



ADVANCE SOCIAL SCIENCE ARCHIVE JOURNAL

Available Online: <https://assajournal.com>

Vol. 05 No. 01. Jan-March 2026. Page#.4454-4470

Print ISSN: [3006-2497](#) Online ISSN: [3006-2500](#)Platform & Workflow by: [Open Journal Systems](#)<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.21493177>**Gratitude Prosocial Behavior and Resilience Among Youth****Seemab Akhter**

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Abstract

The present study was conducted to measure the difference in degree of gratitude, prosocial behavior and resilience in social and non-social workers. The sample of study comprised of both males ($n=30$) and females ($n=30$). Between non-social workers and social workers, one-way analysis of variance planned comparison results indicated that participants significantly differed in scores of gratitude, prosocial behavior and resilience. This study is literature contribution for social and positive psychology research and also opens gates for further research in this context.

Key words: *gratitude, prosocial behavior, resilience, social workers, non-social workers*

Introduction

Positive psychology has shifted the focus of psychological research from understanding mental illness to identifying the strengths that enable individuals to flourish. Rather than emphasizing deficits and psychopathology, this perspective highlights positive emotions, adaptive personal characteristics, and psychological resources that contribute to well-being, effective coping, and meaningful social relationships. Among these strengths, gratitude has emerged as one of the most extensively studied constructs because of its consistent association with psychological health, interpersonal functioning, and life satisfaction.

Gratitude is commonly defined as a tendency to recognize, appreciate, and respond positively to the benefits one receives from other people, life experiences, or a higher power. McCullough, Emmons, and Tsang (2002) conceptualized gratitude as both a transient emotional state and a stable dispositional trait that influences the way individuals perceive and respond to positive experiences. Individuals with high levels of gratitude are more likely to acknowledge the kindness of others, interpret life events positively, and maintain an appreciative outlook even during adversity. This positive orientation has been associated with greater happiness, optimism, emotional stability, and psychological well-being.

The importance of gratitude extends beyond psychological theory and is deeply embedded in cultural and religious traditions. Across Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, and other faiths, gratitude is regarded as a moral virtue that strengthens relationships and promotes social harmony. Within the

Islamic perspective, gratitude (Shukr) occupies a central position in daily life. The Holy Quran repeatedly emphasizes gratitude as a source of spiritual growth and increased blessings, stating: *"If you are grateful, I will surely increase you"* (Quran 14:7). In Pakistani society, where religious beliefs strongly influence individual attitudes and behaviors, gratitude is reflected through acts of generosity, hospitality, Zakat, Sadaqah, volunteerism, and community support. These practices reinforce social cohesion while encouraging individuals to recognize and reciprocate the kindness they receive.

Contemporary psychological research suggests that gratitude is far more than a pleasant emotional experience. It influences cognitive appraisals, emotional regulation, and interpersonal behavior in ways that enhance both individual and collective well-being. Emmons and Crumpler (2000) described gratitude as a fundamental component of healthy psychological functioning because it encourages individuals to focus on positive life experiences rather than personal shortcomings or daily stressors. Similarly, Wood, Joseph, and Linley (2007) identified gratitude as a reliable indicator of psychological well-being and demonstrated that grateful individuals report higher levels of life satisfaction and positive affect while experiencing lower levels of depression and anxiety. These findings suggest that gratitude functions as an important psychological resource that supports adaptive functioning across multiple domains of life.

One of the most important outcomes associated with gratitude is prosocial behavior. Prosocial behavior refers to voluntary actions intended to benefit other people without the expectation of external rewards. Such behaviors include helping, sharing, cooperating, comforting, volunteering, donating resources, and providing emotional or practical support to others. These behaviors strengthen interpersonal relationships, facilitate trust, and contribute to healthier and more cooperative communities. Within psychology, prosocial behavior has been described as an umbrella construct encompassing actions that protect or enhance the welfare of others, regardless of whether the recipient is a family member, friend, acquaintance, or stranger.

The relationship between gratitude and prosocial behavior has attracted considerable empirical attention during the past two decades. Gratitude appears to motivate individuals to reciprocate kindness by helping others, thereby creating positive cycles of generosity and cooperation. Rather than merely increasing positive mood, gratitude promotes moral behavior by encouraging individuals to recognize the value of supportive relationships and respond with empathy, compassion, and generosity. Experimental studies have demonstrated that individuals experiencing gratitude are more willing to assist others, even when helping requires personal effort or sacrifice. Consequently, gratitude has been recognized as one of the emotional mechanisms underlying altruistic and cooperative behavior.

Prosocial behavior is particularly important in societies facing economic, social, and psychological challenges. Acts of volunteerism, community service, charitable giving, and mutual support strengthen social capital and foster resilience within communities. Pakistan possesses a strong tradition of social support rooted in religious teachings and collectivistic cultural values. Nevertheless, increasing urbanization, economic pressures, and changing social structures highlight the importance of understanding psychological factors that encourage helping behavior among young adults. Investigating gratitude as a potential determinant of prosocial behavior may therefore contribute to both psychological theory and community development.

Another construct receiving increasing attention within positive psychology is resilience. Resilience refers to the capacity to adapt successfully to adversity, recover from stressful experiences, and maintain

psychological functioning despite significant challenges. Rather than implying the absence of stress or hardship, resilience reflects an individual's ability to recover, learn, and continue functioning effectively following adverse experiences. According to the American Psychological Association, resilience involves adapting well in the face of trauma, tragedy, threats, or significant sources of stress. Similarly, Masten described resilience as the capacity of a dynamic system to withstand disturbances that threaten its functioning while maintaining healthy development. These perspectives emphasize that resilience is a dynamic developmental process rather than a fixed personality characteristic.

Resilience has become increasingly relevant during young adulthood, a developmental period characterized by academic demands, career uncertainty, financial pressures, interpersonal transitions, and expanding social responsibilities. Young people who possess higher resilience generally demonstrate better emotional regulation, greater optimism, stronger coping strategies, and improved psychological adjustment when confronted with stressful life events. Consequently, identifying factors that strengthen resilience has become an important objective of positive psychological research.

Resilience has consistently been identified as one of the most important protective factors contributing to psychological well-being. Individuals with higher resilience are more capable of regulating emotions, maintaining optimism, adapting to changing circumstances, and recovering from stressful experiences. Although resilience was initially conceptualized as an extraordinary characteristic observed among individuals who successfully overcame traumatic experiences, contemporary research considers it a dynamic process that can be developed and strengthened through positive psychological resources, supportive relationships, and adaptive coping strategies. Rather than eliminating adversity, resilience enables individuals to respond constructively to challenges while maintaining healthy psychological functioning.

Among the psychological strengths believed to facilitate resilience, gratitude has received considerable empirical support. Grateful individuals tend to interpret stressful situations from a more optimistic perspective, recognize available social support, and focus on personal strengths rather than solely on difficulties. Consequently, gratitude has been associated with reduced depression, anxiety, hostility, and psychological distress, while simultaneously predicting greater life satisfaction, positive affect, self-esteem, optimism, and emotional well-being. These findings suggest that gratitude functions as a protective psychological factor that enhances individuals' capacity to cope effectively with adversity and maintain psychological health. Your thesis similarly highlights that grateful individuals experience better psychological functioning, healthier interpersonal relationships, improved sleep quality, and greater subjective well-being.

The relationship between gratitude and resilience is best explained through Fredrickson's Broaden-and-Build Theory of Positive Emotions. According to this theory, positive emotions broaden individuals' momentary thought-action repertoires, allowing them to think more creatively, remain open to new experiences, and engage in constructive social interactions. Repeated experiences of positive emotions gradually build enduring psychological, cognitive, and social resources that enhance future adaptation. Gratitude, as one of the core positive emotions, broadens individuals' perceptions beyond immediate stressors and encourages them to recognize supportive relationships, opportunities, and personal strengths. Over time, these broadened cognitive processes contribute to the development of resilience by increasing optimism, adaptive coping, emotional regulation, and interpersonal connectedness. Consequently, gratitude not only improves momentary emotional experiences but also creates lasting

psychological resources that enable individuals to withstand future adversity. This theoretical explanation provides a strong conceptual foundation for expecting a positive relationship between gratitude and resilience.

The development of resilience may also be understood through Seligman's 3P Model, which explains how individuals interpret adverse experiences. According to Seligman, resilience is influenced by three common cognitive distortions: personalization, permanence, and pervasiveness. Personalization refers to attributing every negative event to personal failure; permanence involves believing that adversity will continue indefinitely; and pervasiveness reflects the assumption that one negative event affects every aspect of life. Individuals who adopt these pessimistic explanatory styles are more vulnerable to emotional distress, whereas resilient individuals interpret adversity as temporary, specific, and manageable. Gratitude naturally complements this cognitive framework by encouraging individuals to appreciate positive experiences despite ongoing difficulties, thereby reducing pessimistic interpretations and strengthening adaptive coping. The interaction between gratitude and resilient explanatory styles provides a theoretical explanation for why grateful individuals often demonstrate greater psychological adjustment following stressful experiences.

Another important outcome associated with gratitude is prosocial behavior. Prosocial behavior encompasses voluntary actions intended to benefit others, including helping, sharing, cooperating, comforting, volunteering, and charitable giving. Such behaviors strengthen interpersonal relationships, increase trust, and contribute to healthier communities. Previous literature consistently demonstrates that gratitude motivates individuals to reciprocate kindness through acts of generosity and compassion. Rather than functioning merely as an emotional response, gratitude encourages individuals to recognize the value of social relationships and motivates them to contribute positively to the welfare of others. Experimental evidence has shown that grateful individuals are more likely to engage in helping behaviors even when such actions involve personal cost, suggesting that gratitude functions as a moral emotion promoting cooperation and altruism. Your thesis also emphasizes that prosocial behavior enhances subjective well-being, strengthens interpersonal relationships, and contributes to healthier societies by fostering cooperation and mutual support.

The association between prosocial behavior and resilience has also attracted increasing scholarly attention. Individuals who regularly engage in helping behaviors often report greater meaning in life, stronger social support, enhanced self-worth, and improved emotional well-being. Helping others creates reciprocal social relationships that provide emotional resources during periods of stress. Consequently, prosocial behavior may indirectly strengthen resilience by expanding supportive interpersonal networks and increasing opportunities for positive emotional experiences. This reciprocal relationship is particularly relevant for social workers, whose professional responsibilities involve assisting individuals experiencing psychological, social, and economic difficulties. Because social workers routinely engage in helping behaviors, they are frequently assumed to possess higher levels of gratitude, resilience, and prosocial behavior than individuals who are not formally involved in social service activities. Nevertheless, empirical findings remain inconsistent, indicating the need for further investigation.

Despite substantial international research examining gratitude, resilience, and prosocial behavior independently, comparatively few studies have investigated these constructs simultaneously within the Pakistani context. Existing literature has primarily focused on Western populations, limiting the

generalizability of findings to collectivistic societies where family support, religious beliefs, and community obligations strongly influence psychological functioning. Furthermore, very limited empirical evidence compares social workers with non-social workers regarding these positive psychological characteristics. Addressing this gap is particularly important because Pakistani society emphasizes gratitude, compassion, volunteerism, and community support through both cultural traditions and Islamic teachings. Understanding how these strengths operate among Pakistani youth may therefore provide culturally relevant evidence for designing interventions aimed at promoting psychological well-being and civic engagement.

Against this background, the present study examines the relationships among gratitude, resilience, and prosocial behavior among Pakistani youth while comparing social workers and non-social workers. Specifically, the study investigates whether gratitude is positively associated with resilience and prosocial behavior and whether individuals engaged in social work demonstrate higher levels of these positive psychological characteristics than those who are not involved in organized social service. The findings are expected to contribute to the growing body of indigenous positive psychology research and provide practical implications for educational institutions, mental health professionals, and organizations working to strengthen youth development and community well-being.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the current studies are;

1. To explore the relationship between gratitude, prosocial behavior and resilience.
2. To explore the effect of demographic variables on gratitude.

Hypotheses

1. There is likely to be a significant relationship between gratitude, prosocial behavior and resilience.
2. Social workers are likely to show more gratitude, prosocial behavior and resilience than nonsocial workers.
3. There are likely to be more gratitude, resilience and prosocial behavior in males as compare to females

Method

Research Design

The present study employed a **quantitative correlational comparative research design** to examine the relationships among gratitude, prosocial behavior, and resilience among Pakistani youth and to compare these psychological characteristics between social workers and non-social workers. A correlational design was considered appropriate because the primary objective was to investigate the associations among the study variables without manipulating any independent variable. Additionally, a comparative component was incorporated to determine whether individuals engaged in organized social work differed significantly from non-social workers in terms of gratitude, resilience, and prosocial behavior.

Participants

The sample consisted of **60 young adults**, including **30 social workers** and **30 non-social workers**, selected through **purposive sampling**. Equal representation of gender was maintained, with **30 males (50%)** and **30 females (50%)** participating in the study. Participants ranged in age from **18 to 28 years**. Of the total sample, **35 participants (58.3%)** were adults and **25 (41.7%)** were adolescents. Regarding educational attainment, **30 participants (50%)** were undergraduates, **20 (33.3%)** were graduates, and

10 (16.7%) were postgraduates. Most participants belonged to the middle socioeconomic class, while the remaining participants represented lower-middle and upper socioeconomic groups. Sample size was determined using **G*Power**, and purposive sampling was employed to recruit participants who fulfilled the inclusion criteria.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Individuals between **18 and 28 years of age** who voluntarily agreed to participate and were able to complete the questionnaires independently were included in the study. Participants engaged in volunteer work, non-governmental organizations, welfare services, blood donation campaigns, healthcare support, polio eradication initiatives, or other community service activities were categorized as **social workers**. Individuals not involved in organized or regular social service activities were categorized as **non-social workers**. Participants outside the specified age range or those providing incomplete responses were excluded from the study.

Measures

Demographic Information Form

A demographic information form developed by the researchers was used to collect participants' background information, including age, gender, educational level, socioeconomic status, and affiliation with social or non-governmental organizations.

Gratitude Questionnaire–Six Item Form (GQ-6)

Gratitude was measured using the **Gratitude Questionnaire–Six Item Form (GQ-6)** developed by McCullough, Emmons, and Tsang. The instrument consists of six self-report items assessing dispositional gratitude. Responses are recorded on a Likert-type scale, with higher scores indicating greater gratitude. In the present study, the scale demonstrated acceptable internal consistency (**Cronbach's $\alpha = .65$**). The observed score range was **14–42**, compared with the theoretical range of **6–42**. Skewness ($-.66$) and kurtosis ($.23$) indicated that the data were normally distributed.

Brief Resilience Scale (BRS)

Resilience was assessed using the **Brief Resilience Scale (BRS)** developed by Smith and colleagues (2008). The scale comprises six items measuring an individual's ability to recover from stressful situations. Three items are positively worded and three are negatively worded, requiring reverse scoring before calculating the overall score. Higher scores indicate greater resilience. In the present study, the BRS demonstrated good reliability (**Cronbach's $\alpha = .86$**), with an observed score range of **9–30**. The distribution of scores satisfied assumptions of normality (skewness = $.16$; kurtosis = $.07$).

Prosocial Behavior Scale

Prosocial behavior was measured using the **Prosocial Behavior Scale** developed by Caprara and Pastorelli (1993). The instrument consists of **16 items** assessing helping behavior, sharing, empathy, and concern for others. Responses are recorded on a five-point Likert scale ranging from **1 (Never/Almost Never True) to 5 (Almost Always/Always True)**. Higher scores indicate greater engagement in prosocial behaviors. In the present sample, the scale demonstrated excellent internal consistency (**Cronbach's $\alpha = .96$**), with an observed score range of **36–82**. Normality statistics supported the suitability of the data for parametric analyses (skewness = $-.34$; kurtosis = $-.35$).

Procedure

Prior to data collection, permission to use the standardized instruments was obtained from the respective authors. Formal approval was also secured from the relevant organizations and institutions

involved in participant recruitment. Participants were informed about the objectives of the study and assured that their responses would remain confidential and would be used exclusively for research purposes. After obtaining informed consent, questionnaires were administered both in person and online.

Participants were recruited from hospitals, non-governmental organizations, welfare organizations, and community service initiatives, including voluntary blood donation programs, polio eradication campaigns, and charitable organizations. Individuals employed at Gomal University and DHQ Hospital also participated. Online questionnaires were distributed after obtaining permission through electronic communication, enabling wider participation among volunteers.

Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to established ethical principles throughout the research process. Participation was entirely voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from all respondents before questionnaire administration. Participants were assured that their identities would remain anonymous and that all information would be treated confidentially. They were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any stage without penalty. Furthermore, respondents were assured that the collected data would be used solely for academic and research purposes.

Statistical Analysis

Data were analyzed using **IBM SPSS Statistics**. Descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations) were computed to summarize participant characteristics and study variables. Internal consistency of the instruments was assessed using Cronbach's alpha coefficients. Pearson product-moment correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationships among gratitude, resilience, and prosocial behavior. Independent-samples *t*-tests were performed to compare social workers and non-social workers, as well as male and female participants, on the study variables. Statistical significance was evaluated at the .05 level.

Results

Participant Characteristics

Table 1

<i>Descriptive analysis of study variables</i>		<i>(N=60)</i>
Variables	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	30	50
Female	30	50
Age		
Adolescents	25	41.7
Adults	35	58.3

Education		
Undergraduate	30	50
Graduate	20	33.3
Post Graduate	10	16.7
Category		
Social worker	30	50
Non-social	30	50

Table 1 shows the frequency distribution of all the variables involved i.e., age, gender, education and social or non-social worker category. There are 50% male and 50% female amongst the total of 60 respondents. According to the above tabulated frequencies there are 58.3% participants who belongs to the age group of adults whereas the rest 41.7% lie in the age group of adolescents. Above mention table shows that the majority of respondents which is 50% lie in the education group of graduates whereas 33.3 % of the whole sample lie in the education group of under-graduates and 16.7% of the respondents lie in the education group of post graduate.

Psychometric Properties of the Study Measures

Table 2.

Psychometric properties of study variables (N=60)

Variables	No. of items	A	Range		Skewness	Kurtosis
			Potential	actual		
GQ	6	.65	6-42	14-42	-.66	.23
PS	16	.96	16-80	36-82	-.34	-.35
BRS	6	.86	6-30	9-30	.16	.07

****Table 2 show psychometric properties of the study variable. It includes alpha reliability, potential and actual range, skewness and kurtosis for all scales including The Gratitude Questionnaire (GQ-6), The

Brief Resilience Scale (BRS) and Prosocial Behavior Scale (PS). The skewness of all the scales is within range of +1 to -1 which indicates that the data of all the variables is normally distributed.

Cronbach alpha reliability of the Gratitude Questionnaire (GQ-6), The Brief Resilience Scale (BRS) and Prosocial Behavior Scale (PS) ranged from .65 to .96, which demonstrates that all of the measures and their respective scales have good internal reliability and are appropriate to use on the sample of this study.

Relationship between Gratitude, Prosocial Behavior, and Resilience

Table 1

<i>Intercorrelation among study variables</i>			<i>(N=60)</i>
Variables	GQ	PS	BRS
GQ	-	.24*	.267**
PS	-	-	.39**
BRS	-	-	-

Note: To explore the relation among study variables i.e. The Gratitude Questionnaire (GQ-6), Prosocial Behavior Scale (PS) and The Brief Resilience Scale (BRS), Pearson Product-movement Correlation was used. Table 3 noted that gratitude is positively correlated to prosocial behavior with its correlation coefficient i.e., 0.24 a significant value with reference to $p < 0.01$ level. Here exists another positive correlation between gratitude and resilience which is also significant at level 0.01 with its coefficient of correlation at 0.26. There exists a significant relationship between prosocial behavior and resilience ($r = .39$).

Comparison between Social Workers and Non-Social Workers

Table 4

Mean, standard Deviations, and t-values of gratitude, resilience, prosocial behavior between social and non-social workers

Variables	Social Worker		Non-Social Worker		P	95% CL		Cohen's d
	M	SD	M	SD		LL	UL	
GQ	27.3	5.87	28.9	6.81	.00	.82	3.73	.43
BRS	18.1	2.11	18.1	2.66	.00	-.42	1.70	.16
PS	49.4	16.08	49.2	15.04	.41	-2.20	3.10	.04

Table 4 shows the difference between social workers and non-social workers in terms of variables by using Gratitude Questionnaire (GQ-6), Prosocial Behavior Scale (PS) and The Brief Resilience Scale (BRS)). Above mentioned scores does not proved our formulated hypothesis that social workers have more gratitude($M=27.3$, $p=.00$), prosocial behavior($M=49.4$, $p=.41$) and resilience(18.1 , $p=.00$) than non-social workers.

Table 5
Gender Differences

Mean, Standard deviation, and t-values of study variable

Variables	Male		Female		P	95% CL		Cohen's d
	M	SD	M	SD		LL	UL	
GQ	31.31	5.42	33.43	5.05	.54	-3.58	-.65	.40
BRS	18.46	3.66	17.88	3.99	.05	-.49	1.56	.15
PS	60.88	10.08	64.75	8.48	.33	-6.46	-1.27	.41

Table 5 illustrate the difference between male and female in terms of gratitude, resilience and prosocial behavior. Above mentioned analysis showed that males show more resilience ($M=18.46$, $p=.05$) as compare to females. Similarly, females show more gratitude($M=31.31$, $p=.54$) and prosocial behavior($M=60.88$, $p=.33$) as compare to males.

Discussion

The present study examined the relationships among gratitude, resilience, and prosocial behavior among Pakistani youth and compared these positive psychological characteristics between social workers and non-social workers. Guided by the principles of positive psychology, the study sought to determine whether gratitude functions as a psychological strength associated with adaptive coping and helping behavior and whether engagement in social work is linked with higher levels of these characteristics. Overall, the findings demonstrated significant positive associations among gratitude, resilience, and prosocial behavior, whereas no statistically significant differences were observed between social workers and non-social workers. These findings partially supported the proposed hypotheses and contribute to the growing body of positive psychology literature within the Pakistani context.

The first objective of the study was to examine the relationship between gratitude and prosocial behavior. Consistent with the proposed hypothesis, the findings indicated a positive association between these two variables, suggesting that individuals with higher levels of gratitude were more likely to engage in behaviors intended to benefit others. This finding is consistent with the conceptualization of gratitude as a moral emotion that motivates reciprocity and strengthens interpersonal relationships. Individuals who appreciate the kindness and support they receive from others often experience a desire to reciprocate these benefits through acts of generosity, cooperation, and helping behavior. Gratitude therefore extends beyond an emotional response and becomes a motivational force that encourages positive social interaction.

The present finding is consistent with previous research demonstrating that gratitude enhances empathy, altruism, cooperation, and social responsibility. Emmons and McCullough (2003) argued that grateful individuals become increasingly aware of the contributions made by others, which encourages reciprocal helping behaviors. Similarly, Bartlett and DeSteno (2006) reported that experimentally induced gratitude significantly increased participants' willingness to help strangers, even when helping required personal effort. Algoe (2012) further proposed that gratitude strengthens social bonds by promoting trust, reciprocity, and relationship maintenance. The findings of the present study therefore reinforce the proposition that gratitude represents an important psychological mechanism underlying prosocial behavior.

The second objective was to investigate the relationship between gratitude and resilience. As hypothesized, gratitude demonstrated a positive association with resilience, indicating that participants who reported higher gratitude also exhibited greater capacity to recover from stressful experiences and adapt to adversity. This finding suggests that gratitude may function as an adaptive cognitive and emotional resource that enables individuals to focus on available strengths and social support rather than becoming overwhelmed by negative experiences.

This finding can be interpreted through Fredrickson's Broaden-and-Build Theory, which proposes that positive emotions expand individuals' cognitive and behavioral repertoires while gradually building enduring psychological resources. Gratitude encourages individuals to recognize positive aspects of life despite adversity, broadens their perspectives, and facilitates adaptive coping strategies. Repeated experiences of gratitude may therefore strengthen resilience by fostering optimism, emotional regulation, and supportive interpersonal relationships. Previous investigations by Fredrickson et al. (2003), Wood et al. (2008), and Southwick et al. (2014) similarly concluded that gratitude contributes to resilience by promoting positive emotional experiences and strengthening coping resources during stressful circumstances.

The findings also support Seligman's explanatory model of resilience, which suggests that resilient individuals interpret adversity as temporary, specific, and manageable rather than permanent and overwhelming. Gratitude naturally complements this adaptive explanatory style because grateful individuals tend to recognize positive experiences even during difficult situations. Consequently, gratitude may reduce pessimistic thinking while encouraging optimism, hope, and constructive problem-solving, thereby enhancing resilience.

The third objective examined the relationship between prosocial behavior and resilience. The positive association observed between these variables suggests that individuals who regularly engage in helping behaviors are also more capable of coping effectively with stress and adversity. One possible explanation is that helping others strengthens social connectedness, increases perceived social support, and provides a greater sense of meaning and purpose in life. These social and emotional resources may, in turn, facilitate resilience by reducing feelings of isolation and promoting adaptive coping during challenging circumstances. This interpretation is consistent with previous research indicating that supportive interpersonal relationships and community engagement represent important protective factors for psychological well-being and resilience.

Contrary to expectations, no statistically significant differences were observed between social workers and non-social workers regarding gratitude, resilience, or prosocial behavior. Although social workers are generally expected to demonstrate higher levels of helping behavior because of their professional responsibilities, the findings suggest that these psychological strengths may not be determined solely by occupational involvement. Several explanations may account for this result. First, Pakistani society is predominantly collectivistic, emphasizing family cohesion, religious values, hospitality, and mutual assistance regardless of occupational status. Consequently, individuals who are not formally engaged in social work may still regularly participate in charitable activities, community support, and acts of kindness through cultural and religious practices. Such experiences may contribute to comparable levels of gratitude and prosocial behavior across both groups.

Second, the relatively small sample size may have limited the statistical power to detect subtle group differences. Although minor differences in mean scores were observed, these variations were insufficient to achieve statistical significance. Future studies employing larger and more diverse samples may provide greater clarity regarding occupational differences in positive psychological characteristics. Additionally, social work encompasses diverse professional roles that vary considerably in terms of responsibilities, exposure to adversity, organizational support, and opportunities for community engagement. These variations may have reduced the homogeneity of the social worker group and influenced the observed findings.

Overall, the present findings support the central assumptions of positive psychology by demonstrating that gratitude, resilience, and prosocial behavior are closely interconnected psychological strengths that contribute to healthy adjustment and interpersonal functioning. Rather than functioning independently, these constructs appear to reinforce one another in promoting psychological well-being and adaptive social behavior. Encouraging gratitude through educational programs, counseling interventions, and community initiatives may therefore strengthen resilience while simultaneously fostering greater prosocial engagement among young adults.

Strengths of the Study

The present study possesses several methodological and theoretical strengths that enhance its contribution to the field of positive psychology. First, it simultaneously examined three important positive psychological constructs—gratitude, resilience, and prosocial behavior—within a single conceptual framework. Although previous investigations have explored these variables independently,

comparatively few studies have examined their interrelationships simultaneously among Pakistani youth. This integrated approach provides a broader understanding of the psychological mechanisms underlying adaptive functioning and helping behavior.

Second, the study contributes to the limited indigenous literature on positive psychology in Pakistan. Most empirical evidence regarding gratitude and resilience has originated from Western societies, where cultural values differ considerably from those of collectivistic cultures. By investigating these constructs within a Pakistani sample, the present study provides culturally relevant evidence and extends the applicability of positive psychology theories to non-Western populations.

Another important strength lies in the use of standardized psychometric instruments with established reliability and validity. The Gratitude Questionnaire (GQ-6), Brief Resilience Scale (BRS), and Prosocial Behavior Scale are internationally recognized measures that have demonstrated satisfactory psychometric properties. Their use strengthens the credibility and scientific rigor of the findings.

Furthermore, the comparative inclusion of social workers and non-social workers provides an additional contribution to the literature. Although statistically significant group differences were not observed, the comparison offers valuable insight into whether professional engagement in community service is associated with enhanced psychological strengths. This comparison has received limited attention within the Pakistani context and therefore represents a meaningful addition to existing research.

Finally, the study possesses practical relevance for psychologists, counselors, educators, social workers, and policymakers by emphasizing gratitude as an important psychological resource associated with resilience and helping behavior among young adults.

Limitations of the Study

Despite its contributions, several limitations should be acknowledged when interpreting the findings. The most important limitation concerns the relatively small sample size. The study included only sixty participants, which may have reduced statistical power and limited the generalizability of the findings. Future studies involving larger and more representative samples may provide more stable estimates and permit more sophisticated statistical analyses.

Second, purposive sampling was employed to recruit participants. Although appropriate for the objectives of the study, this non-probability sampling technique restricts the representativeness of the sample and limits the extent to which findings can be generalized to the wider Pakistani population.

Another limitation involves the exclusive reliance on self-report questionnaires. Self-report measures are susceptible to social desirability bias, acquiescence bias, and inaccurate self-perceptions. Participants may unintentionally overestimate socially desirable characteristics such as gratitude or helping behavior. The cross-sectional nature of the research design represents another limitation. Since data were collected at a single point in time, causal relationships among gratitude, resilience, and prosocial behavior cannot be established. Longitudinal and experimental studies are required to determine the directionality of these relationships.

Furthermore, the study focused exclusively on young adults between 18 and 28 years of age. Consequently, the findings cannot automatically be generalized to adolescents, middle-aged adults, or older populations.

Finally, several potentially influential variables—including personality traits, emotional intelligence, perceived social support, religiosity, coping styles, socioeconomic circumstances, and family functioning—were not examined. Future investigations should incorporate these variables to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the determinants of gratitude, resilience, and prosocial behavior.

Practical Implications

The findings of the present study have important implications for psychological practice, education, and community development.

Educational institutions may incorporate gratitude-based activities into student development programs through reflective writing, gratitude journals, appreciation exercises, peer recognition activities, and community engagement initiatives. Such interventions may strengthen emotional well-being while encouraging healthier interpersonal relationships.

Mental health professionals may integrate gratitude-focused interventions within cognitive-behavioral therapy and positive psychology interventions to enhance resilience, optimism, emotional regulation, and adaptive coping among individuals experiencing stress, anxiety, or life difficulties.

Universities and community organizations should encourage volunteerism, social service, and civic engagement opportunities that enable young adults to develop empathy, compassion, cooperation, and social responsibility. Such experiences may strengthen psychological well-being while simultaneously benefiting society.

Government agencies and non-governmental organizations may utilize the findings when designing youth development policies emphasizing positive mental health, community participation, volunteerism, and resilience-building programs.

Parents and teachers also play an essential role in cultivating gratitude during childhood and adolescence by modeling appreciation, encouraging kindness, and reinforcing helping behaviors. Developing these strengths early in life may contribute to healthier emotional adjustment and stronger interpersonal relationships throughout adulthood.

Recommendations for Future Research

Future research should recruit larger samples representing different provinces, educational institutions, occupations, and socioeconomic backgrounds to improve the generalizability of findings.

Longitudinal research designs are recommended to investigate whether gratitude predicts subsequent changes in resilience and prosocial behavior over time and to establish causal relationships among these constructs.

Future investigations may also examine emotional intelligence, optimism, hope, mindfulness, forgiveness, self-compassion, life satisfaction, social support, and personality traits as potential mediators or moderators explaining the relationships observed in the present study.

Researchers should compare additional occupational groups, including teachers, healthcare professionals, psychologists, humanitarian workers, and university students, to determine whether occupational experiences influence positive psychological characteristics differently.

Experimental studies evaluating the effectiveness of gratitude-based interventions in enhancing resilience and prosocial behavior would make valuable contributions to positive psychology literature and provide practical evidence for intervention development.

Finally, qualitative investigations exploring individuals' lived experiences of gratitude and resilience may complement quantitative findings and provide deeper insight into the cultural meanings attached to these constructs within Pakistani society.

Conclusion

The present study examined the relationships among gratitude, resilience, and prosocial behavior while comparing these positive psychological characteristics between social workers and non-social workers in Pakistan. The findings demonstrated that gratitude was positively associated with both resilience and prosocial behavior, while resilience was also positively associated with prosocial behavior. These findings reinforce the central assumptions of positive psychology by suggesting that positive emotional strengths contribute to adaptive coping, healthier interpersonal relationships, and psychological well-being.

Contrary to the proposed hypotheses, social workers and non-social workers did not differ significantly in gratitude, resilience, or prosocial behavior. This finding suggests that these psychological strengths may develop through broader cultural, familial, educational, and religious influences rather than occupational involvement alone. In collectivistic societies such as Pakistan, values emphasizing compassion, generosity, hospitality, and mutual support may contribute to the development of gratitude and helping behavior across diverse groups.

The findings further support Fredrickson's Broaden-and-Build Theory by demonstrating that gratitude functions as a positive emotional resource capable of strengthening resilience and promoting prosocial engagement. Similarly, the results are consistent with positive psychology perspectives emphasizing that psychological strengths enhance well-being and facilitate successful adaptation to life's challenges.

Overall, gratitude appears to represent more than a positive emotional experience; it serves as an enduring psychological resource that promotes resilience, strengthens helping behavior, and contributes to healthier individuals and communities. Encouraging gratitude through educational, clinical, organizational, and community-based interventions may therefore play an important role in promoting positive mental health and social well-being among Pakistani youth.

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