
| RESEARCH ARTICLE

Psychological Well-Being of Youth: The Role of Gratitude and Hope

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| ABSTRACT

The present study has been conducted on the youth (N=200) of age group 18-24 years to find the role of the character strengths of gratitude and hope in their psychological well-being. Gratitude and hope have been assessed using the Value in Action Inventory of Strengths (Peterson and Seligman, 2004), and psychological well-being has been assessed using the Psychological Well-Being Scale by Carol Ryff (1989). The data has been analyzed by using Pearson correlation and linear regression. The findings depict a significant positive correlation of gratitude and hope with the psychological well-being of youth. Also, the regression analysis establishes the significant and positive role of gratitude and hope in predicting the psychological well-being of youth.

| KEYWORDS

Gratitude, hope, psychological well-being

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1. Introduction

Youth are the assets of any society. Their energy can be channelized in productive directions in the best possible ways only if they themselves are healthy physically as well as psychologically. The present study has been conducted on college students who are in their late teenage and early twenties. They are ready to play their future role as a responsible adult at this stage of life. Their psychological well-being (PWB) is important for keeping them more physically active and performing better in academics and work life. Lower levels of psychological well-being have been found to be related to counter-productive or health risk behaviours. Keeping in mind all these things, the policymakers are keen to know the things important to enhance the well-being of youth.

Most of the previous research has focused on finding out the factors causing a threat to their well-being. However, positive psychology focuses on the traits and virtues of personality to enhance well-being in life. Gratitude and hope are two important strengths that may play a vital role to increase well-being levels in people's life. Perceiving the good in the situations that exist in life with a feeling of thankfulness and expecting good in the future may enhance their PWB. The present study is aimed at finding out how these strengths contribute to the PWB of youth.

In this study, these variables have been studied as character strengths. The Value in Action (VIA) classification (Peterson & Seligman, 2004) identifies six virtues, i.e., wisdom, courage, humanity, justice, temperance, and transcendence. Under these, there are twenty-four character strengths: the 'psychological components' making up these virtues. Gratitude and hope are related to the virtue of transcendence that connects one with the larger universe (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). Having these strengths changes how one perceives the circumstances, events, or actions and increases happiness in different ways.

Gratitude is “a positive psychological reaction towards an interpersonal benefit received” (Bono & McCullough, 2006). The character strength of gratitude involves feeling grateful for every little or big thing in life. Hope as a character strength is a positive trait that enables one to expect something good, which is realistic and also important for a person. The character strengths of gratitude and hope enhance the positive states of mind that may cause enhanced well-being. Shimai et al. (2006) found gratitude and hope among those strengths that showed greater associations with happiness. Feeling grateful on a regular basis can have a big effect on our lives. In a study, Galati, Manzano and Sotgiu (2006) found that the college students who were keeping a record of their blessings in their gratitude journal prepared by them daily or weekly reported higher levels of positive states.

1.1 Objectives of the study

The objectives of the present study are:

1. To explore the relationship between gratitude and PWB among youth.
2. To explore the relationship between hope and PWB among youth.

1.2 Hypotheses

The hypotheses formed in this regard are as follows:

1. There shall be a significant relationship between gratitude and PWB among youth.
2. There shall be a significant relationship between hope and PWB among youth.

2. Method

2.1 Sample

The sample of the study is the college-going youth of the age group 18-24 years. The sample comprises 200 youth (N=200). The sample was comprised of males (n=100) as well as females (n=100). The sample has been drawn from the colleges of different cities of Haryana, India.

2.2 Measures

A- Value in Action Inventory of Strengths (Peterson and Seligman, 2004): Derived by Dr. Robert McGrath from VIA-240 item inventory and based on a five-point Likert scale, it is a 120 items self-report inventory that measure character strengths of adults of age ≥ 18 . The total 120 items assess twenty-four character strengths, wherein each strength is assessed by five items. The VIA in the present study is used for the assessment of character strengths of gratitude and hope. The inventory possesses good psychometric properties. The internal consistency reliabilities for gratitude and hope are .87 and .79, respectively.

B- Psychological Well-Being (PWB) Scale by Carol Ryff (1989): It has been used to assess the level of PWB of youth in this study. It contains 54 items (medium form) reflecting different areas of psychological well-being. Participants were asked to rate the statements on a scale of 1 to 6, depending on their level of agreement and disagreement. The range of internal consistency is between 0.87 and 0.93, and test-retest reliability coefficients lie between 0.81 and 0.85.

2.3 Procedure

The sample was selected using stratified random sampling. After finalizing the sample, the data was collected at the convenience of the participants. The data was analyzed with the help of descriptive statistics, Pearson product-moment correlation and linear regression.

3. Results and Discussion

The present study's findings are shown in Tables 1, 2 and 3. Table 1 represents the descriptive statistics and the correlation coefficients among the variables under study.

Table 1: **Outcomes for the descriptive statistics and Pearson correlation for the studied variables (N=200)**

Variables	M	SD	Pearson r		
			Gratitude	Hope	PWB
Gratitude	18.87	2.94	1		
Hope	19.88	3.04	.483**	1	
PWB	212.50	24.26	.402**	.455**	1

**** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).**

The data as shown in table 1 establishes the significant positive correlation between the character strength of gratitude and PWB ($r = .402$; $p < .01$) as well as between the character strength of hope and PWB ($r = .455$; $p < .01$) among youth. It shows that the higher the level of these strengths, the higher the level of PWB. In order to study the effect of gratitude and hope on PWB, linear regression analysis has been carried out.

Table 2 represents the outcomes of regression analysis showing regression coefficients of gratitude on PWB.

Table 2: **Summary of regression analysis for Gratitude predicting PWB in youth (n=200)**

Predictor	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	β	<i>t</i>	<i>Sig(p)</i>
Gratitude	3.32**	.54	.402	6.18	<.001
R ²	.162				
F	38.21**				<.001

****significant at $p < .01$ level**

Note. Dependent Variable: PWB, **B**=Unstandardized regression coefficient, **β** =Standardised regression coefficient

Regression analysis for gratitude predicting PWB in youth shows that gratitude predicts PWB with $F(198) = 38.21$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .162$. The effect size caused by gratitude in the PWB of youth is 16.2%. The findings support the first hypothesis of this study, i.e., 'there shall be a significant relationship between gratitude and PWB among youth'.

Table 3 represents the outcomes of regression analysis showing regression coefficients of hope on PWB.

Table 3: **Summary of regression analysis for Hope predicting PWB in youth (n=200)**

Predictor	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	β	<i>t</i>	<i>Sig(p)</i>
Hope	3.63**	.50	.455	7.19	<.001
R ²	.207				
F	51.69**				<.001

****significant at $p < .01$ level**

Note. Dependent Variable: PWB, **B**=Unstandardized regression coefficient, **β** =Standardised regression coefficient

Regression analysis for hope predicting PWB in youth shows that hope predicts PWB with $F(198) = 51.69$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .207$. The effect size caused by hope in the PWB of youth is 20.7%. The findings support the study's second hypothesis, i.e., 'there shall be a significant relationship between hope and PWB among youth'.

Thus, the findings of this study establish a significant positive correlation of the strengths of gratitude and hope with the PWB of youth. These strengths have also predicted PWB among youth significantly and positively in the present study. Several studies have supported findings, such as Kardas et al. (2019).

The positive role of these strengths in the PWB of youth can be attributed to several causes. In research studies conducted in the past, these strengths have been found to be associated with life satisfaction (Proyer et al., 2011; Vela et al., 2017), academic achievement (Park & Peterson, 2009a; Wagner & Ruch, 2015) and greater scholastic, social competence and creativity levels (Onwuegbuzie, 1999). These may, in turn, cause these strengths to enhance the levels of PWB.

4. Conclusion

The present study results reveal that the strengths of gratitude and hope predict the well-being of youth with a high level of variance. These findings can be useful for academicians, mental health professionals and researchers. Further, the interventions based on gratitude and hope can effectively be used to improve well-being levels among youth. However, there are some limitations of the present study, such as age-wise or area wise generalizability concerns, as the sample was limited to the area of Haryana state and to the age group of 18-24 years only. Further investigations can be made to include a wide area and age groups.

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