



GRATITUDE, AUTHENTICITY AND LIFE SATISFACTION

MIHAELA, CHRAIF^a

^a *University of Bucharest, Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences
Department of Applied Psychology and Psychotherapy*

Abstract

The present study investigates the relationship between gratitude, life satisfaction and the three facets of authenticity: authentic living, accepting external influence and self-alienation. The hypotheses test both bivariate correlations and simple regression models. Method: the participants were a group of 45 people age between 18 and 59 years old (Mean =34.13, S.D.=11.16). The instruments were: The Gratitude Questionnaire-6 (McCullough, Emmons & Tsang, 2002), The Authenticity scale (Wood, Linley, Maltby, Baliousis & Joseph, 2008), The Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener, Emmons, Larsen & Griffin, 1985). The participants agreed with the conditions of the research, publication of the results and the ethical principles, GDPR, Individual research consent. The results confirmed the hypotheses for the $p < .05$ threshold of statistical significance.

Future studies should investigate the relationship between the studied variables on large sample size and in different cultures.

Keywords: *life satisfaction, gratitude, authenticity, self-alienation.*

1. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

1.1. The concept of gratitude

The concept of gratitude was analyzed by researcher in different cultures through traversal and longitudinal studies. Also, cross-cultural were conducted to provide information about how gratitude is perceived. Hence, Davis et al. (2016) and Wood et al. (2010) cited by Unanue et. al (2019) highlighted that gratitude was associated with the following concepts: better life, indexed as higher positive affect, self-esteem, positive emotions, optimism, relationships, meaning in life, and self-acceptance.

Mihaela Chraif

E-mail adress: mihaela.chraif@fpse.unibuc.ro

Salvador-Ferrer (2017) highlighted that gratitude represents the subjective feeling of life's wonder and appreciation as Emmons & Shelton (2002) evidenced. The same author showed that Rosenberg (1998) evidenced that gratitude is a form of emotional stimuli response as affect experience; McCullough, Emmons, & Tsang (2002) highlighted that gratitude is the tendency to recognize and respond with grateful emotions and evidenced the following indicators of the gratitude concept: intensity, frequency, number of life circumstances for gratitude feeling, and the number of individuals who feel grateful.

Gordon, Impett, Kogan, Oveis & Keltner (2012) underlined that the gratitude is a basement for the success of intimate bonds relationship. Wood, Maltby, Stewart, & Joseph (2008) conducted a study regarding the gratitude and appreciation as single personality trait. The findings revealed that both dimensions are facets of single personality trait.

Zahn et al. (2009) cited by Allen (2018) highlighted in their study that pride and gratitude, "activated areas in the mesolimbic and basal forebrain regions involved in feelings of reward and the formation of social bonds" (Allen, 2018, page, 16). Zahn, Garrido, Moll, & Grafman (2014) cited by the same author revealed that people experiencing "gratitude have more gray matter volume in their right inferior temporal cortex, an area previously linked to interpreting other people's intentions" (Allen, 2018, page. 16).

1.2. Life satisfaction

Diener, Oishi, & Lucas (2003) cited by Salvador-Ferrer (2017) evidenced that life satisfaction represents the people's personal satisfaction with their own lives regarding the global cognitive satisfaction. Diener (1984) cited by the same authors highlighted that gratitude could lead to higher levels of life satisfaction by reducing negative affects and experience.

Seligman (2002) cited by Salvador-Ferrer (2017) evidenced that satisfaction with life as subjective well-being cognitive component facet may reflect the personal satisfaction with life. Sariçam (2015) conducted a study in which tested a structural equation model regarding three variables: life satisfaction, life authenticity and happiness. As theoretical framework, Sariçam (2015) cited the followings authors highlighting basic concepts about the life satisfaction: Diener, Oishi & Lucas, (2003) presented the life satisfaction concept as dimension of quality of life, and Pavot, Diener, Colvin & Sandvik (1991) underlined that global life satisfaction is a cognitive component of subjective well-being.

Çekici et al (2019) conducted a study investigating the moderating effect of authenticity between the life satisfaction and valued living. The findings evidenced that the authentic behavior moderate the relationship between the two mentioned variables in a positive statistically significant way.

The study conducted by Rizeanu & Chraif (2020) concluded that there are correlation between the Humor styles and Well-being Facets and Emotions and Life Satisfaction.

1.3. Life authenticity

Wood, Linley, Maltby, Baliousis & Joseph (2008) conducted a study regarding the development and conceptualization of the authenticity scale. In this study they provided information about the authenticity concept, the related variables, and the three facets of authenticity concept: authentic living, accepting external influence and self-alienation. The authors selected an item pool from others questionnaires and created a new scale measuring the authenticity concept. Furthermore they computed the psychometric indicators and performed the exploratory factorial analyses regarding the principal components weighted by the items after the rotation. Hence, the three factors mentioned above were separated as principal components. Also, the authors calculates the validity and reliability indicators.

Sheldon (2009) cited by Sariçam (2015) define the authenticity concept as being sincere regarding the emotions, self-awareness and psychologically depth. Barret-Lennard (1998) cited by the same author highlighted the three dimensions of the authenticity construct: the first experience of a person, the awareness, and the external behavior and communication of the person.

Rathi & Lee (2020) analyzed the authenticity concept related with life satisfaction and psychological well-being in an Asian collectivist culture. The findings evidenced that the peoples' authenticity correlate positively with life satisfaction and psychological well-being.

Boyratz, Waits, & Felix, (2014) conducted a longitudinal analysis regarding the variables: authenticity, life satisfaction, and distress. The results evidenced positive association between authenticity and life satisfaction in high levels and an association between high level of authenticity and high level of stress (high level of authenticity and low level of distress).

2. OBJECTIVE AND HYPOTHESES

2.1. OBJECTIVE

The objectives of the research:

1. To test possible bivariate correlations between the variables: life satisfaction and gratitude.
2. To evidence that authentic living predicts the life satisfaction and gratitude.

3. To evidence that accepting external influence predict the life satisfaction and gratitude.
4. To evidence that self-alienation predict the life satisfaction and gratitude.

2.2. HYPOTHESES

The research hypotheses are the followings:

1. There is a statistically significant bivariate correlation between gratitude and satisfaction.
2. Authentic living predicts statistically significant the life satisfaction.
3. Authentic living predicts gratitude.
4. Rejecting external influence predicts statistically significant the life satisfaction.
5. Rejecting external influence predicts statistically significant the gratitude.
6. Self-alienation predicts statistically significant the gratitude. (-)
7. Self-alienation predicts statistically significant the life satisfaction. (-)

3. METHOD

3.1. The participants

The participants were a number of participants, students, from different domains of activities, age between 18 and 59 years old (Mean =34.13, S.D.=11.16). The participants were agreed the publication of the anonymized results.

3.2. The instruments

1. *The Gratitude Questionnaire-6* (McCullough, Emmons & Tsang, 2002) represents a self-report scale with 6 items on a scale from 1-strongly disagree to 7-strongly agree. The questionnaire was designed to assess the gratitude affect in terms of intensity. Alpha Cronbach was .86 for the 6 items. The range for the internal consistency was between .70 to .86.

2. *The Authenticity scale* (Wood, Linley, Maltby, Baliouisis, & Joseph, 2008)

The authors conducted a preliminary factor analysis (measuring the a priori three-factor based on the definition of authenticity) on the 25 item and selected a number of three factors as principal components: authentic living, accepting external influence and self-alienation. According the author the Bartlett's test highlighted that

the data collected from 200 persons sample size provided statistically significant values for the EFA ($p < .001$) and KMO measures (.823) indicate an optimum sample size for the analyses.

Regarding the Alpha Cronbach internal reliability, the authors firstly calculated for the four-item subscales: Authentic Living (.69), Accepting External Influence (.78), Self-Alienation (.78). according their findings, increasing the number of the items on each subscale, Alpha Cronbach increased with values between .03 and .04.

Furthermore, the authors performed a Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) and evidenced that provided a good fit for the three factors model for both samples. Hence, according the results, the indicators CFI and RMSEA were supporting the models. In the present study, were applied the 25 items from the general items pool.

3. *The Satisfaction with Life Scale* (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985).

The scale was composed from 5 items on a scale from 1- Strongly disagree to 7-Strongly agree. Alpha Cronbach the internal consistency was. The authors performed an Exploratory Factorial Analysis model and the five items loaded single factor according Eigenvalue procedure > 1 . Alpha Cronbach computed in the same study was .86 and two month test-retest reliability provided .82 coefficient.

3.3. Procedure

In order to collect the data, a google form document has been provided for the participants. The instruments were applied in accord with the ethical code, GDPR and informed consent. In the beginning of the questionnaire, the participants were informed about the study and all the requirements in order to be published in a scientific journal. The participants accepted all the research requirements and agreed with the data analyses and publication of the results.

3.4. The design

To test the regression hypotheses, the variables were the followings:

- Independent variables: authentic living, accepting external influence and self-alienation.
- Dependent variables: life satisfaction and gratitude.

4. RESULTS

The reliability coefficients Alpha Cronbach were calculated for each dimension of the questionnaires.

Table 1. Alpha Cronbach coefficients

Variabes	Alpha Cronbach
Authentic living	.789
Accepting external influence	.816
Self- -alienation	.829
Life satisfaction	.922
Gratitude	.819

In the table 2 can be seen the Central tendencies indicators for the variables: Satisfaction, Gratitude, Authentic living, Accepting external influence, Self-alienation.

Table 2.- Descriptive statistics

Variable	Mean	Std. Deviation
Satisfaction	26.24	8.923
Gratitude	33.46	14.953
Authentic living	5.02	14.953
Accepting external influence	65.08	18.467
Self-alienation	21.46	8.179
N=45		

Testing the first hypothesis with Pearson bivariate correlation statistically test the followings results: satisfaction with life and gratitude ($r=.766$; $p<.001$), gratitude with authentic life ($r=-.758$; $p<.001$), authentic life with satisfaction with life ($r=.759$; $p<.001$), external influence with life satisfaction ($r=.758$; $p<.001$), external influence with satisfaction ($r=.7668$; $p<.001$), self-alienation with life satisfaction ($r=-.571$; $p<.001$).

Hence, the first hypothesis (There is a statistically significant bivariate correlation between gratitude and satisfaction) has been confirmed for the correlation coefficient $r=.76$ and the statistically significant threshold $p<.001$).

In order to test the simple regression hypotheses, the regression statistically models were applied.

For the second hypothesis "Authentic living predict statistically significant the life satisfaction." the regression equation is the following: $life\ satisfaction = 34.20 - 1.548 * authentic\ living$

The multiple correlation coefficient and the variance explained by the simple regression model can be seen in the table 3:

Table 3.- Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Model
1	.759 ^a	.576	.566	4.405	1

a. Predictors: (Constant), authentic life

The third hypothesis regarding the independent variable authentic living predicting gratitude was confirmed for $p < .001$, $R = .758$, $R \text{ Square} = .575$. The regression equation is the following: $\text{life satisfaction} = 41.28 - 1.557 * \text{authentic living}$.

Regarding the fourth hypothesis "Rejecting external influence predict statistically significant the satisfaction with life." the regression equation is the following: $\text{satisfaction with life} = -7.645 + .521 * \text{Rejecting external influence}$. The value of the multiple correlation coefficient is $R = .758$ and the value for $R \text{ Square}$ is $.575$.

Regarding the fifth hypothesis "Rejecting external influence predict statistically significant the gratitude." the regression equation is the following: $\text{gratitude} = 3.336 + .463 * \text{Rejecting external influence}$. The value of the multiple correlation coefficient is $R = .669$ and the value for $R \text{ Square}$ is $.448$.

Testing the sixth hypothesis "Self-alienation predict statistically significant the life satisfaction." the regression hypothesis is the following: $\text{the life satisfaction} = 38.95 - .592 * \text{Self alienation}$. Furthermore, were calculated the multiple correlation coefficient $R = .571$ and the $R \text{ Square}$ value $= .326$.

The seventh hypothesis "Self-alienation predicts statistically significant the gratitude." was tested applying the simple regression model equation. The equation is the following: $\text{gratitude} = 49.023 - .725 * \text{Self alienation}$. Furthermore, were calculated the multiple correlation coefficient $R = .571$ and the $R \text{ Square}$ value $= .326$.

5. CONCLUSIONS

According the results the research hypothesis had been confirmed for $p < .01$. Furthermore, statistically significant Pearson correlation has been confirmed: gratitude with authentic life ($r = -.758$; $p < .001$), authentic life with satisfaction with life ($r = .759$; $p < .001$), external influence with life satisfaction ($r = .758$; $p < .001$), external influence with satisfaction ($r = .7668$; $p < .001$), self-alienation with life satisfaction ($r = -.571$; $p < .001$). Also, the study emphasis that self alienation predicts statistically significant negative the life satisfaction and gratitude. In the other words as much as the level of self-alienation increase the levels of gratitude and life satisfaction will decrease statistically significant ($p < .001$).

The variable rejecting external influence predicts statistically significant the life satisfaction and gratitude ($p < .001$).

Future research shall focus on enlarging the sample size, selecting participants from different cultures, organizational environments and others life context.

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