



**RESEARCH PAPER**

**Mediating Effect of Coping Strategies in the Relationship between Gratitude and Life Satisfaction among Professionals**

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**ABSTRACT**

The present study investigated the relationship between gratitude, coping strategies and satisfaction with life, moreover, mediating role of coping strategies was also investigated. For this purpose, a sample of 300 professionals (doctors, bankers, teachers) were recruited from private and government sectors. Convenient sampling was employed to recruit samples, cross-sectional design was used in this research. The Gratitude Questionnaire (McCullough & Emmons, 2002), Coping strategy scale (Grych, Hamby & Banyard, 2013) and Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener, Emmons & Griffin, 1985) were used to investigate the study variables. Statistical analysis revealed that gratitude had a positive relationship with coping skills and satisfaction with life, moreover, coping skills had significant positive relationship with satisfaction of life. It was also elucidated that coping strategies were mediating the relationship between gratitude and satisfactions of life. Maintaining a connection between gratitude and coping may propose fresh avenues for studies on gratitude approaches. Results of one study can be calculated in the creation of intervention and solutions based primarily on the usage of coping mechanisms that aim not only to alleviate tension but also to improve satisfaction with life in higher professionals.

**KEYWORDS** Coping Strategy, Gratitude, Satisfaction with Life

**Introduction**

Coping strategies are commonly used by professionals to improve their abilities, self-esteem which contribute to enhancing their quality of work and life satisfaction as well (Tsui Pui Ki, 2009). Effective use of coping is associated with low stress and improved psychological well-being in professionals (Rout, 2000). The efficacy of coping strategies depends on the form of stress, the person, and the situations. Thoughtful people know that several life experiences are unpredictable, yet this knowledge should not leave them helpless but instead they have practiced dealing with such challenges (Gluck, 2013). If a person's capacity to cope with challenges occurs in the environment and the solution of these problems is (Lazarous, 1993), involves preparation, managing, and planning (Folkman, & Moskowitz, 2004). Positive coping mechanisms enhance the performance of employees and maladaptive coping strategy decreases its effects or increases the stressors. one study found that adaptive coping strategies are positively correlated with gratitude and maladaptive coping strategies are negatively correlated with gratitude (Kaniuka et al., 2020).

**Gratitude**

Gratitude is a feeling that reflects our recognition of the positive behavior that others have done for us (Fox, 2015) and one of the aspects of personality that has gained researchers' attention in the current era. Gratitude is intended as both a disposition and a state or emotion. Gratitude is appraised as a feeling through which people perceive valued things of their lives (Wood, Froh, & Geraghty, 2010) these people appear to be more

responsive towards social activity by demonstrate positive social actions, so they are emotionally aware, generous, cooperative, and respectful of others, and having fewer materialistic goals (McCullough, Emmons, & Tsang, 2002). This type of virtues strengthens social relationships and helps people to cope with stressful situations (Lyubomirsky, Sheldon & Schkade, 2005). An individual with the best levels of gratitude can easily encounter everyday experiences and comfortably deal with the challenges (stressors) that occur in their lives, rather than an individual with a reduced rate of gratitude, can feel psychological distress (Lee, Kim, Bae, Kim, Shin, Yoon, & Kim, 2018). It has been found that higher levels of gratitude lead to higher levels of life satisfaction (Unanue et al., 2021).

### **Life Satisfaction**

Life satisfaction as the broader aspect of psychological luxury that represent the existing happiness in someone's life (Seligman, 2002). Traits including happiness and gratitude are the most coherent part of the life satisfaction (Diener, Heintzelman, Kushlav, Tay, Wirtz, & Lute, 2017) Which includes different varieties of areas such as employment, family, and education (Diener et al, 2017). Like gratitude, another variable life satisfaction has also great impact on professional life. Sousa and Lyubomirsky (2001) define that overall life satisfaction determine and occurs if someone is recognizing self -worth and believing that they have certain experiences and expectations in life that are capable, accomplishing acknowledging and valuing by their own. Life satisfaction is linked with gratitude (Chang et al., 2022; Kong et al., 2015), Higher level of gratitude is positively linked to higher gratification and hopefulness (McCullough et al., 2004; Li et al.,2022). Social and psychological resource theory by Hobfoll (2002), assumed that positive traits including gratitude lead an individual to understand the positive aspects of life and lead to higher life satisfaction. Hence, higher life satisfaction increases the meaningfulness of life (Oriol et al., 2020) and gratitude level in professionals (Lambert et al., 2009). According to Vallerand (2008) studies showed that higher meaning in life indicates energy devoted to find out the purpose of life in a better way. Self -determination theory defines that people have innate tendency to have competency, autonomy and relatedness, relatedness need is the desire to feel sense of belonging and connected to others (Deci & Ryan, 2000). All three needs are important for an individual's well- being including growth and affiliation (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Individuals who value intrinsic goals and meaning in life are more experienced in life satisfaction (Froh et al., 2010). As per self-determination theory (SDT), meaningful life promotes identity in the young generation (Brassai et al., 2012), and leads to life satisfaction and enhances the quality of well-being and work quality (Williamson & Geldenhuys, 2014).

### **Gratitude and Life Satisfaction**

According to Sirois and Wood (2017) gratitude is related to personal mental wellbeing. If a person has the ability of gratitude, he or she may face little distress in their life. Research conducted on 309 Spanish volunteers and the findings showed that there is a significant influence of gratitude on life satisfaction (Boehm, Lyubomirsky, & Sheldon, 2011; Lyubomirsky & Layous, 2014). Studies have shown that appreciation is linked to improved social ties (Wood, 2010), positive relations are highly correlated with higher satisfaction with life (Unanue, 2014). In the other side, Sun and Kong (2013) said that it was not obvious how gender-specific the connection between appreciation and life satisfaction varies. It is more likely to be a favorable association between satisfaction with life and gratitude. One study finding indicates gratitude is a good emotion and is closely linked to pleasant emotions (Sun, & Kung, 2013). Another research concludes in his cross-sectional study that the gratitude is strongly associated with life satisfaction and experimentally proved that the professionals with gratitude feel better about their life and experience overall satisfaction (Rash, 2011). Experimental studies are proving the greatest link between gratitude and life satisfaction. Although longitudinal studies prove that the different aspects of personality are result of gratitude such as social support, low stress and to not experience post-traumatic growth (Toepfer, Cichy, & Peters, 2012). One study purposed the relationship between life

satisfaction and gratitude by using a longitudinal design (Zhou & Wu, 2016), findings have found that there is a strong connection among gratitude and life satisfaction (Lavy & Littman-Ovadia, 2011). In health care, gestures of gratitude (thanksgiving, praise) have been described as one form of positive acknowledgement for health care workers and are correlated with enhanced satisfaction with life (Froman, 2010).

### **Gratitude and Coping Strategies**

Individuals who are more hopeful/gratitude become more active in addressing their challenges through coping mechanisms. Such coping mechanism can encourage them to feel better, to face and resolve the numerous difficulties of life, by enhancing their levels of satisfaction. Information has demonstrated that it is glad to support people who are better likely to perceive challenging issues and to motivate them to cope with life's challenges (Watkin, 2004).

Findings of Chinese Family Caregivers suggest that gratitude has been related to a stronger usage of emotion-focused coping (Christine, 2015). In some other research, coping mechanisms were related to life fulfillment and enhance gratitude (Malkoç 2011; Karimzade & Besharat, 2011). Particularly, the usage of problem-oriented management shows high rates of life satisfaction and higher gratitude ability (MacCann, 2012). One research results predict that that some doctors cannot handle feelings of inadequacy, vulnerability and are more vulnerable to manage stress (reference). Physicians experience extreme anxiety that leads to contribute to low academic success, dissatisfaction of life, turnover, and severe health issues.

Another study of Wood (2017) explored that professional are used three broad coping strategies. First, grateful people report a higher level of social wellbeing and are more likely to have social networks. Second, grateful people are more likely to use coping strategies and deal with their daily life problems. Third, grateful people are less likely to deny the problem and engage in maladaptive or substance use. Maintaining a connection between gratitude and coping may propose fresh avenues for studies on gratitude approaches. Usually, the study focuses on explaining the cognitive effects of treatments. Gratitude is connected to discrete coping strategies and how much the association between gratitude and well-being is influenced by coping skills. Another research found that the individuals who feel more pleasure and gratitude specifically are more satisfied with their life and rarely experience negative emotions (Gracia & Moradi, 2013). In 2007 Linley explores gratitude was associated with distinct coping styles. or even if coping styles influenced the interaction between gratitude and life satisfaction. There is a strong connection between gratitude and coping strategies.

### **Life Satisfaction and Coping Strategies**

The connection between coping mechanisms and life satisfactions have also been studied. Stress management research indicated that measuring physicians' tension and use of their coping approaches may have useful consequences for higher education, the strong coping mechanism lead a person towards the life satisfaction among doctors. Evidence presented on how the medical student life is burdened with stress, failure to resolve issues in the long-term have serious professional and personal consequence (Nicholl, & Timmins, 2005). A study among professionals found that professionals coping strategies include social support, debriefing, self-education, taking break from work and engage in pleasurable activities tend to increase satisfaction of life among professionals (Hunter, & Schofield, 2004). A study of doctors indicates the doctor's feels satisfaction and gratitude increased the level of spirituality in the healing process and the doctors are used effective coping strategies such as spending time with friends and family, exercise, taking time off, positive appraisal and discussing things with closed ones are likely to increase mental health and life satisfaction (Peter, 2012; Markwell, & Wainer, (2009).

## **Coping mediating**

As coping strategies are found to have a relationship with gratitude and life satisfaction and there is a reasonably strong connection of gratitude and life satisfaction, coping strategies can mediate the level of gratitude and level of life satisfaction. A study has found that gratitude and life satisfaction have a positive correlation with each other while social support, which is a coping strategy, acts as a partial mediator in adults (Keshky et al., 2023). The significance of the study is that the researcher wants to get knowledge that how the coping strategies show mediating effects towards gratitude and life satisfaction among professionals.

## **Material and Methods**

Cross-sectional design was employed in current study to explore the relationship between Gratitude, Coping strategies and Life Satisfaction among Professionals (doctors, teachers, bankers).

## **Sample**

Participants were sampled from population of diverse professionals such as doctors, educationists, bankers by utilizing convenient sampling technique. Sample size for the study was determined by using *G-power*. Sample comprised of 300 participants. Participants of age ranging from 25 to 59, currently residing in Sialkot were recruited in sample. Data was collected using google forms and professionals were contacted through their emails.

## **Instruments**

### **Gratitude Questionnaire (GQ-6) (McCullough, Emmons & Tsang, 2002)**

Gratitude questionnaire is a self-report measure, comprised of six items. Participant's disposition to experience gratitude was measured using this questionnaire. Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree = 1 to strongly agree = 5 was utilized to record the responses of participants. Item 3 and 6 required reverse scoring. Few sample items are I have so much in life to be thankful for. If I had to list everything that I felt grateful for, it would be a very long list. Internal consistency of gratitude questionnaire was adequate in this study, as it was  $\alpha .92$ .

**Coping Scale (Grych, Hamby & Banyard, 2013).** Emotional, cognitive, and behavioral ways of dealing with difficulties are assessed by this scale. This scale comprised of 13 items and these items are scored on 4-point Likert scale ranging from 4=mostly true about me to 1= not true about me. Total score can be derived by adding score of all items. One of sample item is: When dealing with a problem, I try to see the positive side of the situation. Internal consistency was found to be 0.91.

**Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) (Diener, Emmons & Griffin, 1985).** It was five item uni-dimensional scale used to assess the judgment of individual about satisfaction with life. Seven-point Likert scale ranging from 7 strongly agree to 1 strongly disagree was used to record the response of participants. Scoring should be kept continuous, sum up scores on each item. Few sample items are here: in most ways my life is close to my ideal, the conditions of my life are excellent (Galanakis, Lakioti, Pezirkianidis, Karakasidou & Stalikas, 2017). Reliability of scale was appropriate as it was estimated  $\alpha .84$

## **Procedure**

After approval of topic from Department Dissertation Program, an authentication letter was obtained from Psychology Department, GCWUS to begin the research. For purpose

of present research questionnaires were retrieved from internet and permission was sought from the authors of scales via email. Participants were selected through convenient sampling technique, and they were contacted online, through personal emails or social media platforms, google forms were used for purpose of data collection. Individual consent was sought from each participant. After submitting informed consent by participants further scales were revealed for response, approximately fifteen minutes were consumed in this process. Researcher e-mail address was given for contact in case of any query and every query was catered and participants had thanked them for their cooperation.

**Ethical Considerations**

The scales were used after taking prior permission from the author through email. Prior permission was sought from the concerned authority for data collection. After taking the permission officially from all authentic sources, data collection was started, and questionnaires were sent to those participants who met the required criteria. Confidentiality and anonymity of participants were maintained. Participants were given right to withdraw from research at any time.

**Results and Discussion**

**Relationship between Gratitude, Coping and Satisfaction with life in Professionals**

The present study explored the relationship between gratitude, coping skills and satisfaction with life, for this purpose normality assumptions were checked then *Pearson Product Moment Correlation* was utilized. Furthermore, to examine the mediating role of coping skills between gratitude and satisfaction with life, *Process* by Andrew. F. Hyaes (2007) was used.

**Table I**  
**Summary of inter-correlation between gratitude, coping skills and satisfaction with life (N=300).**

Variable	1	2	3	4	5
1 Gender	-	-.03	.05	-.17**	-.04
2 Experience		-	-.00	-.13	.04
3 Gratitude			-	.15**	.64**
4 Coping				-	.24**
5 Satisfaction with Life					-

Note \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$  Gender, Male=1, Female=2.

It was found that gratitude was significantly related with coping skills and satisfaction with life in positive direction, which explicates that individual who has disposition of gratitude has better coping skills and is also satisfied with life circumstances.

It was hypothesized that coping skills will be a mediator in the relationship between gratitude and satisfaction with life. For this purpose *PROCESS* by Adrew. F. Hayes was used for mediation analysis.

**Table 2**  
**Direct effects of Gratitude on Satisfaction with Life through coping skills in Professionals**

Predictors	Coping Skills		Satisfaction with Life	
	$\beta$	SE	$\beta$	SE
Gratitude	.35***	.07	.54***	.04
Coping Skills			.13***	.03
<b>Covariates</b>				

Age	-.11***	.25
Gender	-.67	.45
Experience	.26**	.06

$R^2 = .18$ ,  $F(6-293) = 10.64$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $R^2 = .49$ ,  $F(7-292) = 40.21$ ,  $p < .001$  **Note.** \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$   $\beta$  = Standardized Regression Co-efficient,  $SE$  = standard error.

**Table 3**  
**Indirect effects of Gratitude on Satisfaction with Life through coping skills in Professionals**

Mediators	Satisfaction with Life			
	$\beta$	Boot SE	LL	UL
Coping Skills	.03**	.01	.01	.11

**Note.** \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ ,  $\beta$  = Standardized Regression Co-efficient,  $LL$  = Lower Limit,  $UL$  = Upper Limit

A bootstrapping method was performed using SPSS Process Macro to examine if coping will mediate the relationship between gratitude and satisfaction with life. First the results of regression shows that gratitude was a significant predictor of coping ( $\beta = .35$ ,  $t = 3.94$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Next while controlling for coping, the results of second regression indicates that gratitude was significant predictor of satisfaction with life ( $\beta = .61$ ,  $t = 14.1$ ,  $p < .001$ ). The results of the indirect effect based on 5000 bootstrap samples show a significant indirect positive relationship between gratitude and satisfaction with life mediated by coping ( $\beta = .47$ , Bootstrap CI95 = .02 and .11). The mediator, coping accounted for approximately 46% of the total effect on satisfaction with life. On the other hand, there was statistically significant direct effect between gratitude and satisfaction with life ( $\beta = .61$ ,  $t = 14.1$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

## Discussion

The aim of the study was to investigate the mediating effect of coping strategies towards gratitude and life satisfaction among professionals. The current findings of the study revealing the effects of coping on gratitude and life satisfaction and explaining the association between gratitude, life satisfaction and coping strategies. There is significant positive correlation between gratitude, life satisfaction and coping strategies. The findings of the study supported the hypothesis that there is a significant positive correlation between gratitude and life satisfaction but the correlation with coping is significantly less. Literature gives evidence of the association between gratitude and life satisfaction. According to Layous et al, (2013) positive correlation between gratitude and life satisfaction. The result has shown that the grateful individual is more likely to experience satisfaction in their lives. Another study's findings prove that gratitude is positively linked with social relationships and social relationships promote life satisfaction. The results significantly show association between gratitude and life satisfaction (Wood et al, 2010). The second hypothesis was their significant difference in level of gratitude, life satisfaction and coping among male and female participants. The findings of our study also support the hypothesis that there are gender differences in level of gratitude, life satisfaction and coping. The male has a high level of score on satisfaction with life and coping strategies with compared to female, but in gratitude, female has a high level of score as compared to male. Froh et al in (2009) discussed that gender difference exist on the relationship between gratitude, life satisfaction and coping results. The third hypothesis is that the professionals who have problem focused coping strategies are more competitive than those who have emotional focused coping strategies. The findings of the present study also supported this hypothesis. Penley, Tomaka, and Weibe, (2012) explored that problem focused strategies are more effective than using emotion-focused strategies in health outcomes among professionals. Another study has found that problem-focused coping is effective than emotional focused coping in work settings (Havlovic, & Keenan, 1995; Parasuraman, & Cleck, 1984). The fourth hypothesis was that gratitude significantly increased adaptive coping strategies and life satisfaction. The findings of the current study prove the role and link of gratitude with life satisfaction. But

the finding also shows the negative correlation between gratitude and coping strategies. The results are less significant in this regard. Some of the previous studies also prove this negative correlation between gratitude and coping strategies. One study indicates that gratitude was negatively associated with problematic behavior. For example, (Wood et al, 2008) a longitudinal study concluded that gratitude reduces the impact of depression. But another study by (DeWall et al, 2012) verifying this relationship again and concluded through longitudinal study that the gratitude is negatively related to problems like aggression. Further, (Wood et al, 2010) revealed that gratitude is linked with coping styles. He revealed that gratitude is negatively associated with negative coping strategies and styles such as rejection, discouragement failure and behavioral disorders. Moreover, gratitude is a coping strategy.

### **Conclusion**

The aim of the study is to investigate the mediating effect of coping strategies towards gratitude and life satisfaction among professionals. Research findings show the strong relationship between gratitude and life satisfaction and negative correlation with coping strategies. The other research findings explain that there is also a difference in level of gratitude, life satisfaction and coping strategies among male and female. The male has high level of coping strategies and life satisfaction and have low level of gratitude as compared to the females.

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