationships, work, health, and personal growth, and is influenced by a range of factors, including personality, culture, and life experiences (Diener, Suh, Lucas, & Smith, 1999). Life satisfaction is a key component of subjective well-being, which also includes positive emotions and psychological well-being (Diener, 2000).

“Anyone, male or female, who believes in God and does good deeds, God promises them a happy life and will receive a best reward in life hereafter for their great actions.” (Quran 16:97)

Self-report scales such a Satisfaction with life scale (SWLS) is used to measure life satisfaction (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985). That has been shown by research that other related constructs like happiness and wellbeing is distinct from life satisfaction (Lucas, Diener, & Suh, 1996). Life satisfaction is also related to, but distinct from, psychological well-being, which includes aspects such as autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Ryan & Deci, 2001). God says “I will give you more blessings If you are thankful, But you will face severe punishment If you are ungrateful.” (Quran 14:7)

Life satisfaction play important role in positive psychology, it explains an individual's self-reported and overall quality of life (Diener et al., 1985). "Look at the earth, day , night and heaven , people who think and understand these are all signs of God for them".(Quran 2:164)

It encompasses cognitive evaluations of one's life circumstances based on personal criteria, a reflection shaped by individual values, expectations, and cultural context (Diener, 2000). As a subjective measure of well-being, life satisfaction is distinct from the transient emotions experienced on a daily basis, embodying a more stable and enduring assessment of life's effectiveness and fulfillment (Pavot & Diener, 2008).

Relationship between gratitude and life satisfaction

Gratitude is the predictor of satisfaction of life. It has been demonstrated that those people having gratitude in their hearts are more satisfied with their lives as their point of focus is positive aspects of life. This is in line with Quranic teaching (And remember when Allah says if you're grateful I'll surely increase you (in favor) but if you deny indeed My punishment is severe) (Quran 14.7)

By cultivating Gratitude individuals can increase their sense of satisfaction and contentment in life. Studies have also shown that gratitude is linked to a range positive things, including increased well-being, social connections, and resilience (Wood et al., 2010). As the Quran states, "Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer – We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do" (Quran 16:97). By incorporating gratitude practices into daily life, individuals can increase their sense of purpose and direction and cultivate a more positive outlook on life. According to psychologist Alex Wood, "Gratitude is a powerful tool for increasing well-being, as it helps individuals to reframe their experiences and focus on the positive aspects of their lives" (Wood et al., 2010).

Theoretical framework

Gratitude as a Moral Emotion Theory (Emmons, 2004)

This theory proposes that gratitude is a moral emotion that arises from the perception of a benevolent act or gift. According to this theory, gratitude serves as a moral motivator, encouraging individuals to reciprocate kindness and maintain social relationships.

The Gratitude-as-a-Virtue Theory (Peterson & Seligman, 2004)

This theory proposed that gratitude is a character strength and virtue that is essential for human flourishing. According to this theory gratitude is a moral goodness that involves recalling and praising good things in life.

Self-Determination Theory (SDT) of Life Satisfaction

Proposed by Edward Deci and Richard Ryan (2000), SDT posits that People feel satisfaction in life when they fulfill their following needs: Autonomy: Control over one's life and the feeling of agency. Competence: Feeling efficient and worthy in achieving other individual's goal. Relatedness: feeling connected and valued by others. STD suggested that when these needs meet through individual experience then satisfaction and well-being increases in life.

The Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) Theory

Proposed by Ed Diener and his colleagues (1985), The satisfaction of life is the cognitive assessment of one's life. The SWLS theory suggests that life satisfaction arises from the balance between an individual's positive and negative experiences, as well as their expectations and aspirations. The SWLS theory proposes that life satisfaction is an overall assessment of life, impacted by various life domains, like relationships, work, and health.

Research gap

Despite extensive research on the link between gratitude and life satisfaction, certain gaps remain. Most studies focus on Western populations, overlooking how cultural differences shape this relationship. Additionally, while short-term gratitude interventions show positive effects, there is a shortness of longitudinal research exploring its long-term influence. The underlying neurobiological mechanisms connecting gratitude to life satisfaction also remain underexplored. Moreover, existing studies often generalize findings without considering demographic variations such as age, gender, and socioeconomic status. Further research is needed to compare gratitude's influence with other positive psychological constructs, such as optimism and mindfulness, to determine its unique contribution to overall well-being.

Method

Objectives

1. To probe the link between Independent variable gratitude and Dependent variable life satisfaction in diabetic patients.
2. To assess the effect of gratitude on life satisfaction among diabetic patients.

Hypotheses

Gratitude is positively associated to the life satisfaction of diabetic patients.

1. There will be a positive relation between levels of gratitude and life satisfaction among diabetic patients.
2. Diabetic patients with high level of gratitude will also have high level of life satisfaction.

Instruments

Satisfaction with Life Scale

Satisfaction with life scale (SWLS) is developed by Diener et al. (1985). This is a 5-item scale that measures overall life satisfaction using a Likert-type format ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). It evaluates the cognitive assessment of individual's life satisfaction. The SWLS has demonstrated strong reliability, with Cronbach's alpha values typically exceeding 0.87 (Diener et al., 1985).

Gratitude Questionnaire

Questionnaire has six items form (GQ-6). It is created by McCullough et al. (2002). The Questionnaire examines tendency of person to experience gratitude. It is a Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). GQ-6 evaluates how frequently individuals acknowledge and cherish positive things in their survival. It has strong reliability, along with Cronbach's alpha of approx. 0.82 (McCullough et al., 2002).

Results

Table 1: Descriptive Properties of the Sample (N=200)

Sample Data		n	%
Age	25-30	19	9%
	31-35	45	22%
	35-40	65	34%
	41-45	71	35%
Gender	Male	69	35%
	Female	131	65%
Qualification	Matric	52	26
	FSC/FA	86	43
	BS	44	22
	M.PHIL	18	9
Marital Status	Married	146	73
	Unmarried	54	27

The sample consist of 200 respondents, including both male and female, primarily aged between 25-45 years. Additionally, participants qualification include Matric, FSC, BS and M.phil are available in the data file.

Table 2: Psychometric Properties of All Instrument (N=200)

Scales	K	α	M	SD	Range	Skew	Kurtosis
SWLS	5	.77	25.6	5.1	26.0	-.976	.71
GQS	6	.72	30.8	5.4	33.0	-1.21	2.11

Note SWLS = Satisfaction With life scale, GQ = Gratitude Questionnaire

Table 2 present the descriptive statistics and alpha reliability coefficients for all values used in this study. The reliability of the scales is well within an acceptable range, with alpha coefficients ranging from .72 to .77. Additionally, normality assumption has been assessed with skewness and kurtosis values falling between -1 to +2, indicating that the data follow a normal distribution.

Table 3: Correlation matrix between Satisfaction With life scale and Gratitude Questionnaire

Variables	1	2
SWLS	.564**	-
GQ	--	-

Note: SWLS=Satisfaction with life scale, GQ= Gratitude Questionnaire

The table outlines the Pearson correlation coefficients across two variables. Gratitude is substantially positively interrelated with SWLS.

Table 4: Regression Coefficients Of Independent Variable On Dependent Variable (Satisfaction With Life)

Variables	B	SE	T	p	95% CL
Constant	9.100***	1.750	5.200	.000	5.64-12.55
GQ	.537***	.056	9.616	.000	.427-.647

Note: N=200, ***p <.05: SWLS=Satisfaction with life scale, GQ= Gratitude Questionnaire

Discussion

This study examined that in which way gratitude affects life satisfaction. Results showed gratitude and life satisfaction is very strong and positive which is stable with previous research focusing the significance of gratitude for complete well-being (Emmons & Mishra, 2011; Wood, Froh, & Geraghty, 2010).

People who have higher level of gratitude having higher life satisfaction because they emphasize on the positive things of life rather than negative things. People having gratitude always have emotions like dedication, happiness and desires which enhance their level of life satisfaction. The consistency of the instruments used in this study was very well recognized. In future, researchers could investigate this relationship between gratitude and life satisfaction in multicultural Frameworks and examine interventions to improve the level of gratitude to enhance life satisfaction.

Conclusion

To sum up, this study underscores the importance of gratitude in boosting life satisfaction. The results suggest that people who regularly practice gratitude tends to feed more satisfaction their lives. Gratitude focuses on the positive attributes and individual who practice it, experience an increase in positive emotions. These findings support existing research and deepen our understanding of how gratitude work to enhance overall well-being. Looking ahead, future research could explore these relationships in different cultures and settings and examine ways to cultivate gratitude and optimism through interventions to boost life satisfaction.

Limitation

The study might not have considered the cultural differences that could affect the relationship that are being studied. Future studies should investigate how the relationship between variables varies across different culture. The participants in the study might not be represent the broader population. This means that the findings might not be applicable to everyone, as the sample might be biased towards a specific age group, location, or demographic.

This study has depended on the data reported by itself that can be mutually defective. Participants responded in such a way that they were accepted socially. Sometime, participants have not reported their thoughts, emotions, emotions or behaviors correctly. Future studies could delve deeper into the relationship of both variables across the diverse cultural settings or sample may not be the representative of the broader population limiting the generalizability of findings.

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