

# Gratitude and Resilience among Elderly and Young People

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## ABSTRACT

Gratitude and resilience both have been an area of interest among researchers. Resilience can be understood as person's ability to successfully adapt to the life tasks in the phase of any adverse conditions. Gratitude can be understood as a feeling and expression of appreciation towards someone. The current study aims to present a comparative picture of resilience and gratitude between elderly and young adults while also contrasting other demographic variable such as gender and education. Study also aims to present a relationship of different demographic variables with gratitude and resilience. It was found that significant difference does exist between gratitude, resilience and the demographic variables. Associations were found to be significant between resilience, gratitude and two out of three demographic variable, age and gender.

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## 1. Introduction

Stress or adversity can occur anytime and anywhere, family, workplace, society, within family, due to financial pressures etc. Individual's successful adaptation and recovery during these adversities is generally understood as resilience. Some theorists view resilience as a defence mechanism and some conclude this aspect as a key contributor towards mental health. The key dimensions to explain the aspects of resilience has been underlined under, using supportive relationships, role model, future aspiration, sense of control, commitment, problem solving, giving and maintaining relationship, self-awareness (Mampane, 2006). Family, community, psychological traits, self-evaluative beliefs and coping skills may be some of the factors associated with resilience.

Gratitude has been an area of interest for ancient, medieval and modern philosophers, and it still continues to engage contemporary western philosophers. It can be defined as a feeling of appreciation which is generally felt by the recipient of kindness, favours, or any other types of generosity, towards the giver of such favours. Many research evidences suggest that gratitude can be cultivated (Emmons, 2010).

Positive emotions like gratitude, resilience and forgiveness plays an important role for society to act positively (Chaudhary, Jyoti, Chaudhari, 2014). Some evidence suggest that these virtues develop from a secure base (Dwiwardani, Hill, Bollinger, Marks, Steele, Doolin, and Wood, Hook, Davis, 2014). In a study it has been found that gratitude towards god reduces the deleterious impacts of stress on health during late life (Krause, 2006). A strong association of gratitude and wellbeing have been seen in a clinical review (Wood, Froh, Geraghty, 2009). Working with gratitude also impacts our brain (Wong, Brown, 2017). How individual cultivates gratitude is closely associated with variety of developmental influences s/he is subjected to across the adulthood (Allemand, Hill, 2016). Similar to gratitude, resilience and resiliency education have also been found to be facilitating to mental health (Richardson, Waite, 2002). Many other studies have presented an evidence of variations of gratitude and resilience across the age and gender.

Interestingly, gratitude and resilience are two positive attitudes of human cognition. There have been very less studies with these aspects taken together with the demographic variables like age, gender and education. Hence the current study aims to present the empirical evidence in Indian context.

## 2. Objectives

1. To assess the gratitude and resilience in young adults as compared to elderly subjects.
2. To examine the gender difference of gratitude and resilience in young adults and elderly subjects.
3. To assess and compare the gratitude and resilience in graduate and postgraduate participants.
4. To determine the relationship of different demographic factors, gratitude and resilience.

## 3. Methods

**Sample:** The sample consisted of 189 subjects out of which, 98 were the young adults ranging from 20 to 30 years, and 91 were the elderly ranging from 60 to 75 years. Out of the total, 95 were females and 94 were males, 74 were graduates and 115 were postgraduates from Delhi and Varanasi region of India.

**Tools:** Following were the tools used in the study-

- Gratitude Questionnaire by McCullough, Emmons, and Tsang: 6 item long tool for measuring gratitude. Responded on 7-point scale. Item 1,2,4,5 have normal scoring range from 1 to 7, but 3 and 6 have reverse scoring range from 7 to 1.
- Resilience Scale by Mampane: total 25 items long tool for measuring resilience of an individual across eight dimensions- using supportive relationship (items - 1, 7, 12, 21, 24), role model (item- 25), future aspiration (item- 23), sense of control (items - 4, 9), commitment (items - 2, 10, 17, 20), problem solving (item - 3, 5, 13), giving and maintaining relationship (items - 8, 11, 19), self-awareness

(items - 6, 14, 15, 16, 18, 22). Responded on a five-point scale. Scored in 0,1,2,3,4 format.

Gender	Male	94	49.7%
	Female	95	50.3%
Education	Graduate	74	39.2%
	Post Graduate	115	60.8%

4. Results

Table 1: Characteristics of Sample

Demographic Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Age 20 to 30 years	98	51.9%
60 to 75 years	91	48.1%

Table 1 indicates that 51.9% participants were young adults and 48.1% were elderly in which 49.7% were male and 50.3% were female who have complete graduate (39.2%) and postgraduate (60.8%) degrees.

Table 2: Mean, Standard Deviation and t-values for comparison of two age group on gratitude and different dimensions of resilience.

	Age	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value
Gratitude	20 to 30 Years	33.41	4.82	2.16*
	60 to 70 Years	31.87	4.96	
Using Supportive Relationships	20 to 30 Years	14.41	2.70	8.45**
	60 to 70 Years	11.71	1.47	
Role Models	20 to 30 Years	2.88	0.81	1.47NS
	60 to 70 Years	3.10	1.23	
Future Aspirations	20 to 30 Years	3.17	0.74	0.41NS
	60 to 70 Years	3.23	1.11	
Sense of Control	20 to 30 Years	5.09	1.47	5.08**
	60 to 70 Years	4.19	0.81	
Commitment	20 to 30 Years	3.08	3.14	1.24NS
	60 to 70 Years	2.53	2.83	
Problem Solving	20 to 30 Years	9.30	1.71	5.34**
	60 to 70 Years	8.05	1.47	
Give and Maintain Relations	20 to 30 Years	9.42	2.04	11.81**
	60 to 70 Years	6.64	0.97	
Self-Awareness	20 to 30 Years	17.35	2.85	3.30**
	60 to 70 Years	15.89	3.25	
Total Resilience	20 to 30 Years	64.74	8.22	8.83**
	60 to 70 Years	55.38	6.10	

p<0.01 = significant at 0.01\*\*, p<0.05 = significant at 0.05\*; p>0.01 or 0.05 = not significant NS

Table 2 indicates significant differences which can be observed in gratitude and overall resilience between the young adults and the elderly. The dimensions of resilience namely,

role models, future aspirations and commitment is followed by an insignificant difference.

Table 3 Mean, Standard Deviation and t-values for comparison of male and female on gratitude and different dimensions of resilience.

	Gender	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value
Gratitude	Female	34.14	4.09	4.33**
	Male	31.18	5.28	
Using Supportive Relationships	Female	13.65	2.62	2.93*
	Male	12.57	2.41	
Role Models	Female	3.28	0.96	4.00**
	Male	2.70	1.03	
Future Aspirations	Female	3.54	0.63	5.46**
	Male	2.85	1.06	
Sense of Control	Female	4.78	1.39	1.38NS
	Male	4.53	1.15	
Commitment	Female	2.08	2.51	3.48**
	Male	3.56	3.27	
Problem Solving	Female	8.83	1.32	1.02NS
	Male	8.57	2.04	
Give and Maintain Relations	Female	8.48	1.91	2.59**
	Male	7.69	2.26	
Self-Awareness	Female	18.05	2.16	6.91**
	Male	15.23	3.32	
Total Resilience	Female	62.72	7.98	4.14**
	Male	57.72	8.59	

p<0.01 = significant at 0.01\*\*, p<0.05 = significant at 0.05\*; p>0.01 or 0.05 = not significant NS

Table 3 indicates significant differences which can be observed in gratitude and overall resilience between the male and female. The dimensions of resilience namely, sense of

control and problem solving is followed by an insignificant difference.

**Table 4 Mean, Standard Deviation and t-values for comparison of education on gratitude and different dimensions of resilience.**

	Education	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value
Gratitude	Graduate	31.95	5.09	1.63NS
	Postgraduate	33.14	4.80	
Using Supportive Relationships	Graduate	11.60	1.52	7.30**
	Postgraduate	14.08	2.65	
Role Models	Graduate	3.12	1.19	1.35NS
	Postgraduate	2.91	0.92	
Future Aspirations	Graduate	3.21	1.12	0.17NS
	Postgraduate	3.19	0.80	
Sense of Control	Graduate	4.17	0.84	4.36**
	Postgraduate	4.97	1.41	
Commitment	Graduate	2.39	2.74	1.57NS
	Postgraduate	3.09	3.13	
Problem Solving	Graduate	7.98	1.56	4.86**
	Postgraduate	9.16	1.66	
Give and Maintain Relations	Graduate	6.70	0.96	8.40**
	Postgraduate	8.98	2.20	
Self-Awareness	Graduate	16.02	3.17	2.21*
	Postgraduate	17.05	3.05	
Total Resilience	Graduate	55.22	6.01	7.20**
	Postgraduate	63.46	8.56	

*p*<0.01 = significant at 0.01\*\*, *p*<0.05 = significant at 0.05\*; *p*>0.01 or 0.05 = not significant NS

Table 4 indicates significant differences which can be observed in overall resilience between the graduates and postgraduates. The gratitude and the dimensions of resilience

namely, role models, future aspirations and commitment is followed by an insignificant difference.

**Table 5 Correlation analysis between demographic factors, gratitude and different dimensions of resilience.**

	Gratitude	Using Supportive Relationships	Role Model	Future Aspirations	Sense of Control	Commitment	Problem Solving	Give and Maintain Relationship	Self-Awareness	Total Resilience
Gender	-.30**	-.21**	-.28**	-.37**	-.10	.24**	-.07	-.18*	-.45**	-.29**
Age	-.15*	-.52**	.10	.03	-.34**	-.09	-.36**	-.65**	-.23**	-.54**
Education	.11	.47**	-.09	-.01	.30**	.11	.33**	.52**	.16*	.46**
Gratitude	X	.36**	.43**	.52**	.08	-.27**	.40**	.32**	.50**	.47**
Using supportive relations	X	X	.02	.28**	.45**	-.06	.48**	.68**	.47**	.81**
Role Model	X	X	X	.49**	-.12	-.35**	.22**	-.01	.38**	.22**
Future Aspirations	X	X	X	X	-.00	-.33**	.26**	.27**	.62**	.48**
Sense of Control	X	X	X	X	X	.07	.18*	.42**	.22**	.52**
Commitment	X	X	X	X	X	X	-.32**	-.08	-.24**	.08
Problem Solving	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	.45**	.33**	.54**
Give and Maintain Relationship	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	.46**	.77**
Self-Awareness	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	.74**

Table 4 indicates significant associations ranging from weak to moderate which can be observed between gratitude and

resilience with the age and gender. Education is followed by an insignificant association.

## 5. Discussion

In this study, assessment of gratitude and resilience of young adult and elderly have been done along with its comparison across two other demographic variables, gender and education. The obtained results demonstrate significant differences between two groups and significant association between different measures. According to our results, it was found that young adults, scored comparatively higher in comparison to the elderly on both resilience and gratitude. Results confirmed previous findings that gratitude vary across age groups (Allemand M, Hill PL; 2014, 2016), but contradicted with some studies in terms of who scored high (Chopik et al, 2017). Contradictory results were found with previous studies in the aspect of resilience (Stephanie MacLeod MS et al, 2016). While observing the gender difference, it was found that females scored high in comparison to males on both resilience and gratitude. Somewhat similar results were found in

studies associated with Gratitude towards God (Neal Krause, 2006) and Gender differences in gratitude (Kashdan TB et al, 2009). Results associated with resilience were found to be confirming (Masood A. et al, 2016) and contradicting (Jason D. Boardman et al) with the previous studies. Post graduates were found to have higher gratitude and resilience in comparison to the graduates. The associations of gratitude and resilience with gender were found to be fairly weak negative. Associations of gratitude with age was found to be very weak negative and negligible with education. Association of resilience with age was found to be moderated negative and moderate positive with education. No reliable data was there to conform or contradict the findings. The overall results indicates that the differences do exist in age, gender and education in terms of gratitude and resilience, also providing the statistical evidence of the associations among each other.

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