



Faculty of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development

**THE INFLUENCE OF GRATITUDE ON LEARNING
ENGAGEMENT AMONG UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS**

Nur Syallehah Binti Duati

Bachelor of Psychology (Honours)

2022

UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SARAWAK

Grade: A

Please tick (✓)

Final Year Project Report

Masters

PhD

DECLARATION OF ORIGINAL WORK

This declaration is made on the 7th day of July 2022.

Student's Declaration:

I, NUR SYALLEHAH BINTI DUATI, 71049, Faculty of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development, hereby declare that the work entitled, The Influence of Gratitude on Learning Engagement among Undergraduate Students is my original work. I have not copied from any other students' work or from any other sources except where due reference or acknowledgement is made explicitly in the text, nor has any part been written for me by another person.

07 JULY 2022

Date submitted

Syallehah

NUR SYALLEHAH BINTI DUATI (71049)

Supervisor's Declaration:

I, DR. LEE JUN CHOI hereby certifies that the work entitled, The Influence of Gratitude on Learning Engagement among Undergraduate Students was prepared by the above named student, and was submitted to the "FACULTY" as a partial fulfilment for the conferment of Bachelor of Psychology (Honours) and the aforementioned work, to the best of my knowledge, is the said student's work.


Dr. Lee Jun Choi
Senior Lecturer (Psychology Programme)
Faculty of Cognitive Sciences & Human Development
UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SARAWAK

Received for examination by: _____
(DR. LEE JUN CHOI)

Date: 7 July 2022

I declare this Project/Thesis is classified as (Please tick (√)):

- CONFIDENTIAL** (Contains confidential information under the Official Secret Act 1972) *
- RESTRICTED** (Contains restricted information as specified by the organisation where research was done) *
- OPEN ACCESS**

Validation of Project/Thesis

I therefore duly affirmed with free consent and willingness declared that this said Project/Thesis shall be placed officially in the PeTARY with the abide interest and rights as follows:

- This Project/Thesis is the sole legal property of Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS).
- The PeTARY has the lawful right to make copies for the purpose of academic and research only and not for other purpose.
- The PeTARY has the lawful right to digitise the content to for the Local Content Database.
- The PeTARY has the lawful right to make copies of the Project/Thesis for academic exchange between Higher Learning Institute.
- No dispute or any claim shall arise from the student itself neither third party on this Project/Thesis once it becomes sole property of UNIMAS.
- This Project/Thesis or any material, data and information related to it shall not be distributed, published or disclosed to any party by the student except with UNIMAS permission.

Student's signature Syallehah
(07 JULY 2022)


Dr. Lee Jun Choi
Senior Lecturer (Psychology Programme)
Faculty of Cognitive Sciences & Human Development
UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SARAWAK
Supervisor's signature: _____
(DATE) 17 July 2022

Current Address: Pekan Kecil Sook, 89008 Keningau, Sabah

Notes: * If the Project/Thesis is **CONFIDENTIAL** or **RESTRICTED**, please attach together as annexure a letter from the organisation with the period and reasons of confidentiality and restriction.

[The instrument was duly prepared by the PeTARY]

**THE INFLUENCE OF GRATITUDE ON LEARNING ENGAGEMENT AMONG
UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS**

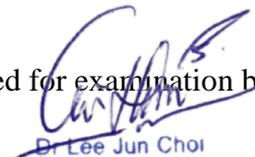
NUR SYALLEHAH BINTI DUATI

This project is submitted
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for a
Bachelor of Psychology with Honours

Faculty of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development
UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SARAWAK
(2022)

The project entitled The Influence of Gratitude on Learning Engagement Among Undergraduate Students was prepared by Nur Syallehah Binti Duati, 71049 and submitted to the Faculty of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development in partial fulfilment of the requirements for a Bachelor of Psychology with Honours

Received for examination by:


Dr Lee Jun Choi
Senior Lecturer (Psychology Programme)
Faculty of Cognitive Sciences & Human Development
UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SARAWAK

(DR. LEE JUN CHOI)

Date:

17 July 2022

Gred

A

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

First and foremost, I would like to extend my gratitude to Almighty God for giving me the strength and facilitating my affairs throughout this study until I have completed my Final Year Project, within the allotted time despite various challenges that I went through.

I would also like to express my special gratitude to my respected supervisor, Dr Lee Jun Choi, for his dedication to mentoring me despite his tight schedule. He gave me a lot of valuable guidance and feedback throughout the process of conducting this study, which was helpful to me in completing the study.

Not to be forgotten are my parents, who always supported and inspired me and my friends who supported me in completing this research and helped me gather data.

Also, I am thankful to all respondents who are willing to spend time answering this study's questionnaire.

Last but not least, thanks to those various individuals who helped directly or indirectly in providing me opinions and assistance while completing this study.

I dedicated this study to my parents, who have always inspired me to do my best in my study.

Table of Contents

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	1
LIST OF TABLES	I
LIST OF FIGURES	II
ABSTRACT.....	i
ABSTRAK.....	ii
CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION	1
1.0 Introduction	1
1.1 Background of Study.....	1
1.2 Problem Statement	3
1.3 Research Objectives	4
1.3.1 General Objective	4
1.3.2 Specific Objectives	4
1.4 Research Questions	5
1.5 Research Hypotheses.....	5
1.6 Conceptual Framework	6
1.7 Significance of Study	6
1.8 Definition of Terms.....	7
1.8.1 Gratitude	7
1.8.2 Learning Engagement	7
1.8.3 Behavioral Engagement	8
1.8.4 Emotional Engagement.....	8
1.8.5 Cognitive Engagement.....	8
1.9 Summary.....	9
CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW	10
2.0 Introduction	10
2.1 Gratitude	10
2.1.1 Benefits of Gratitude.....	13
2.2 Learning Engagement	16
2.2.1 Behavioral Engagement	18
2.2.2 Emotional Engagement.....	19
2.2.3 Cognitive Engagement.....	20
2.2.4 The Outcome of Learning Engagement.....	20
2.2.5 Drives of Learning Engagement	21

2.3	Related Theories and Model	22
2.3.1	The Broaden-and-Build Theory	22
2.4	Previous Findings	23
2.4.1	The Relationship between Gratitude and Learning Engagement	23
2.5	Summary	25
CHAPTER 3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY		26
3.0	Introduction	26
3.1	Research Design	26
3.2	Research location, Population and Sample	27
3.2.1	Location	27
3.2.2	Population	27
3.2.3	Sample.....	28
3.3	Instruments	30
3.3.1	Instrument Structure.....	31
3.3.1.1	Section A: Demographic.....	31
3.3.1.2	Section B: Gratitude.....	31
3.3.1.3	Section C: Learning Engagement	31
3.4	Data Collection Procedures	33
3.4.1	Primary Data	33
3.4.2	Secondary Data	33
3.5	Pilot Study	33
3.6	Validity	34
3.7	Reliability.....	35
3.8	Data Analysis Procedures.....	36
3.8.1	Descriptive Data Analysis.....	36
3.8.2	Inferential Data Analysis	37
3.8.2.1	Kruskal Wallis test.....	37
3.8.2.2	Spearman’s Correlation Coefficient	38
3.9	Summary	38
CHAPTER 4 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS		39
4.0	Introduction	39
4.1	Demographic Data of The Respondents.....	39
4.2	Normality Test.....	42
4.3	Reliability Test of Instrument in Actual Study	42
4.4	Validity Test.....	43

4.5	Analyses on The Influence of Gratitude on Learning in Different Faculties.....	44
4.6	Analyses on The Learning Engagement in Different Faculties.	45
4.7	Hypotheses Testing	47
4.7.1	Analyses the Differences in Terms of Gratitude on Learning Engagement Between Faculties.	47
4.7.2	Relationship between Gratitude and Learning Engagement Among Undergraduate Students.	49
4.8	Summary of Findings	51
4.9	Conclusion.....	51
CHAPTER 5 LIMITATION, IMPLICATION, RECOMMENDATION AND CONCLUSION.....		53
5.0	Introduction	53
5.1	Summary of the Study	53
5.2	Limitations of Study.....	54
5.3	Implication of the Study	56
5.3.1	Implications to knowledge.....	56
5.4	Recommendations	57
5.5	Conclusion.....	58
REFERENCES		59
APPENDIX.....		74

LIST OF TABLES

Table 3.0: Table for Determining Sample Size from Given Population by Krejcie & Morgan (1970).....	29
Table 3.1: The Components and Criteria Involved in the Questionnaire Sections.....	32
Table 3.2: Alpha Coefficient for Each Section in the Questionnaire.....	35
Table 4.0: The Summary of Frequency and Percentage of Demographic	40
Table 4.1: Reliability Test Result of Instrument.....	42
Table 4.2: Factor Analysis Result	43
Table 4.3: Descriptive Results of The Level of Gratitude on Learning in Different Faculties	44
Table 4.4: Descriptive Results of The Level of Learning Engagement in Different Faculties	46
Table 4.5: Means in Terms of Gratitude on Learning Engagement Between Faculties	48
Table 4.6: Correlation Between Gratitude and Learning Engagement.....	49
Table 4.7: The Overall Summary of the Result of Hypotheses Testing.....	51

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.0: Conceptual Framework	6
Figure 4.0: Respondent's Faculties.....	41

ABSTRACT

This study aimed to examine the influence of gratitude on learning engagement among undergraduate students at University Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS), Kota Samarahan, Sarawak. There are 112 data have been collected from students in different faculties. The instrument of this study can be used because it has been proven valid and reliable. This study has found that the influence of gratitude on learning among undergraduate students at UNIMAS is at a low level and cognitive engagement is the majority of learning engagement at UNIMAS. This study showed no significant difference in gratitude towards student learning engagement among undergraduate students at University Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS). Moreover, this study also discovered that there is a positive correlation between gratitude and student engagement, where the influence of gratitude has a positive impact on encouraging students to be actively engaged in their learning. Based on the analysis of the findings, it proved that the influence of gratitude is parallel to the involvement of learning, whereby if the students have high feelings of gratitude, their learning engagement also increases. To improve and enhance this study, future researchers are advised to conduct this research by covering the factors involved in stimulating students' express gratitude for their learning and its relevance to the three aspects of learning engagement.

Keywords: *Gratitude, Learning Engagement, Undergraduate Students.*

ABSTRAK

Kajian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji pengaruh kesyukuran terhadap penglibatan pembelajaran dalam kalangan pelajar sarjana muda di Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS), Kota Samarahan, Sarawak. Jumlah data yang telah dikumpulkan ialah sebanyak 112 daripada pelajar di fakulti yang berbeza. Instrument ini boleh digunakan kerana telah terbukti sah dan boleh dipercayai. Hasil dapatan kajian mendapati bahawa kesyukuran dalam kalangan pelajar prasiswazah terhadap pembelajaran di UNIMAS adalah berada di tahap yang rendah dan penglibatan kognitif merupakan penglibatan pembelajaran majoriti di UNIMAS. Dapatan kajian ini menunjukkan bahawa tidak terdapat perbezaan yang signifikan dari segi kesyukuran terhadap penglibatan pembelajaran antara pelajar sarjana muda di Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS). Selain itu, kajian ini juga mendapati terdapat perkaitan yang positif antara kesyukuran dengan penglibatan pelajar di mana pengaruh kesyukuran memberi impak positif dalam menggalakkan pelajar melibatkan diri secara aktif dalam pembelajaran mereka. Berdasarkan analisis dapatan kajian, membuktikan bahawa pengaruh kesyukuran adalah selari dengan penglibatan pembelajaran di mana sekiranya pelajar mempunyai perasaan kesyukuran yang tinggi, maka penglibatan pembelajaran mereka juga meningkat. Bagi menambah baik dan mempertingkatkan kajian ini, pengkaji akan datang dinasihatkan menjalankan kajian ini dengan mengambil kira faktor-faktor yang terlibat dalam merangsang rasa kesyukuran pelajar terhadap pembelajaran mereka dan kaitannya dengan tiga aspek penglibatan pembelajaran.

Kata kunci: *Kesyukuran, Penglibatan Pembelajaran, Pelajar Prasiswazah.*

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This chapter discussed the influence of gratitude on learning engagement in terms of the background of the study, the problem statement, the conceptual framework, the research objectives, which consist of the general objectives and specific goals, research questions, research hypotheses, the definition of the term, the significance of the study and the scope of the study.

1.1 Background of Study

Engagement plays a crucial role in achievement and learning based on the numerous research regarding its role in the learning process. According to Sesmiyanti (2016), the influence of engagement can enhance students' learning ability. In higher education, student engagement has become more widely recognised as a critical component of high-quality teaching and learning (Ashwin & McVitty., 2015). A previous study of middle school students (Wonglorsaichon, Wongwanich & Wiratchai., 2013) has pointed out the effect of school engagement on academic achievement. It shows that students who demonstrated a high level of participation in their studies express good feelings and recognize the value of their studies. They also argue the critical role of engagement in inspiring students to strive for better in their studies, which results in their dedication to studying and lesson plans. It has proven that engagement is vital in ensuring the quality of learning. Therefore, it is necessary to delve into the factors involved in promoting and stimulating students' involvement in learning.

Gratitude becomes beneficial in education when learning is treated as a gift, the student's essential or foundational attitude (Wilson & Foster., 2018). Past study (Zhen, Liu,

Ding, Jiang, Jiang & Hong., 2019) has demonstrated that students who exhibit a high level of gratitude seem to be more appreciative of the kindness of others (e.g., teachers and classmates at school). It also can stimulate them to engage in repaying activities. This study also supported a previous study (Tian, Pi, Huebner & Du., 2016), which demonstrated that gratitude has a significant association with adolescent subjective well-being in schools. The presence of gratitude within students is seen to increase learning engagement, as shown by previous studies. Robustelli & Whisman (2018) have emphasized the importance of practising gratitude, which gives many positive outcomes for people who imply it in their life.

Gratitude is a feeling of appreciation for the individual who receives it from others and surroundings. According to Sansone & Sansone (2010), gratitude is the expression of one's appreciation for what is worth and relevant to them and a general feeling of thankfulness or appreciation. Emmons & Crumpler (2000) have argued the concept of gratitude as an emotion, a virtue, a moral sentiment, a motive, a coping response, a skill, and an attitude. They also stated it is an emotional state and an attitude toward life that is a source of human power in promoting one's personal and interpersonal well-being. This definition has explained that gratitude is more than a feeling of gratitude whereby it produces long-lasting positivity in individuals, significantly impacting their life and ensuring a good quality of life.

Numerous findings have proven that gratitude, one of the positive emotions, is advantageous for people because it does not only make them feel thankful for their life. Gratitude also enhances the individual spiritually (Loi & Ng, 2021), emotionally (Armenta, Fritz & Lyubomirsky, 2017), and physically (Hill, Allemand & Robert, 2013) when practising gratitude in life (Elosua, 2015). Positive feelings are advantageous to physical and mental health, enabling individuals to grow and thrive. Moreover, Sansone & Sansone (2010) has described that expressing gratitude, thankfulness, and appreciation produces a pleasant

experience that enhances one's overall wellbeing. Besides, experiencing gratitude can generate an optimistic attitude when facing obstacles in life by providing various reasons to be grateful (Sood, 2012). Therefore, it builds strength and resilience in a person despite going through various life challenges.

For instance, when students express gratitude for their studies, it makes the learning process more meaningful because it affects their emotions and learning ability to engage more passionately in learning and predict academic success. Hence, this research was conducted to examine the influence of gratitude on learning, divided into three aspects of engagement which are emotional, cognitive, and behavioural, among undergraduate students.

1.2 Problem Statement

Students face various challenges, especially university students, as they experience more challenges such as cognitive challenges, becoming an active learner, coping with reading materials, instructional problems, language barrier, time management, the burden of assignments and cultural differences in higher education (Fook & Sidhu, 2015). If students are not engaged in their study, they may feel difficulty in their learning, which impacts the student's dedication or decision to drop out (Benraghda, Goudih & Ssekamanya, 2018). Many studies show the benefits of gratitude which provides multiple benefits to overall well-being and is linked with happiness as well as a great predictor of life satisfaction (Elosúa, 2015; Behzadipour, Sadeghi & Sepahmansour, 2019; Sun, Jiang, Chu & Qian, 2014; Kong, Ding & Zhao, 2014). These previous studies also supported by Wangwan (2014), that gratitude appears beneficial for young people's psychological health. However, after rigorous research related to this study, most studies about the relationship between gratitude and learning engagement have only been carried out on adolescents and primary schools.

Few studies have ever touched on the influence of gratitude on learning as a stimulator of student engagement among university students. Many researchers have not treated the influence of gratitude on learning engagement in much detail. Apart from studies by Jin and Wang (2019), Bono and Froh (2009), Wilson (2016) and Wilson and Foster (2018), far too little attention has been paid to the influence of gratitude on learning engagement among university students. On the other hand, most of the studies have focused on the association of gratitude with well-being, happiness, forgiveness, self-esteem, social support, and life satisfaction among university students (Kong et al., 2014; Safaria, 2014; Phing, 2016; Asif, Khalid, Ashraf, Khan & Pervaiz, 2018; Allan, Steger & Shin, 2013; Salvador-Ferrer, 2017; Bryne, 2020; Wood, Maltby, Gillett & Joseph, 2008).

Hence, the researcher wants to know whether gratitude as a positive emotion influences learning engagement among undergraduate students who experience many challenges in the university, primarily learning-related since online classes were conducted due to the COVID-19 pandemic that hit the rest of the world. The present study will investigate the influence of gratitude on learning engagement among undergraduate students at the University Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS).

1.3 Research Objectives

1.3.1 General Objective

To determine the influence of gratitude on learning engagement among undergraduate students at the University Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS).

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

In the specific objective, the study aimed to address the following research objectives:

- 1) To identify the influence of gratitude on learning engagement among undergraduate students between different faculties.
- 2) To determine whether there is any significant difference in terms of gratitude on learning engagement between different faculties.
- 3) To determine the correlation between gratitude and learning engagement among undergraduate students.

1.4 Research Questions

The research questions are as follows:

- 1) Is there any influence of gratitude on learning engagement among undergraduate students between different faculties?
- 2) Is there any significant difference in terms of gratitude on learning engagement among undergraduate students between different faculties?
- 3) Is there any correlation between gratitude and learning engagement among undergraduate students?

1.5 Research Hypotheses

Based on research questions 2 and 3, the research hypotheses are as follows:

H_{a1}: There is a significant difference in terms of gratitude on learning engagement among undergraduate students between faculties.

H_{a2}: There is a correlation between gratitude and learning engagement among undergraduate students.

1.6 Conceptual Framework

This study aimed to examine the influence of gratitude on students' engagement in learning. The conceptual framework of this research is shown below in Figure 1. The independent variable of this study is undergraduate students and gratitude, while the dependent variable is learning engagement which consists of behavioural, emotional, and cognitive.

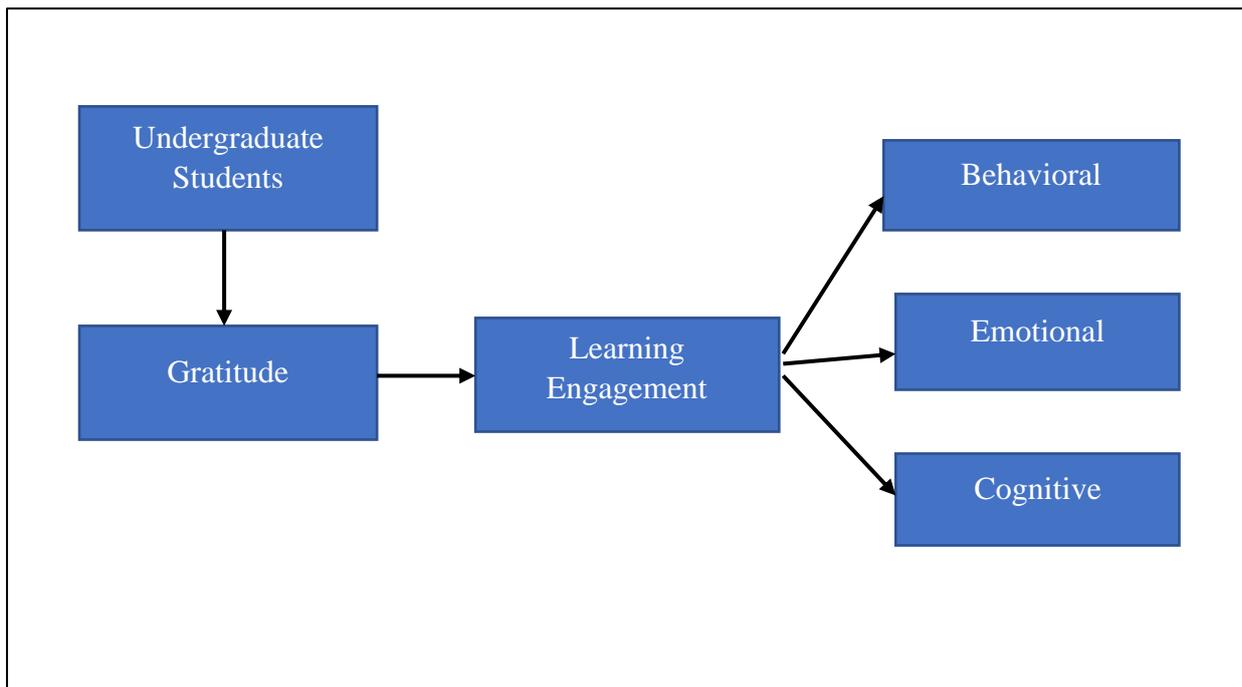


Figure 1.0 Conceptual framework of the study

1.7 Significance of Study

This study provided future researchers with a framework to investigate the influence of gratitude on learning by exploring the effects of gratitude, boosting well-being and stimulating interest and motivation to learn, which improves academic performance. The study offers some critical insights into the benefits of feelings of gratitude which impact learning engagement. The findings of this study could also benefit students in gaining a better understanding of

gratitude, which is necessary for learning context so that students perceive learning as an opportunity to increase their self-knowledge base and enhance self-efficacy.

Moreover, this study also explains the result of the findings, which are proven through this study and can be added to research to broaden understanding of the importance of practising oneself to be grateful. The research results are not only reserved for students, but every community member should cultivate and practice gratitude as a basic psychological need to improve life-long learning. People could nurture gratitude within themselves or in families, especially children, at an early age by practising it to generate a positive influence on their growth and life-long learning.

1.8 Definition of Terms

In this study, several terms need to be defined

1.8.1 Gratitude

Conceptual Definition: The appreciation of an individual when someone does something nice or helpful to him or her when they obtain something useful. (Bono & Froh, 2009).

Operational Definition: A person experiences more pleasant moods, satisfaction, happiness, and hope are linked to subjective well-being favourably, as are less envy, despair, and negative moods. (Bono & Froh, 2009).

1.8.2 Learning Engagement

Conceptual Definition: Learning engagement can be defined as effective educational practices which increase participation both inside and outside of the classroom (Kuh, Cruce, Shoup, Kinzie & Gonyea, 2007).

Operational Definition: Learning engagement can be operationally as the extent to which students' willingness and effort to participate in academic and non-academic related activities.

1.8.3 Behavioral Engagement

Conceptual Definition: Assignment completion, grade point average, and extracurricular activities such as athletics are examples of visible student performance and behaviour (Jimmerson, Campos & Greif., 2003).

Operational Definition: Behavioral engagement can be operationally as the action of students to actively participate in the learning process, include classroom activities or discussions related to learning which can help students achieve positive academic outcomes (Fredricks, Blumenfeld & Paris, 2004).

1.8.4 Emotional Engagement

Conceptual Definition: Student's sentiment for he or she education and individual within the school such as educators, administrators, and classmates. (Nguyen, Cannata & Miller, 2016).

Operational Definition: Emotional engagement can be operationally as students' feelings and thoughts on their learning which include teachers, peers, and the institutions, regardless of positive or negative reactions (Fredricks et al., 2004).

1.8.5 Cognitive Engagement

Conceptual Definition: Students' utilization of complex learning techniques and active self-regulation (Reeve & Tseng, 2011).

Operational Definition: Cognitive engagement can be operationally as the extent to which a student's willingness to devote effort to learning involves mental efforts such as mastering difficult graded skills or comprehending complex ideas (Fredricks et al., 2004).

1.9 Summary

In conclusion, this chapter briefly discusses the variables studied in this research. Each topic in the research introduction was fundamental to assist the researcher in performing this study.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher discusses past studies related to the focus of this study which is gratitude and learning engagement. The related models and theories were also included in this chapter.

2.1 Gratitude

A large and growing of literature has explored the feelings of gratitude. Traditionally, it has been argued that gratitude can be an emotion, attitude, habit, moral virtue, personality characteristic, or coping reaction (Emmons & McCullough, 2003). The word gratitude is taken from the Latin root word "*gratia*" which means grace, graciousness, or gratefulness. The word itself is equal to the meaning of gratitude, which has to do with receiving help or kindness from others that makes the receiving individual feel a sense of appreciation (Furlong, Froh & Gonzalez, 2014). Grateful people value their lives more as they acknowledge the sense of thankfulness from their surroundings. Wilson & Foster (2018) has found that feeling appreciation drives the positive outcomes for the recipient in terms of mood, relationships, and learning. This view is supported by Emmons & McCullough (2003) argue for the influence of gratitude on life which brings a variety of positive outcomes such as gaining peace of mind, bringing joy, improving physical health, and bringing more satisfaction to personal relationships. They also suggest that throughout history and time, the expression of gratitude has changed and has been perceived as a basic psychological need and a desirable feature of a person's personality and social interaction. Based on this explanation, it can be concluded that gratitude is an attitude or disposition to react with feelings of gratefulness and not just a mere expression of gratitude.