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IMPACT OF GRATITUDE AND EGO-RESILIENCE ON TEST ANXIETY AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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Abstract

Adversity was high for those who were grateful and resilient, and they showed high levels of competence and adaptability. The present research was planned to measure the Impact of Gratitude and Ego-resilience on Test Anxiety among University Students. In total 250 university students participated in this research study. The present study was a quantitative and cross-sectional research design. The questionnaires were filled out by both male and female students. The basic goal of this study is to reveal the association between positive psychology by assessing the impact of gratitude and ego-resiliency as an individual's ability to deal with every kind of situation and educational psychology by investigating the impact of these two variables on university students' test anxiety or exam anxiety. This research aims to investigate the university student's test anxiety and its relationship with gratitude and ego-resilience, either both have a positive impact on test anxiety, gratitude has more than ego-resilience or ego-resilience has a more positive association with test anxiety. The results indicate that both variables have a weak association with test anxiety, as ego-resilience has a negative correlation with test anxiety showed students whose ego-resiliency is higher have less test anxiety and related symptoms, but the impact of gratitude is weak as results showed students have test anxiety even if they have gratitude. Male university students were found more ego-resilient and had less test anxiety as compared to female students overall, the impact of variables was found more among males.

Keywords: Anxiety, Gratitude, Ego-resilience, Adversity, Adaptability.

Introduction

This research aims to investigate the relationship between positive psychology and educational psychology, nowadays as anxiety related to exams, tests, or assessments is very common among university students so this research finds out about how positive psychology terms like gratitude and personality character, ego resilience can effect on the exam or test anxiety. Gratitude can refer to a sense of appreciation or the idea that one should respond appropriately to a kind act (McConnell, 2013). Receiving assistance when under stress can have a favorable psychological effect; thankfulness is assistance but delivered through appreciation, some other kind gesture, or a token of positive words. The feeling of gratitude compels us to appreciate the good things in our lives and forces us to spread this kindness to others. According to the American Psychological Association (APA) definition, ego resilience is a personality trait consisting of the ability to adaptively change the degree to which a person blocks or expresses emotional impulses, depending on social demands, as well as the capability to reply to continuously changing ecological requirements. (Farkas & Orosz, 2015). Test anxiety means the compilation of phenomenological, biological, and behavioral signs that follow fear about prospective adverse effects or a decline in proficiency on an assessment or other similarly evaluative conditions. Test-anxious behavior is often triggered by a person's perception of fear that the obligations made on them by the demanding atmosphere are going to test or go beyond their mental, emotional, and social resources (Zeidner, M. 2004). Some students struggle with impairing test anxiety. Physical symptoms like a racing heart, headache, or nausea may coexist with mental symptoms like racing thoughts, trouble concentrating, or dread. Whether it's for a simple class quiz, final exam, or a significant Test anxiety may

reverse several months and weeks of hard work studying for a history exam Stress-related exams are typical and reasonable (Nist, S. L., & Holschuh, J. L.2000).

Significance of the Study

To assess the significant impact of gratitude and ego-resiliency on test anxiety among university students is one of the typical purposes of research investigations. This study will provide beneficial results about how gratitude, a token of some positive words or in other words appreciation and ego-resilience have an impact on pre-exam stress or test anxiety among university students, in their tough times when students are burdened with coursework alongside research work they feel hopeless, frustrated due to burnout caused by a load of academic pressure. At that time if they have their personality trait or ability to change with respect for constantly altering ecological demands in people and along with this they get gratitude from teachers, family, and surroundings they will feel a reduction in their pre-exam anxiety and feel motivated for doing better preparation and hard work. So, from this point of view, this study will be very beneficial to students, researchers, and others who are interested in this domain of study.

Research Objectives

- To assess whether gratitude and ego-resiliency have any association with test anxiety among university students or not, is test anxiety or exam stress significantly correlated with gratitude and ego-resilience?
- To investigate the university student's test anxiety and its relationship with gratitude and ego-resilience, either both have a positive impact on test anxiety, gratitude has more than ego-resilience or ego-resilience has a more positive association with test anxiety.

Hypothesis

H₁: There is a significant impact of gratitude and ego-resilience on test anxiety among university students.

H₂: There is a more significant impact of gratitude and ego-resilience on test anxiety among female university students as compared to male students.

H₃: There is a significant association between ego resilience and test anxiety among university students.

H₄: There is a significant relationship between gratitude and test anxiety among university students.

Literature Review

Receiving assistance when under stress might have a beneficial psychological effect. Gratitude is also linked to improved Ideas about helping and improved interpersonal connections. Gratitude strengthens the useful impacts of assistance on mental health (Nathan T, et al., 2021). Higher ego-resilient people rate their aspirations higher. Positive correlations were found between empathetic feelings and ego-resilience (Win, T., & Thein, K. M. 2020). Compared to graduate students, undergraduate students have much more test anxiety (Duraku, Z., H. 2017). Low academic achievement, low self-esteem, and program failure are due to moderate to severe test anxiety (Kaur Khaira, et al., 2023). Compared to young males, young women reported an increased degree of mathematics anxiety (Xie, F., et al., 2019). People who are thankful and resilient have faced a lot of challenges and have shown themselves to be very competent and adaptable (Arcega, et al., 2022). Exam anxiety and academic stress were inversely correlated with resilience (Trigueros, R., et al., 2020). The use of mindfulness and gratitude-based interventions can help students feel less stressed and anxious (Jain, A. 2020).

Method

Participant Characteristics

The age range of participants was 18 to 25 years. Participants were University students. The sample was collected from different Government universities of Bahawalpur, Punjab, Pakistan. The total number of participants was (N=250). The data was collected from both male and female university students.

Research Design

The research was Quantitative and cross-sectional research design was applied.

Sampling Procedure

Data collection involved the use of a convenient sampling technique. University students from different universities in Bahawalpur, Punjab, Pakistan were serving as participants. The sample size was 250, 125 male university students and 125 female university students The sample size was calculated by G-Power.

Operational Definition

Gratitude

According to McCullough, Emmons, & Tsang (2001), the respondent's overall Gratitude Questionnaire-Six Item Form (GQ-6) scores will be used to define gratitude.

Ego-Resilience

According to the American Psychological Association (APA) definition, ego resilience is a personality trait consisting of the ability to adaptively change the degree to which a person blocks or expresses emotional impulses, depending on social demands, and a trait that enables people to adjust to the demands of a continually changing environment (Farkas & Orosz, 2015).

Test Anxiety

According to the British Psychological Society (BPS), According to Spielberger and Vagg (1995), the test anxiety notion has been suggested to be specific to the circumstance characteristic that helps explain individual differences in how terrifying people think exams are.

Measures

The Gratitude Questionnaire (GQ-6)

The Gratitude Questionnaire-Six-Item Form (GQ-6) is a six-item self-reported information questionnaire aimed to assess variations among people in the tendency to feel thankful throughout the day. The GQ-6 is an immediate assessment of somebody's predisposition to feel pleased. A scale from 1 to 7 is used by participants to react to six questions, with 1 denoting "strongly disagree" and 7 denoting "strongly agree." The two questions are scored backward to prevent response bias. There is evidence that the GQ-6 is adversely correlated with anxiety, depressive disorders, consumerism, and jealousy and positively correlated with optimism, life satisfaction, hope, spirituality and religiousness, forgiveness, empathy, and prosocial conduct. The internal reliability of the GQ-6 is resilient, with alphas ranging from .82 to .87. With no time limit, the GQ-6 can be accomplished in less than 5 minutes, according to [McCullough, Emmons, & Tsang \(2002\)](#).

The Ego Resiliency Scale Revised (ER89-R)

The 10-item ER89-R simple survey was established by [Alessandri et al. \(2008\)](#) & [Vecchione et al. \(2010\)](#). From 1 (applicable not at all) to 7 (applicable heavily), participants were asked to rate their agreement with each ER statement. There are indications that the ER89-R factor structure consists of a more advanced framework, where two initial-order elements, Optimal Regulation (OR) and Openness to Life Experience (OL), are modulated by a second-degree feature called ego-resilience which in turn influences how individuals respond to the scale items.

Westside Test Anxiety Scale

Students who could reap the rewards from an anxiety-reduction approach are discovered using the decreased ten-item Westside Test Anxiety Scale. Self-reported anxiousness impaired and performance-impairing concerns are tackled by the scale's aspects. The Westside scale is a valid

indication of performance impairment, as shown by the constant connections between scale adjustments and distinctions in findings from tests in both separate groups. Similar results were obtained with fifth graders, most of whom were in excellent standing, and college students, many of whom were on academic probation, indicating that the scale is an accurate indicator across a variety of groups of people. A trustworthy and precise tool for measuring test anxiety impairment is the Westside Test Anxiety Scale, according to studies, with a coefficient of validity of .44, which is high by today's standards ([R Driscoll, 2007](#)).

Procedure

Permission to use the research questionnaires was taken from the authors. Informed consent was taken from participants before collecting data. Confidentiality was maintained. The research didn't use the names of participants. First, the participants fill out the demographic sheet then the Gratitude Questionnaire (GQ-6) which consists of 6 items. Second, participants filled out the Ego Resilience Scale. This scale consists of 14 items and then filled the Westside Test Anxiety Scale, this scale consists of 10 items.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical concerns were considered when performing the research. Before they began participating in the research, all participants received information regarding the scale. The participants' consent was obtained on their willingness to take part in the study and the data's confidentiality was upheld. Those involved without obtaining permission may leave the research at any moment. Their data was utilized in further education.

Statistical Analysis

Results

Characteristics of Respondents	Frequency	Percentages
Gender		
Female	125	50.0
Male	125	50.0
Education		
Bachelor	206	82.4
Master	41	16.4
Diploma	3	1.2
Socioeconomic status		
Upper-class	31	12.4
Middle-class	205	82.0
Lower class	14	5.6

Table 1, Table of sample characteristics

The study used quantitative methods for collection and analysis. The data was examined using SPSS.

Table 2, Correlation of Gratitude, Ego-Resilience, and Test Anxiety (n=250)

Measures	M	SD	1	2	3
1. Gratitude	29.05	5.17	—		
2. Test Anxiety	28.88	9.27	.098	—	
3. Ego-resilience	53.12	10.07	.238*	-.05	—

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

Results indicate that there is a negative and weak correlation between test anxiety, and ego-resilience (-.05), a positive correlation between ego-resilience and gratitude (.23), and gratitude and test anxiety have a positive correlation (.09). According to these results, the independent variables have a weak correlation with the dependent variable.

Table 3, Gender Comparisons of Gratitude, Ego-Resilience, and Test Anxiety

Measures	Male (n=125)		Female (n=125)		df	t	p	Cohen's d
	M	SD	M	SD				
Gratitude	27.6	4.08	30.34	5.80	248	-4.07	.000	0.54
Ego-resilience	56.08	10.57	50.16	8.61	248	4.85	.624	0.61
Test Anxiety	28.60	10.39	29.17	8.02	248	-.49	.000	0.06

The table indicates that the differences between males and females in terms of gratitude, ego-resilience, and test anxiety are significant. According to this table, gratitude (Male=27.6, Female=30.34) and test anxiety (Male=28.60, Female=29.17) is higher among females as compared to male students, but the impact of ego-resilience (Male=56.08, Female=50.16) is higher in males as compared to female students. Overall, the

results show that the impact is higher among the male university students as compared to the females.

Discussion

The results of this study conclude a weak correlation between ego resilience and test anxiety as is shown in Correlation analysis, the correlation between these variables is negative which means that if ego-resilience is higher in university students the test anxiety and related symptoms will be less, and vice versa, so ego resilience helps cope with test or pre-exam, result related anxiety in students. The correlation between gratitude and test anxiety is positive but the weak impact of gratitude on test anxiety or test anxiety overcomes the gratitude, the association between gratitude and ego-resilience is positive and significant. So, hypothesis 1 is not accepted because these variables have a weak impact on test anxiety. Hypothesis 2 states that there will be a significant gender difference in the impact of gratitude and ego-resilience on test anxiety but according to the independent sample t-test the impact of ego-resilience is higher among male as compared to female university students and overall the impact is higher among male students as some research also shows women are less egotistical than men. therefore, women have lower ego resilience than men (Mpanya, et al., 2022), gratitude and test anxiety are higher among female students because females are more emotionally sensitive than males it is shown in research also women are also more prone to clinical anxiety than men and are more willing to self-declare generalized anxiety and test anxiety (Chapell et al., 2005; McLean et al., 2011; Hannon, 2012; Núñez-Peña et al., 2016), gratitude and test anxiety has weak relationship. As in correlation analysis the ego resilience and test anxiety correlation has a weak correlation but is important because if one increases the other or we can say that test

anxiety will decrease so hypothesis 3 is rejected and hypothesis no.4 is not proved because gratitude and test anxiety has weak correlation, some research also support it as it the favorable association between educational anxiety and stress is mitigated by ego resiliency in states. (Cole. et al., 2015). Hypothesis 5 is accepted because results show a significant relation between gratitude and ego resilience, as some studies' findings show that those who expressed greater resilience also expressed greater levels of appreciation or gratitude (Lasota et al., 2020). This study can be generalized to university students as it has used scientific methods and tools. In the future, researchers or students who are interested in this area of research or these variables this research will be helpful to them as this study is a combination of positive and educational psychology.

Conclusion

The more the students are Ego-resilient the higher chances of reduction of test anxiety among those. Gratitude or any token of positive words or appreciation is important for motivation.

Recommendations

So, for future researchers, those using these variables should use a larger sample size, and with more resources and period should also be increased. This study is conducted on Pakistani university students, this study should be conducted on other region's and countries' students to check if gratitude is overcome by test anxiety or not.

Implications of the Study

The present research findings have implications for families, community, researchers, university students, teachers, professors, and mental health professionals. Parents and professors can understand how their positive role and appreciation can help university students in coping with test anxiety and related symptoms, their motivation will also increase due to higher ego-resiliency and

with tokens of positive words from their surroundings.

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