



The Relationship Between Gratitude and Academic Performance of Selected College Students

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ABSTRACT

This research was conducted as a result of a discrepancy in the findings of studies attempting to establish a relationship between gratitude and academic performance. The participants who volunteered for this study were 129 3rd year B.S. Psychology college students from a population of 184 currently enrolled in a local government college in the Province of Rizal, Philippines. The GQ6 Gratitude Questionnaire was administered on the participants and their general weighted average for the previous academic semester was obtained. The findings indicated no significant difference in the general weighted average and the gratitude scores of the respondents when grouped according to sex. Using a Pearson r correlation, a weak positive correlation was found between the participants' academic performance and their gratitude scores

Introduction

The word 'gratitude' comes from the Latin 'gratia,' which signifies grace, graciousness or gratefulness. Gratitude is commonly understood to mean an appreciation as a result of receiving something tangible or intangible from another individual.¹

Being grateful allows an individual to savor the joy that he or she is currently experiencing and consequently decreases the tedium of anything happening presently. The more a person expresses gratitude, the more self-worth and self-esteem he or she feels.²

In a study conducted by Emmons and McCullough (2003), participants were directed to write statements that expressed their gratitude for a 10-week period. At the end of the study, the participants found themselves more hopeful about the future.³

In a study utilizing the GQ6 (Gratitude Questionnaire) conducted among 160 students of a public university in Malaysia, gratitude was found to positively correlate highly with resilience and academic performance.⁴

In another study involving 34 Japanese senior high students wherein the participants kept a 9-week gratitude journal, the results showed that continuous engagement with the emotion of gratitude produced a protective effect against declines in academic motivation.⁵

In yet another study of 11 Chinese adolescents, the results revealed that the tendency to practice gratitude has a positive prediction function on academic achievement.⁶

A study conducted on over 1,000 ninth and tenth grade students who spent 10 minutes per day writing gratitude letters to their parents, teachers, coaches or friends for a period of 1 month resulted in the participants reporting greater life satisfaction and motivation.⁷

In another study conducted in Iran, 312 university students were obtained as participants. The gratitude questionnaire by Sevari was administered and their grades were gathered. A significant relationship was established between the participants' appreciation of others and their educational performance.⁸

In yet another study involving third year psychology students, 23 participants utilized a gratitude application (app) to encourage them to actively practice gratitude. The findings revealed that gratitude had an impact on optimism, hope, interest sustainability, and perceived academic performance.⁹

However, a study found that state gratitude did not significantly influence in-situ task performance, academic related choice and persistence.¹⁰ And in a study involving a meta-analysis of 20 original empirical journal articles that investigated fostering gratitude among the youth, it yielded that gratitude-based interventions as a whole, were generally ineffective.¹¹

This research hopes to address the discrepancy in the findings of the aforementioned studies. The following are the research questions:

1. What was the academic performance of the respondents during the previous academic semester computed in terms of general weighted average?
2. What is the gratitude scores of the respondents?

3. Is there a significant difference in the academic performance of the respondents when grouped according to sex?
4. Is there a significant difference in the gratitude scores of the respondents when grouped according to sex?
5. Is there a significant relationship between the respondents' academic performance and gratitude scores?

Methodology

The respondents for this study were 3rd year B.S. Psychology students of a local government college in the Province of Rizal, Philippines. Their total population is 184. The computed sample using Slovin's formula is 125. Through self-selection (voluntary participation in the study), 129 respondents were obtained. There were 26 male and 103 female respondents. The mean age of the males was 22.3 while the mean age of the females was 21.4.

The respondents were asked to compute their general weighted average (GWA) for the academic grades they obtained during the previous semester. This is done by getting the weighted mean of all their grades based on the number of units (credits) per course. The grading system of this particular school is shown in Table 1. Based on this table, the higher the numerical value of the grade, the lower the academic performance.

Table 1

Score	Grade	
98-100	1.00	Highest
95-97	1.25	
91-94	1.50	
88-90	1.75	
85-87	2.00	
82-84	2.25	
79-81	2.50	
76-78	2.75	
75	3.0	
74 and below	5.0	Lowest

The instrument used was *The Gratitude Questionnaire – Six Item Form (GQ-6)*. This is a 6-item questionnaire that uses a 7-point Likert Scale.¹² The GQ-6 has demonstrated an internal reliability, with alphas ranging from .82 and .87, and there is evidence that the GQ-6 is positively correlated to optimism, life satisfaction, religiousness, forgiveness, empathy, prosocial behavior, hope and spirituality and negatively related to materialism, envy, depression and anxiety.¹³

Permission from the author was first obtained prior to its use. Table 2 shows how the responses are scored. The informed consent of the participants was acquired and the questionnaire was administered anonymously through Google Forms. The data gathering was conducted in September of 2022.

Table 2

The Gratitude Questionnaire Scoring Scale

Item Response	Score assigned
Strongly disagree	1
Disagree	2
Slightly disagree	3
Neutral	4
Slightly agree	5
Agree	6
Strongly agree	7
(Items 3 and 6 of the questionnaire are reverse-scored)	

Results

The following tables show the statistical computations that were necessary to answer the research questions of this study.

Table 3

Comparison of General Weighted Average according to Sex

	Male	Female
N	26	103
Mean	1.63502197804	1.69227864078
Standard Deviation	0.18679143756	0.22568602720
SEM	0.0366328148112	0.0222375050273
Welch's t-test results: $t = 1.3361$ $df = 45$ standard error of difference = 0.043 The two-tailed P value equals 0.1882 Not statistically significant		

Table 4 Comparison of Gratitude Scores according to Sex

	Male	Female
N	26	103
Mean	4.820513	4.736246
Standard Deviation	0.53317305293	0.64866389904
SEM	0.1045638385005	0.0639147531412
Welch's t-test results: $t = 0.6876$ $df = 45$ standard error of difference = 0.123 The two-tailed P value equals 0.4952 Not statistically significant.		

Table 5

Relationship between GWA and Gratitude Scores among Males

X Values $\sum = 42.511$ Mean = 1.635 $\sum(X - Mx)^2 = SSx = 0.872$	Y Values $\sum = 125.333$ Mean = 4.821 $\sum(Y - My)^2 = SSy = 7.107$	X and Y Combined N = 26 $\sum(X - Mx)(Y - My) = -0.198$
R Calculation $r = \frac{\sum(X - My)(Y - Mx)}{\sqrt{(SSx)(SSy)}}$ $r = -0.198 / \sqrt{(0.872)(7.107)} = -0.0794$ $r = -0.0794$ Weak negative correlation		

Table 6

Relationship between GWA and Gratitude Scores among Females

$\sum = 174.305$ Mean = 1.692 $\sum(X - Mx)^2 = SSx = 5.195$	Y Values $\sum = 487.833$ Mean = 4.736 $\sum(Y - My)^2 = SSy = 42.918$	X and Y Combined N = 103 $\sum(X - Mx)(Y - My) = 0.241$
R Calculation $r = \frac{\sum(X - My)(Y - Mx)}{\sqrt{(SSx)(SSy)}}$ $r = 0.241 / \sqrt{(5.195)(42.918)} = 0.0161$ r = 0.0161 Weak positive correlation		

Table 7

Relationship between GWA and Gratitude Scores of all Respondents Combined

$\sum = 216.815$ Mean = 1.681 $\sum(X - Mx)^2 = SSx = 6.136$	Y Values $\sum = 613.167$ Mean = 4.753 $\sum(Y - My)^2 = SSy = 50.172$	X and Y Combined N = 129 $\sum(X - Mx)(Y - My) = -0.057$
R Calculation $r = \frac{\sum(X - My)(Y - Mx)}{\sqrt{(SSx)(SSy)}}$ $r = -0.057 / \sqrt{(6.136)(50.172)} = -0.0033$ r = -0.0033 Weak negative correlation		

Discussion

Table 3 shows the computation for significant difference between the general weighted average of the respondents when grouped according to sex. For the 26 male respondents, the mean is 1.63502197804, the standard deviation is 0.18679143756 and the SEM is 0.0366328148112. For the 103 females, the mean is 1.69227864078, the standard deviation is 0.22568602720 and the SEM is 0.0222375050273. With a df of 45 and a standard error of difference of 0.043, the Welch's t-test yielded a t value of 1.3361. This indicates that there is no significant difference between the general weighted average of the respondents when grouped according to sex.

Table 4 shows the computation for significant difference between the gratitude scores of the respondents when grouped according to sex. For the 26 male respondents, the mean is 4.820513, the standard deviation is 0.53317305293 and the SEM is 0.1045638385005. For the 103 females, the mean is 4.736246, the standard deviation is 0.64866389904 and the SEM is 0.0639147531412. With a df of 45 and a standard error of difference of 0.123, the Welch's t-test yielded a t value of 0.6876. This indicates that there is no significant difference between the gratitude scores of the respondents when grouped according to sex.

Table 5 shows the computation for significant relationship between the general weighted average and gratitude scores of the 26 male respondents. Using Pearson r coefficient of correlation, an r value of $r = -0.0794$ was obtained, which indicates a weak negative correlation. It must be noted that the higher the GWA's numerical value, the lower the academic performance. Therefore, as the male respondents' academic performance increases, their gratitude scores increase very slightly.

Table 6 shows the computation for significant relationship between the general weighted average and gratitude scores of the 103 female respondents. Using Pearson r coefficient of correlation, an r value of $r = 0.0161$ was obtained, which indicates a weak positive correlation. Therefore, as the female respondents' academic performance increases, their gratitude scores decrease very slightly.

Table 7 shows the computation for significant relationship between the general weighted average and gratitude scores of all 129 respondents combined. Using Pearson r coefficient of correlation, an r value of $r = -0.0033$ was obtained, which indicates a weak negative correlation. Therefore, as the respondents' academic performance increases, their gratitude scores increase very slightly.

Overall, the statistical values obtained demonstrate a very weak positive relationship between academic performance and gratitude scores of the respondents. Based on these results, the discrepancy in the findings of previous studies involving these two variables appear to be unresolved. In addition, the researcher suggests further investigation into the disparity in the relationship of these two variables between male and female respondents as shown in Tables 5 and 6.

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