



Gratitude, Happiness, and Resilience of University students: A Correlational Study

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Abstract

The life of a student is not easy. They face many difficulties during this time. Future, relationships, and carrier planning all things are all part of their life. Some students handle these situations very effectively and some get confused in handling these situations. This study was conducted to look at the role of two positive factors (happiness and gratitude) of resilience. To fulfill that purpose 120 university students were selected, and suitable measures were used to gatherer information. Findings suggested a significant positive role of happiness and gratitude in resilience.

Keywords: Happiness, Gratitude and Resilience.

INTRODUCTION

Resilience is one of the important factors for good mental health. It is a trait which helps an individual deal with the negative event of life. Resilience defined as an individual's ability to adjust himself in difficult situations (Hermann et al., 2011; Cheung & Kam, 2012; Werner, 1995; Murphey et al., 2013). Individuals with good resiliency power always deal effectively with stressors of life like, health issues, relationship conflict, family problems, or poverty. Resilient individuals keep themselves away from responding to adverse circumstances with negative consequences, such as drug abuse and violent behavior (Werner, 1995; Shumba, 2010; Cutuli & Herbers, 2018). These persons are more prone with a positive approach to taking negative events as opportunities for growth. "Resilience refers to positive adaptation, or the ability to maintain or regain mental health, despite experiencing adversity" (Wald et al. 2006). Researches on resilience put emphasis on strengths or potentials such as cognitive functioning and intellectual power that help an individual to survive with worst circumstances. Pioneering researches focused on adversities of childhood, these adversities

were broadened over time to includes lifetime negative events statistically linked with adjustment problems and mental disorders. Negative events include physical illness, significant trauma, unhealthy parenting, childhood abuse and loss of loving one etc. Resilience is a trait that help an individual to come out from a traumatic situation (Klohn, 1996; Bonanno, 2004;). Gratitude is a positive emotional reaction to the gift or the benefit received by an individual from another person with a good intention (Emmons & Crumpler, 2000; Tsang, 2006). Dispositional gratitude represents an affective feature or a general tendency to respond with gratitude to favor and affection of others (McCullough et al., 2001). It has four basic dimensions (Emmons, McCullough, Tsang, 2003): intensity (the degree of usual experience of gratitude), the frequency of gratitude, the extent or events of life for that a person is grateful at that time, and the density or the individuals to whom the person is grateful. These dimensions can be explored by the Gratitude Questionnaire GQ-6 (McCullough, Emmons, Tsang, 2002).

The leading idea of the research was the Broaden and Build Theory, which assumes that positive sentiments extend the repertoire of individual thinking and behaviors, thus enabling to build and expand one's personal resources. In accordance with this theory, we presume that gratitude is a positive sentiment that help can helps in enhancing cognitive flexibility and schemes of thinking (Fredrickson, 2001). It positively correlates with openness and its individual dimensions, which suggests that grateful people have a rich inner world and imagination. The theory also provides a theoretical framework for understanding the relationship between gratitude and resilience. According to the author, people who are grateful have available a wider variety of behavioral options and coping mechanisms. Gratitude allows a person to change one's mind and, even in situations of stress, it helps to focus attention on the contribution of the event and the importance of positive aspects of everyday life. At the same time, it leads to reciprocal altruism that helps build up lasting resources of friendship and social relationships. It was found that positive emotions like love, contentment, and joy are known as the boosting factors of resilience (Cohn & Fredrickson, 2010; Amstadter et al., 2014; Emmons & Shelton, 2002; Ong et al., 2006; Kashdan et al., 2006).

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Happiness can be concluded as the result of an individual's life and affects the positive emotional wellness of life (Seligman 2008; Fordyce 1988; Sheldon and Lyubomirsky 2006; Park, Peterson, & Seligman, 2004). Happiness is a feeling that lies in the person's own belief. An individual feels happy when he realized the greatness of life and starts living with

it. It is a feeling of euphoria, prosperity, or satisfaction. Happiness comes when an individual feels safe, productive, and understands the worth of his life that stage gives bliss to the individual. In the literature, researchers did rigorous work and gives several theories of happiness to identify basic psychological elements of happiness. Happiness is the balance between positive and negative feelings (Kim-Prieto et al. 2005; Diener et al. 2010), cognitive evaluation of well-being (Kahneman 1999), and characterized with positive psychological properties like environmental mastery, personal growth, and autonomy (Ryff 2013). Studies show positive relation of resilience with variables like subjective well-being psychological well-being and subjective happiness Bajaj and Pande 2016; Sagone and De Caroli 2014; Souri and Hasanirad 2011; Choi and Kim 2018).

Rationale of the study:

Gratitude, Happiness, and Resilience all are positive psychological constructs. Individually every construct has positive outcomes at every stage of life. Resilience is the mental power of an individual to defeat negative thoughts on another hand happiness and gratitude have also contributed to well-being. According to Alva (1991) Resilience for students "sustain high levels of achievement motivation and performance despite the presence of stressful events and conditions that place them at risk of doing poorly in school and ultimately dropping out of school." Engagement in school, mastery in work, problem-solving and pro-social behavior found also associated with resilience (Fergusson & Horwood, 2003; Masten, Best, & Garnezy, 1990; Werner & Smith, 1988; Gore & Eckenrode, 1994) It was noticed that resilient students cope better with emotional, occupational, and psychological problems. So the study was conducted with an insight into that happiness and gratitude may play a role in students' resilience. **Objective:**

To assess the association between gratitude, happiness, and resilience of university students.

To find the role of gratitude, happiness in the resilience of university students.

Hypotheses:

H1 There will be a positive association between gratitude, happiness, and resilience of university students

H2 Gratitude and happiness play significant roles in the resilience of university students.

Method

Sample: A convenient sample of 120 university-going students was selected for the study between the age range of 20 to 28 years.

Tools:

Brief Resilience Scale (BRS): it is a self-report questionnaire that accesses the ability of an individual to "bounce back from stress". This scale developed by Smith et al. (2008), could provide some key insights for individuals with health-related stress (Smith et al. 2008). The scale consists of six items with a five-point rating scale in which three items are positively worded and three items are negatively worded. The is reverse scoring for negatively worded items. The mean of six items describes the resilience score of the participant. The development of the scale's controlled for protective factors to get good reliability of the scale (Smith et al. 2008).

Subjective Happiness Scale (Lyubomirsky & Lepper 1999): The scale consists four-item with 7-point Likert Scale from very unhappy to vary happy.

The total score ranges between 4 to 28. Happiness increased with the score. The highest scores mean that the subjective happiness of the individual is very high. The internal consistency (Cronbach alpha) of the scale is 0.65 for university students and .70 for the community sample. (Lyubomirsky & Lepper 1999).

Gratitude Questionnaire: (McCullough et al., 2002): The scale consists six-item with 7- point Likert scale ranges between 1 (Strongly agree) to 7 (Strongly disagree). The internal consistency (Cronbach α = 0.80). Gratitude measures with the help of items (e.g., "I have so much in life to be thankful for," "If I listed everything that I felt grateful for, it would be a very long list"). **Procedure:**

At the initial stage participant were contacted and for their give a brief detail about the research work. Responses of the participants were recorded with the help of Google form. Received data was analyzed with the help of SPSS.

Result and discussion:

The aim of the present study to know about the relationship between Gratitude, Happiness, and Resilience of University students.

Table 1. Showing the correlation between Gratitude, Happiness and Resilience of University students.

	Happiness	Resilience
Gratitude	.40**	.32**
Happiness		.35**

****.**01 level of significance

The results show a positive correlation between gratitude and happiness ($r = .40$) and between gratitude and resilience ($r = .32$). Hence the hypothesis is proved that gratitude, happiness, and resilience found positively associated with each other. Previous researches support the evidence that gratitude found to be positively related with happiness (Maltby et al., 2005; Emmons & McCullough, 2003; Watkins et al.,

2015; McCullough et al., 2002; Witvliet et al., 2019) and also found the intensified impact of gratitude on resilience (Mary & Patra, 2015). Researchers suggest a consistent relation between happiness and resilience. Some recent findings talk about the significant role in the enhancement of resilience of college going students (Barnes, Short, Carson, & Platt, 2020).

Table 2 Showing the regression analysis of happiness and gratitude on Resilience of University students.

Model	Beta	R Square	Adjusted R Square	R Square Change	F Change	Sig. Change	F
Gratitude	.301	.145	.120	.145	14.20	.003	

Gratitude	.345	.205	.173	.06	11.21	.011
Happiness						

Dependent variable: Resilience; Constant predictor: Gratitude, Happiness

The results of Table 2 shows that Gratitude and happiness significantly predict the resilience and both these variable accounting 20% variance in which gratitude contributes 14% role in boost up the resilience of any individual and happiness contribute 6% in the resilience of an individual. A resilient individual always keeps himself away from reacting to adverse circumstances with negative results, such as drug abuse and violent behaviors (Cutuli & Herbers, 2018; Shumba, 2010; Werner, 1995). Happiness and Gratitude put a consistent effect on resilience with the idea that positive sentiments are protective factors of an individual's resiliency in the direction of life changing events (Seligman et al., 2005). The impact of gratitude described in the term of coping strategies to cope with one's thoughts and reframing oneself in the direction of being grateful (Sztachanska et al., 2019; Watkins et al., 2015). The self-experienced positive memorable events are important for someone to be grateful and resilient.

Conclusion:

The present study talks about the significant role of happiness and Gratitude in resilience. Happiness is related to overall wellbeing, life satisfaction, and the evaluation of life in a positive way. University time is a critical period for any student because at that time a continuous pressure of careers, relationships, family responsibilities remain on the mind. So being thankful and stay happy contributes to avoiding negative situations and growing with a positive attitude. This study has certain limitations in selecting factors and sampling, but these limitations can be reduced by adding Some other factors that may contribute to an individual's resiliency.

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