

# Optimism, Gratitude and Life Satisfaction Among Emerging Adults

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## Abstract:

Gratitude, Optimism and Life Satisfaction is one of the leading concepts in Positive Psychology, gratitude is one of the most significant expression of thankfulness, optimism is another spectrum of being positive and hopeful in one's life which leads to life satisfaction. Studies have shown that optimism is ingrained in human nature. The majority of psychologists define optimism as the belief that events or experiences will have overwhelmingly positive outcomes. Also, considering gratitude is one of the major character qualities, acknowledging and expressing gratitude for the positive things in one's life is necessary. Therefore the present study, was taken out and found the relationship among gratitude, optimism and life satisfaction among 351 emerging adults using GQ6, State Optimism Measure and The Satisfaction with life scale.

The purpose of the current study investigated the relationship between emerging adults' (19–24) life satisfaction, thankfulness, and optimism. It is discovered that there is a negative low connection between optimism, life satisfaction, thankfulness, and life satisfaction.

**Keywords:** Gratitude, Optimism and Life Satisfaction, Emerging Adults

Gratitude is one of the significant character strengths, which therefore involves the acknowledgement of and expression of thankfulness towards good things that happen in one's life (VIA Institute on Character, n.d.) as well as recognizing that the source of goodness resides outside of oneself. Gratitude has been perceived as both a state and a trait. Gratitude is viewed as a virtue with varying levels of intensity, frequency, and duration (McCullough et al. 2002; Wood et al. 2008). When another person has given or sought to give us something of greater value, gratitude is acknowledged as one of the good emotions we experience. One's experiences of gratitude result from acknowledging the 'gratuitous' role-specific sources of support that may play in propagating valuable outcomes in one's life. Therefore, the experience of gratitude may help us reciprocate kind-heartedness toward others who help us; and it may be particularly beneficial to express gratitude because it can confirm the energy and interest other people invest on our behalf and help spur on more of such behavior.

Another positive psychological variable that is believed to be affecting one's satisfaction with life is optimism which means having and believing in positive outcomes about the future (Kardas et al., 2019; Sapmaz & Doğan, 2012). Research has proven that humans are hardwired to be more optimistic. Optimism, according to the majority of psychologists, encompasses the conviction that the consequences of events or experiences will be overwhelmingly favorable. Others argue that optimism is more of an explanation style and that it is found in how people explain the causes of occurrences. Optimists are more

prone to regard failure or negative experiences as transient rather than permanent, specific rather than worldwide, and external rather than internal causes of failure. Optimism is a long-term, cross-situational, and stable personality characteristic concerning one's outlook on future positive or negative life events (Scheier and Carver, 1985). Optimism has been associated with improved physical health, enhanced happiness, and the promotion of professional success in individuals (Singh and Jha, 2013; Hao et al., 2016). Another positive psychological variable that is believed to be affecting one's satisfaction with life is optimism which means having and believing in positive outcomes about the future (Kardas et al., 2019; Sapmaz & Doğan, 2012).

## **Methods**

### **Aim**

To study the relationship among optimism, gratitude and life satisfaction among emerging adults (19-24).

### **Objective**

To find out the relationship between optimism, gratitude and life satisfaction among emerging adults

### **Hypotheses**

There is a significant relationship between optimism, gratitude and life satisfaction among emerging adults.

### **Research Design**

Correlational Analysis was used in the study on Gratitude, Optimism and Life Satisfaction among emerging adults (19-24).

### **Variables**

Variable 1: Optimism

Variable 2: Gratitude

Variable 3: Life Satisfaction

### **Operational Definitions**

Gratitude: "Being grateful for the people or life events in one's life is defined as having gratitude."

Optimism: "A person's innate impulse to hold out hope for the future is characterised as optimism."

Life Satisfaction: "Life satisfaction is described as the experience of finding significance and high caliber in one's own life."

**Sample Description-** The sample was taken from the age range of 19-24 emerging adults, and an equal number of males and females was included.

**Sample size-** The sample size was 351 who are between 19-24 (emerging adults) of age range.

### **Sampling methods**

Non-random Convenience sampling and Snowball sampling method

**Inclusion criteria were considered for the study as** Individuals from 19-24 (emerging adults) were included in the research. Those individuals who can read and understand the English language. Males and females are included. Subjects in college (PUC, UG, PG) are considered

**Exclusion criteria of the study were** Subjects below the age of 19 and above the age of 24 were not considered in the study. Individuals who are under intervention/ training was excluded. Individuals with psychological disorders are not considered. Married and divorced/separated subjects are excluded. Subjects doing diploma courses are not included

### **Tools for data collection:**

#### **The Gratitude Questionnaire-Six Item Form (GQ-6)**

Gratitude was measured using the Gratitude Questionnaire-Six-Item Form (GQ-6) questionnaire. It's a seven-point Likert-type self-report questionnaire, with a 1 indicating strong disagreement and a 7 indicating strong agreement with the provided topic. McCullough, Emmons, and Tsang (2002) created the scale to assess individual differences in the likelihood of expressing thankfulness in everyday life. It takes less than 5 minutes to complete the questionnaire, but there is no time restriction. Items 3 and 6 are reverse scored among the six items to reduce response bias. The psychometric properties of the test indicate good internal reliability with alphas ranging between .82 and .87. The Cronbach's alpha estimates for these six-item totals have settled between .76 to .84. There is evidence that scores on the GQ-6 correlate positively with forgiveness, life satisfaction, prosocial behavior, optimism, hope, empathy, spirituality and religiosity and are negatively related to envy, depression and anxiety.

#### **State Optimism Measure**

The state optimism measure is used to measure optimism, a 7-item scale developed by Milstein et al., (2019). It is a 5-point Likert scale (1= Strongly disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neither agree nor disagree, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree) and the respondents answer the 7 items based on the 5-point Likert scale. The scoring is based on the mean score of items 1-7 with a higher score indicating greater state of optimism. The scale demonstrated acceptable high factor loadings on a single dominant factor (loadings: 0.64-0.93). The scale has a high internal reliability (Cronbach's Alpha: 0.92-0.96), with a strong convergent validity correlation in hypothesized directions. The selected 7 items demonstrated acceptable high factor loadings on a single dominant factor.

#### **The Satisfaction with Life Scale**

The satisfaction with life scale, a 5-item self-report measure developed by Diener, Emmons, Larsen and Griffin (1985) were used to measure the life satisfaction constituent of subjective wellbeing. It is a 7-point Likert-type scale specifically designed to assess cognitive judgments of a person's overall life satisfaction. Participants indicate how much they agree or disagree with each of the 5 items by indicating any rating between 1 and 7 where 1 indicates a strong disagreement and 7 indicates a strong agreement. The scale is shown to be a reliable measure of life satisfaction (Pavot et al., 1991). Scores of this scale are shown to correlate with the scales measuring mental health and with those that predict future suicidal attempts. The total score can range between 5 and 35, with a high score indicating a person's satisfaction with life. The coefficient alpha of the scale ranging between .79 and .89 indicates that the scale has very good internal consistency. There were good test-retest correlations (.84,.80) over a month interval (Pavot,

& Diener, 2008).

**Procedure for Data Collection:**

The study was initiated by participants being given written instructions and objectives of the study. Each participant was encouraged to seek clarification if any before they begin answering for the study. Contact numbers and email IDs of the researchers was shared with them at the start of the page both in the online and offline mode. After obtaining consent through a google form each participant was expected to fill out the demographic form and answer the questionnaire, one at a time.

In the offline mode, the consent form was shared and sociodemographic details will be collected like the subject’s name, age, marital status, etc. If the data doesn’t meet the inclusion criteria, the data will be rejected.

**Procedure for Data Analysis:**

Correlational Research Analysis was used in this research to find out the relationship between Gratitude, Optimism and Life satisfaction among emerging adults (19-24).

**Table 1**

*Showing the relationship between optimism, gratitude and life satisfaction among the young adults.*

Variables	N	Mean	SD	Pearson’s Correlation	Significance(2 tailed)
Optimism	351	26.01	4.710	1	-
Gratitude	351	18.76	5.867	-3.75**	.000
Life Satisfaction	351	22.10	6.183	-3.90**	-

\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2 tailed)

**Analysis and Results**

The aim of the study was to study the relationship between Gratitude, Optimism and Life Satisfaction among Emerging Adults (19-24). The variables of the study include the Variable 1: Optimism which refers to the incentive within the individual of being hopeful in the future and Variable 2: Gratitude which refers to being grateful towards the people or life events in one’s life.

Variable 3: Life satisfaction which is referred to as when an individual finds meaning and high calibre within one’s own life.

The study carries an objective which is to find the relationship among gratitude, optimism and life satisfaction among emerging adults (19-24). The hypothesis states that there is a relationship among Optimism, Gratitude and life satisfaction among emerging adults.

The tools used for the study are The Gratitude Questionnaire-Six Item Form (GQ-6) McCullough et al., (2002) created the scale, and The state optimism measure developed by Milstein et al., (2019). and The satisfaction with life scale, a 5-item self-report measure developed by Diener, Emmons, Larsen and Griffin (1985). The research design is a co-relational analysis. The participants consisted of emerging adults, unmarried males and females between the age of 19-24, residing in urban, semi-urban and rural

areas of India. The sampling method included a convenient sampling method and a snowball sampling method. A total of 351 individuals participated in the study based on the inclusion criteria of the study. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences was used to conduct the analysis (SPSS). The descriptive statistics was used to analyse mean, median and mode. The normality of data was analysed using Skewness and Kurtosis, Pearson's correlation was used to analyse the relationship between Optimism, Gratitude and Life Satisfaction among emerging adults (19-24).

The current study aims to understand whether there is a significant relationship between optimism, gratitude and life satisfaction among emerging adults (19-24). The study was conducted on unmarried college students using correlational analysis. The data was collected using both non-random convenience sampling and snowball sampling techniques and was analyzed using the correlational method.

The descriptive statistics of skewness and kurtosis was carried out in order to determine the normality of the distribution of the data. The descriptive statistics for the sample was represented in table 5, indicating that the data is normally distributed.

The objective was to find out the relationship among optimism, gratitude and life satisfaction among emerging adults. The table 6 showed that Optimism and Gratitude have low negative correlation ( $r=-.375$ ), Optimism and Life Satisfaction has low positive correlation ( $r=.390$ ). Gratitude and life satisfaction has low negative correlation ( $r=-.348$ ). All three variables are significant at 0.01 level of significance. The magnitude of the correlation between these variables (optimism, gratitude and life satisfaction) is strong.

From the previous studies it can be seen that there is a positive correlation between the variables optimism, gratitude and life satisfaction. The findings from the present study shows that when gratitude decreases, optimism increases. Therefore, it can be understood that when gratitude is low due to life events or circumstances people seek to be more optimistic.

People often resort to being grateful and hopeful when life satisfaction is deteriorating. Likewise, when life satisfaction is low, the findings show that gratitude is high. The result also shows that when optimism is high, life is also high. This shows that when a person is optimistic they are more likely to perceive life in a positive sense and feel a higher satisfaction with life.

The findings of the study were in line with the previous studies on optimism, gratitude and life satisfaction. The present study found that there is a relationship among optimism and gratitude life satisfaction among emerging adults between the age group of 19-24. Earlier studies showed that practicing gratitude is an effective coping strategy (Wood et al., 2007) and gratitude is related to three main types of coping (Wood et al., 2010). Greater levels of gratitude indicated greater levels of life satisfaction through reduced stress (Zainab et al., 2018). Optimism and Life Satisfaction have a significant relationship. In addition, there was a significant difference between males and females with regard to optimism and life satisfaction (Yildirim et al., 2018).

Over time, gratitude and life satisfaction exhibit a positive correlation. Higher degrees of thankfulness increase life happiness, which in turn promotes gratitude, according to the self-reinforcing interactions. Gratitude is significantly higher for women than men, also found that women are more likely to experience life satisfaction (Unanue et al., 2019). It has been argued that certain adaptive behaviors relate optimism and life satisfaction with other self-determined variables such as social adaptability, a positive outlook, greater resilience to adverse situations, subjective happiness, self-esteem and self-concept (Pablo et al., 2020). However, the current study found that there is a significant relationship between optimism, gratitude and life satisfaction. Student's appraisals of being grateful and hopeful of the experience and

expression played a significant role.

### Implications

The findings of this study has practical implications in psychological intervention programs such as psychological counselling, psychoeducation and therapies. The findings about the relationship between the variables namely optimism, gratitude and life satisfaction has wide application among family educators, psychology educators and counsellors. The findings of this study has added to the literature of Indian studies in the area of emerging adults with regard to the concept of optimism, gratitude and life satisfaction. The results imply that optimism and gratitude among males and females emerging adults are positively correlated to life satisfaction which can be used by counsellors, therapists, and mental health professionals dealing with emerging adults. The new findings have major implications for Indian research and practice on understanding the mechanisms behind optimism, appreciation, and life satisfaction.

### Limitations

This study being time-bound has its primary limitation in its scope as there was stipulated time to complete the research study. The sample was limited to the age group of 19-24. One of the major limitations of the study was that the data collection procedure was \conducted during the post-pandemic period as a result reaching out for physical responses from various institutions across India was a drawback and hence the procedure of data collection took place in a hybrid mode and due to limited time the procedure had to be completed in a short period of time. Another limitation is that the study sample was recruited using a convenient sampling procedure and included emerging adults who are unmarried college students, being largely females. Replication of the current findings in other samples with about equal numbers of boys and girls from other groups (e.g., community, adolescent, and clinical samples) using a randomly chosen sample from a target population would be useful in generalizing the findings.

### Scope for further study

The study can be further extended by increasing the sample size. As only unmarried students were included in the study, married individuals can also be explored in the study of optimism, gratitude and life satisfaction. Also, the study can be expanded by exploring different age groups and other occupations. Since this study was confined only to the age group of 19-24 (emerging adults) and with the occupation of college students those who are unmarried.

Furthermore, these findings can be very useful in formulating optimism, gratitude and life satisfaction training or other intervention plans and therapeutic techniques by professionals in schools, colleges, hospitals, industries, etc. Therefore, which can help increase life satisfaction in an individual.

### Conclusion

The present study aimed to study the relationship between optimism, gratitude and life satisfaction among emerging adults (19-24). The correlation between Optimism, Life satisfaction, gratitude and life satisfaction is found to be negatively low, which means that if one variable increases the other variable decreases.

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