Research Paper

Study on Relationship Between Gratitude, Optimism and Personal Growth Initiative Among Adolescents and Young Adults

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ABSTRACT

Gratitude is a sense of thankfulness and happiness in response to receiving a gift, either a tangible benefit given by someone or a fortunate happenstance. Optimism is the tendency to expect that good things will happen in future. Personal Growth initiative is the motive of a person to develop himself in all aspects of life. The objective of the study is to find out the relationship between Gratitude, Optimism and Personal Growth Initiative among the youth people and to study the mean differences in gratitude, optimism and personal growth initiative with regard to socio-demographic factors. Descriptive research design is used for the present study. 201 peoples fulfilling both inclusion and exclusion criteria were selected as samples for the study, through convenient sampling. The Gratitude Questionnaire developed by Dr. Micheal E. McCullough and Dr. Robert A. Emmons (2002) which consists of 6 items is used. To measure the level of optimism, The Optimism Scale constructed by the Youth Mental Health Measure (1997) which consists of 4 items is used. Personal Growth Initiative Scale developed by Dr. Christine Robitsheck which consists of 9 items is used. It was observed that the level of gratitude, optimism and personal growth initiative does not differ with regard to age, gender, educational qualification, place of living and type of family. The results indicate that the higher the level of gratitude and optimism, higher will be the initiative of personal growth. The Research shows that there exists a positive correlation between gratitude, optimism and personal growth initiative. This study helps to create awareness about the wellness of gratitude, optimism and personal growth initiative to the adolescents and young adults and promotes to develop them.

Gratitude:
According to APA, *Gratitude is a sense of thankfulness and happiness in response to receiving a gift, either a tangible benefit (e.g., a present, favour) given by someone or a fortunate happenstance (e.g., a beautiful day).* The word gratitude originated from the Latin word named Gratus which means thankful or pleasing. Gratitude is a kind of positive feeling which blocks other toxic emotions such as envy, regret and resentment.

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Robert Emmons was the person who contributed much towards gratitude. According to him gratitude is comprised of 3 parts and they are as follows,

- First stage: An individual has to feel good or grateful for the things that they are having in their life.
- Second stage: They have to express gratitude towards other people who made them feel better.
- Third stage: People have to adapt to the new behaviours as a result of interacting with the people who have helped them.

Theoretical Perspectives:
Types of Gratitude:
Some psychologists are further categorised gratitude in to three types as well such as,

1. Affective trait: It's an overall tendency or a person's personality to be grateful.
2. Mood: It fluctuates on a daily basis.
3. Emotion: It's kind of a temporary feeling when someone receives a favour or gift.

The Broaden-and-built theory of gratitude:
This theory was developed by Barbara Fredrickson. This theory discusses the benefits and importance of having positive emotions such as gratitude. The ultimate goal of this theory is not to suggest that you never experience anything negative, the main idea is that we can build up our resiliency through small positive activities every day.

Importance of gratitude:
Gratitude is important in everyone's life because,

- It helps people to be grateful and stay positive even in worse conditions.
- It helps people to view life from different perspectives.
- It increases the level of motivation inside an individual.
- It increases one's ability to cope up with stress.
- It makes people more loving and forgiving.

Optimism:
According to Schier and Carver (1985), *Optimism is defined as the generalised expectancy that the future will be positive.* It is a belief that good things will happen rather than bad things about the expectations regarding the future outcomes. In extent optimism is which a person expects for the desired outcomes in the future and expects undesired outcomes not to happen. It's a kind of good positive emotion which helps individuals to enhance their lifestyle and wellbeing.

Theoretical Perspectives:
Explanatory styles of optimism:
According to Martin EP Seligman explanatory styles are *"Our tendency to offer similar explanations for different events."* The various explanatory styles of optimists are,

- Externality: In an external explanatory style an individual blames the external causes which originate with other people or circumstances.
- Unstable: In an unstable explanatory style an individual thinks that if a bad situation occurs, that is not stable and it's temporary.
- Specific: In specific attribution, the individual thinks specific causes influence an isolated or narrow range.

Types of optimism:
- Dispositional Optimism: It is the basic expectation that the more good things will happen compared to bad things in the future.
- Unrealistic Optimism: It is a kind of optimism where the positive expectations don't match with the actual evidence.
- Comparative Optimism: In this the kind of optimism in which the individual expects good things for themselves as compared to others.
- Situational Optimism: In this kind the individual expects a positive outcome in a particular situation.
- Strategic Optimism: In this kind of optimism the individual denies some risks because they believe that they have control over it.
- Realistic Optimism: In this kind of optimism the individual will keep a positive outlook towards the world constraints.

Importance of optimism:
- Optimists experience less distress when dealing with difficulties in life.
- Optimists will have the ability to adapt themselves during negative events.
- Optimism improves the psychological and physical wellbeing of an individual.
- Optimists will develop more health promoting behaviours.
- Optimists are capable of learning new lessons from stressful events.

Personal growth:
Personal growth involves the growth and enhancement of all the aspects of the person such as their feelings about themselves and their effectiveness in living. According to *Ryff, personal growth is, together with a sense of purpose in life, the dimension of well-being that comes closest to Aristotle's Eudaimonia*. It is a continuous process which takes place over the period of life. It includes the development of positive life skills and the development of a realistic and healthy self-esteem. Personal growth helps people to change and promote happiness, emotional intelligence and resilience. It refers broadly to a subset of personality development that relates to the process of becoming better in a personally meaningful way.

Theoretical Perspectives:
Personal Construct Theory:
This theory was developed by George Kelly who developed this theory who is referred to as the father of cognitive clinical psychology. In this theory he states that we tend to develop a set of personal constructs which are essentially mental representations that we use to interpret events. According to George Kelly, an individual's personality is made up of various mental constructs through which he/she views reality. He believed that each individual on this earth is much like a scientist and we want to understand the environment around us and to make predictions about the future and may create new theories.

Importance of Personal growth Initiative:
- It enhances an individual to develop the adaptability to different situations.
- It gives a sense of meaning and satisfaction in Life.
- It improves the ability to deal with stressful situations.
- It leads an individual to the path of Self-Acceptance.
- It helps the individual to make better decisions.
- It develops a positive attitude towards new ideas.

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Summary

Nowadays, majority of psychologists are focused on illness rather than wellness. It is equally important that we focus on promoting welfare among individuals. In this study we are going to look out the impact of positive psychology aspects such as Gratitude and Optimism on the Personal Growth of an individual among with socio demographic factors. The American Psychological Association (APA) defines gratitude a sense of thankfulness and happiness in response to receiving a gift, either a tangible benefit given by someone or a fortunate happenstance. The American Psychological Association (APA) defines optimism as the attitude that good things will happen and that people's wishes or aims will ultimately be fulfilled. Whereas, Personal Growth is defined as the, together with a sense of purpose in life, the dimension of well-being that comes closest to Aristotle's Eudaimonia.

METHODS

Aim

To examine the relationship between Gratitude, Optimism and Personal Growth among late adolescents and young adults.

Objectives

To examine the relationship between Personal growth, Gratitude and optimism. To find the mean difference between gender among the variables.

Sample

This study will be conducted among the youth population aged between 18 to 30 residing in Tamil Nadu. This study will be conducted among 201 peoples residing in Tamil Nadu. The sample for the study will be drawn by using convenient sampling technique.

Inclusion Criteria

Individuals who come under the age range between 18 – 30.

Exclusion Criteria

Those who were not giving the consent were excluded from the study.

Research Design

Descriptive research design is used in this study to find out the levels of each variable and if they differ based on socio demographic factors.

Tools used

In this study to measure the level of gratitude, The Gratitude Questionnaire developed by Dr. Micheal E. McCullough and Dr. Robert A. Emmons (2002) which consists of 6 items is used. To measure the level of optimism, The Optimism Scale constructed by the Youth Mental Health Measure (1997) which consists of 4 items is used. To measure the level of personal growth the Personal Growth Initiative Scale developed by Dr. Christine Robitsheck which consists of 9 items is used.

Procedure

Data collection will be administered using 'Google forms. This method provides an adequate number of samples and helps to ensure that samples are equally distributed. As people are spending more time on the internet nowadays, it will help to quickly collect data.

The form can be completed during their free time so they do not need to spend much time.

Statistical Analysis:
Simple percentage frequency, mean and SD will be presented for all the variables.
1. To find out the association between the subject variables using the Karl Pearson coefficient of correlation is used
2. To find out significant mean differences between two groups (male and female) the independent sample t-test will be used.
3. To find out the significant mean differences between more than two groups, one-way ANOVA will be used.

Ethical Considerations
The survey was conducted on ethical principles. The scale used was granted permission by the respective owner. The participants of the study participated voluntarily with informed consent. The personal information gained by the study will be kept confidential at any point and anonymity will be maintained even if there is a situation to mention something specifically. The data collected will only be accessed by the researcher. The research is plagiarism free with required citations for credits.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table.1 Distribution of respondents based on selected socio demographic variables

	Frequency	Percent
A. Gender		
Male	82	40.8
Female	119	59.2
B. Age		
17 & below	34	16.9
18 – 19	123	61.2
20 & above	44	21.9
C. Educational Qualification		
Schooling	35	17.4
UG	160	79.6
PG	6	3
D. Place of Living		
Rural	77	38.3
Urban	124	61.7
E. Type of Family		
Nuclear	57	28.4
Joint	144	71.6

While discussing age, it is clear from the above table that 16.9 per cent of the respondents are below the age 17 years, while 61.2 per cent are between (18& 19) years and the remaining 21.9 per cent are above 20 years.

In terms of gender, three-fifth of the respondents (59.2%) is females while the remaining two-fifth (40.8%) is males.

With regard to the family type 28.4% of the respondents belong to Nuclear family whereas the remaining 71.6% respondents belong to Joint family.

While discussing the Educational Qualification of the respondents, 17.4 per cent of them are

doing Schooling and 79.6 per cent of them are pursuing or completed UG and 3 per cent of them are pursuing or completed PG.

With regard to Place of living, 38.3 per cent of the respondents are from the rural area and 61.7 per cent of the respondents are from urban area.

Table.2 Karl Pearson's correlation results for the study variables.

		Gratitude	Optimism	Personal Growth
Gratitude	Pearson Correlation	1	.169*	.537**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.017	.000
	N	201	201	201
Optimism	Pearson Correlation	.169*	1	.217**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.017		.002
	N	201	201	201
Personal Growth	Pearson Correlation	.537**	.217**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.002	
	N	201	201	201
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).				
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)				

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
It is visible from the above table that there exists a significant association between Total Gratitude and Total Optimism; where r = 0.169(*), p<0.05 (2-tailed). Hence, higher the levels of Total Gratitude, higher will be the levels of Total Optimism.

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
It is visible from the above table that there exists a significant association between Total Gratitude and Total Personal Growth; where r = 0.537(**), p<0.01 (2-tailed). Hence, higher the levels of Total Gratitude, higher will be the levels of Total Personal Growth.

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
It is visible from the above table that there exists a significant association between Total Personal Growth and Total Optimism; where r = 0.217(**), p<0.01 (2-tailed). Hence, higher the levels of Total Optimism, higher will be the levels of Total Personal Growth.

Table.3 The mean, SD, and statistical test values for Total Gratitude, Total Optimism and total Personal growth based on place of Gender.

Gender		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	SIG
Gratitude	Male	82	30.11	7.252	-1.514	199	.132	p =.132 NS
	Female	119	31.43	5.102				
Optimism	Male	82	10.78	1.956	.028	199	.978	p =.978 NS
	Female	119	10.77	1.778				
Personal Growth	Male	82	41.77	8.639	.192	199	.848	p =.848 NS
	Female	119	41.55	7.615				

The mean, SD, and statistical test values for Total Gratitude, Total Optimism and total Personal growth based on Gender was presented on the above table. From the above table it is clear that there is no significant difference in scores of total Gratitude, total Optimism and total Personal growth based on Gender. The observed difference is not statistically significant as the t-Value is not significant at 99.9 per cent level of significance.

Table 4 The mean, SD, and statistical test values for Total Gratitude, Total Optimism and total Personal growth based on place of living.

	Place of Living	N	Mean	Std. deviation	t	df	Sig.(2-tailed)	Sig
Gratitude	Rural	77	30.56	6.843	-.608	199	.544	p=.544NS
	Urban	124	31.10	5.590				
Optimism	Rural	77	10.58	1.802	199	.247	.247	p=.247NS
	Urban	124	10.90	1.873				
Personal Growth	Rural	77	41.88	8.373	199	199	.733	p=.733NS
	Urban	124	41.48	7.837				

The mean, SD, and statistical test values for Total Gratitude, Total Optimism and total Personal growth based on Place of living was presented on the above table. From the above table it is clear that there is no significant difference in scores of total Gratitude, total Optimism and total Personal growth based on Place of living. The observed difference is not statistically significant as the t-Value is not significant at 99.9 per cent level of significance.

Table.5 The mean, SD, and statistical test values for Total Gratitude, Total Optimism and total Personal growth based on Type of Family.

Sl. No	Type of Family	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	df	Sig.(2-tailed)	Sig
Gratitude	Joint	57	31.18	6.191	.416	199	.678	p=.678NS
	Nuclear	144	30.78	6.067				
Optimism	Joint	57	10.95	1.608	.826	199	.410	p=.410NS
	Nuclear	144	10.71	1.936				
Personal growth	Joint	57	41.54	7.931	-.103	199	.918	p=.918NS
	Nuclear	144	41.67	8.094				

The mean, SD, and statistical test values for Total Gratitude, Total Optimism and total Personal growth based on Type of Family was presented on the above table.
From the above table it is clear that there is no significant difference in scores of total Gratitude, total Optimism and total Personal growth based on Type of Family. The observed difference is not statistically significant as the t-Value is not significant at 99.9 per cent level of significance.

Table 6 The mean, SD, and statistical test values for Total Gratitude, Total Optimism and total Personal growth based on Age.

Sl.NO	Age	N	F	df	SIG
Gratitude	17&below	34	.711	2,198	p=.493NS
	18-19	123			
	20&above	44			
Optimism	17&below	34	1.758	2,198	p=.175NS
	18-19	123			
	20& above	44			
Personal Growth	17&below	34	1.216	2,198	p=.298NS
	18-19	123			
	20&above	44			

The mean, SD, and statistical test values for Total Gratitude, Total Optimism and total Personal growth based on Age was presented on the above table. From the above table it is clear that there is no significant difference in scores of total Gratitude, total Optimism and total Personal growth based on Age. The observed difference is not statistically significant as the F-Value is not significant at 99.9 per cent level of significance.

Table 7 The mean, SD, and statistical test values for Total Gratitude, Total Optimism and total Personal growth based on Educational Qualification.

Sl.NO	EDU.QUALIFICATION	N	F	df	SIG
Gratitude	Schooling	35	1.445	2,198	p=.238NS
	UG	160			
	PG	6			
Optimism	Schooling	35	.871	2,198	p=.420NS
	UG	160			
	PG	6			
Personal Growth	Schooling	35	.099	2,198	p=.906NS
	UG	160			
	PG	6			

The mean, SD, and statistical test values for Total Gratitude, Total Optimism and total Personal growth based on Educational Qualification was presented on the above table.

From the above table it is clear that there is no significant difference in scores of total Gratitude, total Optimism and total Personal growth based on Educational Qualification. The observed difference is not statistically significant as the F-Value is not significant at 99.9 per cent level of significance.

CONCLUSION
The research shows that there exists a positive and significant relationship between Gratitude, Optimism and Personal Growth; and found out that there is no significant difference in the scores of Gratitude, Optimism and Personal Growth with respect to socio-demographic factors.

Limitations
- Limited number of participants.

- Unequal distribution of gender of participants.
- Limited duration to conduct the study.
- Lack of random sampling.

Suggestions for future research

The present study highlights the relationship between Gratitude, Optimism and Personal Growth and also respect with socio-demographic factors. Future studies could focus on the use of interventions to promote Gratitude and Optimism to improve the initiative to personal growth among people

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Conflict of Interest
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