

Quantitative Analysis of Hope, Gratitude, and Satisfaction as Predictors of Psychological Well-Being in Medical Students

Tayyaba Qureshi¹, Shabana Ali¹, Tayyaba Fahad¹, Maria Yousaf¹, Amber Rashid² and Noor Fatima¹

ABSTRACT

Objective: The objective of the study was to measure hope, gratitude and satisfaction with life as indicators of psychological well-being in medical students.

Study Design: Quantitative Cross-sectional study

Place and Duration of Study: This study was conducted at the Department of Anatomy, Islamic International Medical College, Rawalpindi from 15th April 2023 to 15th September 2023.

Methods: A total of 246 students of a medical college in Pakistan participated in this study. 132 were male (56%) and 114 were female (46%). All the students answered a well-being survey comprising a Gratitude Questionnaire-Six Item Form (GQ-6), The Flourishing Scale by Diener et al. (2010), the Satisfaction with Life Scale, devised by Diener et al. (1985), and a Gratitude Scale developed by Kardas and Yalçın (2019). Data was analyzed using SPSS version 21.

Results: Gratitude predicted 49.7% of the variance in well-being alone; life satisfaction predicted 54%, and hope predicted 96%. Pearson correlation was positive and Gratitude was most close to well-being and it was followed by the variables; life satisfaction and hope.

Conclusion: Gratitude stands out as a critical predictor of well-being, playing a pivotal role in nurturing a positive outlook. This is relevant for medical students, who can harness gratitude to alleviate stress and navigate daily hurdles more smoothly.

Key Words: Gratitude, Hope, Satisfaction, Well-being

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INTRODUCTION

Well-being is a condition of general happiness, and feeling good in one's life. It includes many different things, including social relationships, fulfillment in one's work or activities, and a feeling of purpose and meaning in life. It also includes one's physical, mental, and emotional health. Because it might differ from person to person depending on their unique circumstances, values, and ambitions, well-being is frequently referred to as a subjective experience¹.

¹. Department of Anatomy, Islamic International Medical College, Rawalpindi.

². Department of Pharmacology, Islamabad Medical and Dental College IMDC, Islamabad.

Correspondence: Dr. Tayyaba Qureshi, Assistant Professor Anatomy Islamic International Medical College, Rawalpindi.
Contact No: 0336-1042956
Email: dr.tayyabaqureshi@gmail.com

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An individual's overall evaluation of their happiness and contentment with many elements of their life is referred to as their level of satisfaction with life. A person's cognitive and affective assessments of their living circumstances, accomplishments, and general well-being are considered in this subjective measurement². Life satisfaction is often used as an indicator of the quality of life, and the ultimate goal in one's life. Several factors contribute to an individual's satisfaction with life, and these factors can vary from person to person. Medical education is a rigorous and demanding process that requires a substantial commitment of time, effort, and emotional investment. As a result, medical students could go through both good and bad experiences that affect their overall contentment with the career route they have selected. The characteristics of the individual, the environment of the medical school, and a host of other variables can all have a substantial impact on the degree of satisfaction of medical students, and on the overall curriculum³.

Gratitude is a positive emotion and an appreciation for the goodness and positive aspects of one's life. It involves recognizing and acknowledging the valuable

things, experiences, or people in our lives and feeling thankful for them. Gratitude is often directed towards others, but it can also extend to oneself, nature, or even life in general. Practicing gratitude has been associated with increased happiness, contentment, and overall well-being⁴.

Hope is a powerful and resilient force that can have profound effects on individuals and communities. It can provide a sense of meaning, purpose, and direction, and help individuals navigate through difficult circumstances. Additionally, hope has been linked to various positive outcomes, including better physical and mental health, improved coping abilities, increased motivation, and enhanced well-being. It's important to note that while hope can be a valuable resource, it is not a substitute for concrete actions or solutions to challenges. It is a mindset and emotional state that can help individuals approach difficulties with a positive attitude and belief in their capacity to create change⁵.

METHODS

Study design: It was a Quantitative Cross-sectional study, conducted at Islamic International Medical College, after approval from Institutional Review Committee, Ref. No. Riphah/IIMC/23/3074. A total of 246 students participated in this study. Students were given a Well-Being survey comprising of the Flourishing Scale, Satisfaction with Life Scale, a Gratitude Questionnaire, and a Hope Scale.

The Flourishing Scale: Diener et al. (2010) created this scale to gauge people's levels of well-being. Scores from the scale, which consists of eight items with responses on a 1–7 scale from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree, range from 8–56. A high rating denotes a higher degree of well-being.

Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS):

This measurement tool was developed by Diener et al. (1985) for the estimation of life satisfaction of individuals. It comprises five items answered on a point Likert type survey.

The Gratitude Scale: Kardas and Yalcin (2019) developed this scale for the measurement of gratitude level. This scale has 25 items to be answered on a points Likert-type survey. The higher scores indicate a higher level of gratitude⁶.

The Hope Scale: The Hope Scale was devised by Snyder et al (1991), for the assessment of the hope levels of an individual. This scale uses 8 items, and higher scores indicate a higher level of hope in an individual.

Data Analysis: Data was analyzed using SPSS version 21 and continuous data was presented as means or medians along with appropriate measures of dispersion according to the normality of data distribution as tested with Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests⁷. Pearson's Correlation Coefficient was used to correlate different indicators with well-being. Stepwise multiple regression was performed to check the predictability of the variables⁸.

RESULTS

Out of 246 students,132 were male (56%) and 114 were female (46%). All three indicators discussed in this study were positively related to each other. All variables together accounted for about 51% of the variance in psychological well-being. Gratitude predicted 49.7% of the variance in well-being alone; life satisfaction predicted 54%, and hope predicted 96% (Figure 1). Male and female students did not show any statistically significant difference in results.

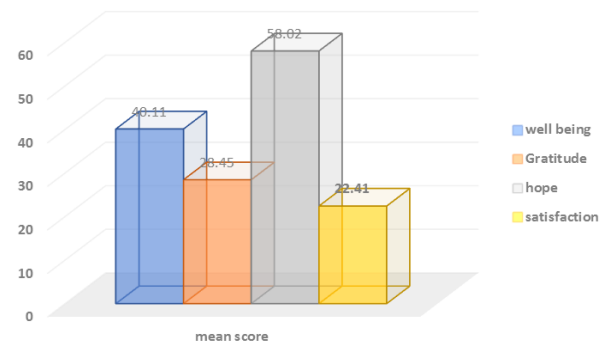


Figure No. 1: Bar chart showing mean score of all variables in medical students

Pearson Correlation showed a positive correlation between all the variables and between well-being and all the variables. To determine the predictability between the variables stepwise multiple regression was performed. All the variables predicted well-being and according to stepwise multiple regression, all the variables were significant, while the most predictive variable was gratitude, followed by the variables; life satisfaction and hope.

Table No. 1: Regression Analysis of well-being with all the predictors

	R	Sig
Regression Analysis	.854 ^a	0.000
P<0.01		

DISCUSSION

This study aimed to calculate the contribution of gratitude, hope, and satisfaction with life as indicators of well-being. Gratitude proved to be the most closely linked to the well-being of medical students. A practice of appreciation can help students manage these challenges and enhance their general well-being. Earning a medical degree can be extremely rigorous, stressful, and emotionally taxing. Medical students commonly endure significant levels of stress due to the demanding academic requirements and clinical commitments⁹. Expressing gratitude and concentrating on the good aspects of their education and experiences can aid in stress reduction and emotional well-being. Gratitude can help medical students build resilience by focusing on their strengths and resources, allowing them to recover more quickly from setbacks and challenges¹⁰. Gratitude practice has been related to

better mental health outcomes such as reduced symptoms of despair and anxiety. Students can acquire a more positive attitude toward life and their chosen job path by recognizing and appreciating the positive parts of their medical journey. Grateful people are more inclined to practice self-care because they cherish and appreciate their well-being¹¹.

Medical students who practice thankfulness may be more likely to prioritize sleep, exercise, and healthy eating habits, leading to improved physical and mental health. It has the potential to boost relationships and social bonds¹². Medical students can strengthen ties and support networks by showing thanks to mentors, coworkers, and patients, resulting in a sense of belonging and community¹⁰. Grateful people are more empathic and kinder towards others. Medical students who practice thankfulness may get a better grasp of their patients' experiences and sentiments, boosting their capacity to deliver empathic treatment. Incorporating gratitude practices into daily life, such as keeping a gratitude journal¹³, expressing thanks to others, or engaging in mindfulness exercises centered around appreciation, can significantly contribute to the overall well-being and happiness of medical students⁷. It's important to note that while gratitude can be beneficial, it is not a substitute for addressing mental health concerns or seeking professional support when needed. If medical students are experiencing significant distress or emotional challenges, they should reach out to appropriate resources, such as counseling services¹⁴ or mental health professionals, for assistance⁴.

CONCLUSION

Gratitude is one of the most important predictors of well-being as it fosters a positive mindset, promoting emotional resilience and reducing stress through an increased focus on appreciation. Medical students require gratitude to reduce their stress and ease out daily challenges. To enhance gratitude, students must practice daily reflection on blessings and acts of kindness, they can also express appreciation to others, and maintain a gratitude journal to cultivate a sense of thankfulness in life.

Author's Contribution:

Concept & Design of Study: Tayyaba Qureshi
 Drafting: Shabana Ali, Tayyaba Fahad
 Data Analysis: Maria Yousaf, Amber Rashid, Noor Fatima
 Revisiting Critically: Tayyaba Qureshi, Shabana Ali
 Final Approval of version: Tayyaba Qureshi

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