

# Role of Gratitude in Developing Social Support Among Young Adults

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**Abstract:-** In this study, young adults between age 18 and 25 years were asked to reflect on their perceptions of social support and gratitude. Data were gathered by an online google sheet survey utilizing the GQ-6 and MSPSS scales, and a cross-sectional survey methodology was used. A total of 80 individuals were gathered through convenience sampling. A substantial positive association between gratitude and perceived social support was discovered by the study. Among the many good feelings, gratitude is one. It's important to concentrate on the positive aspects of our life and express gratitude for what we have. Young people who obtain assistance from others feel less alone and are appreciative of the support they receive. The findings revealed that young adults perceived social support are significantly influenced by gratitude. These results imply that encouraging gratitude may be a viable method for boosting social support and enhancing the well-being of young people.

**Keywords:-** Gratitude, Social Support, Young Adults, Cross-Sectional Survey, Quantitative Method.

## I. INTRODUCTION

For a very long time, philosophers and psychologists have thought about the ideal existence and how to get it (Guignon, 1999). After leaving his home in pursuit of a more fulfilling life, the Buddha eventually discovered enlightenment, a feeling of serenity, and happiness (Synder & Lopez, 2007). According to Aristotle, the secret to a happy existence is eudaimonia, or happiness founded on a lifetime of pursuing worthwhile, developmental objectives (Waterman, 1993).

Gratitude is regarded as a mindset towards life and an emotional state that can strengthen relationships and one's own well-being. It is the feeling of being grateful for receiving personal benefits, and it is thought to have beneficial effects on daily functioning and overall health. There is debate concerning the definition of gratitude within the field of gratitude study. Gratitude has been viewed as an attitude, a moral virtue, a habit, a personality feature, or a coping mechanism (Emmons and Shelton, 2002; Emmons and McCullough, 2003). Gratitude is a feeling that individuals experience after getting assistance that they consider to be expensive, valued, and selfless (Wood et al., 2008a). Accordingly, contemporary research has defined gratitude as an emotion that is always geared towards recognising the good deeds performed by others (McCullough et al., 2002).

Each person may have a distinct perception of social support. Gratitude can lead to the development of perceived social support. Based to the broaden-and-build theory of good emotions, expressing gratitude can increase one's social and psychological capital (Fredrickson, 2001). During the challenging moments in people's life, these resources serve as reserves from which to draw (Emmons and McCullough, 2003). The feeling of gratitude and the activities it inspires deepen and create new social connections and friendships. In addition, focusing on the advantages that others have provided for them makes people feel liked and cared for by others (McCullough et al., 2008; Lan and Wang, 2019a). Thus, it seems to be that being gratitude strengthens relationships and other social ties. These are social resources because they may be drawn upon during times of need to provide social assistance (Emmons and McCullough, 2003). The concept of social connection holds that social connectivity, which is defined as "keeping close relationships with society," may satisfy people's desires for belonging and support their goal-oriented behaviour, which in turn fosters the development of hope (Lee et al., 2001).

According to the research (Wood et al., 2008) gratitude can lead to a more supportive development environment, and increased awareness of perceived social support. Other studies on the role of social support, stress, and depression discovered that being grateful resulted in less stress and depression and more social support. According to (Fredrickson, 2004) appreciation can mirror, inspire and reinforce social behaviour in both gift-givers and gift-recipient. As a result, those who express gratitude more often may also benefit from more social resources, particularly from others' support. This theory has been further supported by some empirical findings. Those who are more grateful, for instance, are more likely to perceive and receive more social support from others, from family, friend or even complete stranger (Froh et al., 2009).

In accordance to research (Kashdan et al., 2006; Froh et al., 2008; Wood et al., 2008), developing gratitude may improve a person's mental health and social interactions, among other elements of their life. Gratitude may also encourage prosocial behaviour and improve general well-being, according to research by Bartlett and DeSteno (2006) and Cheavens et al. (2006). These results underline the potential advantages of gratitude practise in daily life.

With regard to research, being appreciative can improve social connectivity, sleep quality, and happiness. Algoe and Haidt (2009) discovered that participants' perceptions of social connectivity rose when they sent letters of thanks. Similar findings were made by Singh and Shejwal (2017), who discovered that among young people, gratefulness was linked to greater sleep and wellbeing. According to Komarudin et al. (2021), the association between social support, spirituality, and happiness was mediated by feelings of appreciation and self-acceptance. In addition, Xin's (2022) research found that thankfulness aids in bridging the gap between fundamental psychological requirements, perceived social support, and college student participation. These findings demonstrate the potential advantages of gratitude practise in fostering favourable social and psychological outcomes.

Thus, the current study investigates the role of gratitude in developing the social support. This research is expected to: (a) provide information to young adults about the importance of the social support and (b) assisting young adults to acknowledge the importance of gratitude.

## II. METHODOLOGY

### ➤ *Aim of the Study:*

To assess the influence of gratitude on perceived social support.

### ➤ *Objective of the Study:*

- *To check the relationship between gratitude and perceived social support.*
- *To identify if gratitude plays a role in developing perceived social support among young adults.*

### ➤ *Hypothesis:*

Gratitude plays a role in developing perceived social support among young adults.

### ➤ *Participants:*

The participants were male and female who fall under the age range of 18 to 25. Total of 80 participants completed the research scales.

### ➤ *Research design:*

A cross-sectional survey design was used for this study's research methodology. The goal of the study is to investigate the connection between gratitude and social support among young adults, notably those between the ages of 18 and 25. The study will employ quantitative methods to examine the data, which will be gathered using an online Google sheet survey.

### ➤ *Instruments:*

#### • *Gratitude:*

The GQ-6 is a brief, self-report assessment of the tendency to feel grateful. Six questions are answered by participants on a scale from 1 to 7, with 1 signifying "strongly disagree" and 7 signifying "strongly agree." To

prevent response bias, two items are scored in reverse. There is evidence that the GQ-6 is positively related to optimism, life satisfaction, hope, spirituality and religiousness, forgiveness, empathy, and prosocial behaviour and negatively related to depression, anxiety, materialism, and envy. The GQ-6 has good internal reliability, with alphas between .82 and .87.

#### • *Perceived social support:*

The Multi-Dimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS: Zimet et al. 1988), which assesses social support, was used to measure it. There are 12 things in the MSPSS, such as "My family really tries to help me" and "There is a special person who is there when I need them." Each question is answered on a 7-point Likert scale, with 1 denoting severe disagreement and 7 denoting strong agreement. The MSPSS scale scores can range from 12 to 84, with higher scores indicating higher perceived levels of social support. For the three different sources of support—Significant Other, Family, and Friends—three separate scores can be computed. Additionally, the sum of all items represents the overall grades for perceived social support. The Cronbach alpha coefficients for the internal consistency of MSPSS were calculated as .88 for the overall scale.

### ➤ *Variables:*

- *Independent variable – gratitude*
- *Dependent variable – perceived social support*

### ➤ *Operational Definition:*

#### • *Gratitude:*

Gratitude is an effective trait that is, a 'a general tendency to recognize and respond with grateful emotions to the roles of other people's benevolence in positive outcomes and that one obtains' (McCullough et al., 2002).

#### • *Perceived Social Support:*

Perceived social support is defined as 'subjective perspective of availability of social resources in terms of emotional, informational and instrumental support from family, friends and significant others' (Zimet et al., 1988).

### ➤ *Sampling technique:*

Convenience sampling will be used for this study's sample size. Young individuals between the ages of 18 and 25 who have access to the internet and can complete the online survey will be chosen as participants. Using email lists and social media, the online Google sheet survey will be distributed and individuals would be asked to participate willingly. The study's findings might not apply to the entire population of young people because convenience sampling was used, therefore care should be exercised in how you interpret the data.

### III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The statistical techniques used for the study are correlation and linear regression. The correlation method was used to understand the relationship between gratitude and perceived social support.

Table 1 Mean, Standard Deviation and correlation of gratitude and perceived social support.

Variable	Mean	Sd	r	sig
Gratitude	30.44	5.367		
PSS	64.38	11.904	0.485**	0.00

Note: \*\*-p < 0.01, PSS – perceived social support

Table 1 denotes mean, standard deviation and whether there is correlation between the two variables Gratitude and Perceived social support among young adults (N = 80). After the analysis it is indicated that there is significant relationship between Gratitude and Perceived social support (r= 0.485, p = 0.001). The results were statistically significant at 0.01 level. Therefore, the hypothesis is accepted which states that there is a significant relationship between gratitude and perceived social support among young adults. Here it is shown that Gratitude has a direct relationship with Perceived social support.

Table 2 linear regression analysis using dimensions of gratitude as predictor and perceived social support as criterion.

Independent variable	Dependent variable	Standardized $\beta$	t-value	Model summary
Gratitude	Perceived social support	0.485	4.895	R <sup>2</sup> = 0.235 F = 23.963 Sig= 0.000

Note: - \*\*p < 0.01

A standard linear regression analysis was conducted to find out if there was any significant influence between gratitude and perceived social support among young adults. In model 1, gratitude on perceived social support results found to be F (80) = 23.963, p< 0.01, was statistically significant. Therefore, the hypothesis that gratitude impacts perceived social support among young adults is accepted.

#### ➤ Discussion

The objective of this study was to find the influence of gratitude on developing perceived social support among young adults. The result of this study shows that there is a significant positive correlation between gratitude and perceived social support among young adults. This shows that increase in gratitude can also influence the perceived social support among young adults. The results of the study are consistent with Xin (2022) which has also found the significant relationship between gratitude and perceived social support among college students.

The current study found that the gratitude has a role in developing the social support. That when the young adults show more gratitude towards other, they tend to perceive more social support. According to research by Tsang et al.

(2006), young adults in Hong Kong who expressed more gratitude also received more social support. Research by Algoe and Haidt (2009) highlights the potential advantages of fostering gratitude in social connections by providing empirical evidence for the beneficial influence of gratitude on perceived social support. In line with Frederickson's (2004) theory, being gratitude increases social ties, creates a larger social network, and improves a person's overall quality of life. A study by Singh and Shejwal (2017), have also found that there is a significant impact of gratitude on perceived social support among young adults. The study by Wood et al. (2008) has found that gratitude led to higher level of perceived social support, and lower levels of stress and depression. According to Chen et al. (2012), being gratitude might help athletes feel better because they receive greater social support from their teammates and coaches. Gratitude is believed to work as a reinforcement for kind and helpful behaviours, increasing the likelihood that they will happen again in the future (McCullough et al., 2001). Therefore, it was believed that more appreciative youth report greater social support from important individuals in their lives.

This study shows that the development of gratitude might serve as a preventative treatment that helps people in improving their wellbeing in future. Also, by assisting them in obtaining social support from others, it may serve as an active treatment.

### IV. CONCLUSION

Young adults' perceptions of social support and gratitude were compared in the study, and it was shown that there was a strong positive association between the two. The findings are in line with other studies and highlight the potential benefits of encouraging gratitude in interpersonal relationships. Particularly, gratitude is thought to strengthen bonds between people, expand one's social network, and enhance one's general quality of life. According to the study, being grateful can help people get social support from other people, which can operate as an active therapy and a preventative measure to enhance wellbeing. According to these results, gratitude may be a helpful technique for fostering social support and enhancing wellbeing among young people.

#### ➤ Implications

The result of the study can provide insight into how gratitude plays a key role among young adults. The results of the study will help the young adults to acknowledge the importance of being grateful to people. The study allows further research to take place by including gender and socio – demographic details.

#### ➤ Limitations

The study used convenience sampling which may limit the generalizability to the broader population. The study could not control other potential factors that may impact perceived social support such as personality traits or life events.

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