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Gratitude and Its Relationship with Students' Psychological Well-Being and Happiness

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Abstract

This study examines gratitude among undergraduate students of a public university in Malaysia and its relationship with psychological well-being and happiness. This study took 149 samples randomly from 235 undergraduate students who were asked to participate in answering Gratitude Questionnaire-6, Ryff's Scale of Psychological Well Being, and Subjective Happiness Scale. Correlation analysis shows a positive relationship between gratitude and students' psychological well-being and happiness. This study supports the previous studies that practicing gratitude is a positive way to enhance students' healthy psychological well-being and happiness in their life. This study recommends the university management to take consideration to cultivate gratitude practice embedded in the curriculum or in the extracurricular activities.

Keywords: gratitude, psychological well-being, happiness

Introduction

Numerous studies suggest that university students are one of the most vulnerable populations to developing mental health-related problems since it is emotionally and intellectually demanding compared to other stages of educations (Auerbach et al., 2018; Bruffaerts et al., 2018; Cleofas, 2020; Saleem, Mahmood, & Naz, 2013; Zivin, Eisenberg, Gollust, & Golberstein, 2009). University students face various challenges and pressures, such as physical, social, financial, and emotional difficulties during their studies. Students are prone to feel stress due to their assignments, exams, and relationships with others, which can cause low psychological well-being and happiness. Not to mention, the current situation of the pandemic that forces them to dramatically change the learning method from face-to-face learning to online learning might contribute to lower psychological well-being and happiness among students. It has to do with the fact that some students may not have a conducive learning environment while studying from home, making it more stressful for them to do online learning. On this account, there is a need to advocate a method to obtain healthy psychological well-being and happiness for students. One approach that is being increasingly highlighted by both scholars and practitioners is gratitude, an approach from positive psychology.

Gratitude is the feeling of thankfulness towards God, self, other people, and the things that happen around us (Behzadipour, Sadeghi, & Sepahmansour, 2018; Emmons & McCullough, 2003). According to Kumari and Madnawat (2016), gratitude is the appreciation of meaningful and valuable things and