



Exploring the Mediating Role of Psychological Flexibility in the Relationship Between Gratitude and Psychological Well-being

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Abstract: The current research studied how psychological flexibility connects gratitude with psychological well-being in adult populations. The research tested whether psychological flexibility serves as a bridge that enables gratitude to produce better psychological outcomes according to two psychological theories which include positive psychology and process-based behavioral models. Three hundred twenty adults participated in the study by completing the Gratitude Questionnaire (GQ-6) and Ryff's Psychological Well-Being Scale (PWB) and the Comprehensive Assessment of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy Processes (CompACT). The study found that participants displayed high levels of both gratitude and psychological flexibility and psychological well-being based on descriptive findings. The correlation analysis showed that gratitude positively connects with psychological well-being ($r = 0.58, p < 0.001$) and gratitude establishes a positive connection with psychological flexibility ($r = 0.52, p < 0.001$) while psychological flexibility also shows a positive relationship with psychological well-being ($r = 0.64, p < 0.001$). The regression analysis showed that gratitude functioned as a crucial predictor of psychological well-being ($B = 0.72, p < 0.001$) and psychological flexibility ($B = 0.65, p < 0.001$). The mediation analysis showed that psychological flexibility acted as a partial mediator for the relationship between gratitude and well-being because the gratitude coefficient dropped to 0.38 when flexibility entered the analysis. The research demonstrates how gratitude improves psychological well-being through its role in promoting increased acceptance and openness and the pursuit of personal values. The study shows that mental health promotion programs need to combine gratitude practices with psychological flexibility training because this combination produces better results for participants.

Keywords: *Gratitude, Psychological Flexibility, Psychological Well-Being, Mediation, Adults, Positive Psychology*

1. Introduction

Psychological well-being is a central construct in mental health, reflecting individuals' ability to experience positive emotions, maintain satisfying relationships, and function effectively in daily life. With the emergence of positive psychology, there has been a shift from focusing solely on pathology to understanding strengths that enhance well-being.

Gratitude is one such strength, defined as a disposition to recognize and appreciate positive aspects of life. Individuals high in gratitude tend to experience greater happiness, optimism, and life satisfaction. Gratitude has been linked to improved interpersonal relationships, reduced stress, and better emotional regulation.

Another key construct is psychological flexibility, which refers to the ability to remain in contact with the present moment and adapt behavior in accordance with personal values despite difficult thoughts or emotions. It is a core component of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) and plays a significant role in mental health.

Gratitude exists as an emotional experience which people feel at particular times and as a permanent personal trait that enables people to recognize and value all the good things which life brings them and which scientific research shows to function as an essential psychological asset that supports adult mental health across various cultural backgrounds (Diniz et al., 2023; Kerry et al., 2023).

Gratitude in positive psychology functions as a mechanism which enables people to direct their attention toward beneficial elements existing in their social and personal environments thus helping them develop better ways to evaluate situations and build social bonds and discover their life purpose which forms the basis of their psychological health (Kerry et al., 2023; Zhang et al., 2024).

The latest cross-cultural research shows that practices which focus on gratitude produce measurable improvements in well-being although these benefits tend to be small; this finding supports the idea that gratitude serves as a link between well-being and a changeable pathway which people can use to improve their health (Choi et al., 2025; Diniz et al., 2023).

The cross-cultural meta-analysis which studied 145 studies from 28 countries and included 163 samples and 727 effect sizes and 24,804 subjects found that gratitude interventions produced a minor improvement in well-being (Hedges' $g = 0.19$; 95% CI [0.15,

0.22]) which showed that different groups achieved small but steady effects throughout their studies (Choi et al., 2025).

The same synthesis found that different countries showed different results from their intervention because research methods and outcome assessment methods which included well-being measurement and trial randomization affected the results thus demonstrating that gratitude creates well-being through a process that produces consistent results which vary according to the specific method used to measure well-being (Choi et al., 2025).

The systematic review and meta-analysis which examined 64 clinical trials showed that gratitude interventions increase gratitude while improving mental health outcomes through reduced anxiety and depressive symptoms which were observed in multiple trials (Diniz et al., 2023).

The findings from intervention research demonstrate that gratitude practices impact eudaimonic psychological well-being dimensions which include Ryff-based domains together with their hedonic effects which involve positive affect and life satisfaction (Czyżowska et al., 2022).

Research about adult gratitude practices found that expressing gratitude leads to overall psychological well-being with particular positive effects on self-acceptance and environmental mastery which demonstrate how gratitude connects to functional aspects of human behavior (Czyżowska et al., 2022).

Although both gratitude and psychological flexibility independently predict well-being, limited research has explored the mechanism linking these variables. The present study aims to examine whether psychological flexibility mediates the relationship between gratitude and psychological well-being.

2. Review of Literature

Research consistently demonstrates a strong positive relationship between gratitude and psychological well-being. Individuals who practice gratitude report higher life satisfaction, increased positive affect, and lower levels of depression and anxiety.

Psychological flexibility has also been identified as a significant predictor of well-being. Individuals with higher psychological flexibility are better able to cope with stress, regulate emotions, and engage in value-based actions.

Emerging research suggests that gratitude may enhance psychological flexibility by promoting acceptance, mindfulness, and adaptive coping strategies. However, empirical

studies examining psychological flexibility as a mediator remain limited, highlighting the need for further investigation.

3. Methodology

3.1 Aim of the Study

To examine the mediating role of psychological flexibility in the relationship between gratitude and psychological well-being among adults

3.2 Variables of the Study

The present study includes three primary variables: gratitude, psychological flexibility, and psychological well-being. The study defines gratitude as an independent variable which describes an individual's natural ability to recognize and value the positive things in life and the support they receive from others. The concept indicates a mental framework which combines positive thoughts with emotional states to shape how people understand and react to their daily life events.

Psychological flexibility is conceptualized as the mediating variable. The capacity of a person to accept their internal thoughts and feelings while staying focused on the current moment and acting according to their core values is displayed through their ability to handle distressing situations. The theoretical framework of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) defines psychological flexibility as a fundamental adaptive mechanism which enables people to build resilience while maintaining effective daily operations.

Psychological well-being serves as the dependent variable. The optimal psychological functioning of an individual includes six core dimensions which are autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations with others, purpose in life, and self-acceptance. The study shows eudaimonic well-being through its focus on meaning and self-realization and the development of healthy psychological states.

The study proposes that psychological flexibility serves as a bridge which connects gratitude to the positive effects of psychological well-being.

3.3 Objectives of the Study

1. To assess the level of gratitude among adults.
2. To assess the level of psychological well-being among adults.
3. To assess the level of psychological flexibility among adults.
4. To examine the relationship between gratitude and psychological well-being.
5. To examine the relationship between gratitude and psychological flexibility.

6. To examine the relationship between psychological flexibility and psychological well-being.
7. To determine whether psychological flexibility mediates the relationship between gratitude and psychological well-being.

3.4 Research Hypotheses

Main Hypotheses

H1: Gratitude will be positively correlated with psychological well-being.

H2: Gratitude will be positively correlated with psychological flexibility.

H3: Psychological flexibility will be positively correlated with psychological well-being.

H4 (Mediation Hypothesis): Psychological flexibility will significantly mediate the relationship between gratitude and psychological well-being.

Null Hypotheses

H01: There will be no significant relationship between gratitude and psychological well-being.

H02: There will be no significant relationship between gratitude and psychological flexibility.

H03: There will be no significant relationship between psychological flexibility and psychological well-being.

H04: Psychological flexibility will not significantly mediate the relationship between gratitude and psychological well-being.

3.5 Tools / Scales used in the Study

The present study utilizes three standardized psychometric instruments to measure the variables of interest.

The Gratitude Questionnaire–Six Item Form (GQ-6) developed by McCullough et al. (2002) serves as the instrument for measuring dispositional gratitude. The scale consists of six items which participants evaluate through a Likert-type system to determine their daily gratitude experience between different levels of intensity and frequency. The test demonstrates strong internal consistency while validating its construct across multiple different population groups.

The Psychological Well-Being Scale (PWB) created by Carol Ryff in 1989 serves as the assessment tool for evaluating psychological wellbeing. The scale assesses six core dimensions: autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations with others,

purpose in life, and self-acceptance. The assessment tool offers both short and long versions which researchers have successfully used in various cultural studies.

The Comprehensive Assessment of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy Processes (CompACT) developed by Francis et al. (2016) serves as the instrument for assessing psychological flexibility. The scale measures fundamental ACT processes which include openness to experience and behavioral awareness and valued action. The system evaluates psychological flexibility through multiple dimensions while maintaining excellent psychometric standards.

These tools are selected because they match the theoretical framework of study constructs and researchers have established their reliability and validity through psychological research.

3.6 Method

The present study adopts a quantitative research methodology to study how psychological flexibility acts as a mediator between gratitude and psychological well-being of adults. The researchers selected 320 participants for the study because this number provided enough statistical strength to conduct mediation analysis and correlation and regression testing and group comparison tests. The sample size was determined according to mediation model requirements and multiple regression analysis guidelines which indicate that increased sample size results in better parameter estimate stability and higher confidence during indirect effect assessments. The research methodology was created to maintain scientific integrity through reliable measurement methods and ethical research practices which continued throughout the study.

3.7 Research Design

The study uses a descriptive and correlational research design which includes a mediation framework. The research design collects data from adult participants at one specific moment because it uses cross-sectional research methods. The correlational research design enables researchers to study relationships between gratitude and psychological flexibility and psychological well-being without changing any research variables. The researchers used regression-based mediation analysis to create a predictive design which examines how psychological flexibility functions as a mediator between gratitude and psychological well-being. The design requires non-experimental testing because researchers tracked real-world variable measurement instead of using controlled testing conditions. The design provides suitable methods for studying psychological processes while validating theoretical models through community research.

3.8 Sample

The research involved 320 adult participants who lived in both urban and semi-urban regions. Researchers used convenience sampling to select study participants because this method provided better access to participants. The study included all adults who were between 18 and 60 years of age. Researchers included both men and women in the study to achieve gender balance. The study required participants to possess basic reading skills so that they could understand and answer the survey questions. The study excluded participants who had severe diagnosed psychiatric disorders because their conditions would create confounding factors that would impede accurate measurement of psychological well-being. The sample size of 320 meets the requirements for mediation analysis and multivariate statistical tests because it surpasses the established thresholds needed to identify medium effect sizes with proper statistical power. The research collected participant demographic data which included age, gender, educational qualification, occupation, and marital status to create a sample profile and to conduct required comparison tests.

3.9 Tools

Researchers collected data through three standardized measurement tools. Researchers used the Gratitude Questionnaire–Six Item Form (GQ-6) to measure gratitude because it evaluates dispositional gratitude through six Likert-type items. The researchers used Ryff's Psychological Well-Being Scale (PWB) to measure psychological well-being, which assesses six core dimensions of human development: autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations with others, purpose in life, and self-acceptance. The Comprehensive Assessment of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy Processes (CompACT) evaluated psychological flexibility through three dimensions, which included openness to experience and behavioral awareness and valued action. All tools have demonstrated acceptable reliability and validity in previous research.

3.10 Data Collection

The researchers used a structured self-report questionnaire to gather their data. The researchers reached out to participants through educational institutions and workplaces and online platforms. Participants who had given their informed consent received the questionnaire in both printed and secure online survey link formats. The researchers explained the study purpose to participants and assured them that their responses would remain confidential and used only for academic research purposes. The average time taken to complete the questionnaire was approximately 20 to 25 minutes. Participants were encouraged to provide honest answers which they should complete without external assistance. The researchers

conducted data screening to find complete data while they removed all incomplete or inconsistent data for analysis. The researchers coded the collected data and transferred it into statistical software to conduct their analysis.

3.11 Data Analysis

The researchers applied proper statistical methods to their examination of gathered data. The researchers used mean, standard deviation, frequency, and percentage calculations to describe how demographic characteristics and variable distribution patterns. Pearson's correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationships among gratitude, psychological flexibility, and psychological well-being. The researchers used multiple regression analysis to examine both predictive relationships and mediation effects. The researchers established gratitude as the independent variable, psychological well-being as the dependent variable, and psychological flexibility as the mediator. The researchers evaluated the mediation effect through regression-based procedures to identify whether gratitude indirectly influenced psychological well-being through psychological flexibility in a statistically significant manner.

The researchers used independent sample t-tests to investigate how gender impacts gratitude, psychological flexibility, and psychological well-being. The researchers conducted one-way ANOVA to examine how demographic factors, including age group and educational level, affected the study outcome. The researchers checked all three assumptions of normality, linearity, and homogeneity of variance before they conducted their parametric tests. The researchers determined statistical significance when results reached the 0.05 threshold.

3.12 Ethical Considerations

The study maintained strict compliance with ethical principles. Participants took part in the study after they had signed an informed consent document which they received before researchers started collecting data. Participants received information about the research goals and study duration and they learned about their right to drop out of the study without facing any negative effects. The researchers maintained participant confidentiality and anonymity by failing to collect any data that could be used to identify individual participants. Researchers kept the data in secure storage and used it only for academic research purposes. The research team expected no psychological harm to occur because participants completed standard personality and well-being questionnaires, yet they provided participants with support service contact details to use when they experienced discomfort from answering certain questions. The study maintained respect for participant dignity, privacy, and autonomy in accordance with established ethical guidelines for psychological research.

4. Result

Table 1: *Descriptive Summary of Key Variables*

Variable	Description
Gratitude	High levels observed; strong appreciation and thankfulness
Psychological Well-Being	High functioning across all six dimensions (Ryff's model)
Psychological Flexibility	High levels, especially in valued action and acceptance

Table 2: *Correlation Matrix for Study Variables*

Variables	Gratitude	Psychological Well-Being	Psychological Flexibility
Gratitude	—		
Psychological Well-Being	0.58	—	
Psychological Flexibility	0.52	0.64	—

Table 3: *Regression Analysis Predicting Psychological Well-Being and Flexibility*

Predictor	Outcome Variable	B	p-value
Gratitude	Psychological Well-Being	0.72	< .001
Gratitude	Psychological Flexibility	0.65	< .001

Table 4: *Mediation Analysis Summary*

Path	B	p-value
Gratitude → Well-Being (Total Effect)	0.72	< .001
Gratitude → Well-Being (Direct Effect)	0.38	< .001
Psychological Flexibility → Well-Being	0.49	< .001

Table 5: *Group Differences (t-test and ANOVA)*

Variable	Group Comparison	Statistic	p-value
Gratitude	Females > Males	—	—
Psychological Well-Being	Gender	t = 1.95	.052

Psychological Flexibility	Age Groups	F = 4.25	.006
Psychological Well-Being	Education Levels	F = 3.85	.022

The analysis revealed high levels of gratitude, psychological well-being, and psychological flexibility among participants. Descriptive findings from the GQ-6, Ryff's Psychological Well-Being Scale, and CompACT indicated that participants demonstrated strong gratitude tendencies, positive functioning across all well-being dimensions, and high psychological flexibility, particularly in valued action and acceptance.

Pearson correlation analysis showed significant positive relationships between all variables. Gratitude was positively correlated with psychological well-being ($r = 0.58, p < .001$) and psychological flexibility ($r = 0.52, p < .001$), while psychological flexibility showed a strong positive correlation with well-being ($r = 0.64, p < .001$).

Regression analysis indicated that gratitude significantly predicted psychological well-being ($B = 0.72, p < .001$) and psychological flexibility ($B = 0.65, p < .001$). Mediation analysis revealed that psychological flexibility partially mediated the relationship between gratitude and psychological well-being, as the effect of gratitude decreased when flexibility was included in the model.

Group differences showed that females reported higher gratitude than males, while psychological well-being differences were not statistically significant. Significant differences in psychological flexibility were observed across age groups ($F = 4.25, p = 0.006$), and psychological well-being varied significantly across educational levels ($F = 3.85, p = 0.022$).

5. Discussion

The research results demonstrate the three evaluation tools GQ-6, Ryff's PWB, and CompACT which provide the framework for the research results that follow which include correlation results and regression/mediation results and t-test results and ANOVA results. The sample shows high gratitude levels combined with strong psychological well-being across all main Ryff dimensions and their psychological flexibility which the study proves through statistical analysis that shows psychological flexibility serves as a partial mediator for the relationship between gratitude and psychological well-being.

The Gratitude Questionnaire GQ-6 shows that respondents demonstrate a strong tendency to express gratitude and thankfulness. The statement "I have so much in life to be thankful for" received agreement from 110 people who chose Agree and 62 people who chose

Strongly Agree while 38 people disagreed with the three negative statements and 40 people remained neutral about the statement. A similar pattern appears for "If I had to list everything that I felt grateful for it would be a very long list" where 104 (32.5%) chose Agree and 60 (18.8%) chose Strongly Agree with only 32 (10.0%) falling under disagreement categories and 46 (14.4%) remaining neutral. The results demonstrate that most adults consider gratitude to be an unchanging and important part of their everyday existence.

The gratitude perspective and social appreciation profile strengthen this conclusion because they provide additional support. The reverse-worded statement "When I look at the world, I don't see much to be grateful for" was strongly rejected because 90 (28.1%) chose Strongly Disagree 86 (26.9%) chose Disagree and 60 (18.8%) chose Slightly Disagree which totaled 236 (73.8%) in disagreement categories. Only 32 (10.0%) endorsed agreement categories and 44 (13.8%) were neutral. People showed social gratitude when 220 (68.7%) of participants agreed with multiple response options to the statement "I am grateful to a wide variety of people" which 82 (25.6%) of participants selected Slightly Agree 96 (30.0%) selected Agree and 42 (13.1%) selected Strongly Agree. The findings demonstrate that people experience gratitude as an inner feeling that they share with others through multiple relationships which create well-being benefits.

The items about reflective appreciation and delayed gratitude show different levels of depth. The statement "As I get older I find myself more able to appreciate the people, events, and situations that have been part of my life history" received strong endorsement which 88 (27.5%) selected Slightly Agree 92 (28.8%) selected Agree and 38 (11.9%) selected Strongly Agree which resulted in 218 (68.2%) agreement responses. The neutrality response rate reached 60 (18.8%) who showed uncertain feelings about age-linked appreciation. The delayed gratitude statement ("Long amounts of time can go by before I feel grateful...") received total rejection through disagreement which reached 70 (21.9%) and 80 (25.0%) and 64 (20.0%) resulting in 214 (66.9%) total disagreement while 50 (15.6%) showed agreement and 56 (17.5%) remained neutral. The pattern shows that people experience gratitude at present time instead of waiting for extended periods to receive it.

The results from Ryff's Psychological Well-Being Scale show that people achieve strong performance across six domains: autonomy and mastery and growth and purpose and self-acceptance and relationships. The participants showed strong support for autonomy and independent expression through their responses to the statement "I am not afraid to voice my opinions..." which received 76 (23.8%) Slightly Agree and 91 (28.4%) Agree and 59 (18.4%) Strongly Agree to reach a total of 226 (70.6%) agreement. The statement "My decisions are

not usually influenced by what everyone else is doing" received 68 (21.2%) Slightly Agree and 95 (29.7%) Agree and 65 (20.3%) Strongly Agree to total 228 (71.2%) agreement. The statement "I have confidence in my opinions..." received 71 (22.2%) and 90 (28.1%) and 64 (20.0%) to reach 225 (70.3%) agreement. The statement "It's difficult for me to voice my own opinions..." received total rejection from participants who showed 78 (24.4%) and 84 (26.2%) and 60 (18.8%) disagreement which totaled 222 (69.4%) to show that most participants see themselves as independent and able to express their views.

People had minimal worries about their social evaluation and their ability to fit into the community. The statement "I tend to worry about what other people think of me" received 78 (24.4%) of disagreeing votes and 82 (25.6%) of disagreeing votes and 66 (20.6%) of disagreeing votes which combined to 226 (70.6%) while only 24 (7.5%) of participants and 14 (4.4%) of participants and 8 (2.5%) of participants showed agreement and 48 (15.0%) remained neutral. The statement "I do not fit very well with the people and the community around me" received the same rejection pattern which showed that 217 (67.8%) of people disagreed with the statement. The statement "I have not experienced many warm and trusting relationships..." received total disagreement from 220 (68.8%) of people. The sample population experiences social belonging together with relational security according to these findings. Environmental mastery and life management received strong support from the research findings. The statement "I feel I am in charge of the situation in which I live" received 223 (69.7%) agreement from participants. Participants showed 225 (70.4%) agreement with the statement about their ability to handle responsibilities. Participants expressed high satisfaction with their home and lifestyle because 220 (68.7%) of participants agreed. The statement about facing difficulties with life organization received rejection because 216 (67.5%) of participants disagreed with it. Participants experience competence and organization skills together with daily life control according to this research finding.

The study found that participants experienced low daily stressors together with low role strain which resulted in their ability to sustain psychological resilience. The statement "The demands of everyday life often get me down" was rejected by 74 (23.1%) + 88 (27.5%) + 62 (19.4%) = 224 (70.0%) participants. The statement about feeling overwhelmed was rejected by 70 (21.9%) + 90 (28.1%) + 63 (19.7%) = 223 (69.7%) while the statement about disappointment regarding achievements was rejected by 80 (25.0%) + 88 (27.5%) + 61 (19.1%) = 229 (71.6%). The 46–49 neutral responses maintained stability at 46–49 which indicates that only a small group of participants experienced brief periods of tension or had partial conflicting emotions.

The study found that participants demonstrated both curiosity toward new experiences and development toward personal growth. The positive statement “It is important to have new experiences that challenge how you think...” was endorsed by 71 (22.2%) + 98 (30.6%) + 61 (19.1%) = 230 (71.9%). People rejected all three activities from the statement about resistance to change because 68 (21.2%) + 85 (26.6%) + 63 (19.7%) = 216 (67.5%) of people showed disagreement with “I am not interested in activities that will expand my horizons” while 70 (21.9%) + 82 (25.6%) + 65 (20.3%) = 217 (67.8%) of people showed disagreement with “I do not enjoy being in new situations...” The self-stagnation statement (“I haven’t really improved much...”) was rejected by 75 (23.4%) + 88 (27.5%) + 62 (19.4%) = 225 (70.3%). The strong eudaimonic well-being patterns demonstrate growth and learning together with self-development.

The study demonstrated two main findings through its two primary outcomes. The statement about life direction and purpose in life was authenticated by 232 people who took part in the study. The statement about future planning was approved by 75 (23.4%) + 94 (29.4%) + 59 (18.4%) = 228 (71.2%), and the statement about non-aimless existence was approved by 73 (22.8%) + 92 (28.8%) + 61 (19.1%) = 226 (70.6%). People opposed the reverse purpose statements which included "People who live their life without any thought about what will come next in their life." People opposed the statement which claimed "People who live their life without any goals will achieve nothing." The adults in the survey study showed two strong tendencies when they demonstrated both purposeful living and future planning activities.

People showed strong levels of self-acceptance and self-regard. The statement about self-assurance and positive self-image received support from 74 (23.1%) + 92 (28.8%) + 62 (19.4%) = 228 (71.2%) of the sample. The statement about personality preferences received support from 73 (22.8%) + 94 (29.4%) + 60 (18.8%) = 227 (70.9%) of the sample. The negative self-attitude statement was rejected by 78 (24.4%) + 86 (26.9%) + 62 (19.4%) = 226 (70.6%), while social comparison boosting self-regard was endorsed by 72 (22.5%) + 91 (28.4%) + 55 (17.2%) = 218 (68.1%), with 52 (16.2%) neutral. The sample shows positive self-evaluation which functions as a protective factor that enhances psychological well-being.

The present study aimed to examine the relationship between gratitude and psychological well-being and to explore the mediating role of psychological flexibility. The findings provide strong support for all proposed hypotheses.

First, the results confirmed that gratitude is positively associated with psychological well-being. Individuals with higher gratitude reported greater emotional stability, life

satisfaction, and positive functioning across multiple domains. This aligns with existing literature in positive psychology, which highlights gratitude as a key contributor to mental health and well-being.

Second, gratitude was found to be significantly related to psychological flexibility. This suggests that individuals who regularly experience gratitude are more likely to adopt adaptive coping strategies, remain present-focused, and accept internal experiences without avoidance. Gratitude may foster openness and cognitive reframing, which enhances flexibility.

Third, psychological flexibility showed the strongest association with psychological well-being. This finding supports the theoretical framework of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT), which identifies flexibility as a central mechanism underlying psychological health. Individuals who can accept distress, defuse from negative thoughts, and act according to values tend to experience better well-being.

Most importantly, the mediation analysis demonstrated that psychological flexibility partially mediates the relationship between gratitude and well-being. This indicates that gratitude enhances well-being not only directly but also indirectly by increasing psychological flexibility. In other words, grateful individuals are more flexible in their thinking and behavior, which in turn improves their psychological functioning.

The presence of partial mediation suggests that other mechanisms may also contribute to this relationship, such as emotional regulation, social support, or resilience. However, psychological flexibility remains a key explanatory pathway.

Demographic findings further enriched the results. Females reported higher gratitude levels than males, which may be explained by greater emotional expressiveness and relational orientation. Age differences in psychological flexibility suggest developmental influences, where flexibility may increase with life experience. Educational differences in well-being indicate the role of cognitive and social resources in shaping mental health outcomes.

Overall, the study highlights the importance of integrating gratitude and psychological flexibility in mental health interventions. Programs that promote gratitude practices (e.g., journaling, reflection) along with flexibility skills (e.g., mindfulness, acceptance) may significantly enhance psychological well-being.

6. Limitations of the Study

The study has certain limitations that must be acknowledged. The study's cross-sectional design prevents researchers from establishing causality because researchers used correlational data to test mediation instead of longitudinal data. The study results depend on

self-report measures which create social desirability bias and common method variance problems. The study used convenience sampling which restricted its findings to the particular adult group that researchers investigated. The researchers did not effectively control for cultural variables and environmental stress factors. Future research should use longitudinal studies that employ various sampling techniques and multiple methods of data collection.

6.1 Implications and Suggestions for Future Research

The study results present significant theoretical and practical implications. The study provides theoretical support for an integrative framework which connects positive psychology with Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) principles. Psychological flexibility serves as the essential process that links gratitude to better well-being outcomes thus directing researchers to develop mechanism-based models instead of using basic correlational studies.

Adult well-being interventions should implement gratitude practices together with techniques from mindfulness acceptance exercises and values clarification strategies. Educational institutions together with workplaces and community mental health programs can benefit from structured modules which incorporate these components.

Researchers need to use longitudinal research and experimental research methods for better evaluation of causal pathways between concepts. The study should investigate moderation effects which include age demographic factors and cultural background and socio-economic background and stress handling capabilities. Researchers can use cross-cultural studies to determine whether the mediation model operates similarly across different cultural groups. The gratitude-well-being pathway can be better understood by adding physiological and behavioral markers that indicate flexibility.

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