



The Role of Positive Psycho-Therapy (PPT) for Improving Gratitude among Depressed Adolescents: A Comparative Study

Sipra Khuntia¹

Ph.D. Research Scholar, Department of Psychology, Ravenshaw University,
Cuttack, Odisha, India

&

Prof. (Dr.) Sangeeta Rath²

Professor, Department of Psychology, Ravenshaw University,
Cuttack, Odisha, India

Abstract: The present study focuses on examining the role of Positive psychotherapy (PPT) on improving gratitude level of depressed adolescents. The effectiveness of PPT is measured through pre-test and post-test design. In this study, purposive sampling technique has been utilized for data collection. BDI-II and GQ-6 were used as test measures. Total of 120 participants (N=120), 60 depressed (Male=30 & Female=30) and 60 non-depressed (Male=30 & Female=30) were selected through the screening process. Among 60 moderately depressed adolescents every 10th participants were selected, resulting in 6 participants (3 males & 3 females) were finally chosen for therapeutic purpose of taking PPT. The student's t-test (correlated sample) was used for statistical calculation. Research findings revealed that there were significant differences in the pre-test and post-test scores of gratitude among depressed and non-depressed adolescents. Positive Psychotherapy (PPT) as an intervention found to be effective for decreasing depressive symptoms in moderately depressed individuals by increasing pleasure, engagement, and meaning- both in-person and over the web during therapeutic sessions. After practicing (gratitude journal, using character strengths, practical wisdom, gratitude letter, hope, optimism) in the therapy, participants developed a sense of growth mind set and better adjustment with the environment. Results of the study indicated from the mean scores that the depressed adolescents showed improvement in post-test (after intervention) 'Gratitude' score after receiving PPT.

Key words: Depression, Gratitude, Adolescents, Positive Psycho-Therapy (PPT).

I. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Depression

Depression is accompanied by feelings of inadequacy, hopelessness, lack of energy, and difficulty concentrating. Depression is a psychological disorder that heavily affects physical functions, changes in mood, and social interactions. Depressed people have feelings of low concentration, low energy, insomnia, early morning awakening with appetite loss, and weight gain and loss.

1.2 Psychological Correlates of Depression

Depression is related with many psychological factors, like learned helplessness, hopelessness, perceived stress, loneliness, life satisfaction, gratitude, ability to forgive, self-esteem and many more. Here, in the present study we will focus on improving gratitude level in case of depressed adolescents after providing Positive Psycho-Therapy (PPT).

1.2.1 Gratitude. Gratitude is the gateway to create peace and happiness in our lives. It brings many positive changes in our life. Gratitude allows the celebration of the present rather than brooding over the past. It helps in blocking toxic emotions (envy, resentment, regret, and depression). It states that grateful people are more stress-resilient which strengthens social ties and self-worth. The distressed person tends to compare themselves negatively with others. Such comparisons, as evidence shows, lower their self-worth and leave them feeling victimized and resentful (Hoeksema & Davis, 1999). On the other hand, gratitude helps us become aware that we are the recipient of goodness. One cannot be grateful without being thoughtful. Through the practice of being grateful towards life, we learn to think about the kindness of others, shifting our perspective from self-absorption to social expansion. In short, gratitude can build up our psychological capital, acting as a helper during tough times.

Gratitude energizes clients to recreate or convert negative thoughts into positive, appropriate, and realistic ones. This recreating of positivity is associated with our psychological health (Lambert et al., 2012). In their longitudinal research study, Wood et al. (2008) found out that grateful people have better coping skills than other people. Gratitude is positively related to

altruistic behaviour. Specifically, if we take people who are more grateful towards others, they are less affected by stress and depression and more satisfied with their lives and relationships. Learning to be more grateful through sustained practices such as maintaining a *Gratitude Journal* can help clients learn and use more positive coping strategies, which lower our stress levels.

1.3 Therapeutic Approach for Depression

A person diagnosed with depression can be treated in several ways, such as medication and psychotherapy (like REBT, CT, CBT, PPT, etc.). But here in this study, the researchers have focused on Positive Psycho-Therapy (PPT) developed by Tayyab Rashid, (2008).

1.3.1 Positive Psycho-Therapy (PPT). Positive psycho-Therapy (PPT) is a therapeutic approach designed to counteract our symptoms with strengths, weaknesses with virtues, and deficits with skills. It helps us understand complex situations and experiences in a balanced way (Rashid & Seligman, 2019). The positives in PPT are primarily based on Martin Seligman's idea of well-being. Seligman organized happiness and well-being into five scientifically measurable parts:

P-Positive emotion

E-Engagement

R-Relationships

M-Meaning

A-Accomplishment.

By taking into account the first letter of each part, the mnemonic PERMA was framed (Seligman, 2012). These elements are essential for a satisfying and meaningful life. These are neither exhaustive nor exclusive to live. Still, research has shown that fulfilling all these elements is related to higher rates of life satisfaction and happiness and lower stress levels.

1.3.2 Phases of PPT. Positive psychotherapy has enlightened us about strengths in life. In this context, PPT has three phases:

Phase-1: In this phase, Positive Psycho-Therapy is used as a narrative way that denotes the expression of our strengths from various perspectives. It can initiate purposeful life goals by using character strengths and signature strengths.

Phase-2: In this phase, the therapist deals with clients' negative memories, emotions, feelings, and those emotions which do not allow an individual to move forward in life and build positive emotions.

Phase-3: This final phase works on exploring positive relationships and strengthening the processes which create meaningful relationships. It allows a person to explore the purpose and meaning in life.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Amini et al. (2016) conducted a study to examine the efficacy of Positive Psycho-Therapy (PPT) on happiness and gratitude among female students. They have applied quasi-experimental design with control group and pretest-posttest and follow-up test. After screening 100 females, 30 participants were diagnosed having symptoms of severe psychological disorders. They were further subdivided into experimental and control group, each having 15 participants. These 15 participants from the experimental group were given PPT for 10 sessions. Results of the study revealed that PPT is very much effective for increasing level of happiness and gratitude among female university students.

Ho et al. (2014) conducted a study on the role of Positive Psychological Interventions (PPIs) for decreasing depressive symptoms and increasing the levels of life satisfaction, gratitude and happiness among older adults. The study included 74 participants for investigation. The results also revealed that after receiving PPIs for nine-week, the participants showed decreased symptoms of depression and increased in the levels of life satisfaction, gratitude and happiness.

There were a good number of studies conducted in the topic of the role of positive psychotherapy (PPT) for improving well-being, happiness, life satisfaction and self-esteem among depressed adolescents, both national and international articles. But there are not enough studies both nationally and internationally related to the role of positive psychotherapy (PPT) for improving gratitude levels of depressed adolescents.

2.1 The Rationale of the Study

The current study will provide ample opportunities for adolescents suffering from a moderate level of depression to once again revive their lost energies through optimistic looks by wearing specs of positivity. This study will also help adolescents to improve their mental health issues.

After conducting systematic review, it was observed that there exists a gap in previous researches. There were not enough researches found specifically based on current topic among depressed adolescents, either nationally or internally. There is a need for bridging this gap. The current study is a modest attempt in this direction.

2.2 Objectives of the Study

1. To apply positive psychotherapy (PPT) for dealing with moderately depressed participants affected by low sense of gratitude.
2. To assess the effectiveness of positive psychotherapy (PPT) on the depressed participants by comparing pre-test and post-test scores of depressed adolescents in the measure of gratitude.

2.3 Hypotheses

1. There will be differences in the gratitude level of depressed adolescents through pre-test & post-test measures showing improvement in the post-test measure.
2. The positive psychotherapy (PPT) will have a positive effect on the gratitude level of moderately depressed adolescents.

III. METHOD OF STUDY

3.1 Research Design

A quantitative technique was utilized for data collection. Pre-test Post-test research design had been adopted for the study.

3.2 Sampling Technique

In this research, the purposive sampling technique is used for data collection. Total of 120 participants (N=120), 60 depressed (Male=30 & Female=30) and 60 non-depressed (Male=30 & Female=30) were selected through the screening process. Among 60 moderately depressed adolescents every 10th participants were selected, resulting in 6 participants (3 males & 3 females) were finally chosen for therapeutic purpose of taking PPT. They were low in their gratitude level.

3.3 Tools Used

1. **Beck's Depression Inventory Second Edition (BDI-II) (Screening Test).** Beck Depression Inventory of 2nd edition (BDI-II) was developed by Beck (1996). BDI-II is 21- item rating scales which ranges from 0 to 3 and is used to assess or measure depressive symptoms over the past two weeks or more than two weeks (DSM-IV, 1994). The total score of BDI-II will be 63, and the higher score indicates that the person is going through severe depression. In the BDI-II, participants choose a single score in each item of total 21 items which indicates symptoms of depression. There are two items among the 21 items: item number 16 indicating changes in sleeping pattern and item number 18 indicating changes in appetite. In BDI-II scores ranges from 0-13 indicates minimal depression; 14 to 19 indicates mild depression; 20 to 28 indicates moderate depression and 29 to 63 indicates severe depression. The BDI-II has Cronbach's alpha reliability of 0.94 and concurrent validity range between 0.82 to 0.94.
2. **The Gratitude Questionnaire-Six-Item Form (GQ-6).** GQ-6 developed by Maccullough et al., (2002), is a six-item self-report questionnaire to test individual differences in the proneness to experience gratitude in daily life. Each item is graded on a scale of '1' to '7', with '1' indicating "strongly disagree" and '7' indicating "strongly agree." The sum of all six items equals the complete range, which is 6-42. The scores for items 3 and 6 are inverted. Two items are reverse-scored to reduce response bias. GQ-6 has Cronbach's alpha reliability which ranges from 0.82 to 0.87. It takes less than 5 minutes to complete the GQ-6 (Maccullough et al., 2002).

3.4 Procedure

The data for the study was collected by administering the test measures to 120 (30 depressed and 30 non-depressed males; 30 depressed and 30 non-depressed females) participants within the age bracket of 18-21 years from different colleges of the Cuttack district of Odisha. Among 60 depressed participants, 6 participants were selected having a moderate level of depression and those who scored low in gratitude measure. Then dependent sample t-test statistical technique had been utilized to measure significant differences between pre-test and post-test scores of the measure of gratitude among six depressed adolescents.

3.5 Statistical Analysis

To analyse collected data and examine the statistical differences between pre-test and post-test measures of gratitude esteem among six depressed adolescents. The dependent sample t-test statistical technique was taken for statistical calculation. Raw data was entered in the Microsoft Office Excel Sheet and then further analysed using SPSS for Windows (IBM Version 20).

IV. RESULTS

Table-1

(Inferential statistics) Statistical Differences in Pre-Test & Post-Test Measure of 'Gratitude' of six depressed adolescents

Groups	N	Mean	SD	t	df	P	Interpretation
Pre-test (Before Intervention)	6	20.83	2.92	5.96	5	P<0.01	Significant
Post-test (After Intervention)	6	28.16	2.22				

Note. A dependent sample t-test was applied to analyze the significance of the mean difference between pre-test (before intervention) and post-test (after intervention) in the measure of 'Gratitude' on depressed adolescents using the Gratitude Questionnaire. The obtained t-value =5.96 with df =5 was significant at a 0.01 level of significance ($p<0.01$). It is indicated from the mean scores that the depressed adolescents showed improvement in post-test (after intervention) 'Gratitude' score.

V. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Analyses of Research Findings

In this study, we can find out that after practicing (a gratitude journal, using character strengths, practical wisdom, gratitude letter, hope, optimism), participants developed a sense of growth mind set and better adjustment to the environment.

Results of the study indicated that Positive Psychotherapy (PPT) was found to be highly effective in managing psychological issues in moderately depressed adolescents. This result was also supported by the previous research studies (Parks, (2009). The efficacy of Positive Psychotherapy (PPT) as an intervention designed to decrease depressive symptoms in moderately depressed individuals by increasing pleasure, engagement, and meaning-both in-person and over the web during therapeutic sessions. PPT decreases symptoms without ever targeting depression directly. This study provided an important step in developing a low-cost, acceptable intervention for decreasing mild-moderately depressive symptoms in a non-clinical population.

Positive psychotherapy (PPT) works from the premise that the toughest challenges of life can better be met by systematically assessing and amplifying the positive resources of clients (Rashid, 2014; Rashid & Seligman, 2013). PPT integrates symptoms with strengths, resources with risks, weaknesses with values, and hopes with regrets to understand the inherent complexities of human experiences in a way that is more balanced than the traditional deficit-oriented approach to psychotherapy.

5.2 Delimitations of the Study

In this study, the sample was purposively selected, which may have led to some selection bias. This can be eliminated in future research. The generalization of research findings can be more valid by using a larger sample size in future research studies.

5.3 Implications of the Study

1. This study has both theoretical and practical implications for psychologists and counsellors for providing positive psychotherapy intervention to moderately depressed individuals.
2. The present study has important implications for professional practice or decision-making, scholarly understanding of the field, and theory building.

5.4 Recommendations & Suggestions for Further Research

- **Replication:** Future research should be replicated based on the methodology of the present study upon different populations, and different socio-cultural groups.
- **Recommendations for further research or for changing research methodology:** A recommendation for the future research study will be based on taking the multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) and multivariate analysis of covariance (MANCOVA) for statistical investigations/analyses by taking into account the impact of different psychosocial factors towards depression.
- **Recommendations for changes in academic concepts, knowledge, or professional practice:** There should be more emphasis given to mental health awareness among adolescents, their parents, and community level by the professionals. The focus should also be given to addressing mental health issues in the curriculum itself by the academicians.
- **Recommendations can also be in the direction of changes or modifications in accepted theoretical constructs.**
- **Recommendations for Government:** The effects of depression among adolescents are noticed to be high and a matter of great concern. Therefore, efforts should be made by the government to identify these students and introduce regular psychological services to help mitigate these problems, so that they will not affect the physical, academic, social, and emotional dimensions of their lives. Mental health issues of adolescents need to be addressed and should be of prime focus in all spheres.

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VII. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

There are no conflicts of interest among authors.

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