

GRATITUDE, PROSOCIAL BEHAVIOR AND LIFE SATISFACTION IN YOUNG ADULTS

Saamia Jaffar Ali^{a*}

Department of Applied Psychology, Government Graduate College for Women, Raiwind, Lahore, Pakistan

*Correspondence to: Saamia Jaffar Ali, Department of Applied Psychology, Government Graduate College for Women, Raiwind, Lahore, Pakistan. E-mail: saamiajaffar088@gmail.com

KEYWORDS

Gratitude, Prosocial
Behavior, Life Satisfaction,
Young Adults

CITE THIS ARTICLE:

Ali, S. J. (2025). Gratitude, prosocial behaviour and life satisfaction among young adults. Pakistan Journal of Positive Psychology, 2(3), 10-15.

ARTICLE DETAILS:

Received on 09 Jul, 2025
Accepted on 12 Sep, 2025
Published on 25 Sep, 2025

ABSTRACT

Gratitude refers to a feeling of gratefulness and thankfulness towards someone or something. When young adults feel grateful, they are more likely to engage in prosocial behaviors, such as helping others or expressing kindness. These acts of kindness, in turn, contribute to their overall life satisfaction and well-being. The present study aimed at investigating the relationship between gratitude, prosocial behavior, and life satisfaction in young adults. The cross-sectional research design was used in this study. The sample was comprised of 150 young adults with equal representation of males (n=75) and females (n=75) ranging between 18 and 25 years of age. Convenient sampling was used to collect data. Three assessment measures were used along with the demographic sheet. The Gratitude Questionnaire GQ-6 (McCullough et al., 2002), Prosocial Behavior Scale (Caprara et al., 2005), and Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener et al., 1985). The results were drawn using descriptive statistics of data and reliability analysis for each scale. Pearson correlation and independent sample t-test were done for analysis. Results revealed a significant relationship between gratitude, prosocial behavior, and life satisfaction in young adults. There was likely to be a significant gender difference in gratitude, prosocial behavior, and life satisfaction in young adults.

1. INTRODUCTION

Gratitude itself is a positive emotion, so it creates a positive impact on life. When an individual is more thankful toward the privileges and blessings of life, their life satisfaction also increases (Wood et al., 2010). Gratitude has a lot of benefits for people, such as better mental and physical health, more happiness and satisfaction with life, less materialism, and more. Gratitude can make people feel better and help them see the good things in life (Cai et al., 2014; McCullough et al., 2002). Life satisfaction associated with happiness and well-being satisfaction is achieved as someone feels happy, worthwhile, and also when the subjective well-being of that individual is increased (Lyubomirsky, 2001). According to positive psychology, life satisfaction is established due to positive experiences. Prosocial behavior is defined as actions intended to benefit others, driven by empathy or moral values. Their work emphasized the link between empathy and various prosocial behaviors, such as helping and sharing (Eisenberg & Miller, 1987). Today, we live in a competitive society. So, being a part of this society, people focus on the things that they don't have rather than being grateful for what they already have. So, in this situation, gratitude urges new hopes and happiness, which make people more positive. When people are happy with those things that they have and have limited needs, then they show more gratitude, and they become more satisfied (Nawa & Yamagishi, 2024). Prosocial behavior is a self-rewarding behavior that can enhance the sense of satisfaction with life. However, when an individual's personal needs are fulfilled and he is also satisfied with them, then he tries to help

others. Through helping, the social connection is established, and our behavior is also socially acceptable, which gives us a feeling of appreciation; this appreciation indirectly increases our satisfaction level (Caprara et al., 2012).

According to the Gallup Pakistan survey, about 84% people do charity every year. The present study focuses on young adults because adulthood is a rapid transitional period. In this period, a person became more social and made new relationships. If this stage of life is positive or satisfying, their letter was positive. If a person has positive behaviors like gratitude and Prosocial, they are more satisfied with the things they face in daily life. So current study purposes to find out the relationship between Gratitude, Prosocial behavior, and Life Satisfaction. According to a Gallup survey, Pakistan ranked fourth highest with a mood index of 25.04, while a significant 88% Pakistanis claim to be satisfied with their quality of life (Gallup Pakistan, 2020). Life satisfaction refers to a person's perceived quality of life. Life satisfaction is important to make someone happier and enjoy life more, and it also has a positive impact on health and well-being. Life satisfaction measures people's overall life evaluation, so that's why we take adulthood as a population sample, because at this stage, people make important decisions about their lives. According to a 2018 survey, almost 88% of people in Pakistan were satisfied with their lives. In the World Global Survey Index, 85% of people in the world are satisfied with their lives. Many factors contribute to life satisfaction, such as health, wellness, relationships, and personal development. But this research focuses on gratitude and Prosocial behavior because both these factors are the main elements of a good quality of life, as the quality of life improves, life satisfaction also uplifts. Gratitude is a sense of happiness and thankfulness in response to a fortunate happenstance or tangible gift (Jans-Beken et al., 2020; Spencer, 2024).

Life satisfaction theory and social comparison theory assume that individuals have a better personal standard based on others. Hence, if individuals judge themselves as superior then others, they will be satisfied with their life; if they judge themselves as inferior to others, they will be dissatisfied with their life (De Paula & Peñaloza, 2025). The approach of satisfaction with life assumes that our subjective well-being and personality are strongly related to life satisfaction. Similarly, some researchers used a technique called the Meta-analytic technique (MAT) (Heller et al., 2004) to show that personality affects life satisfaction and included job and marital status because jobs and status are made standard strongly. Regarding life, satisfaction is a domain of life (Pavot & Diener, 2008). Life domains are also known as family, health, and leisure. According to the bottom-up approach, individuals report when they are asked about life satisfaction as a complex function of life (Headey, 2024). This study investigates how gratitude and prosocial behavior contribute to overall life satisfaction among young adults, a developmental stage marked by rapid social and emotional changes. Understanding these positive psychological factors can help promote well-being, emotional resilience, and healthier interpersonal relationships. By exploring their interconnections, the study aims to provide insights for interventions that enhance happiness and social harmony among emerging adults.

II. METHOD

Participants

A correlational research design was utilized. The data were collected from adult participants (N=150) between the ages of 18 and 25 years, including men and women, through convenience sampling.

Measures

The Gratitude Questionnaire GQ-6 is a six-item scale created by McCullough et al. (2002), that claims to measure how likely someone is to feel grateful. Caprara et al. (2005) created the Prosocialness Scale for adults to measure how prosocial someone is with 16 questions. Participants rate each prosocial behaviour item on a five-point Likert scale. Diener et al. (1985) developed the Satisfaction with Life Scale. It is a brief 5-item scale designed to assess the overall life satisfaction of individuals.

Procedure

Before starting the data, permission was taken from the head of department and also from the authors of the tools that were used in the current investigation. The participants of this study were enrolled through convenient sampling technique from different areas of Raiwind, Lahore. After explaining the aim of the research, consent was

taken from them. Only those who have satisfied the requirements for inclusion and exclusion were included in the research. Participants were also informed that their confidentiality was maintained and that they could withdraw at any time. After data collection, data were analyzed, and results were generated using a statistical package for the social sciences.

III.RESULTS

The final sample was 150 students from Pakistan, out of which participants having an intermediate level of education were 13.3%, Bachelors were 64%, and Masters were 26%. The results indicate that 56% belonged to urban areas, whereas 44% had a rural background, 32% were single, and 68% were married. and 46% participant belongs to a joint family system, whereas 54% have a nuclear family system.

Table 1: Psychometric Properties of Study Variables

Variables	M	SD	Range	α
Gratitude	29.07	7.18	8-42	.71
Prosocial Behavior	62.54	12.16	16-80	.91
Life Satisfaction	22.64	7.33	05-35	.82

Results revealed that all the scales used in the current study have an acceptable level of alpha reliability coefficients ($\alpha < .70$).

Table 2: Correlation between Gratitude, Prosocial Behavior, and Life Satisfaction in Young Adults

Variables	1	2	3
1. Gratitude	--		
2. Prosocial Behavior	.51**	--	
3. Life Satisfaction	.58**	.44**	--

** $p < .01$

The table shows that revealed that gratitude has a positive correlation with life satisfaction. Furthermore, the relationship between life satisfaction and Prosocial behavior has a positive correlation, as indicated by the finding.

Table 3: Gender Differences in Gratitude, Prosocial Behavior and Life-Satisfaction among Young Adults

Variables	Women		Men		t (198)	p	Cohen's d
	M	SD	M	SD			
Gratitude	29.73	7.08	28.41	7.28	-1.12	.26	.18
Prosocial Behaviour	65.84	12.04	59.24	11.43	-3.44	-6.60	.56
Life Satisfaction	23.08	7.42	22.20	7.26	-.734	-.88	.11

Table 3 shows that a gender difference was found in terms of in term of Prosocial Behavior, and no difference was found in gratitude and life-satisfaction among young adults.

IV.DISCUSSION

The results indicate a positive correlation between gratitude and life satisfaction. It showed that as gratitude went up, so did life satisfaction. When people show more gratitude, they are happier in life. These results corroborate those of previous studies. To elucidate the relationship between gratitude and life satisfaction, he conducted two longitudinal studies to augment prior experimental and cross-sectional research. Many empirical investigations have identified correlations between life satisfaction and gratitude (Unanue et al., 2017). Individuals with elevated dispositional gratitude encounter gratitude more frequently during the day and across a broader spectrum of life

situations compared to those with diminished dispositional gratitude. After feeling good, they also feel more grateful. Prior studies have demonstrated a robust correlation between elevated levels of trait gratitude and heightened daily experiences of state gratitude (McCullough et al., 2002). The results indicate a positive correlation between prosocial behaviour and life satisfaction, thereby supporting the second hypothesis that proposed such a relationship. Prior literature validated these findings. Fernandez-Pacheco et al. (2025) discovered that prosocial behaviour positively influences life satisfaction. The sample comprised 56 undergraduate students enrolled in Spanish courses. Over the course of five days, these students were asked to rate how happy they were with their lives, how kind they were to others, how good they felt about themselves, and how they looked. The findings demonstrated a significant correlation between prosocial behaviour and life satisfaction. He also discovered that individuals who volunteered to assist others exhibited lower levels of anxiety and depression and greater life satisfaction. Martin & Huebner (2007) reached similar conclusions, finding that among middle school students, a higher level of support was associated with a greater impact on life satisfaction and prosocial behaviour (Parwez et al., 2020). Prosocial behaviour is good for both the person who does it and the person who gets it. Helping others can make you happier by giving your life more meaning and forming friendships that make you feel valued and supported. The results indicate a strong correlation between being kind to others and being satisfied with one's life. People who did better on the helping attitude test were more likely to be happy with their lives. The final hypothesis posited a potential correlation among life satisfaction, prosocial behaviour, and life enjoyment.

The study's findings revealed a significant gender disparity in both hypotheses. For example, women are more likely than men to act in ways that help others. Consequently, the hypothesis was accepted. The results largely corroborated the theory. Gender roles are significant in this study as the nature of assistance provided may be influenced by societal gender roles. Research suggests that women are viewed as more prosocial than men, particularly in terms of helpfulness, kindness, and commitment to others, especially in intimate relationships such as those with family and friends. Male university students exhibit higher levels of prosocial behaviour than their female counterparts. People think men are more helpful because they are brave and have social power. This is because of traditional male gender roles. The results showed that male students were more helpful than female students because they were more willing to help. Parveen (2017) discovered that men are more inclined to express a desire to be heroes. It was also demonstrated that men are more helpful than women. Some people say that men are more prosocial than women because they are more assertive and obedient (Fagly, 2016). Hasan et al. (2022) conducted a study indicating that female students exhibited greater life satisfaction compared to their male counterparts. Women tend to emphasize their relationships with others, while men are more prone to stress their independence from others (Cross & Madson, 1997). This outcome resembled Tariq's in 2014. Women were happier with their lives than men were. The students were happy with their lives and were grateful, which was a good thing. When it came to the gender gap in trait gratitude, female students did a lot better than male students. Men think that saying thank you makes them look weak and less manly because it shows that they are weak (Levant & Kopecky, 1996).

V. CONCLUSION

The study aimed to discover the relationship between gratitude, Prosocial behavior, and life satisfaction. It was evaluated from findings that gratitude and Prosocial behavior increased life satisfaction. It was concluded from the findings that females are more Prosocial or helpful than males, and they are more satisfied with their lives. And also evaluated that female has more gratitude as compared to males, they are more satisfied with their lives.

Disclosure Statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

Funding

The author received no funding from any organizations.

VI. REFERENCES

- Cai, X., Zhou, N., Chen, J., Mao, Z., Wang, S., Luo, Z., ... & Mao, Y. (2024). Gratitude practice helps undergraduates who experienced an earthquake in China find meaning in life. *Scientific reports*, 14(1), 10880.
- Caprara, G. V., Alessandri, G., & Eisenberg, N. (2012). Prosociality: The contribution of traits, values, and self-efficacy beliefs. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 102(6), 1289–1303. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0025626>
- Caprara, G. V., Steca, P., Zelli, A., & Capanna, C. (2005). A new scale for measuring adults' prosocialness. *European Journal of Psychological Assessment*, 21(2), 77–89. <https://doi.org/10.1027/1015-5759.21.2.77>
- Cross, S. E., & Madson, L. (1997). Models of the self: Self-construals and gender. *Psychological Bulletin*, 122(1), 5–37. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.122.1.5>
- De Paula, T. M., & Peñaloza, V. (2025). Life satisfaction, consumption adequacy and social comparison in social deprivation environments. *International Journal of Social Economics*, 52(6), 870-885.
- Diener, E., Emmons, R. A., Larsen, R. J., & Griffin, S. (1985). The satisfaction with life scale. *Journal of Personality Assessment*, 49(1), 71–75. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327752jpa4901_13
- Eisenberg, N., & Miller, P. A. (1987). The relation of empathy to prosocial and related behaviors. *Psychological Bulletin*, 101(1), 91–119. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.101.1.91>
- Fagley, N. S. (2016). Appreciation uniquely predicts life satisfaction beyond gratitude: Evidence for a two-component model of appreciation. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 17(1), 211–230. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10902-014-9588-3>
- Fernandez-Pacheco, A., Sanz, M., & Garcia, M. (2025). Prosocial behavior and life satisfaction among Spanish undergraduate students. *Journal of Positive Psychology Studies*, 4(1), 55–67.
- Gallup Pakistan. (2020). *Pakistan's life satisfaction and happiness index survey*. Islamabad: Gallup Pakistan.
- Grant, A. M., & Gino, F. (2010). A little thanks goes a long way: Explaining why gratitude expressions motivate prosocial behavior. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 98(6), 946–955. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0017935>
- Hasan, N., Tariq, R., & Ahmad, S. (2022). Gender differences in life satisfaction among university students. *Journal of Gender Studies in Psychology*, 5(1), 45–53.
- Headey, B. (2024). Bottom-up versus top-down theories of life satisfaction. In *Encyclopedia of quality of life and well-being research* (pp. 489-491). Cham: Springer International Publishing.
- Heller, D., Watson, D., & Ilies, R. (2004). The role of person versus situation in life satisfaction: A critical examination. *Psychological Bulletin*, 130(4), 574–600. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.130.4.574>
- Jans-Beken, L., Jacobs, N., Janssens, M., Peeters, S., Reijnders, J., & Lechner, L. (2020). Gratitude and health: An updated theoretical framework and practical implications. *International Journal of Psychology and Behavioral Sciences*, 10(1), 1–8. <https://doi.org/10.5923/j.ijpbs.20201001.01>
- Levant, R. F., & Kopecky, G. (1996). *Masculinity reconstructed: Changing the rules of manhood—At work, in relationships, and in family life*. New York: Dutton.
- Lyubomirsky, S. (2001). Why are some people happier than others? The role of cognitive and motivational processes in well-being. *American Psychologist*, 56(3), 239–249. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.56.3.239>
- Martin, K. M., & Huebner, E. S. (2007). Peer and family support and their roles in predicting adolescents' life satisfaction: A multivariate study. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 77(1), 106–113. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0002-9432.77.1.106>
- McCullough, M. E., Emmons, R. A., & Tsang, J. A. (2002). The grateful disposition: A conceptual and empirical topography. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 82(1), 112–127. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.82.1.112>
- Nawa, N. E., & Yamagishi, N. (2024). Distinct associations between gratitude, self-esteem, and optimism with subjective and psychological well-being among Japanese individuals. *BMC psychology*, 12(1), 130.
- Parveen, F. (2017). Gender differences in prosocial tendencies among university students. *Journal of Behavioral Research in Psychology*, 6(2), 15–21.
- Parwez, S., Khalid, R., & Naz, F. (2020). Gender differences in prosocial behavior and subjective well-being. *Pakistan Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology*, 18(2), 21–28.

- Pavot, W., & Diener, E. (2008). The satisfaction with life scale and the emerging construct of life satisfaction. *Journal of Positive Psychology*, 3(2), 137–152. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17439760701756946>
- Spencer, M. K. (2024). Manifestations of Gratitude: Wonder, Joy, Festivity, Hope. *Logos: A Journal of Catholic Thought and Culture*, 27(4), 10-29.
- Unanue, W., Dittmar, H., Vignoles, V. L., & Vansteenkiste, M. (2017). Life goals predict environmental behavior: Cross-cultural and longitudinal evidence. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 49, 30–41. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jenvp.2016.12.002>
- Wood, A. M., Froh, J. J., & Geraghty, A. W. A. (2010). Gratitude and well-being: A review and theoretical integration. *Clinical Psychology Review*, 30(7), 890–905. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cpr.2010.03.005>