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Research Article

Gratitude Among Adults with Physical Disabilities: A Gender-Based Study

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Abstract

The present study examined gratitude among adults with physical disabilities from a gender-based perspective. The study aimed to assess the pattern of gratitude among male and female adults and to determine whether significant gender differences existed in gratitude levels. A total of 102 adults aged 25–40 years, comprising 51 males and 51 females, were selected purposively from Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. All participants had postgraduate-level education. Gratitude was assessed using the Gratitude Questionnaire (GQ-6) developed by McCullough, Emmons, and Tsang (2002). Descriptive statistics, Pearson's correlation, analysis of variance (ANOVA), and regression analysis were employed to examine the data. The descriptive findings indicated moderate levels of gratitude overall, with variations across the six GQ-6 items. Female participants reported comparatively higher mean scores on Items 1, 4, 5, and 6, whereas male participants showed a slightly higher mean on Item 3; the mean scores on Item 2 were identical for both groups. Correlation analysis revealed several significant associations among the GQ-6 items, including positive relationships between Items 1 and 2 ($r = .672, p < .01$), Items 1 and 4 ($r = .605, p < .01$), and Items 4 and 5 ($r = .595, p < .01$). The relationship between gender and individual gratitude items was not statistically significant. Similarly, ANOVA revealed no significant gender differences across any of the six gratitude items ($p > .05$). The regression model was also nonsignificant, $F(6, 95) = 0.992, p = .436$, indicating that the six gratitude items did not significantly predict gender. Overall, the findings suggest that gratitude is experienced across genders among adults with physical disabilities, with no statistically significant gender-based differences. The study highlights the importance of recognizing gratitude as a positive psychological resource and provides a basis for further research on gratitude, well-being, social support, and psychological adjustment among adults living with physical disabilities.

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1. INTRODUCTION

This study, titled "Gratitude among Adults with Physical Disabilities: A Gender-Based Study" aims to shed light on the intricate relationship between gratitude levels and emotional resilience within this unique demographic. Adults aged 25-40 facing physical disabilities encounter a plethora of challenges that can significantly impact their emotional well-being. Among these challenges, understanding how gratitude manifests and contributes to their emotional resilience becomes essential for devising targeted interventions that effectively support their mental health. Gratitude, characterized by recognizing and appreciating positive aspects in life, has been linked to various psychological benefits, yet its specific implications for adults with physical disabilities remain relatively unexplored. Gratitude is not simply a feeling of being thankful; it is a cognitive-emotional process in which the brain recognizes a benefit, assigns positive value to it, and acknowledges its source or meaning. This process involves brain regions associated with reward, social cognition, and emotional regulation, particularly the medial prefrontal cortex and anterior cingulate cortex. When gratitude is practiced repeatedly through activities such as gratitude journaling or mindful appreciation, these neural processes are repeatedly activated. Through neuroplasticity—the brain's ability to adapt in response to repeated experience—such practice may strengthen the brain's tendency to notice and value positive experiences, social support, and prosocial behaviour. Therefore, gratitude can be understood as a trainable psychological process that may gradually influence patterns of attention, emotional processing, and social valuation.

Robert Emmons and Michael McCullough define gratitude as a two-step process: 1) "recognizing that one has obtained a positive outcome" and 2) "recognizing that there is an external source for this positive outcome." Gratitude has been found to be connected to concepts of well-being rooted in humanistic counseling perspectives, offering an alternative understanding of human nature and psychopathology (Wood & Joseph, 2007). This aligns with survey findings indicating that over 90% of American teenagers and adults reported that expressing gratitude contributed to them feeling either "extremely happy" or "somewhat happy" (Gallup, 1999). The correlation between gratitude and mood as well as life satisfaction appears robust. In terms of more existential views of well-being, gratitude has been associated with psychological or "eudemonic" well-being. While subjective well-being encompasses the emotionally pleasing and satisfying aspects of life, eudemonic well-being signifies a life lived to the fullest, maximizing human potentials and growth (Ryan & Deci, 2001). Wood and Joseph (2010) demonstrated that individuals with low eudemonic well-being were 7.16 times more likely to meet criteria for clinical depression a decade later. Experiencing gratitude may contribute to eudemonic well-being, providing resilience against depression in later life. Froh and Yurkewicz et al. (2009) revealed that gratitude in youth was correlated with well-being and relationships, even after accounting for general positive affect. This suggests that gratitude has effects beyond simple affective valence.

Emmons and McCullough (2003) explored the impact of a gratitude intervention on individuals' subjective well-being. Their findings indicated that participants in the gratitude group experienced higher levels of subjective well-being compared to those in the hassles group, displaying increased life satisfaction and positive affect. Kashdan, Uswatte, and Julian (2006) highlighted the role of gratitude as a significant predictor of well-being, even in the face of trauma and adversity among veterans. In a study by Froh, J.J. Sefick, and Emmons (2008) focusing on early adults, it was observed that practicing gratitude through journaling could serve as a beneficial intervention for enhancing well-being in this age group. Additionally, Lestari (2020) reported a notable connection between optimism, self-esteem, and gratitude in individuals with physical disabilities, emphasizing the contributing roles of gratitude and self-esteem.

Hermansyah's investigation in 2017 revealed a noteworthy positive association between gratitude and perceived social support. Raihana, in 2023, elucidated the concept of gratitude among Indonesians with physical disabilities. The study found that both subjects exhibited a sense of gratitude in various aspects of their lives. This was evident in their expressions of gratitude through heartfelt appreciation, verbal expressions, and actions. They demonstrated their gratitude by remembering to worship Allah, following His commands, avoiding prohibitions, and using positive language in their daily interactions. In 2021, Nurdin explored the impact of social support and gratitude on resilience in individuals with physical disabilities. The study discovered that both social support and gratitude had a positive influence on resilience, with emotional support and abundant gratitude identified as crucial factors. This suggests potential interventions to enhance resilience in adults facing physical limitations. Rizkiana's 2019 study investigated the influence of gratitude on life satisfaction in hearing-impaired college students at the Centre for Disability Studies & Services. The results indicated that higher levels of gratitude correlated with a 12.2% increase in life satisfaction for these students. In 2018, Ati conducted a study to examine the relationship between gratitude, social support, and the stress experienced by parents of special needs children. The regression analysis revealed a significant connection between social support, gratitude, and parental stress.

Jackowska et al. (2016) conducted a study on gratitude intervention, assessing sleep quality and disturbance. After two weeks of gratitude journaling, daily sleep quality showed a slightly but significantly greater improvement compared to a control group receiving no treatment. Digdon and Koble (2011) suggested that focusing on positive aspects each evening, as in a gratitude intervention, reduces pre-sleep arousal, improving sleep quality and duration, although not surpassing the benefits of constructive worry or imagery distraction exercises. The study is needed to understand the role and level of gratitude among adults with physical disabilities and to examine whether gender differences exist in this psychological strength. Such understanding may contribute to developing more inclusive psychological interventions that promote positive adaptation and quality of life.

2. OBJECTIVES-

To assess the level of gratitude among adults with physical disabilities.

To examine the gender differences in gratitude among adults with physical disabilities.

To examine the relationship among the items of the Gratitude Questionnaire (GQ-6) among adults with physical disabilities.

To explore whether the individual components/items of gratitude significantly contribute to gender differences among adults with physical disabilities.

Hypotheses-

H₁: There will be a significant difference in the level of gratitude between male and female adults with physical disabilities.

H₂: There will be a significant relationship among the items of the Gratitude Questionnaire (GQ-6) among adults with physical disabilities.

3. RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed an Explanatory Research design to examine gratitude levels among physically disabled adults aged 25-40 with Post Graduate education. A purposive sampling method was used to enlist 102 participants, evenly distributed

with 51 males and 51 females, from Bihar and UP. Participants were recruited from various sources, including local disability support organizations, community centers, and online platforms, ensuring a diverse and representative sample. This study utilized the Gratitude Questionnaire (GQ-6) developed by McCullough, M. E., Emmons, R. A., & Tsang, J. (2002) as the measurement tool to assess participants' levels of gratitude. The GQ-6 is a reliable and validated self-report scale designed to evaluate an individual's inclination to experience and express gratitude.

Data collection was conducted with fairness and transparency. The primary instrument for measuring gratitude levels was the Gratitude Questionnaire (GQ-6). Ethical considerations were rigorously upheld, encompassing informed consent, data confidentiality, anonymity, and obtaining necessary approvals from Institutional Review Boards. Data analysis employed a comprehensive approach, including Descriptive analysis to summarize data, correlation to explore relationships, ANOVA to assess group differences, and Regression Analysis to identify potential predictors of gratitude levels. This methodological framework aimed to provide a thorough and deep understanding of gratitude experiences among physically disabled adults.

Result Analysis-Descriptive Analysis-

		Report					
Gender		G.T.1	G.T.2	G.T.3	G.T.4	G.T.5	G.T.6
Male	Mean	3.86	3.76	2.73	3.86	4.00	3.20
	N	51	51	51	51	51	51
	Std. Deviation	1.357	1.193	1.358	1.342	1.400	1.357
Female	Mean	4.06	3.76	2.41	4.14	4.12	3.57
	N	51	51	51	51	51	51
	Std. Deviation	1.223	1.242	1.219	1.217	1.227	1.221
Total	Mean	3.96	3.76	2.57	4.00	4.06	3.38
	N	102	102	102	102	102	102
	Std. Deviation	1.289	1.212	1.294	1.282	1.311	1.298

The table 1 results reveal distinctive patterns in gratitude levels among male and female adults with physical disabilities. For males, the mean gratitude scores vary across items, with notable highs in Items 1, 4, and 5 and a lower score in Item 3. Females, on the other hand, exhibit slightly elevated mean gratitude scores in Items 1, 4, and 5, with a lower score in Item 3. The aggregated data for both genders demonstrates a moderate overall gratitude level, with higher scores in Items 1, 4, and 5.

Standard deviations indicate moderate variability in gratitude responses across items, suggesting diversity in individual experiences within this population. These findings contribute valuable insights into the deep landscape of gratitude among adults facing physical disabilities, informing potential interventions tailored to address specific emotional needs within this demographic.

Table 2: Correlation Analysis-

Variables	Gender	G.T.1	G.T.2	G.T.3	G.T.4	G.T.5	G.T.6
Gender	1	.061	-.004	-.159	.092	.031	.135
G.T.1	.061	1	.672**	-.159	.605**	.622**	.210*
G.T.2	-.004	.672**	1	-.267**	.554**	.526**	.266**
G.T.3	-.159	-.159	-.267**	1	-.221*	-.102	-.019
G.T.4	.092	.605**	.554**	-.221*	1	.595**	.321**
G.T.5	.031	.622**	.526**	-.102	.595**	1	.219*
G.T.6	.135	.210*	.266**	-.019	.321**	.219*	1

Table 2. Correlation analysis aimed to discern relationships between gender and gratitude items (G.T.1 to G.T.6) in adults with physical disabilities. The findings indicated generally

weak associations between gender and specific gratitude items. None of the correlations between gender and gratitude items were statistically significant (all $p > 0.05$), implying that, at an

overall level, gender did not strongly correlate with particular gratitude items. However, within the gratitude items, noteworthy interitem correlations were observed: A moderate positive association was found between gratitude in Item 1 (G.T.1) and Item 2 (G.T.2) ($r = 0.672, p < 0.01$). A substantial positive correlation emerged between gratitude in Item 1 (G.T.1) and Item 4 (G.T.4) ($r = 0.605, p < 0.01$). A moderate

negative association was identified between gratitude in Item 2 (G.T.2) and Item 3 (G.T.3) ($r = -0.267, p < 0.01$). A substantial positive correlation was observed between gratitude in Item 4 (G.T.4) and Item 5 (G.T.5) ($r = 0.595, p < 0.01$). A modest positive association was noted between gratitude in Item 5 (G.T.5) and Item 6 (G.T.6) ($r = 0.219, p < 0.05$).

Table 3: ANOVA

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
G.T.1	Between Groups	.615	1	.615	.368	.545
	Within Groups	167.228	100	1.672		
	Total	167.843	101			
G.T.2	Between Groups	.002	1	.002	.001	.970
	Within Groups	148.351	100	1.484		
	Total	148.353	101			
G.T.3	Between Groups	4.269	1	4.269	2.591	.111
	Within Groups	164.751	100	1.648		
	Total	169.020	101			
G.T.4	Between Groups	1.412	1	1.412	.858	.357
	Within Groups	164.588	100	1.646		
	Total	166.000	101			
G.T.5	Between Groups	.166	1	.166	.096	.758
	Within Groups	173.481	100	1.735		
	Total	173.647	101			
G.T.6	Between Groups	3.095	1	3.095	1.853	.176
	Within Groups	166.993	100	1.670		
	Total	170.088	101			

The Table 3 ANOVA results examined the variations in gratitude items (G.T.1 to G.T.6) among adults with physical disabilities. Overall, no statistically significant differences were found in gratitude levels between different groups for most items. Notably, G.T.3 showed a marginal significance,

suggesting a potential difference that warrants further investigation. These findings imply a generally consistent experience of gratitude among adults with physical disabilities across various items, highlighting the resilience and commonalities within this unique demographic.

Table 4: Regression Analysis-

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.243 ^a	.059	.000	.502
a. Predictors: (Constant), G.T.6, G.T.3, G.T.5, G.T.2, G.T.4, G.T.1				

The table 4 Model Summary reveals that the regression model, incorporating predictors G.T.6, G.T.3, G.T.5, G.T.2, G.T.4, and G.T.1, demonstrates limited effectiveness in explaining the variance in the dependent variable. The R Square value of 0.059 indicates that these predictors collectively explain only 5.9% of

the variability. The Adjusted R Square, factoring in the number of predictors and sample size, remains at 0.000, signaling minimal improvement. The Std. Error of the Estimate is 0.502, representing the average discrepancy between observed and predicted values.

ANOVA ^b						
	Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1.502	6	.250	.992	.436 ^a
	Residual	23.988	95	.253		
	Total	25.490	101			
a. Predictors: (Constant), G.T.6, G.T.3, G.T.5, G.T.2, G.T.4, G.T.1						
b. Dependent Variable: Gender						

The analysis of variance (ANOVA) was performed to evaluate the significance of a regression model predicting Gender based on seven predictors. The results revealed a non-significant model ($F = 0.992, p = 0.436$), indicating that the predictors, including G.T.6, G.T.3, G.T.5, G.T.2, G.T.4, and G.T.1,

collectively did not significantly explain the variability in Gender. The Residual Sum of Squares was 23.988, and the Total Sum of Squares was 25.490, with 95 and 101 degrees of freedom, respectively. In conclusion, the model did not exhibit statistical significance in predicting Gender.

Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.544	.252		6.124	.000
	G.T.1	.039	.060	.100	.652	.516
	G.T.2	-.073	.060	-.177	-1.232	.221
	G.T.3	-.069	.041	-.177	-1.694	.094
	G.T.4	.023	.055	.058	.410	.683
	G.T.5	-.008	.052	-.022	-.161	.873
	G.T.6	.056	.041	.144	1.355	.179
a. Dependent Variable: Gender						

The regression analysis suggests that gratitude items (G.T.1 to G.T.6) have limited predictive power for the dependent variable (Gender). Notably, G.T.3 shows a marginally significant negative association with Gender, while G.T.6 exhibits a positive trend, though not statistically significant.

4. DISCUSSION

The present findings indicate that adults with physical disabilities demonstrated a generally favorable disposition toward gratitude, with only modest differences between males and females. Females showed slightly higher responses on G.T.1, G.T.4, and G.T.5, suggesting somewhat greater recognition of positive aspects of life, appreciation of people, and meaningful life experiences. However, these differences were not statistically significant, indicating that gender did not substantially influence these aspects of gratitude. G.T.2 showed an identical mean for males and females, reflecting a particularly strong similarity in their perception of things for which they were grateful. G.T.3, a negatively worded item, showed lower endorsement among females; after reverse scoring, both groups demonstrated favorable gratitude. This suggests that physical disability does not necessarily lead to a predominantly negative appraisal of life. Rather, individuals may continue to recognize positive and meaningful aspects of their lives despite disability-related challenges.

G.T.4 highlights the interpersonal aspect of gratitude, with females reporting a slightly higher tendency to appreciate a wide variety of people. G.T.5 similarly indicates that participants valued people, events, and experiences accumulated through their lives. These patterns suggest that gratitude may operate as an important psychological resource by directing attention toward supportive relationships and meaningful experiences, although the present study did not directly measure social support, adaptation, or well-being. G.T.6, another negatively worded item, showed a somewhat more favorable reverse-scored response among males. Nevertheless, the difference was nonsignificant. This finding, together with the results of G.T.3, emphasizes that individual item-level variations should not be interpreted as gender differences when statistical evidence does not support them. The significant relationships among G.T.1, G.T.2, G.T.4, and G.T.5 indicate that different expressions of gratitude tend to occur together. Individuals who recognized more things to be thankful for also tended to report greater appreciation of people and life experiences. This pattern supports the conceptualization

of gratitude as a relatively unified psychological disposition rather than six unrelated characteristics.

Overall, the absence of significant gender differences across all six items suggests that gratitude is broadly shared by men and women with physical disabilities. The findings therefore indicate that gratitude may be understood as a potential psychological strength that can be cultivated irrespective of gender. However, because the study was cross-sectional and did not directly assess resilience, quality of life, or psychological well-being, conclusions about its effects on these outcomes should remain cautious.

5. CONCLUSION

The study concludes that adults with physical disabilities showed a generally favorable disposition toward gratitude, with no statistically significant gender differences. Although females reported slightly higher gratitude on some items, the differences were not significant. Thus, gender does not appear to be a significant determinant of gratitude in the present sample, suggesting that gratitude may represent a psychological strength shared across genders among adults with physical disabilities. Gratitude activities such as gratitude Depository, bank, journaling, writing gratitude letters, butterfly reflecting on positive experiences, gratitude meditation and expressing appreciation to others help individuals consciously recognize and value positive aspects of life. Regular practice may enhance positive thinking, emotional well-being, social connectedness, and adaptive coping.

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