



Gratitude as Mediator Between Generativity and Mental Well-Being

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ARTICLE DETAILS	ABSTRACT
History Revised format: Nov, 2020 Available Online: Dec, 2020 Keywords Gratitude, Generativity, Mental Well-Being	The present study was conducted to study the “Gratitude as mediator between Generativity and Mental Well-being” It was hypothesized that gratitude is positively correlated with generativity and mental health, and gratitude play its role as mediator between generativity and mental health. Sample was consisted on 300 males from universities, colleges, Govt Schools and banking sector of Multan. Survey research design especially cross-sectional research design and purposive sampling technique were used. The Gratitude Questionnaire, McCullough, Emmons & Tsang, 2002), Loyola Generativity Scale (LGS) and The Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS) were used to collect and measure the constructs. Data was analyzed through SPSS 24. Results indicate significant positive correlation among gratitude, generativity and mental health Results also indicate that gratitude work as mediator between generativity and mental health.

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Introduction

Positive Psychology

Positive psychology is the field of psychology which focuses on “subjective experiences, individual traits and life events and its goal are to minimize the negative mindset and to develop optimistic though patterns (Seligman, 2009). Most of psychological fields focus on “mental illness” and negative or maladaptive behaviors or thinking. During the 20th century the humanistic school of thought made emphasis on positive aspects of human beings such as “happiness, well-being and positivity which then become the foundation of positive psychology. Martin Seligman is considered as the pioneer of this field of psychology who made the main theme of this field and became the first president of the APA in 1998 (Schippers, 2017). Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi define positive psychology as “the scientific study of positive human functioning and flourishing on multiple levels that include the biological, personal, relational, institutional, cultural, and global dimensions of life” (Seligman, Martin, 2000). Topics of interest to researchers in the field are: states of pleasure or flow, values, strengths, virtues, talents, as well as the ways that these can be promoted by social systems and

institutions (Seligman, 2009). Positive psychologists agree that one must live a happy, engaged, and meaningful life in order to experience "the good life". Martin Seligman referred to the good life as "using your signature strengths every day to produce authentic happiness and abundant gratification"(Lee, & Cheung, 2012). There are four topics of field to which positive psychologists concern "(1) positive experiences, (2) enduring psychological traits, (3) positive relationships and (4) positive institutions" (Keyes, 2002). Most of the psychologist fosters to study basic emotion which is considered between seven to fifteen. Emotions combine in many ways to develop varieties of emotions so increase in positive emotions will no decrease negative emotions or neither decrease in positive emotions will increase negative emotions (Russell, & Barrett, 1999). Russell and Barrett (1999) described emotional reactions as core affects, which are primitive emotional reactions that are consistently experienced but often not acknowledged; they blend pleasant and unpleasant as well as activated and deactivated dimensions that we carry with us at an almost unconscious level (Forbes, 2016).

Gratitude

Gratitude is till now very little studied emotion (Joseph, & Linley, 2005), philosophically and theologically gratitude is considered necessary for normal functioning (Emmons & Crumpler, 2000). There are very little studies about the role and importance of gratitude therefore studies about gratitude will account for the scientific progress (Gable & Haidt, 2005). A large amount of research studies suggest that the gratitude is sturdily associated with wellbeing and play role in psychological interventions (Bono, Emmons, & McCullough, 2004; Emmons & McCullough, 2003), "in fitting with calls to explore the potential for improving disorder through fostering positive functioning and psychological strengths" (Higginson, Mansell, & Wood, 2011). Gratitude has clinical relevance with psychopathology, personality traits, health, healthy relationships, and subjective wellbeing. Reviews of different studies suggest argues that gratitude is most underappreciated and understudied trait in the field of clinical psychology despite its strong role in wellbeing.

Well-being and Psychopathology

"Well-being can be defined through (a) psychopathology, (b) general emotional functioning, (c) existential functioning, or (d) humanistic conceptions" (Joseph & Wood, 2008). "Gratitude is robustly associated with each of these conceptions of well-being". Gratitude also has been found correlated with psychologically maladaptive conditions such as it has been found correlated with depression in some studies (Wood, & Joseph, 2008). These findings are found to be consistent with the "life orientation approach to gratitude" because positive life orientation found to be contrasted with negative beliefs about self, world and future which are consistent with depression (Beck, 1979; Evans et al., 2005). Some studies are found to be consistent with "the personality correlates between gratitude and trait tendencies towards depression". But these researches do not focus on the correlation of gratitude and happiness. (Wood, & Joseph, 2008, 2009), An epidemiological study of thankfulness on nine psychiatric disorders on 2621 individuals found that thankfulness has is negatively correlated with depression, GAD, phobia, or drug abuse and dependence, it was also found lower with bulimia nervosa because thankfulness improves the body image (Geraghty, Wood, & Hyland, 2010), A study by Kashdan, Uswatte, and Julian (2006) found negative correlation between gratitude and PTSD and gratitude was found lower among patients diagnosed with PTSD. Similarly, the extent to which people find themselves able to benefit from experience is integral to the gratitude (Joseph & Linley, 2005; Linley & Joseph, 2004), as the gratitude increase people find themselves more in well-being as they were prior to trauma (Joseph & Linley, 2005). "In reporting the kinds of benefits they have encountered, people regularly report such changes as"

“living life to the full”, “greater appreciation of family and friends, and valuing each day more, partially through appreciation of the finiteness of life, and partially through appreciation of how they are better off than other people” (Linley & Joseph, 2004).

Gratitude as a Psychotherapeutic Intervention

Gratitude has to be found to be strongly associated with mental health and life satisfaction in many experimental studies. People with gratitude have found to be higher in positive emotions and lower in negative emotions. Gratitude is found to be associated with strong coping with ordinary stress and increased resilience, quick recovery from illness and good physical health (Emmons & McCullough, 2003). By cultivating positive thinking and gratitude, mood and physical health could be acquiring. In an experimental study in which people who were asked to study journals or books about gratitude, reported fewer physical complaints, better feelings about their lives and optimism, compared to those who were asked to read less gratitude material (Emmons & McCullough, 2003). In another study conducted by Emmons and McCullough (2003) high level of gratitude found to be associated with “positive states of alertness, enthusiasm, determination, attentiveness, and energy compared with a focus on hassles or a downward social comparison” along with improved sleep quality and quantity (Emmons & McCullough, 2003). Grateful people were also found to be related to happier, helpful, outgoing, optimistic and trustworthy (McCullough, Emmons, & Tsang, 2002). Gratitude was also found to be associated with increased happiness and decreased depression (Seligman, Steen, Park, & Peterson, 2005). In a random assignment grateful people found to be less depressive after 1 month of gratitude intervention (Seligman et al., 2005, p. 417). Research also revealed that gratitude could be increased through meditation, progressive muscle relaxation, and imagination of forgiving or helping situations (VanOyen, et.al, 2002). A psychotherapeutic intervention developed in Japan (which is the combination of all above techniques) known as Naikan therapy, used to increase moral relations with others and strong sense of gratitude (Hedstrom, 1994).

Generativity

Erik Erikson (1950) was the person who introduced the term generativity in his theory of the stages of psychosocial development and defined it as “a concern for establishing and guiding the next generation.” (Slater, 2003). Jonathan Zittrain adopted the term in 2006 to refer to “the ability of a technology platform or technology ecosystem to create, generate or produce new output, structure or behavior without input from the originator of the system.” (Zittrain, 2006).

Hypotheses

1. There would be a significant relationship among generativity, gratitude and mental well-being.
2. Gratitude will mediate the relationship of generativity and mental well-being.

Method

Research Design

For the current study survey research design was adopted and particularly cross-sectional research design will be used. In cross sectional studies, sample of subject is selected and questionnaires regarding variables of choice are administered and relationship and mediation between them is explored (Hopkins, 2008).

Sample

In the present study sample was consist of ($N = 300$) males and females which were selected through purposive sampling from different public and private colleges and universities of Multan and Bahawalpur and working men and women are selected through different banks and private public sector organizations, participants are would be employees because generativity is age limit with duration of 35-64 years.

Instruments

The Gratitude Questionnaire developed by McCullough, Emmons & Tsang, (2002). Loyola Generativity Scale (LGS) developed by McAdams, D.P., & de St. Aubin, E. (1992) and The Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS) developed in 2006 by teams of Warwick and Edinburgh Universities.

Results

Correlation Coefficient Matrix of Gratitude, Generativity, and Mental Well Being

Sr. No.	Variable	1	2	3
1	GRADITUDE	1	.552**	.434**
2	GENERATIVITY	.552**	1	.538**
3	M.W BEING	.434**	.552**	1

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level, $p < 0.01$, Note. $N = 300$.

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level, $p < 0.05$, Gratitude, Generativity and Mental Well Being. Table presents the relationship among gratitude, generativity and mental well-being. Gratitude is positively correlated with generativity ($r = .552^{**}$), gratitude was positively correlated with mental well-being ($r = .434^{**}$). Result findings indicate that there is positive significant correlation among gratitude, generativity and mental well-being.

Linear regression analysis showing direct effect of generativity on gratitude ($N = 300$)

Model	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	β	<i>t</i>	<i>P</i>
generativity	3.117	.212		14.699	.000
gratitude	1.171	.103	.552	11.417	.000

Note. $R^2 = .189$, Adjusted $R^2 = .186$, $F(130.352)$, $P < 0.05$

Table indicates the regression analysis for showing the effect of generativity on gratitude

Findings revealed that generativity regressed upon gratitude. The R^2 value is .189 that indicates that generativity predicts the effects on gratitude.

Linear regression analysis showing direct effect of genertivity on positive mental well being

(N =300)

Model	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	β	<i>t</i>	<i>P</i>
generativity	.664	.060		11.010	.000
M.W Being	2.375	.125	.538	19.059	.000

Note. $R^2 = .304$, Adjusted $R^2 = .302$, $F(121.227)$, $P < 0.05$

Table indicates the regression analysis for showing the effect of generativity on mental well-being. Findings revealed that generativity regressed upon mental well-being. The R^2 value is .304 that indicates that generativity predicts the effects on mental well-being.

Discussion

Generativity is a significant time period of life at which individuals analyze their life and their contributions to significant other in their life. This is the period when individuals think about to pass their life experience, knowledge and learning to next generation so that new generation could avoid those difficulties and problems which generative individuals have faced. As Erikson (1968) indicates, individuals' interaction with other especially with parents and siblings, influence the level of generativity of individuals. If generative people are satisfied with their life and relationships, they make positive contribution in transferring their knowledge, experience and learning to next generation, and this satisfaction also contribute to their individuals own mental wellbeing. Such generative people feel gratitude for positive contribution in learning of new generation. On the other hand, if generative people's reactions with their significant other during their early life then the generative people become unsatisfied their life and they may be able to not make positive contribution for the betterment of their new generation. Generativity is sense of caring and accomplishment to make world better place. If a person fails to contribute to the world it develops the sense of stagnation. Gratitude refers to thankfulness to benefits from beneficiary. Sense of generativity develops thankfulness or gratitude as indicated by our results in table that generativity is positively correlated with gratitude. Generativity and gratitude are both positively correlated with mental well-being. Gratitude also plays a role of mediator between generativity and mental well-being as indicated by tables. There is no much literature about the mediating role of gratitude between generativity and mental well-being but individual researches show correlation between gratitude and mental well-being as indicated by Shapiro, Schwartz, & Santerre (2002), Khasky & Smith, (1999), Witvliet, Ludwig, & Bauer, (2002) Hedstrom, (1994) Reynolds, (1983) that gratitude plays role in physical and mental health specially in depression and stress related issues.

Limitation

1. This research did not compare the gender difference for generativity, gratitude and mental health.
2. This research did not focus on education and socio-economic status of the participants.
3. Only educated individuals are considered in this research.

Suggestions

1. Further research could consider demographic variables like gender difference, education and socio-economic status.
2. Further research should be conducted on large sample minimum 1000 because data collection is not a difficult task for this research purpose.
3. Cross-cultural research should be conducted regarding this topic.

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