

## Relationship between Gratitude and Teacher Effectiveness

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### ABSTRACT

The researcher in this study explores teachers' positive emotion of gratitude and its effect on teacher effectiveness. The objective of the study was to discover the relationship between gratitude and teacher effectiveness. The researcher undertook a study in which 65 high school teachers from Karnataka state participated. The researcher has employed simple random method to fulfill the sampling procedure. Gratitude questionnaire (McCullough et al., 2002) and Teacher Effectiveness questionnaire (Kulsum, 2000) were used for data collection via survey method. Pearson Correlation Coefficient was administered to find the correlation of the variables. The findings confirmed that there was positive correlation between gratitude and teacher effectiveness. Moreover, gratitude and factors of teacher effectiveness are also found positive relationship except class management of the teachers. The implications and limitations of the study are also discussed.

**Keywords:** Positive Psychology, Gratitude, Teacher Effectiveness

Positive psychology is a moderately recent branch of general psychology and its focus shifts from what is wrong to what is right. Rapid development in the field of positive psychology and positive education has been recognized and accepted all over the world. Positive psychology is an umbrella term which is based on humanistic approach, comprising the scientific study of human flourishing in the face of adversity and it is not a study of human weaknesses and limitations (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). The goals of positive psychology are to recognize and develop the human strengths and virtues to formulate a life worth living. According to Martin Seligman, the founding father of positive psychology, there are three pillars for positive psychology movement – positive emotions, positive characters and positive institutions (Seligman, 2002). Positive psychology is thus an attempt to adopt a more open and appreciative perspective regarding human potentials, motives, and capacities. Later, Gable and Haidt (2005) added positive psychology as the study of the conditions and processes that contribute to the flourishing or optimal functioning of people, groups, and institutions. From the positive psychology standpoint, several studies have been

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done related to positive emotions, and positive characteristics and positive institutions. Researchers in the area of positive psychology have been showing great interest in uncovering the incredible positive resource hidden within individuals through systematic scientific method. In recent times, they have given increased attention given to the positive strengths and the teaching effectiveness of teachers and their contribution to positive education and to school as a positive institution.

### ***Gratitude***

The word "grateful" is originated from the word "*gratus*" (Latin) which means a deep appreciation of people, nature, God, or the cosmos, which evokes a subjective experience that includes a sense of thankfulness, wonder, and appreciation (Emmons, McCullough, & Tsang, 2003). Gratitude has been defined in a variety of ways in the literature, with most empirical studies in the area of positive psychology giving priority to gratitude as an emotion, the impact of which can be measured quantitatively (Howels, 2014). The concept of gratitude recently has drawn considerable interest in the popular culture. It is a pleasant state and is linked with positive emotions and it can be expressed in different ways toward others (Emmons & Shelton, 2002). In the area of positive psychology research, gratitude is a focal point for researchers and locates the value of gratitude with its salutary benefits (Fredrickson, 2004). Researchers affirmed the power of gratitude in daily life as a vehicle for positive change in attitude and actions. Empirical studies have affirmed that there is a correlation between a grateful disposition and prosocial states such as empathy, forgiveness, emotional support, and willingness to help others (McCullough et al., 2002; Tsang, 2006). Earlier investigations of gratitude in the school surroundings especially in adolescents have found that it increases the motivation for prosocial behaviours and consequently directs to stronger relationships and increased engagement within school communities (Weber & Ruch, 2012; Freitas, Pieta, & Tudge, 2011; Froh et al., 2010; Froh, Kashdan, Ozimkowski, & Miller, 2009; Froh, Miller & Snyder, 2007). Research by Howels (2004) confirmed that practices of gratitude enhanced the academic thinking process. There were reassuring signs that gratitude promotes positive education (Seligman, Ernst, Gillham, Reivich, & Linkins, 2009). In another study of Froh et al. (2011) with adolescents authenticated that gratitude positively predicted academic achievement. Howells and Cumming (2012) found that practice of gratitude by teachers enhanced the general atmosphere of the school and classroom environment. In the same study the researchers also stated that the teachers' gratitude has a role to play in enhancing teacher relationships and interpersonal attributes. Lai (2014) in her investigation established that those who put greater motivation and effort into the gratitude-enhancing activity had shown more gratefulness.

### ***Teacher Effectiveness***

Teachers, as facilitators, play a vital role in the education system and as key players fulfill the aspirations and goals of an organization (Rao & Kumar, 2004). Teachers have a significant influence on students' academic achievement and they also play a crucial role in educational attainment (Afe, 2001). An effective teacher is described as a person who is able to successfully perform tasks expected of him or her (Okpala & Ellis, 2005). 'Teacher

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effectiveness' is the collection of characteristics, competencies, and behaviours of teachers which enable students to reach desired outcomes (Hunt, 2009). Awofala (2012) claimed that teacher effectiveness is synonymous with individual teachers' performance in teaching; "it is encompassed in knowledge, attitudes, and performance" (Hunt, 2009, p. 30); it has been equated to student achievement (Stronge, 2013) and teacher effectiveness is the life of every educational institution (Rao & Kumar, 2004). Specifically, according to Anderson, effective teachers are those who accomplish the goals that they have set for themselves or which they have set for them by others (Anderson, 2004). Teacher effectiveness is the single most important school-based factor in student achievement and also in the education reform movements (Pretorius, 2015). Pretorius (2015) is of the opinion that teachers should have a positive approach towards effective teaching all through different phases of a student's learning and imbued with those positive strengths that contribute towards effective teaching outcomes. Several studies assured that the teachers' teaching effectiveness is measured by students' academic performance (Adediwura & Tayo 2007; Adu & Olatundun, 2007). In other words, teacher effectiveness has been equalized to student success (Stronge, 2013). Effective teachers use diverse resources to plan and structure engaging learning opportunities; contribute to positive academic, attitudinal and social outcomes for students with their efficacy and collaborate with other teachers, educational professors and parents to ensure students' success (Goe, & Bell, 2008).

### ***Gratitude and Teacher effectiveness***

A teacher, who practices gratitude in his or her life, wears that attitude of gratitude and exude warmth as he or she relates with his or her students and they in turn are willing to learn more (Emmons, 2004). Teaching involves the experience of love which connects the teacher and the students and inspires the students to think on their own and appreciate everything around them. In so doing, the teacher can create an atmosphere of happiness and fulfillment inside and outside the classroom (Emmons, 2004). Studies done by Chan (2009 & 2010) reveals that teachers' gratitude was positively associated with life satisfaction and subjective wellbeing. One of Chan's recent study found that school teachers who practiced gratitude could forgive easily compared to others who didn't practice gratitude (Chan, 2013). Another research claimed that gratitude impacted positively on the teachers, classroom and school environment and enhanced teacher-student relationships (Howells, 2014). Zeng Na (2015) reemphasized the significance of gratitude in the professional and emotional life of a teacher and its overall impact on a teacher's wellbeing and how the same made positive changes in the students' performance in class.

### ***Significance of the study***

In the overall assessment of the growth and development of the positive psychology, the attention given to positive education (Seligman, Ernst, Gillham, Reivich, & Linkins, 2009) imparted in schools, in order to promote well-being of the next generation, is noteworthy. Research on positive education and its impact have shown enhancement of resilience, hope, gratitude, mindfulness, character strengths, growth mindsets, optimism and empathy in students (Waters, 2011). Positive psychology is beneficial to schools, teachers and students

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because it encourages individuals to strive to do their best; teachers can incorporate a number of positive psychological theories and applications in their teaching profession and enhance their teaching ability and be an efficient teacher. To boost this, it is important that more teachers, across disciplines incorporated their personal and social capabilities with positive psychological strengths into their teaching profession which would engender an atmosphere wherein students experience positive powers (Waters & Stokes, 2013). Practice of gratitude by teachers can increase student engagement and improves class and school atmosphere and leave them feel more effective. Earlier research has indicated that gratitude is an important component of workplace culture that contributes to positive outcomes (Chan, 2011). There have been very few research studies that focused on teachers' gratitude. Considering the scarcity of studies on teachers' gratitude and related topics in India, researcher was convinced about the need for a study on gratitude and teacher effectiveness among high school teachers.

### METHODOLOGY

#### *Objectives*

1. To assess the level of gratitude and teacher effectiveness.
2. To assess the relationship between gratitude and teacher effectiveness.
3. To assess the interrelationship among gratitude and factors of teacher effectiveness.

#### *Hypothesis*

1. There is a significant relationship between gratitude and teacher effectiveness.
2. There is a significant relationship between gratitude and preparation of teachers.
3. There is a significant relationship between gratitude and class management of teachers.
4. There is a significant relationship between gratitude and knowledge of teachers.
5. There is a significant relationship between gratitude and characteristics of teachers.
6. There is a significant relationship between gratitude and relations of teachers.

#### *Participants*

The sample of the study consisted of 19 male and 46 female teachers (65) who are teaching in urban schools in Bangalore. Among participants 27 have completed their under-graduation with B.Ed and 38 have done their Post-Graduation and B.Ed. The mean age is 35.70, SD = 6.84 years and average experience is 8.80, SD = 5.35 years. Simple random method used for data collection.

#### *Measurement tools*

1. **Gratitude scale:** The Gratitude Questionnaire (GQ-6) by McCullough, Emmons, & Tsang, (2002) is a six-item self-report questionnaire designed to assess individual differences in the proneness to experience gratitude in daily life. The six items 1-7 likert-scale and total score is 42. It showed the internal consistency ( $\alpha = .82$ ) and construct validity (McCullough et al. 2002).
2. **Teacher Effectiveness Scale:** Teacher Effectiveness constructed by Umme Kulsum (2000) used to measure the teacher effectiveness of the professional teachers. It is a self-anchoring determined scale and the score of the respondent ranges from 0 to 600.

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Reliability was established and retest reliability co-efficient of correlation was found to be 0.63 and split-half reliability co-efficient correlation was found to be  $X_{tt} = 0.68$ . The correlation between the entire score of ranking scale is 0.85. These values indicate that the Teacher effectiveness scale has high criterion-related validity.

### Procedure

Correlational research design was used to assess the variables, gratitude and the Teacher Effectiveness among teachers. Survey method was used for the data collection. The two standardized questionnaires, Gratitude and Teacher Effectiveness Scale were administered to collect the data from employed teachers from schools in Bangalore, Karnataka state. Simple random method used for sampling technique and survey method applied to collect data. For ethical considerations, informed consent was obtained in prescribed format and assured confidentiality to the participants.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

**Table: 1 -Mean and SD of the variables –Gratitude and Teacher Effectiveness**

Sl No.	Variables	Mean	SD
1.	Gratitude	35.25	3.93
2.	Tr. Effectiveness	497.31	46.32
3.	Preparation	92.51	10.13
4.	Management	115.38	13.18
5.	Knowledge	57.81	6.6
6.	Characteristics	140.86	13.99
7.	Relations	90.73	9.87

Table 1 shows the mean and SD scores of the dimensions of gratitude and Teacher Effectiveness of 65 teachers. All subjects had completed the questionnaires. Gratitude ( $M = 35.25$ ,  $SD = 3.93$ ), Teacher Effectiveness ( $M = 497.31$ ,  $SD = 46.32$ ), Planning and Preparation for teaching ( $M = 92.51$ ,  $SD = 10.13$ ), Class Management ( $M = 115.38$ ,  $SD = 13.18$ ), Knowledge of the subject matter ( $M = 57.81$ ,  $SD = 6.6$ ), Teacher Characteristics ( $M = 140.86$ ,  $SD = 13.99$ ) and Interpersonal Relations ( $M = 90.73$ ,  $SD = 9.87$ ).

**Table -2: Correlation values between Gratitude and Teacher Effectiveness  $*p < .05$  ;**

	T.E	PP	CM	KS	TC	IR
Gratitude	.377**	.324*	.215	.298*	.342**	.262*
TE		.862**	.660**	.882**	.909**	.780**
PP			.664**	.705**	.762**	.578**
CM				.712**	.695**	.558**
KS					.785**	.682**
TC						.612**
IR						

\*\* $p < .01$ , T.E=Teacher Effectiveness, PP=Preparation and Planning for teaching, CM=Class Management, KS= Knowledge of Subject-matter, TC= Teacher Characteristics, IR= Interpersonal Relations

The main aim of this study was to find out the correlation between Gratitude and Teacher effectiveness. To fulfill this aim Pearson correlation was carried out. From the result it is

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cleared that Gratitude is positively correlated ( $r = .377$ ;  $p < .01$ ) with Teacher effectiveness and therefore researchers accepted the 1<sup>st</sup> hypothesis, stating that Gratitude and teacher effectiveness statistically significant. According to (Howells, 2014) gratitude and teacher profession is closely related and the present finding supported the previous result. Zeng Na (2015) claimed that grateful teachers make positive changes in their life to enhance students' performance and their own personal life. The same study discovered further that a teacher with gratitude has the magical power to improve teaching job as a vocation.

Result showed that Gratitude is significantly correlated with all the five factors of teacher effectiveness except for the component 'class management'. It is evident from the result that Gratitude and Preparation ( $r = .324$ ;  $p < .01$ ) is correlated and hence 2<sup>nd</sup> hypothesis is accepted that there is a positive relationship between gratitude and preparation of teachers. It means grateful teachers plans and prepares well to the effective teaching. From the result it is understandable that gratitude and class management has no correlation. Hence researchers rejected the 3<sup>rd</sup> alternative hypothesis and accepted the null hypothesis that there is no relationship between gratitude and class management. The 4<sup>th</sup> hypothesis Gratitude and Knowledge of the subject-matter ( $r = .298$ ;  $p < .01$ ) have statistically related and accepted the alternative hypothesis. Even though it is a weak correlation, it can be concluded that teachers with gratitude are good at subject knowledge to perform well in their teaching profession. Likewise, Gratitude and Teacher characteristics ( $r = .342$ ;  $p < .01$ ) related positively and researchers accepted the 5<sup>th</sup> hypothesis of the study. Finally, Gratitude and Interpersonal relations ( $r = .262$ ;  $p < .05$ ) showed positive correlation and alternative hypothesis become true. This finding is proved earlier by (Howells, 2014) stating that gratitude enhances teacher student relationships. In short, grateful teachers uphold various qualities in their teaching profession to perform well such as earlier preparation, class management ability, adequate subject knowledge, healthy behaviour with colleagues and students, and good interpersonal relationships.

Likewise, it was found that teacher effectiveness and factors of the teacher effectiveness were interrelated with each other. Teacher effectiveness with Planning and Preparation for teaching ( $r = .862$ ;  $p < .01$ ), Class management ( $r = .860$ ,  $p < .01$ ), Knowledge of the subject-matter ( $r = .882$ ;  $p < .01$ ) Teacher Characteristics ( $r = .909$ ;  $p < .01$ ); Interpersonal relations ( $r = .780$ ,  $p < .01$ ), are significantly related. From the perfect correlation of the result it is confirmed that teachers who participated in the current study were highly effective teachers. In addition, Preparation and Management ( $r = .664$ ;  $p < .01$ ); Knowledge of the subject-matter ( $r = .705$ ;  $p < .01$ ) Teacher characteristics ( $r = .762$ ;  $p < .01$ ); Interpersonal relations ( $r = .578$ ,  $p < .01$ ), are shown strong relationship. Management and Knowledge ( $r = .712$ ;  $p < .01$ ); Teacher characteristics ( $r = .695$ ;  $p < .01$ ); Interpersonal relations ( $r = .558$ ,  $p < .01$ ) too have statistical correlation each other. Besides, Knowledge of the subject-matter and Teacher characteristics ( $r = .785$ ;  $p < .01$ ); Interpersonal relations ( $r = .682$ ,  $p < .01$ ) are also showed strong positive relationship. Finally, Teacher Characteristics and Interpersonal relations ( $r = .612$ ;  $p < .01$ ) observed as positively related. Researcher concluded that highly effective teachers show their efficacy in all aspects of teaching field; like planning and preparation,

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managerial skills, good knowledge about their subjects, keep attractive character and maintain a lively relationship with students and colleagues.

The present research highlights gratitude as one of the positive assets of teachers. It gives the insight that grateful teachers tend to have more teaching efficacy than ungrateful teachers. It also enlightens us that a grateful teacher prepares well, acquires knowledge, interacts well with students and colleagues and maintains a good relationship. This research will be a motivation to future researchers to explore more positive resources that underlie positive institutions and their employees.

Sample collected from urban area, the minimum sample size and the exclusivity of the unaided schools are the limitations of the study; if samples were included from government and aided sectors, and the results could have been different. Teachers' family environment, positive emotions and effective teaching are the suitable topics for further research.

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