

Effect of Gratitude Journal on Orphaned/ Institutionalized Children and Adolescents

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Abstract

The aim of the study was to see whether maintaining a gratitude journal for twenty days among the orphaned/institutionalized children and adolescence would enhance their subjective well-being i.e. Life satisfaction, Subjective Happiness and increased Optimism. The chosen sample size for the study was 40 (20 children were assigned to the control group and 20 children were assigned to the experimental group). The experimental group were asked to maintain a gratitude journal for twenty days. Life satisfaction scale Scale, Subjective Happiness Scale and Life Orientation Test were the tools used by the Experimenter before and after the intervention for both the control and experimental groups. The data was analyzed using descriptive statistics, and Wilcoxon signed rank test. The results showed that there was a significant difference in the levels of Life Satisfaction, Subjective Happiness and Life Orientation between the Experimental and the Control group after the intervention program.

Keywords: Life Satisfaction, Subjective Happiness, Life Orientation, Gratitude Journal, Orphaned/ Institutionalized Children and Adolescence

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The concept of gratitude recently has attracted considerable interest in the recent culture world-wide. The essential message of gratefulness is *the* panacea for insatiable yearnings and life's ills. Grateful responses to life can lead to peace of mind, happiness, physical health, and deeper, more satisfying personal relationships.

Gratitude has been defined as "the willingness to recognize the unearned increments of value in one's experience" (Bertocci & Millard, 1963, p. 389), and "an estimate of gain coupled with the judgment that someone else is responsible for that gain" (Solomon, 1977, p. 316).

Gratitude defies easy classification. It has been conceptualized as an emotion, an attitude, a moral virtue, a habit, a personality trait, or a coping response. The word gratitude is derived from the Latin root 'gratia', meaning

grace, graciousness, or gratefulness. All derivatives from this Latin root "have to do with kindness, generousness, gifts, the beauty of giving and receiving, or getting something for nothing" (Pruyser, 1976, p. 69). Gratitude is the most common discrete positive affect, experienced by more than 90% of adults (Chipperfield, Perry & Weiner, 2003).

As a concept gratitude has a broad and timeless appeal, one that is seen as valuable and beneficial across cultures and in the Christian, Muslim, Jewish and Hindu traditions (Dumas, Johnson & Lynch, 2002). Thus, gratitude operates in terms of being grateful to someone, being grateful for something, being grateful to a person for something in particular or the tendency to experience gratitude as ongoing across situations (Snyder & Lopez, 2007). From a Positive Psychology perspective however, the focus is on gratitude in terms of optimal functioning, of wellbeing and Satisfaction with Life (SWL). Findings across the literature show gratitude to be both a mediator and function of these, gratitude being variously associated with each.

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In recognition of the importance of gratitude, members of the United Nations General Assembly declared 2000 as the International Year of Thanksgiving. Although around the world people experience and express gratitude in diverse ways (Streng, 1989), they typically feel grateful emotions (i.e., thankful, appreciative) and have developed linguistic and cultural conventions for expressing such gratitude. For example, in Japanese culture the conventional expression of apology—*sumimasen*—is also used to express the feeling of thanks. Gratitude may in fact be a positive, universal characteristic that transcends historical and cultural periods.

Gratitude can also be seen as a prosocial behaviour, in terms of benefits given and received, which results from and stimulates moral behaviour. More specifically, gratitude acts as a ‘moral barometer’, motive and reinforcer (McCullough, Kilpatrick, Emmons & Larson, 2001).

Viewed in this way, gratitude might be seen as the enactment of social norms or mere self-preservation, not least because ingratitude is almost universally derided and would discourage similar behaviour in future (Emmons & Shelton, 2002).

A Theoretical view of Gratitude

A grateful response to life circumstances may be an adaptive psychological strategy and an important process by which people positively interpret everyday experiences. The ability to notice, appreciate, and savor the elements of one’s life has been viewed as a crucial determinant of well-being (Bryant, 1989; Janoff-Bulman & Berger, 2000; Langston, 1994).

Social psychologist Fritz Heider (1958) provided a commonsense view that people feel grateful when receiving a benefit that intentionally resulted from another’s action.

As a consequence, the Heiderian perspective sharpened the focus on the perceived intentionality of the sender as a critical element in shaping the recipient’s sense of gratitude. Building on his viewpoint, in order to have gratitude, two elements are required. The first is an interpersonal context, for gratitude is an interpersonal emotion, which precludes it from being directed toward oneself. Second, implicit in the experience of gratitude is the recipient’s theory of mind from which he or she infers another’s well-meaning intention, resulting in one’s feeling loved and esteemed. That is to say, we can logically infer that a person feeling grateful might be more inclined to feel loved and cared for by others (Shelton, 1990).

From this more expansive perspective, gratitude is fundamentally a moral affect with empathy at its foundation: In order to acknowledge the cost of the gift, the recipient must identify with the psychological state of the one who has provided it. The benefactor’s giving is interpreted by

the recipient as freely offered, and with that comes the acknowledgment that such offering might prove costly to or incur hardship for the benefactor. Such an understanding blends fittingly with some object relations formulations of gratitude, where it is seen as a major derivative of the capacity for love (Klein, 1957). Klein summarizes this entire discussion nicely when she observes that gratitude “underlies the appreciation of goodness in others and in oneself” (1957, p. 187).

Gratitude in Emotion Theory

Appraisal theorists are more inclined to include gratitude within their framework of emotion. Weiner’s (1985) attributional model emphasizes causal appraisals about events as the main determinants of emotional responses. There are two sets of emotions: outcome-dependent and attribution-dependent. General affective reactions of happiness and unhappiness are outcome dependent, whereas secondary emotional reactions of, say, pride, anger, or gratitude follow specific patterns of causal attribution. In this framework, attribution to another for a pleasant outcome elicits gratitude.

Ortony, Clore, and Collins (1988) introduced a goal-based model of appraisal, where the consequences of events are appraised for their relevance to one’s ongoing goal pursuits. Representational systems consisting of goals, standards (consisting of “oughts”), and attitudes (a dispositional liking or disliking of objects) mediate between objective events and the attendant emotional reactions. In their framework, gratitude is a compound of admiration and joy: It consists of approving of someone else’s praise worthy actions and feeling joy for the desirability of the outcome. The variables that affect the intensity of gratitude are (a) the degree of judged praiseworthiness, (b) the deviation of the agent’s action from role-based expectations, and (c) the desirability of the event. The main contribution of this model is that it specifies conditions under which gratitude is and is not likely to occur and calls attention to nuances that might remain undetected in other emotion based frameworks.

Lazarus and Lazarus (1994) describe gratitude as empathic emotions because, alongwith compassion, it depends on the capacity to empathize with others. According to this theory, each emotion is associated with a distinctive dramatic plot, defining what is happening to the person and its significance for the person’s well-being. The dramatic plot for gratitude is the appreciation of an altruistic gift. Both giving and receiving of the gift involve empathy because one must sense the donor’s positive intention, and the donor must sense the need of the recipient. Lazarus and Lazarus describe the “many faces of gratitude” and suggest that within an interpersonal transaction, the personal meanings people attach to giving and receiving influence their experience of gratitude.

Smith (1992) working within Lazarus's cognitive-motivational theory, identified the appraisal components of gratitude as (a) a motivationally relevant outcome that is (b) motivationally congruent or desirable for the person and credited to the efforts of another. Functionally, gratitude motivates the person to reward the other's prosocial behavior.

Intervention: Gratitude Exercises

"Be thankful in all circumstances..." (1 Thessalonians 5:18).

Being grateful about everything is an act of humility. A grateful outlook does not require a life full of material comforts but rather an interior attitude of thankfulness regardless of life circumstances.

Gratitude represents "an attitude toward the giver, and an attitude toward the gift, a determination to use it well, to employ it imaginatively and inventively in accordance with the giver's intention" (Harned, 1997). A grateful person recognizes the receipt of someone else's generosity. Perhaps the core element of gratitude is that it is a response to perceived, intentional benevolence.

Gratitude can manifest itself in a physical form. These are called acts of gratitude, and in application gratitude exercises. Gratitude exercises serve many purposes.

Some of the Gratitude exercises are as follows

Gratitude Journal

Gratitude Journal requires writing all the things that an individual is thankful about. According to Robert Emmons (2000) gratitude journals may help us "bring a new and redemptive frame of reference to a difficult life situation." Gratitude Journals would be in different kinds:

"Count your Blessings" is a journal where an individual is required to write all the things he is privileged of.

"Naikan Technique" this is another journal technique known as Naikan, which involves reflecting on three questions: "What have I received from ___?", "What have I given to ___?", and "What troubles and difficulty have I caused?".

"Gratefulness vs Hassles" is a journal where the client is supposed to write all that he/she is grateful about and all things that annoy or bothers the client.

There is a strong positive link between gratitude journaling and well-being (Emmons, R. A. & McCullough, M. E., 2003). Gratitude journals can be maintained for a minimum of 2 weeks to months and years. In one study of keeping a weekly gratitude journal, participants showed a 5% increase in optimism. In another study, keeping

a daily gratitude journal resulted in a 15% increase in optimism. Yet in another study, keeping a 2-week gratitude journal resulted in a 10% increase in happiness.

Prayers of Gratitude

In many spiritual traditions, prayers of gratitude are considered to be the most powerful form of prayer, because through these prayers people recognize the ultimate source of all they are and all they will ever be.

Thinking outside of the Box

According to Robert Emmons (2000), "I think it's important to think outside of the box when it comes to gratitude. Mother Theresa talked about how grateful she was to the people she was helping, the sick and dying in the slums of Calcutta, because they enabled her to grow and deepen her spirituality. That's a very different way of thinking about gratitude—gratitude for what we can give as opposed to what we receive. But that can be a very powerful way, I think, of cultivating a sense of gratitude."

Goodness of Gratitude

For more than a decade, Robert Emmons (2010), the world's leading scientific expert on gratitude, has been scientifically conducting studies on the effects of gratitude on physical health, on psychological well-being, and on the relationships with others, found that people who practice gratitude consistently report a host of benefits.

Gratitude and Optimism

Gratitude makes us appreciate the value of something, and when we appreciate the value of something, we extract more benefits from it; we are less likely to take it for granted. Gratitude is strongly correlated with optimism. Optimism in turn makes us happier, improves our health, and has been shown to increase lifespan by as much as a few years. Optimism is significantly correlated with gratitude ($r=.51$).

Gratitude and Happiness

Chesterton (1924) claimed that gratitude was the key to happiness. Recently conducted research by Martin Seligman et al (2005) on a sample size of 150, provides an empirical test of these assertions. Participants were asked to write down three things that went well and their causes every night for one week. After one week, participants were 2% happier than before, but in follow-up tests, their happiness kept on increasing, from 5% at one month, to 9% at six months. All this, even though they were only instructed to journal for one week. Participants enjoyed the exercise so much, that they just kept on doing it on their own.

Gratitude and Well-Being

In a study conducted by Emmons and McCullough (2003) the effect of a grateful outlook on psychological and physical well-being was examined. In Studies 1 and 2, participants were randomly assigned to 1 of 3 experimental conditions (hassles, gratitude listing, and either neutral life events or social comparison); they then kept weekly (Study 1) or daily (Study 2) records of their moods, coping behaviors, health behaviors, physical symptoms, and overall life appraisals. In a 3rd study, persons with neuromuscular disease were randomly assigned to either the gratitude condition or to a control condition. The gratitude-outlook groups exhibited heightened well-being across several, though not all, of the outcome measures across the 3 studies, relative to the comparison groups. The effect on positive affect appeared to be the most robust finding. Results suggest that a conscious focus on blessings may have emotional and interpersonal benefits.

Gratitude and Mental Health

A recent study replicated the mental health benefits associated with the grateful focus in a daily study in which gratitude journals were kept over 21 consecutive days. In this study, participants who kept gratitude logs scored higher on measures of psychological well-being and were also more likely to report having helped someone with a personal problem or offered emotional support to another, suggesting prosocial motivation as a consequence of the gratitude induction.

Gratitude and Quality of Sleep

A cross-sectional questionnaire study was conducted by Wood et al (2008) with a large (186 males, 215 females) community sample (ages=18–68 years, mean=24.89, S. D.=9.02), including 161 people (40%) scoring above 5 on the Pittsburgh Sleep Quality Index, indicating clinically impaired sleep, found out that, Gratitude predicted greater subjective sleep quality and sleep duration, and less sleep latency and daytime dysfunction.

Gratitude and Relationships

The emotion of gratitude is thought to have social effects, but empirical studies of such effects have focused largely on the repaying of kind gestures. The current research focused on the relational antecedents of gratitude and its implications for relationship formation. The authors examined the role of naturally occurring gratitude in college sororities during a week of gift-giving from older members to new members. New members recorded reactions to benefits received during the week. At the end of the week and 1 month later, the new and old members rated their interactions and their relationships. Perceptions of

benefactor responsiveness predicted gratitude for benefits, and gratitude during the week predicted future relationship outcomes. Gratitude may function to promote relationship formation and maintenance. (Algoe et al.,2008).

Gratitude and Self- Esteem

Gratitude has been shown in multiple studies to make people kinder and more friendly, and that because of that, grateful people have more social capital. This means that grateful people are actually more likely to receive help from others for no reason other than that they are liked and appreciated.

Gratitude and Health

Gratitude cannot cure cancer but it can strengthen the physiological functioning. Positive emotion improves health. A recent study shows, that those who engage in gratitude practices have been shown to feel less pain, go to the doctor less often, have lower blood pressure, and be less likely to develop a mental disorder.

Gratitude and Exercise

In one 11-week study of 96 Americans, those who were instructed to keep a weekly gratitude journal exercised 40 minutes more per week than the control group.

Gratitude and Resilience

A study revealed, that those that have more gratitude have a more pro-active coping style, are more likely to have and seek out social support in times of need, are less likely to develop PTSD, and are more likely to grow in times of stress.

Gratitude and Achievement

In one study, participants were asked to write down those goals which they wished to accomplish over the next two months. Those who were instructed to keep a gratitude journal reported more progress on achieving their goals at the end of the study.

Gratitude and Decision making

In one study, doctors were given a list of ailments from a hypothetical patient and also given a misleading piece of information that the patient had been diagnosed at another hospital as having lupus. Half the doctors had gratitude evoked by giving them a token of appreciation. Those who did not receive a token of appreciation were more likely to stick with the incorrect diagnosis of lupus; those who did receive the gratitude were energized to expend more energy and to pay their gratitude forward onto their patient. They also considered a wider range of treatment options.

Gratitude and Life Satisfaction

A study conducted by Datu and Mateo (2015) assessed the mediating effects of meaning in life on the relationship between gratitude and life satisfaction. A sample of Filipino college students ($N = 409$) in a private sectarian university completed the Gratitude Questionnaire Six-Item Form (GQ-6), Meaning in Life Questionnaire (MLQ), and Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS). Findings revealed that both gratitude and presence of meaning in life were positively associated with life satisfaction.

Purpose of the study

In the spirit of understanding the link between gratitude and happiness, life satisfaction and life orientation, the purpose of this research is to experimentally investigate the effects of a "grateful outlook" on psychological well-being of the orphaned children. More specifically, the experimenter addresses whether maintaining a gratitude journal for 20 days leads to enhanced psychological and physical functioning of the orphaned children. Drawing together theoretical statements, popular beliefs, and previous empirical findings, the experimenter predicts that self-guided exercises designed to induce a state of gratitude will lead to heightened well-being over time.

The population that was chosen for this study are the orphaned/institutionalized children, as many research studies show that there is disturbed psycho-social well-being among them.

The purpose of this study is to see whether maintaining gratitude journal for twenty days would enhance the life satisfaction, subjective happiness and increase optimism among the orphaned/institutionalized children and adolescents.

The experimenter believes that this research represents a particularly strong test of the happiness-inducing potential of gratitude. If it is possible to demonstrate that there are significant effects of a brief intervention to induce gratitude, then the potential for a longer, more sustained effort would exist.

Literature Survey

A study by Gordon, Impett, Oveis, and Keltner (2012) on the topic, Gratitude Promotes Relationship Maintenance in Intimate Bonds, developed a measure of appreciation in relationships and used cross-sectional, daily experience, observational, and longitudinal methods to test the model. Across studies, it showed that people who are more appreciative of their partners' report being more responsive to their partners' needs (Study 1), and are more committed and more likely to remain in their relationships over time

(Study 2). Appreciative partners were also rated by outside observers as relatively more responsive and committed during dyadic interactions in the laboratory, and these behavioral displays are one way in which appreciation is transmitted from one partner to the other (Study 3). These findings provide evidence that gratitude is important for the successful maintenance of intimate bonds.

Wood, A. M., Joseph, S., & Linley, P. A (2007) examined whether gratitude was correlated with distinct coping styles, and whether coping styles mediated the relationship between gratitude and well being. Participants ($n = 236$) completed measures of coping styles, dispositional gratitude, and measures of well being. Gratitude correlated positively with seeking both emotional and instrumental social support, positive reinterpretation and growth, active coping, and planning. Gratitude correlated negatively with behavioural disengagement, self blame, substance use, and denial. Coping styles mediated up to 51% of the relationship between gratitude and stress, but did not substantially mediate the relationship between gratitude and either happiness, depression, or satisfaction with life.

A research study by Wood, A. M., Joseph, S., & Maltby, J (2008) tested whether gratitude could explain variance in satisfaction with life (SWL) after controlling for both the domains and the facets of the Big Five. The GQ6 measure of gratitude, the NEO-PI-R measure of the Big Five, and the SWL scale were completed by 389 adults. Gratitude was correlated with each of the Big Five domains, and at the facet level showed a distinctive profile whereby gratitude was most strongly correlated with the facets representing well-being and social functioning. Gratitude explained an additional 9% of the variance in SWL after controlling for the Big Five domains ($r = .30$), and an additional 8% after controlling for the facets ($r = .28$). The results support perspectives suggesting that gratitude has a unique relationship with SWL, and clarifies how gratitude relates to personality at the facet level.

On another study by Wood, A. M., Joseph, S., & Maltby, J. (2008) examined the direction of the relationships between trait gratitude, perceived social support, stress, and depression during a life transition. Both studies used a full cross-lagged panel design, with participants completing all measures at the start and end of their first semester at college. Structural equation modeling was used to compare models of direct, reverse, and reciprocal models of directionality. Both studies supported a direct model whereby gratitude led to higher levels of perceived social support, and lower levels of stress and depression. In contrast, no variable led to gratitude, and most models of mediation were discounted. Study 2 additionally showed that gratitude leads to the other variables independently of the Big Five factors of personality. Overall gratitude

seems to directly foster social support, and to protect people from stress and depression, which has implications for clinical interventions.

A study by Steven M Toepfer and Kathleen Walker (2009) have shown that composing letters of gratitude over time would enhance important qualities of subjective well-being in the author; happiness, life- satisfaction, and gratitude.

A study conducted by Nathan et al., (2012) tested the hypothesis that gratitude is linked to lower levels of aggression. Although gratitude increases mental well-being, it is unknown whether gratitude mitigates against aggression. Gratitude motivates people to express sensitivity and concern for others and stimulates prosocial behavior. Cross-sectional, longitudinal, experience sampling, and experimental designs yielded converging evidence to show that gratitude is linked to lower aggression. Higher empathy mediated the relationship between gratitude and lower aggression. These findings have widespread applications for understanding the role of emotion on aggression and can inform interventions aimed at reducing interpersonal aggression.

A study conducted by Emmons et al., (2010) on gratitude and the reduced costs of materialism in adolescents, proposes that materialistic youth seem to be languishing while grateful youth seem to be flourishing. High school students (N = 1,035) completed measures of materialism, gratitude, academic functioning, envy, depression, life satisfaction, social integration, and absorption. Using structural equation modeling, we found that gratitude, controlling for materialism, uniquely predicts all outcomes considered: higher grade point average, life satisfaction, social integration, and absorption, as well as lower envy and depression. In contrast, materialism, controlling for gratitude, uniquely predicts three of the six outcomes: lower grade point average, as well as higher envy and life satisfaction. Furthermore, when examining the relative strengths of gratitude and materialism as predictors, found that gratitude is generally a stronger predictor of these six outcomes than is materialism.

According to a study by Froh , Bono and Emmons (2010) proposes that gratitude, a positive response to receiving a benefit, may contribute more to youth than just momentary happiness. It may ignite in youth a motivation for “upstream generativity” whereby its experience contributes to a desire to give back to their neighborhood, community, and world. This notion was tested by longitudinally examining early adolescents’ gratitude and their social integration, or motivation to use their strengths to help others and feel connected to others at a macro level. Middle school students (N = 700) completed measures of gratitude, prosocial behavior, life satisfaction, and social integration at baseline (T1), 3-months (T2), and 6-months (T3) later. Using

bootstrapping to examine multiple mediators, controlling for demographics and social integration at T1, found that gratitude at T1 predicted social integration at T3 and that prosocial behavior and life satisfaction at T2 mediated the relation. Further mediational analyses showed that gratitude and social integration serially enhanced each other.

Tsang et al., (2012) examined the relationship between religion and two forms of gratitude: (a) grateful reactions to a specific, standardized favor, and (b) self-reported grateful personality. Eighty-one female undergraduate students received a religious or neutral prime, and then received a positive outcome ostensibly from another participant or from random chance. Results demonstrated that intrinsic religiousness was positively associated with grateful disposition but not with self-report or behavioral gratitude for the specific favor. Intrinsic religion was also positively associated with self-reported motivation to express appreciation, but only in the presence of a religious prime and in the absence of a favor. The religious prime had a marginal main effect, facilitating prosocial behaviors but not gratitude. These results provide important qualifications for the positive relationship between religion and gratitude.

A study conducted by Parks et al., (2014) proposed that gratitude is related to numerous aspects of well-being (mental health, decreased psychopathology, positive relationships). Gratitude is a learned trait that can help treat clinical disorders and can improve school performance in children. Gratitude interventions taught in therapy or the school setting can orient individuals towards a positive life approach. Increased gratitude leads to increased well-being.

A study by Wong (2012) aimed to examine the possible cross-sectional mediating role of sleep in the relationship of gratitude with depression and anxiety in patients with chronic pain. A total of 224 patients with chronic pain completed structured questionnaires assessing chronic pain, depression and anxiety symptoms, gratitude, and sleep disturbances. Results of multiple regression analyses yielded a modest mediating effect for sleep on the gratitude–depression link whereas a stronger mediating effect was found for sleep on the gratitude–anxiety link. These data show much of the effect of gratitude on depression was direct whereas sleep exerted a stronger mediating effect on the gratitude–anxiety link.

According to a study conducted by Chan (2011) investigated the effectiveness of a gratitude intervention program in promoting life satisfaction and reducing burnout symptoms among Chinese school teachers in Hong Kong. Sixty-three Hong Kong Chinese school teachers aged 22–54 participated in an eight-week count-your-blessings study that used a pre-test/post-test design. Increases in life satisfaction and the sense of personal accomplishment and decreases in

emotional exhaustion and depersonalization were observed in the post-intervention assessment. Significant changes were observed on life satisfaction and emotional exhaustion as a result of intervention interacting with the meaningful-life orientation to happiness.

A research study by Harbaugha & Michael W. Vasey (2013) shows that gratitude exercises are effective for improving well-being, but the pattern of results also suggests that moderators are likely at play. The present study investigated trait gratitude, baseline depressive symptoms, and inclusion of a rationale as moderators of the efficacy of a two-week gratitude list exercise compared to a daily events list control condition. Results revealed that the gratitude exercise decreased depressive symptoms among participants high in such symptoms at baseline and eliminated the negative effect of low baseline trait gratitude on later happiness, positive emotions, and depressive symptoms.

Kleiman et al., (2013) examined gratitude and grit as factors that synergistically confer resiliency to suicide by increasing meaning in life. Using a longitudinal study of 209 college students, found out that gratitude and grit interact such that individuals endorsing high gratitude and grit experience a near absence of suicidal ideations over time. Testing a mediated moderation model, found that grit and gratitude confer resiliency to suicide by increasing meaning in life. Our findings illustrating the importance of examining co-occurring personality factors as well as the mechanisms of these factors that can confer resiliency to suicide.

According to Mindy, Kiblerb, and Slyc (2013) found that gratitude is associated with positive youth development. The current study examined the relationship between gratitude and protective/risk factors among African American youth. Results indicated greater moral affect gratitude was the only variable significantly associated with greater academic interest, better academic performance, and more extra-curricular activity engagement. Greater moral affect and life-orientation gratitude both significantly correlated with positive family relationship.

Author Mathew E May (2014) conducted a study in which doctors were given a list of ailments from a hypothetical patient and also given a misleading piece of information that the patient had been diagnosed at another hospital as having lupus. Half the doctors had gratitude evoked by giving them a token of appreciation. Those who did not receive a token of appreciation were more likely to stick with the incorrect diagnosis of lupus; those who did receive the gratitude were energized to expend more energy and to pay their gratitude forward onto their patient. They also considered a wider range of treatment options.

A study by Laurie E Scheidle (2011) examined the constructs of forgiveness and gratitude, and their ability to predict subjective well-being in a sample of Christian, older adults.

The researcher also explored the relationship between morale and forgiveness and gratitude. Their ages ranged from 60-89 ($M = 71.71$, $SD = 6.8$). Results revealed that Christian older adults' forgiving disposition, grateful disposition, and trait gratitude jointly predicted most aspects of subjective well-being. Grateful disposition was found to be the most significant predictor of positive affect and is considered a unique predictor, explaining 11% of the variance of the Christian older adults' experiences of positive emotions. A significantly large and positive relationship was found between trait gratitude and morale, and significantly moderate and positive relationships were found between grateful disposition and morale and forgiving disposition and morale.

Frias, Watkins et al., 2011 conducted a study in which they investigated on a theory stating that, reflecting on death causes one to appreciate life as a limited resource, this might enhance gratitude. To test the theory, participants were randomly assigned to a death reflection condition, a traditional mortality salience condition, or to a control condition. Participants in the death reflection and the mortality salience conditions showed enhanced gratitude compared to individuals in the control condition, supporting the theory that becoming aware of one's mortal limitations enhances gratitude for the life that what one has.

A study by Datu and Mateo (2015) assessed the mediating effects of meaning in life on the relationship between gratitude and life satisfaction. A sample of Filipino college students ($N = 409$) in a private sectarian university completed the Gratitude Questionnaire Six-Item Form (GQ-6), Meaning in Life Questionnaire (MLQ), and Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS). Findings revealed that both gratitude and presence of meaning in life were positively associated with life satisfaction. Interestingly, search for meaning in life was negatively correlated with presence of meaning in life. Hierarchical multiple regression analyses showed that presence of meaning in life partially mediated the relationship between gratitude and subjective well-being.

A study conducted by Algoe et al., (2008) focused on the relational antecedents of gratitude and its implications for relationship formation. The authors examined the role of naturally occurring gratitude in college sororities during a week of gift-giving from older members to new members. New members recorded reactions to benefits received during the week. At the end of the week and 1 month later, the new and old members rated their interactions and their relationships. Perceptions of benefactor responsiveness predicted gratitude for benefits, and gratitude during the week predicted future relationship outcomes. Gratitude may function to promote relationship formation and maintenance.

A cross-sectional questionnaire study was conducted by

Wood et al (2008) to test whether gratitude influences sleep through the mechanism of pre-sleep cognitions. A large (186 males, 215 females) community sample (ages=18–68 years, mean=24.89, S. D.=9.02), including 161 people (40%) scoring above 5 on the Pittsburgh Sleep Quality Index, indicating clinically impaired sleep, found out that, Gratitude predicted greater subjective sleep quality and sleep duration, and less sleep latency and daytime dysfunction.

Conclusion

The above review has shown that acts of Gratitude like Gratitude Journal, Gratitude Prayers and the like, can be effective and does enhance the over-all Well Being of an individual.

These studies validate the effects of Gratitude Exercises on orphaned children (who tend to encounter higher emotional distress, hopelessness, and frustration than non-orphans, Mbozi, Debit, and Munyati, 2006) as being more effective in enhancing their life satisfaction and over-all well-being.

Methodology

Aim

The aim of the study is to see whether maintaining a Gratitude Journal for Twenty-days would enhance the life satisfaction, happiness and optimism in the orphaned children and adolescents.

Objectives

- To administer the Satisfaction with Life scale, Happiness scale and Life Orientation Test on orphaned/ institutionalized children and adolescents.
- To assess the effectiveness of the intervention program in increasing life satisfaction, happiness and optimism.
- To compare the pre and post-test, and determine the efficacy of the intervention program.

Operational definitions

Gratitude has been defined as “the feeling that occurs when a person attributes a benefit they have received to another (Emmons, 2004).

Life satisfaction is an overall assessment of feelings and attitudes about one’s life at a particular point in time ranging from negative to positive. (Diener, 1984).

Happiness is defined as “how people evaluate their own lives in terms of cognitive and affective explanations, and can be represented in the following way (Diener, 2000):

SWB (Subjective Well-Being) = SATISFACTION WITH LIFE

+ AFFECT”

Life Orientation looks at two components: Optimism and Pessimism.

Optimism is defined as “the global generalized tendency to believe that one will generally experience good versus bad outcomes in life.” (Scheier and Carver, 2001).

Pessimism refers to people who view problems as internal, unchangeable, and pervasive, whereas optimistic people are the opposite. Pessimism has been linked with depression, stress, and anxiety (Kamen & Seligman, 1987).

Orphaned children and adolescents seem socially deprived and they tend to encounter higher emotional distress, hopelessness, and frustration than non-orphans (Mbozi, Debit, and Munyati, 2006).

Hypothesis

Alternative Hypothesis

- **H1:** There will be significant difference in the levels of Life Satisfaction in the Experimental group before and after the intervention program.
- **H2:** There will be significant difference in the levels of Subjective Happiness in the Experimental group before and after the intervention program
- **H3:** There will be significant difference in the levels of Life Orientation in the Experimental group before and after the intervention program.
- **H4:** There will be statistically significant difference in the levels of Life Satisfaction, Subjective Happiness and Life Orientation between the Experimental and the Control group after the intervention program.

Null Hypothesis

- **H₀ (1):** There will be no statistically significant difference in the levels of Life satisfaction in the Control group before and after the intervention program.
- **H₀ (2):** There will be no statistically significant difference in the levels of Subjective Happiness in the Control group before and after the intervention program.
- **H₀ (3):** There will be no statistically significant difference in the levels of Life Orientation in the Control group before and after the intervention program.

Research Design

The research design for the present study is Experimental Design. The present study involves three stages. The first stage includes the assessment stage where a total of 40 students of an orphanage were given the Satisfaction with Life Scale, Subjective Happiness Scale and Life Orientation Scale.

In the second stage, orphaned/ institutionalized children and adolescents were assigned randomly into two groups experimental and control group. The experimental group were asked to maintain gratitude journal for twenty days which was the intervention program.

The third stage was the post intervention where a re-assessment of the level of Life satisfaction, Happiness and Life orientation was done for both the experimental and the control group by administering the Satisfaction with Life Scale, Subjective Happiness Scale and Life Orientation Test and the scores were compared with those of the pre-test to check the efficacy of the intervention.

A¹ and B¹ are the pre-test scores and A² and B² are the post-test scores of the experimental and control group respectively. Treatment X is an intervention program involving the gratitude journal which was administered to the experimental group to assess whether the treatment was enhancing their life satisfaction, happiness and optimism.

Groups	Pre-test	Treatment	Post test
Experimental	A ¹	X	A ²
Control	B ¹		B ²

Sample

Sampling Technique

The sampling technique used for the study was non-probability, purposive sampling technique. In all, 40 orphaned/institutionalized children and adolescents between the age group of 8 years to 18 years from an orphanage were chosen for the study.

Inclusion Criteria

- Orphaned/Institutionalized children and adolescents who were all be able to read and write English.
- Orphaned/institutionalized children and adolescents between the age group of 8 years to 18 years.
- Orphaned/Institutionalized children and adolescents who had lost both their parents were selected for the study.

Variables

Independent Variable: Gratitude

Dependent Variable: Life Satisfaction, Subjective Happiness and Life Orientation.

Instruments/ Tools for data collection

In order to identify the level of life satisfaction, happiness and life orientation, the researcher has used the following

tools and the description of each tool is given below:

The Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS)

The Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) was first developed by Diener, Emmons, Larsen, and Griffin (1985) to measure cognitive self-evaluation of global life satisfaction. Then it was revised by Pavot and Diener (1993).

The scale has been reported to have high internal consistency and temporal reliability (Yoon & R. M. Lee, 2008). The SWLS has moderately strong correlations with other SWB measures (e.g., Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale). The SWLS was also found to be a suitable measure for use with different age groups (Diener et al., 1985). Atienza, Pons, Balaguer, and Garcia-Merita (2000) noted that, the SWLS has high internal consistency, with Cronbach's α values ranging from .89 to .79. With regard to the item-total correlation, Pavot and Diener (1993) obtained values between .80 and .51; Atienza et al (2000) found values between .74 and .57.

The Subjective Happiness Scale (SHS)

The Subjective Happiness Scale (SHS) (Lyubomirsky & Lepper, 1999) is a four item measure of global subjective happiness. Whilst other measures assess the affective (e.g., the HM) and cognitive (e.g., the SWLS) components of SWB, the SHS measures SWB as a whole. Lyubomirsky and Lepper claim that the SHS reflects "a broader and more molar category of wellbeing and taps into more global psychological phenomena" (1999, p. 139).

The reliability and validity of the scale was collected through 14 samples at different times and location. Internal consistency was tested using Cronbach's alpha reliability which ranges from 0.79 to 0.94 and test-re-test reliability ranged from 0.55 to 0.90.

The Life Orientation Test-Revised (LOT-R)

The Life Orientation Test (LOT) was developed to assess individual differences in generalized optimism versus pessimism. The LOT-R assesses trait-like optimism and pessimism via general, dispositional outcome expectancies of the respondent.

The LOT-R shows acceptable reliability; test-retest reliability was .79 for a college sample (over a 4-month interval) and $\alpha = .78$ (Scheier et al. 1994). The LOT-R has performed similarly in clinical samples of substance abusers. Internal consistency ranged from .67 – .80 into studies of recovering

and treated substance abusers (Majer et al. 2004; White et al. 2001). Test-retest reliability was .75 in a sample of alcohol treatment aftercare patients (Strack et al.1987).

Data Analysis

Since the data violated the test for normality, the statistical technique that was used to analyze the data was the Wilcoxon signed rank test.

Ethical Considerations

After the assessment of the post test, the control group was provided with the intervention program i.e. Gratitude journal, which was given for the experimental group to enhance their overall Subjective Well Being.

Results and Discussion

The purpose of the study was to determine the efficacy of an intervention program aimed at enhancing the subjective well-being i.e. Life satisfaction, Subjective Happiness and enhancing Optimism of the orphaned/institutionalized children and adolescents.

This chapter presents the results and discussion of the present research where in the intervention was administered on forty orphaned/institutionalized girls within the age group of 8-18 years, and the pre-test and post test scores of Satisfaction with Life Scale, Subjective Happiness Scale and Life Orientation Test were collected.

Demographic information

The sample consisted of 40 participants belonging to the age group of 8- 18 years of age, of which 20 were in the Experimental Group and 20 were in the Control Group. The average age of the sample was 14.3.

Table 4.1 Demographic details of the samples

Sample Size	Experimental Group	Control Group	Age Range	Average Age
N= 40	20	20	8-18	14.3

Table 4.2 Showing the Wilcoxon signed test results on Life Satisfaction of the Experimental group

Group	Condition	N	Mean	Median	Ranks	Z	Assymp. Sig (2-tailed)
Experimental	Pre-test	20	21.25	20.5	1.50	-3.59	.000
	Post-test	20	28	27	10.50		

Description of the Samples

The experimenter chose 40 Orphaned/ institutionalized girls from Bengaluru. The girls from this orphanage belong to lower economic background, lost their parents at an early age and are being taken care by an orphanage.

Hypothesis

Following hypothesis were tested:

Alternative Hypothesis

- **H1:** There will be significant difference in the levels of Life Satisfaction in the Experimental group before and after the intervention program.
- **H2:** There will be significant difference in the levels of Subjective Happiness in the Experimental group before and after the intervention program.
- **H3:** There will be significant difference in the levels of Life Orientation in the Experimental group before and after the intervention program.
- **H4:** There will be statistically significant difference in the levels of Life Satisfaction, Subjective Happiness and Life Orientation between the Experimental and the Control group after the intervention program.

Null Hypothesis

- **H₀ (1):** There will be no statistically significant difference in the levels of Life satisfaction in the Control group before and after the intervention program.
 - **H₀ (2):** There will be no statistically significant difference in the levels of Subjective Happiness in the Control group before and after the intervention program.
 - **H₀ (3):** There will be no statistically significant difference in the levels of Life Orientation in the Control group before and after the intervention program.
- a) There will be significant difference in the levels of Life Satisfaction in the Experimental group before and after the intervention program. This was analyzed using the Wilcoxon signed rank test since the data violated test for normality. The results of pre-test and post-test are represented in table 4.2.

A Wilcoxon signed rank test was conducted to determine whether there was a significant difference in the levels of Life Satisfaction in the Experimental group before and after the intervention program. The results indicated a significant difference, $z = -3.59, p < .01$. The mean of the ranks in favor of pre-test was 1.50, while the mean of the ranks in favor of post-test was 10.50.

Thus it validates the hypothesis that states “there will be a significant difference in the levels of Life Satisfaction in the Experimental group before and after the intervention program.”

According to a study by Jo-Ann Tsang of Baylor University (2015) and her colleagues surveyed 246 undergraduate students to see whether there was a relationship between gratitude and life satisfaction. Their results, published in the journal *Personality and Individual Differences*, show that as gratitude increased individuals were more satisfied with life. Further analysis revealed that materialists felt less satisfied with their lives mainly because they were experiencing less gratitude. (2016).

- b) There will be significant difference in the levels of Subjective Happiness in the Experimental group before and after the intervention program. This was analyzed using the Wilcoxon signed rank test since the data violated test for normality. The results of pre-test and post-test are represented in table 4.3.

Table 4.3 Showing the Wilcoxon signed test results on Subjective Happiness of the Experimental group

Group	Condition	N	Mean	Median	Ranks	Z	Assymp. Sig (2-tailed)
Experimental	Pre-test	20	4.9	4.7	5	-3.02	.003
	Post-test	20	6	6.1	11.3		

A Wilcoxon signed rank test was conducted to determine whether there was a significant difference in the levels of Subjective Happiness in the Experimental group before and after the intervention program. The results indicated a significant difference, $z = -3.02, p < .01$. The mean of the ranks in favor of pre-test was 5, while the mean of the ranks in favor of post-test was 11.3.

Thus validating the hypothesis which states that “there will be a significant difference in the levels of Subjective Happiness in the Experimental group before and after the intervention program.”

A study conducted by Steven M Toepfer, Kathleen Walker (2009) found that composing letters of gratitude over time would enhance important qualities of subjective well-being in the author; happiness, life- satisfaction, and gratitude.

- c) There will be significant difference in the levels of Life Orientation in the Experimental group before and after the intervention program. This was analyzed using the Wilcoxon signed rank test since the data violated test for normality. The results of pre-test and post-test are represented in table 4.4.

Table 4.4 Showing the Wilcoxon signed test results on Life Orientation of the Experimental group

Group	Condition	N	Mean	Median	Ranks	Z	Assymp. Sig (2-tailed)
Experimental	Pre-test	20	15.6	16	8.6	-1.85	.063
	Post-test	20	17.8	17.5	9.8		

A Wilcoxon signed rank test was conducted to determine whether there was a significant difference in the levels of Life Orientation in the Experimental group before and after the intervention program. The results indicated that there was no significant difference, $z = -1.85, p > .05$. The mean of the ranks in favor of pre-test was 8.6, while the mean of the ranks in favor of post-test was 9.8.

Thus rejecting the hypothesis which states that “there will be a significant difference in the levels of Life Orientation in the Experimental group before and after the intervention program.”

One study by Seligman, et al (2005) found that people who kept weekly journals had benefits greater than those who kept daily journals. This could be one of the reasons as to why there is no significant difference in the life orientation, as the children were asked to maintain a gratitude journal daily and not weekly.

- d) There will be no significant difference in the levels of Life satisfaction in the Control group before and after the intervention program. This was analyzed using the Wilcoxon signed rank test since the data violated test for normality. The results of pre-test and post-test are represented in table 4.5.

Table 4.5 Showing the Wilcoxon signed test results on Life Satisfaction of the Control group

Group	Condition	N	Mean	Median	Ranks	Z	Assymp. Sig (2-tailed)
Control	Pre-test	20	17.9	18	7.3	-3.11	.002
	Post-test	20	22.9	23.5	11		

A Wilcoxon signed rank test was conducted to determine whether there was no significant difference in the levels of Life Satisfaction in the Control group before and after the intervention program. The results indicated that there was a significant difference, $z = -3.11$, $p < .01$. The mean of the ranks in favor of pre-test was 7.3, while the mean of the ranks in favor of post-test was 11.

Thus rejecting the hypothesis which states that “there will be no significant difference in the levels of Life satisfaction in the Control group before and after the intervention program.”

Since the gratitude intervention coincided with other life enhancing program that was conducted in the institution this must have affected the scores on the scales.

- e) There will be no significant difference in the levels of Subjective Happiness in the Control group before and after the intervention program. This was analyzed using the Wilcoxon signed rank test since the data violated test for normality. The results of pre-test and post-test are represented in table 4.6.

Table 4.6 Showing the Mean, Median, Wilcoxon signed test results on Subjective Happiness of the Control group

Group	Condition	N	Mean	Median	Ranks	Z	Assymp. Sig (2-tailed)
Control	Pre-test	20	5.1	5.5	9.9	-1.92	.054
	Post-test	20	4.6	4.5	8.3		

A Wilcoxon signed rank test was conducted to determine whether there was a significant difference in the levels of Subjective Happiness in the Control group before and after the intervention program. The results indicated that there was no difference, $z = -1.92$, $p > .05$. The mean of the ranks in favor of pre-test was 9.9, while the mean of the ranks in favor of post-test was 8.3.

Thus validating the hypothesis which states that “there will be no significant difference in the levels of Subjective Happiness in the Control group before and after the intervention program.”

- f) There will be no statistically significant difference in the levels of Life Orientation in the Control group before and after the intervention program. This was analyzed using the Wilcoxon signed rank test since the data violated test for normality. The results of pre-test and post-test are represented in table 4.7.

Table 4.7 Showing the Wilcoxon signed test results on Life Orientation of the Control group

Group	Condition	N	Mean	Median	Ranks	Z	Assymp.Sig (2-tailed)
Control	Pre-test	20	15.4	17	9.87	-1.61	.107
	Post-test	20	13.9	14	12.40		

- g) A Wilcoxon signed rank test was conducted to determine whether there was a significant difference in the levels of Life Orientation in the Control group before and after the intervention program. The results indicated that there was no difference, $z = -1.61$, $p > .05$. The mean of the ranks in favor of pre-test was 9.87, while the mean of the ranks in favor of post-test was 12.40.

Thus validating the hypothesis which states that “there will be no significant difference in the levels of Life Orientation

in the Control group before and after the intervention program.”

- h) There will be statistically significant difference in the levels of Life Satisfaction, Subjective Happiness and Life Orientation between the Experimental and the Control group after the intervention program. This was analyzed using the Wilcoxon signed rank test since the data violated test for normality. The results of Experimental and Control group post-test are represented in table 4.8.

Table 4.8 Showing the scores of Experimental and Control group after the Intervention (Post-test)

Groups	Variables	N	Mean	Median	Mean Ranks	Z	Assymp. Sig (2-tailed)
Experimental	Life Satisfaction	20	28	27	10	-3.08	.002
Control		20	22.9	23	29.25		
Experimental	Subjective Happiness	20	6.03	6.1	11.7		
Control		20	4.6	4.5	5.6	-3.09	.002
Experimental	Life Orientation	20	17.8	17.5	9.86		
Control		20	13.9	14	5	-2.91	.004

A Wilcoxon signed rank test was conducted to determine whether there was a significant difference in the levels of Life Satisfaction, Subjective Happiness and Life Orientation between the Experimental and the Control group after the intervention program. The results indicated that there was significant difference in three conditions.

$z = -3.08, -3.09$ and -2.91 respectively; $p < .01$.

This validates the hypothesis which states that “there will be statistically significant difference in the levels of Life Satisfaction, Subjective Happiness and Life Orientation between the Experimental and Control group after the intervention program.

The above tables show that there was enhancement in subjective well-being i.e. life satisfaction, subjective happiness and optimism of the orphaned/institutionalized girls by maintaining a gratitude journal. Improving of subjective well-being of the child is advantageous for a variety of reasons as pointed out by the following studies.

According to Adu and Takyibea (2011) enhancement of subjective well-being in orphaned/institutionalized individuals would serve as a form of coping strategy and builds resilience.

Subjective well-being leads to positive life outcomes of longevity, sociability, creativity, healthier immune function, better citizen participation at work, and increased income, suggesting that high subjective well-being at the individual and societal level is extremely desirable (Larsen & Eid, 2009).

The highest life satisfaction ratings among American children are related to three major individual variables: high self-esteem, emotionally stable temperament, and an internal locus of control (Huebner & Diener, 2008; Huebner, Gilman, & Laughlin, 1999).

Well-being is a state characterized by experiences of contentment, pleasure, and kinds of happiness; by spiritual experiences; by movement toward fulfillment of one’s self-ideal; and by continuing personalization. (Orem, 2001).

The phrase, ‘the ability to live harmoniously’ captures the essence of resiliency, in which human responses to stress and adversity are active, not passive, processes (Rutter, 2000).

As both a social and individual phenomenon, the well-being of children is always associated with social support (Chu et al., 2010).

The concept of well-being is consistent with quality of life, which is defined as “individuals’ perceptions of their position in life in the context of the culture and value systems in which they live and in relation to their goals, expectations, standards and concerns” (World Health Organization, 1996, p. 5).

The cumulative research on the human brain reveals the true essence of holistic health: the brain is dependent upon positive human interaction for appropriate development, survival, and well-being (Cozolino, 2006).

When children are neglected, abused, or traumatized, physiological changes of the brain and body result in malfunction that is inconsistent with well-being and long-term survival (Cozolino, 2006).

In summary, the aim of the study was to establish if maintaining a gratitude journal enhances life satisfaction, happiness and increases optimism in the orphaned children and adolescents. The post-test scores indicate that a significant difference can be seen after the intervention. Thus we may conclude that maintaining a gratitude journal for twenty days will help in enhancing the subjective well-being i.e. life satisfaction, happiness and optimism of the orphaned/ institutionalized individuals.

Conclusion

The present study was undertaken with the aim of determining the effect of gratitude intervention program in enhancing their life satisfaction, subjective happiness and optimism in orphaned/ institutionalized children. This study was conducted in three stages.

Stage one consisted of the pre intervention stage in which 40 orphaned/ institutionalized children and adolescents were administered the Satisfaction with life scale, Subjective happiness scale and life orientation test. Then the researcher randomly assigned the individuals to either the control group or the experimental group.

Stage two consisted of the intervention program where the experimental group were asked to maintain a gratitude journal for twenty days.

Stage three consisted of the post intervention stage in which both the experimental and the control group were again administered the Satisfaction with life scale, Subjective happiness scale and life orientation test.

The findings of the research are listed below:

- The hypothesis stating that there will be significant difference in the levels of Life Satisfaction in the Experimental group before and after the intervention program has been accepted.
- The hypothesis stating that there will be significant difference in the levels of Subjective Happiness in the experimental group before and after the intervention program has been accepted.
- The hypothesis stating that there will be significant difference in the levels of Life orientation in the experimental group before and after the intervention program has been rejected.
- The hypothesis stating that there will be significant difference in the levels of Life Satisfaction, Subjective Happiness and Life Orientation between the Experimental and the Control group after the intervention program has been accepted.
- The hypothesis stating that will be no statistically significant difference in the levels of Life satisfaction in the Control group before and after the intervention program has been rejected.
- The hypothesis stating that there will be no statistically significant difference in the levels of Subjective Happiness in the Control group before and after the intervention program has been accepted.
- The hypothesis stating that there will be no statistically significant difference in the levels of Life Orientation in the Control group before and after the intervention program has been accepted.

Limitations of the study

- The gratitude intervention coincided with other life enhancing program that was conducted in the institution. This must have affected the scores on the scales.

Suggestion for Future Research

- Both boys and girls could form the sample for the study, which can be useful in generalizing
- The same study could be done in different age groups and non-institutionalized population as well.

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