

# A Study of Nature of Gratitude among Male and Female

## Abstract

In the present study effort has been made to study the nature of gratitude among male and female. Researches in the field of gratitude indicated positive associations between gratitude and well-being, social support, prosocial behaviour, optimism, life-satisfaction, sleep-quality, physical-health and academic goals, and negative association with envy, depression and materialistic striving etc. Cultivating gratitude through interventions promotes positive development of adolescents and reduces the negative aspects of today's materialistic world. Objective of the study was to analyze the nature of gratitude for male and female adolescents. The present study has a sample of 40 subjects (male and female); 20 male and 20 female. ANOVA is used for statistical analysis. F-ratio reveals the insignificant effect of gender on gratitude of adolescents ( $F(1, 38) = .438; p > .01$ ) at .01 level of confidence. Mean score shows that gratitude had very little difference at two levels of gender.

**Keywords:** Gratitude, Positive psychology, Gender, Well-being.

## Introduction

Grateful perspective changes the viewpoint of a person through which he perceive and evaluates the world. In every culture, experiences and expressions of gratitude have been accepted a desirable aspects of human personality and social life. Being grateful is related to appreciate what we "have" rather than keep thinking about what we "have not". It is easier for a human being to focus on what is wrong than on what we have to be grateful for, but with efforts we can refocus ourselves. Gratitude could be cultivated through efforts and practices. Gratitude promotes the positive values and reduces the negative ones that ultimately results in better physical and mental health. Previous studies also revealed that gratitude is positively associated with psychological well-being, social support, optimism, hope, life-satisfaction, goal achievement, sleep quality, prosocial behaviour, spirituality (Tsang, 2006). And negatively associated with resentment about past, depression, stress, anxiety, envy, materialism etc. (Burroughs and Rindfleisch, 2002; Polak and McCullough, 2006).

Empirical findings regarding the gratitude and its intervention offer an insight to improve social relations and personal life too. Satisfaction from life is the fundamental need of the present time, in which everyone has a lot of problems and stress to fulfill the necessities of life. Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2005) started a movement called Positive Psychology which emphasizes the importance of positive human behaviour. A grateful person is aware of both the positive and negative in his life but at the same time he is capable of appreciating the good ones. Perhaps recognizing the importance of positive values in our life several institutes started the courses regarding 'Happy Life'. Because by mere getting a degree or money does not ensure the happiness in our life.

Fredrickson (1998) established in her broadens and build model of positive emotions that positive emotions broadens mindset and build enduring resources, which could be used when required. Gratitude strengthens the existing bonds and creates the new affectional bond in society. Emmons and McCullough (2003) suggested that a conscious focus on blessings may have emotional and interpersonal benefits. They also found that participants who completed a gratitude writing condition, experienced more positive affect, better sleep quality, increased optimism and a greater sense of connectivity to others. Watkins et.al. (2003) also supports that gratitude intervention proves beneficial for well-being.

Froh, Sefick, & Emmons (2008) revealed in their study that male compared with female, appear to derive more social benefits from gratitude. While several other studies suggested more benefits for females. Men may view the expression of gratitude as the symbol of weakness

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which disturbed their masculine ideology (Levant & Kopecky, 1995). Barrett et. al. (2000) revealed that women are more aware of their emotions and know how to use them for attaining the required goal. Hayes et. al. (1999) found that men tries to hide, conceal their emotion if they found that it may increase their vulnerability or make them indebted. Kashdan et.al. (2007) investigating sex difference in gratitude and found that men and women differ in the perception of and reaction to gratitude.

**Objective of the Study**

To study the effect of gender, i.e. male and female on gratitude of adolescents.

**Hypothesis**

Gender of adolescents i.e. male and female will not have significant effect on gratitude of adolescents.

**Variables**

**Independent variable:** gender of the subjects, i.e. male and female

**Dependent variable:** gratitude

**Sample**

The present study has a sample of 40 subjects; 20 male and 20 female. By using the random purposive sampling 40 subjects studying in colleges of Agra were selected with the age group of 18-21 yrs.

**Scoring**

GQ-6 (The Gratitude Questionnaire – Six Item Form) by McCullough and Emmons and Tsang was used for the purpose of measuring gratitude. This scale consists of 6 items. Out of them 4 are positively worded and 2 items are negatively worded. All are scored by Likert method on 7-point scale, i.e. 1,2,3,4,5,6,7 for ‘strongly disagree’ to ‘strongly agree’ for positively worded items and reversed for negatively worded items.

**Methodology**

One way ANOVA is used to statistically analyze the scores.

**Results and Interpretation**

Table-1 for analysis of variance reveals that gender has been found to be not significant at .01 level of confidence. The ‘F’ value for gender was (F; 1,38=.438; p>.01) found non-significant. Thus the hypothesis has been accepted. On the basis of result it can be said that gender does not has significant role in determining the amount of gratitude among subjects. For further comparison mean scores for both the genders were calculated, i.e. 25.2 for male and 24.6 for female. The mean gratitude scores for male and female subjects are given in table 2. Table shows that there is a little difference between the mean scores of male and females.

**Table -1  
Summary of One-Way Analysis of Variance for Gratitude scores**

Source or variation	SS	df	MS	F
Between Groups	3.6	1	3.6	0.438
Within Groups	312	38	8.21	

**Table-2**

Gender	Mean Score
Male	25.2
Female	24.6

**Discussion**

In this part effort has been made to analyze and explain the pattern of gratitude found among adolescents with the help of previous studies and present nature of society. Gratitude could be a virtue, positive value, an emotional state, an attitude or a habit. So a grateful personality could be analyzed accordingly. As evident from the insignificant ‘F’- ratio found for the gratitude scores between male females, that both the gender is equally equipped for experiencing gratitude. We find that the mean gratitude score for male is 25.2 and for females are 24.6. Thus results shows that there is no role of gender in experiencing gratitude. Some previous researches revealed differences for both gender and some not. Thus we can interpret the results of the study in reference to today’s changing society where gender role and norms are changing at a very fast pace. These changes are the base for narrowing gender differences. Today’s world is less conventional and having freedom regarding gender-specific traits, increasing dependency on social ties or social bonding for healthy personal and social life. Women are more emotionally expressive in comparison to men because masculine beliefs suggest that emotional expression is a sign of femininity and weakness (Bruch, Berko, and Haase, 1998). In today’s world ‘masculine ideology’ is under the

process of change with changing norms. Where conformity is not necessarily required for attaining some desired goal. In fact we need positive values in our society which can tighten the social bonds. And gratitude is an emotion which increases reciprocal altruism, strengthens social ties and sow the seed of positivity. In our society females with masculine ideology and changing social roles is also increasing which is also responsible for narrowing the gender difference. As building strong and satisfying relationships benefits both genders. Expression and experience both are equally important for gratitude. Ungrateful person is not required by anyone if choice is not forced.

**Conclusion**

It is a well established fact that females are more emotionally expressive in comparison to male. But there could be difference between experience and expression. Males may hide their emotions but they could not stop themselves to feel. Studies reveal that there is a difference between masculine ideology and masculine identity. In today’s changing society even males are performing changing social roles and feminine roles are also under the process of change in every aspect that makes all of us free to express and experience our emotions, feelings despite of the fact that you are male or female. Consequently the present study comes out with the result of no

difference among male and female regarding gratitude scores.

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