

# Gratitude, Life Satisfaction And Well-Being In Adults And Adolescents: A Comparative Analysis

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## Abstract:

**Background:** In this fast-paced world, constructs like gratitude, life satisfaction and well-being have become increasingly important and are also vital for one's mental health. These three factors contribute positively on their own and are interconnected. This study holds value as it attempts to examine these three key constructs of positive psychology among middle-aged adults and adolescents. This study specifically involves adolescents and middle-aged adults because adolescents are in a transitional period during which they experience emotional and social changes. Middle-aged individuals, on the other hand, have established life roles, responsibilities and mid-life crisis which may influence their perspectives on gratitude, life satisfaction and well-being. There are very limited studies which have focused on these three variables in a single integrated framework explicitly. Thus, this study allows for a deeper understanding of how age impacts the relationship between gratitude, life satisfaction and well-being.

**Materials and Methods:** A sample size of 100 participants consisting of 50 adolescents (13-18 years) and 50 adults (45-55 years) were taken for the study. For the assessment of dispositional gratitude, the participants were evaluated with The Gratitude Questionnaire-Six Item Form (GQ-6). In order to assess life satisfaction, the participants were evaluated with Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS) and finally to examine the well-being of the participants they were evaluated with The World Health Organization- Five well-being Index (WHO-5). The present study followed a non-experimental, quantitative and cross-sectional design. Descriptive statistics (Mean and standard deviation) were calculated for the variables, gratitude, life satisfaction and wellbeing. Pearson Product moment correlation was computed to investigate the relationship between these three variables. In addition, independent sample t tests were conducted to examine whether there were significant differences in gratitude, life satisfaction and wellbeing between adults and adolescents.

**Results:** The correlation result indicated a significant positive relationship between gratitude, life satisfaction and wellbeing. Results from Independent sample t test showed significant differences between adolescents and adults in gratitude, life satisfaction and wellbeing ( $p < 0.01$ ) indicating that age can also play role in the experience of these three constructs.

**Conclusion:** These constructs are interdependent in contributing to psychological health. This relationship is not only statistical but also reflects that encouraging one of the three can boost the other two making them important for improving mental health and quality of life. From the mean scores, it is depicted that adults reported higher gratitude, life satisfaction and well-being as compared to adolescents. Thus, age specific interventions should be developed to foster these three key constructs.

**Key Words:** Gratitude, Life satisfaction, Wellbeing, Adolescents, Adults

Date of Submission: 17-09-2025

Date of Acceptance: 27-09-2025

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## I. Introduction

Positive psychology is one of the most recent and rapidly developing disciplines of psychology, and it has grabbed the interest of psychologists and sociologists around the world. Martin Seligman introduced positive psychology in 1998. This field primarily emphasizes that prevention is better than cure. There are wide range of concepts of positive psychology that has been covered by research such as wellbeing, gratitude, resilience, life satisfaction, happiness and more.

Gratitude is not only about thanking people but also recognizing and appreciating every small or big things in one's life. Gratitude is the recognition that one's life is benefitted by someone or any external power. Dispositional gratitude is the extent to which the individuals are predisposed to recognize the positive aspects of life and express thankfulness. There are numerous studies on gratitude which has shown how gratitude impacts positively. Researches have also shown gratitude fosters wellbeing and people who are grateful are happier and less stressed. Gratitude also motivates prosocial behaviour as it is quite evident that people engage in more helping behaviour, when they realise, they are being recognised and appreciated. Also, when individuals are

helped by others, they often wish to return the favour and have a desire to give back. Thus, they also help others. Sukkyung you, June lee and yunoug lee(2020) did a study on 877 adolescents in which they showed gratitude had an influence on prosocial and problem behaviours and social support was a mediating factor. McCullough, Robert Emmons are among the most influential researchers who have contributed to the field of gratitude psychology. Their work laid the foundation in the field of dispositional gratitude. They conducted studies in which participants were randomly assigned to one of three experimental conditions: gratitude group, hassles group, or neutral group, and they kept weekly (study 1) or daily (study 2) records of their mood, coping, health behaviours, and so on, and it was discovered that the gratitude group had higher levels of wellbeing across several. Thus, these evidences support the fact that gratitude is associated with greater happiness. Though state gratitude is situation specific, dispositional gratitude is stable and it leads to more positive experiences.

Life satisfaction is basically an evaluation of a person's quality of life. Life satisfaction of individuals depends on several domains of life like finance, health, relationship and many more. Life satisfaction is the overall assessment of feelings and attitude towards life at a specific point of time. It depends on several aspects and dimensions of wellbeing like emotional, psychological or social aspects and that's why life satisfaction is a major component of wellbeing. Farnaz Mehdi pour Maralani (2016) examined the association between happiness and life satisfaction, as well as the function of resilience as a mediating factor. The findings revealed that there was a positive and significant association between life satisfaction and happiness, and resilience also mediated this relationship. Shefali SK(2018) did a study to study the level of life satisfaction and self- efficacy among young adults. Sample included 60 young adults 30,males and 30 females .The findings indicated there is significant relationship between these two variables but no significant gender difference in the level of life satisfaction and self-efficacy among young adults. Satisfied persons are more likely to engage in healthy behaviours such as frequent exercise and appropriate sleep. Santi Suladari et al (2025) conducted a study on 166 young adults and 113 older adults. Results depicted that life satisfaction was significantly higher in older adults than younger adults.

'Wellbeing' literally refers to general health and happiness. It is the most commonly used term in our day to day lives. The simplest meaning of wellbeing is wellness or "feeling well" due to function of various positive aspects in life. Wellbeing is a very broad concept and has several dimensions like physical wellbeing, psychological wellbeing, emotional wellbeing and many more. Among the different types of wellbeing, psychological wellbeing is the backbone and serves as a foundation of overall wellness as it is based on how individuals evaluate or perceive their lives emotionally and mentally. People with psychological wellbeing are happy and also, they function well in all domains of life. Nicola S. Schutte et al (2011) did a study to explore whether emotional intelligence mediates the relationship between mindfulness and subjective well-being on 125 university students. Results showed that Greater mindfulness was significantly associated with more positive affect, more life satisfaction and less negative affect. Greater mindfulness was also associated with higher emotional intelligence. Higher emotional intelligence was associated with more positive affect, more life satisfaction and less negative affect.

Gratitude, life satisfaction, and wellbeing are interconnected constructs in positive psychology and all have significant effects on an individual's mental health. These three factors contribute positively on their own, and they are interconnected. Dr Shamini Srivastava et al (2024) did a study on 300 college students aged between 18 to 24 years to examine the link between gratitude, life satisfaction and psychological wellbeing. The results depicted a significant positive relationship among these variables and also, gratitude predicted psychological wellbeing and life satisfaction among college students. Extensive studies have been done taking into account these three constructs. Abhijeet Singh Chauhan et al(2024) did a study to explore the role of well-being in the relationship between gratitude and life satisfaction and how gender moderates the relationship between gratitude, life satisfaction and mental well-being of students. The study was done on 453 students. The sample contained 210 male students and 243 female students. The study found that gratitude had a significant impact on mental wellbeing of students of all genders. Gratitude was also shown to meaningfully influence the life satisfaction levels of both male and female participants. Additionally, the research also indicated that mental wellbeing also significantly affected life satisfaction across both genders, male and female.

The current study aims at exploring the relationship between three vital positive values- gratitude, life satisfaction and wellbeing which is directly linked with boosting an individual's overall psychological health. Apart from this, this study also aims at comparing adolescents and adults on gratitude, life satisfaction and wellbeing.

## **II. Material And Methods**

The present study followed a cross-sectional study to assess the gratitude, life satisfaction in middle-aged adults and adolescents. The study aimed to examine the relationship between gratitude, life satisfaction and wellbeing and also to determine whether significant differences are there in these variables between adolescents and adults. The present study has three dependent variables which are gratitude, life satisfaction and well-being and age group is the independent variable categorized as adolescents and middle-aged adults. To assess gratitude,

participants were evaluated with The Gratitude questionnaire six item form(GQ-6). In order to assess life satisfaction, the participants were evaluated with Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS) and finally to examine the well-being of the participants they were evaluated with The World Health Organization- Five well-being Index (WHO-5).

**Study Design:** Non-experimental, cross-sectional design

**Study Location:** Odisha

**Sample Size:** 100 participants consisting of 50 adolescents (13-18 years) and 50 adults (45-55 years) both males and females

**Subjects and selection method:** A total of 100 participants were taken for the study consisting of 50 adolescents (13-18 years) and 50 adults (45-55 years) using a non-probability sampling method by combining purposive and convenience sampling techniques. The participants were from different parts of Odisha. The adolescent group included participants who were in middle to late adolescence. The adult group included individuals in middle adulthood.

**Inclusion Criteria:**

1. Adolescents (13-18 years)
2. Adults (45-55 years)
3. Either sex

**Exclusion Criteria:**

1. Aged < 13 years
2. Aged > 55 years
3. Participants diagnosed with severe psychiatric or any other neurological conditions

**Procedure methodology**

The study was conducted on a sample of 100 participants, consisting of 50 adolescents (13-18years) and 50 adults (45-55years) of Odisha. Participants were contacted through social media networks where they were provided with the forms digitally to access the survey. Informed consent was embedded within the google form itself where the participants confirmed their voluntary participation to take part in the research. . Clear instructions were provided to ensure participants responded correctly. There was also a section in the form for collecting basic demographic information such as name, age, gender. The responses of the participants were treated with strict confidentiality and they were assured that their responses would be used for research purposes only. After ensuring, that all the required number of responses were complete, the data analysis was performed through Microsoft Excel and SPSS. Descriptive statistics (Mean and standard deviation) were calculated for the variables, gratitude, life satisfaction and wellbeing. Pearson correlation analysis and independent sample t tests were carried using SPSS software. The correlation helped in exploring the relationship among gratitude, life satisfaction and wellbeing. Further, Independent t tests were used to determine whether there were significant differences between adolescents and middle-aged adults on these three variables.

**Statistical analysis**

Statistical analyses were performed through SPSS software. Descriptive statistics was calculated to find out the mean and standard deviation. Pearson correlation analysis was carried to explore the relationship between gratitude, life satisfaction and well-being and independent sample t tests were employed to see whether any significant difference exists in these three variables between middle aged adults and adolescents. The Effect size was also calculated using Cohen's d for both the age groups comparison in gratitude, life satisfaction and well-being.

### **III. Result**

Result table-1 presents the mean and standard deviation scores of gratitude, life satisfaction and well-being of all the 100 participants (50 middle aged-adults and 50 adolescents). The mean score and standard deviation scores of participants on gratitude are 30.70 and 7.11 respectively. The mean and standard deviation scores of life satisfaction are 22.20 and 6.84 respectively. The mean and standard deviation scores of well-being are 13.69 and 5.68 respectively.

**Table no 1:** Descriptive statistics for gratitude, life satisfaction and well-being

Variables	N	Mean	SD
gratitude	100	30.70	7.11
life satisfaction	100	22.20	6.84
well-being	100	13.69	5.68

In the result table-2, Pearson product moment correlation coefficient was computed to examine the relationship between gratitude, life satisfaction and well-being. Mean and standard deviation scores are also computed. The results indicate significant positive correlations between all the three variables. This pattern suggests that individuals who experience greater gratitude, also tend to report higher life satisfaction and both of these factors are also associated with increased wellbeing. All correlations are significant at the  $p < 0.01$ . Gratitude has a strong correlation with life satisfaction( $r = 0.606$ ) suggesting that as participants' gratitude increased, their life satisfaction also increased. In addition, gratitude has a moderate correlation with wellbeing( $r = 0.494$ ) which also suggests a meaningful relationship. Life satisfaction and well-being also have moderate correlation( $r = 0.492$ ) which also indicates that higher life satisfaction tends to coincide with better psychological well-being, although the association is not as strong as gratitude and life satisfaction.

**Table no 2** shows *Correlation between Gratitude, Life satisfaction and Well-being*

Variables	N	Mean	SD	1	2	3
Gratitude	100	30.70	7.11		.606**	.494**
Life satisfaction	100	22.20	6.84	.606**		.492**
Wellbeing	100	13.69	5.68	.494**	.492**	

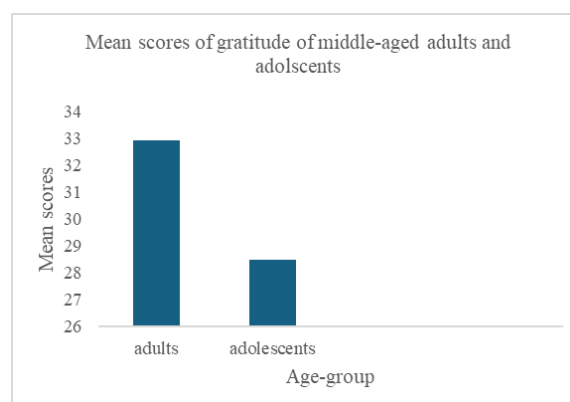
Note. \*\* $p < 0.01$  (2-tailed).

Result table 3 presents the results of an independent sample t-test conducted to determine whether there are significant differences in gratitude between 50 adolescents and 50 middle aged adults. The mean and standard deviation scores of middle-aged adults are 32.92 and 6.38 respectively. On the other hand, the mean and standard deviation scores of adolescents are 28.48 and 7.17 respectively. The findings revealed a statistically significant difference in gratitude scores between the two groups. The t value 3.270 and p value is 0.001. The p value is less than 0.01( $p < 0.01$ ) indicating that the difference is statistically significant. . A comparison of the mean scores indicates that middle-aged adults reported higher gratitude than adolescents. The effect size as measured by Cohen's d was 0.65 indicating a medium to large effect. This suggests that difference in gratitude between the two age groups is not only statistically significant but also meaningful.

**Table no 3** shows Independent sample t test comparing gratitude between middle-aged adults and adolescents.

Note.  $t(df) = t$  statistics (degrees of freedom),  $p$  = significance level

	Middle-aged adults(n=50)		Adolescents(n=50)				
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	$t(98)$	$p$	Cohen's d
Gratitude	32.92	6.38	28.48	7.17	3.270	.001*	0.65



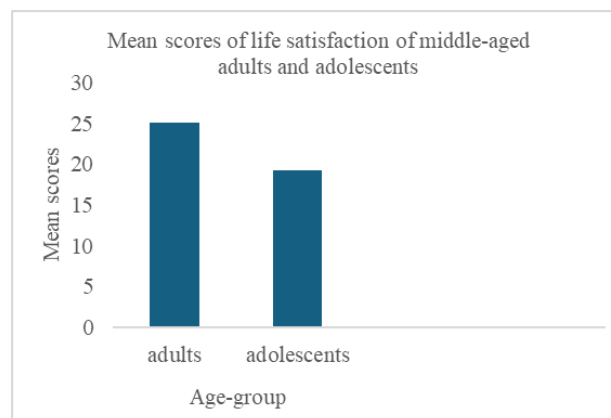
Result table 4 presents the results of an independent sample t-test conducted to determine whether there are significant differences in life satisfaction between 50 adolescents and 50 middle aged adults. The mean and standard deviation scores of middle-aged adults are 25.10 and 6.36 respectively. The mean and standard deviation scores of adolescents are 19.30 and 6.09 respectively. The findings revealed a statistically significant difference

in life satisfaction scores between the two groups. The  $t$  value is 4.657 and  $p$  value is 0.000. The  $p$  value is less than 0.01 ( $p < 0.01$ ) indicating that the difference is statistically significant. A comparison of the mean scores indicates that middle-aged adults reported higher life satisfaction than adolescents. The effect size as measured by Cohen's  $d$  was approximately 0.93 which indicates a large effect. This suggests that difference in life satisfaction between the two age groups is not only statistically significant but also meaningful.

**Table no 4** shows Independent sample  $t$  test comparing life satisfaction between middle-aged adults and adolescents

	Middle-aged adults( $n=50$ )		Adolescents( $n=50$ )				
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	$t(98)$	$p$	Cohen's $d$
Life satisfaction	25.10	6.36	19.30	6.09	4.657	.000*	0.93

Note.  $t(df)$ = $t$  statistics (degrees of freedom),  $p$ =significance level

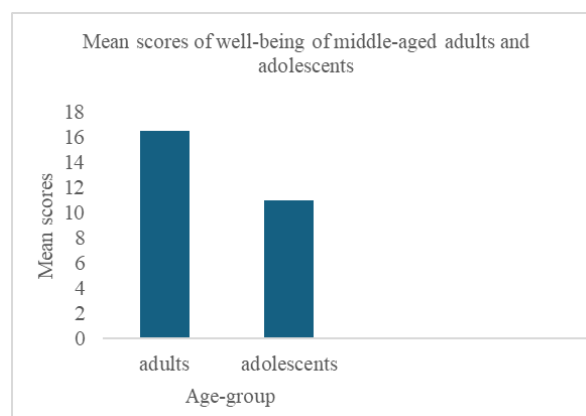


Result table 5 presents the results of an independent sample  $t$ -test conducted to determine whether there are significant differences in well-being between 50 adolescents and 50 middle aged adults. The mean and standard deviation scores of middle-aged adults are 16.44 and 5.84 respectively. On the other hand, the mean and standard deviation scores of adolescents are 10.94 and 3.96 respectively. The findings revealed a statistically significant difference in life satisfaction scores between the two groups. The  $t$  value is 5.512 and  $p$  value is 0.000. The  $p$  value is less than 0.01 indicating that the difference is statistically significant. A comparison of the mean scores indicates that middle-aged adults reported higher well-being than adolescents. The effect size as measured by Cohen's  $d$  was 1.10 which indicates a very large and meaningful difference in wellbeing between the two groups.

**Table no 5** shows Independent sample  $t$  test comparing Well-being between middle-aged adults and adolescents.

	Middle-aged adults( $n=50$ )		Adolescents( $n=50$ )				
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	$t(98)$	$p$	Cohen's $d$
Well-being	16.44	5.84	10.94	3.96	5.512	.000*	1.10

Note.  $t(df)$ = $t$  statistics (degrees of freedom),  $p$ =significance level



#### IV. Discussion

The findings of the present study revealed a significant positive correlation between gratitude, life satisfaction and well-being which These findings are consistent with some existing literatures and highlighting that gratitude as a powerful factor in enhancing happiness and well-being(Mc Cullough and Emmons, 2003). But the present study contradicts with another research study done by Alen Saji et al (2022) who examined the relationship between gratitude, life satisfaction and well-being among young adults during covid-19 and the results revealed that there was no statistically significant relationship between gratitude and life satisfaction but the present study indicated a strong relationship between gratitude and life satisfaction. In the present study, Gratitude showed a moderate correlation with wellbeing. Similarly, a moderate correlation was observed between life satisfaction and well-being. In addition, significant differences were found on these three variables between adults and adolescents. If we compare from the mean scores then it is observed that, adults scored higher than adolescents on all three measures. . If we compare from the mean scores then it is observed that, adults scored higher than adolescents on all three measures. Notably, the effect sizes calculated using Cohen's *d* provide valuable insights into the practical significance of these differences. Gratitude exhibited a medium to large effect, life satisfaction showed a large effect and wellbeing demonstrated a very large effect suggesting not only significant difference but also meaningful difference. Interestingly, these findings challenge some earlier studies. However, the cultural context, sample size may play a role. William J. Chopik et al (2017) in their research study found out that across three age samples, gratitude was highest among older adults and lower among middle-aged and younger adults which contradicts the present findings. Froh et al(2007) did a study on early adolescents where he randomly assigned participants to experimental and control group and found that those who practiced gratitude, reported higher life satisfaction and wellbeing. This suggests that age alone doesn't determine gratitude. The research studies comparing these two specific age groups are limited. More studies should be done to examine how age is playing a role in shaping these three vital constructs. Future research should consider exploring these variables across different age-groups and other factors that influences gratitude, life satisfaction and overall well-being of an individual.

#### V. Conclusion

This study examined the connections among gratitude, life satisfaction and well-being while assessing the differences between middle-aged adults and adolescents on these three variables. This study gives insights into the interconnectedness of these vital concepts in positive psychology while revealing how these dynamics vary between adults and adolescents. The results revealed a positive correlation between these three variables. This suggests that individuals who experience higher levels of gratitude are more likely to feel satisfied with their lives and report higher subjective well-being. These constructs are interdependent in contributing to psychological health. This relationship is not only statistical but also reflects encouraging one of the three can boost the other two making them important for improving mental health and quality of life. In addition, significant differences were found in gratitude, life satisfaction and well-being between adolescents and middle-aged adults. From the mean scores, it is depicted that adults reported higher gratitude, life satisfaction and well-being as compared to adolescents. The effect sizes indicated that the difference in life satisfaction and wellbeing between adults and adolescents was large. The reason could be anything like experience, responsibilities of adults which may shape their perspectives differently than adolescents who are at a transitional phase of life. By identifying the key age group differences, this study emphasizes the need for age specific interventions to foster these three key constructs. Future research should consider exploring these variables different age-groups and also across different cross-cultural contexts.

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