

Impact of Gratitude on Happiness Among Undergraduate Students

Radha Singh¹, Preeti P. Masih²

¹Department of Psychology, Baikunthi Devi Kanya, Mahavidyalaya, Agra

²Department of Psychology, St. John's College, Agra

Abstract

The present study aimed at assessing the effect of gratitude on happiness among undergraduate students. The sample comprised 90 students from 3 different streams (30 Art, 30 Science and 30 commerce students) of Agra district. The sample was selected ranging between the age of 16 to 20 years. The sample was selected using the stratified random sampling technique. The Oxford happiness questionnaire by Peter Hills & Michael Argyle was used to assess the happiness of students. The gratitude scale by Mohammed Anas, Hussain, Mohammad Khan was used to measure gratitude. The data was analysed through linear regression analysis. The results revealed that there is no significant relationship between gratitude and happiness among arts, science and commerce students.

Keywords: Gratitude, Happiness, Undergraduate students.

Gratitude is an important aspect of one's personality and well-being. It is one of the greatest virtues. Gratitude has been the most important aspect of an individual's social & emotional lives. Gratitude has been defined as a "a sense of appreciative & joy in response to receiving a gift, whether the gift is a tangible benefit from a specific other or a moment of peaceful bliss evolved by natural beauty"(Emmons, 2004). Gratitude is when you feel thankful for the good things in your life. Gratitude is an attitude of being thankfulness and appreciative for someone or something. It is a feeling spontaneously generated within an individual for the things one is grateful for in his/ her life. There is a strong connection between gratitude and happiness. Experiencing gratitude boosts physical, mental, emotional, social and spiritual health of an individual. Practicing gratitude provides relief to the persons struggling with mental health problems. Gratitude is an act of identifying the good things that happen resulting in a state of appreciation (sansone & sansone, 2010). Gratitude has been found to be beneficially associated with social well-being, emotional well-being & psychological well-being (Jans- Beken et., 2020). Cregg & Cheavens (2021) found that gratitude has a positive association with positive affect, life satisfaction, extraversion, forgiveness and a negative association with substance abuse and neuroticism.

Happiness is an emotional state having feelings of joy, love, satisfaction and contentment. Happiness can be defined as an enduring state of mind consisting not only of feelings of joy, contentment of other, positive emotions, but also of a sense that one's life is meaningful and valued (Lyumbomirsky, 2001). Seligman (2002) suggested the positive psychology definition of happiness as consisting of both positive emotions and positive activities. Happiness is all about being happy with self, with others and holding positive emotions and thoughts. Happy people often feel less stressed and anxious. They are more productive and creative in their work that leads to better development of an organisation. Aristotle considered happiness

as one of the most vital purposes of human life and a good itself.

A Growing Body of Research Shows a Significant Relationship Between the Above Two Discussed Variables.

Diener(2002) & Argyle(2001) viewed happiness as consisting of four components namely: life satisfaction, positive emotions & good mood, lack of negative mood & emotions of other factors such as optimism, self- esteem & sense of prosperity. Nguyen & Gordon (2020) examined the relationship between gratitude and happiness in young children. The results showed that children's domain -specific gratitude predicted children's happiness above and beyond the general propensity for gratitude. Another study conducted by Safaria (2014) suggests that gratitude is an important factor contributing to happiness among undergraduate students. Saheel & Noor (2016) examined a link between gratitude and happiness among Muslim students, their findings suggesting that the Islamic-based gratitude is beneficial in raising participants' happiness level. Kausar (2018) explored the relationship between gratitude & happiness in college students and their results suggest that there is a significant positive relationship between gratitude and happiness. Behzadipour & Sepahmansour (2018) suggests that gratitude training is effective in enhancing psychological & happiness. Another study conducted by Belen & Barmanpek (2020) investigated the mediating role of gratitude in the relationship between fear of happiness and life satisfaction. Results revealed that fear of life happiness was inversely correlated with the dimensions of gratitude and life satisfaction. Singh & Salve (2017) conducted a study with an aim to predict the role of personality, psychological well- being and gratitude in happiness among young adults. The results demonstrated that happiness among young adults is significantly predicted by psychological well-being, gratitude and extraversion. Bilong & Baker (2021) examined gratitude and its relationship with students' psychological well- being and happiness. The results found that gratitude is a positive way to enhance students' healthy psychological well- being and happiness in their life.

Problem

To study the Impact of Gratitude on Happiness among undergraduate Students

Objectives of the Study

1. To study the impact of gratitude on the happiness of arts stream undergraduate students.
2. To study the impact of gratitude on the happiness of science stream undergraduate students.
3. To study the impact of gratitude on the happiness of commerce stream undergraduate students.

Hypotheses:

Following hypotheses have been tested during the present study:

H1: Gratitude will be the predictor of happiness in arts stream undergraduate students.

H2: Gratitude will be the predictor of happiness in science stream undergraduate students.

H3: Gratitude will be the predictor of happiness for commerce stream undergraduate students.

Participants

A sample of 90 students studying under graduation was selected for the present study. It consists of 30 arts, 30 commerce and 30 science stream undergraduate students. The student belongs to the age group of 16-20yrs. The sample was collected from Baikunthi Devi Girls PG College, Agra

The Measuring Instruments

Oxford happiness questionnaire (OHQ): The Oxford Happiness Questionnaire was developed by Peter hills & Michael Argyle, 2002. OHQ consists of 29 statements with 6-point Linkert scale ranging from 'strongly disagree', 'moderately disagree', 'slightly disagree', 'slightly agree' 'moderately agree' & 'strongly agree'. The total score ranges from 29 to 174. Higher the score indicates higher level of happiness. Also, the Oxford happiness question has adequate reliability & validity. The Oxford Happiness Questionnaire is a valid instrument for measuring happiness.

Gratitude Scale: The gratitude scale developed by Mohammad Anas, Akbar Hussain & Mohmmad Khan (2016). It measures five different dimensions of gratitude: 1. Desirable aspect of life, 2. Reciprocal nature of gratitude, 3. Gratitude towards others, 4. Experience gratitude, 5. Gratitude-related activities. It is a 26-item scale with items answered on a 5-point scale, 'strongly disagree', 'disagree', 'neutral', 'agree', 'strongly agree'. The total score of the scale varies from 26 to 130 and can be inferred as higher the score higher the gratitude. The Cronbach’s Alpha was found 0.91 which is significant at 0.01 level.

Data Collection and Procedure

For the conduction of this study, the gratitude scale and happiness questionnaire were administered individually on a sample of 90(30 arts, 30 science and 30 commerce) undergraduate students. The participants were approached personally and were asked to fill the questionnaire after being informed about the goal of the study. The respondents were given some brief instructions about the questionnaire. The participants were made assured that their responses will be kept confidential. Questionnaire was collected from each respondent ensuring high return rate and encouraging the respondents' freedom of expression. Finally, the scores were analysed using the linear regression analysis.

Statistical Analysis

Linear regression is used to analyse the data.

Result and Discussion

Table-1: Impact of gratitude on happiness among college students of the arts stream.

Predictor: Gratitude

Criterion: Happiness

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square	F Change	df 1	df 2	Sig. F
1	.23a	0.05	00.019	.47867	0.053	1.564	1	28	0.221

The linear R is 0.23, which indicates a low relationship between the predictor gratitude and happiness variable score. The R -squared is 0.053, which indicate that 5.30% of the variance in the happiness score can be explained by gratitude. There is very low impact of gratitude on happiness. The observed values fall an average of 0.478 units from the regression line. This indicates that regression model as a whole is not statistically significant. This means H1 “Gratitude will be the predictor of happiness in arts stream undergraduate students” is not accepted. It may also be that expressing and practicing gratitude happiness to only a certain point among individuals but beyond that if an individual is not getting desired goal/ target, gratefulness will not lead to happiness.

Table-2: Impact of gratitude on happiness among college students of the science stream students.

Predictor: Gratitude

Criterion: Happiness			Change of statistics						
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square	F Change	df 1	df 2	Sig. F
1	.24	.061	0.028	.61266	.061	1.84	1	28	0.18

The linear R is .24, which indicates a low relationship between the gratitude and happiness variable score. The R- square is 0.061, which indicates that 6.10% of the variance in the happiness score can be explained by the gratitude. The observed values fall on average of 0.61 units from the regression line. H2 “Gratitude will be the predictor of happiness in science stream undergraduate students” is not accepted. It is possible to be both sad and grateful. However, they are as related as many believe. In fact, I believe they are more closely related than most people realize, as science has shown. As an article by Ashley J. Smith (2023) explains that gratitude cannot take away pain. It is a “both and” approach rather than a “either or” one. It is possible to be appreciative and hurt. Gratitude is a life saver that will prevent you from falling victim to destructive thought patterns. That exacerbates your sufferings, but it won’t make it go away entirely.

Table-3: Impact of gratitude on happiness among college students of commerce stream.

Predictor: Gratitude

Criterion: Happiness			Change of Statistics						
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square change	F Change	df 1	df 2	Sig. F
1	0.05a	.003	- 0.033	.6888	.002	0.07	1	28	.793

The linear R is .05, which indicates a low linear relationship between the predictor gratitude and happiness variable score. The R- squared is point .003 which indicates approximately 0% of the variance in the happiness score can be explained by gratitude. The adjusted R square is - 0.033. The observed values fall an average of .688 units from the regression line. H3 “Gratitude will be the predictor of happiness in commerce stream undergraduate students” is not accepted. Many times, one has no control over their feeling of sadness. For example, nobody enjoys losing a loved one, being imprisoned in a poor circumstance, or always feeling overwhelmed and fatigued. At that point, it is not only about attitude, it is simply experiencing typical human feelings.

Conclusion:

This study assesses the impact of gratitude on happiness among undergraduate students. Through this particular study, it has been confirmed that there is a low impact of gratitude on happiness among college students of art, science and commerce stream students. It may be due to the fact that the study relies on a limited sample size which makes the generalization of findings difficult. It's important to understand that feeling unhappy is not a sign of being unappreciative. Rather, gratitude is another coping mechanism one may add to the arsenal of their skills. It implies that more investigation is necessary to ascertain the cause of the connection between happiness and gratitude. Gratitude is a wonderful discipline, but it is not a miracle cure for happiness.

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