

Role of School Culture in enhancing Gratitude

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Abstract: This research paper aimed to investigate the impact of school culture (Vedic & Non-Vedic School Culture) on the level of gratitude among school students. To carry out the study we sampled 200 new entrants of Vedic & Non-Vedic, who were selected randomly from various districts of west Uttar Pradesh (100 students from each school culture). The number of girls and boys were equal (50 each in both the groups). 100 students who took admission in the month of July in Vedic Schools were included into experimental group and similarly, 100 new entrants were selected from the Non-Vedic Schools and they were categorized in control group. Experimental group underwent Yoga, Havan and Ved-Paath daily as a part of the intervention in the form of the school curriculum for six months. Control group didn't undergo any such curriculum as part of school culture. Gratitude Questionnaire (GQ-6) developed by Emmons in 2002 was administered to carry the research, its reliability and validity is .82 & .90. The statistical analysis was carried on IBM SPSS version 24 using paired 't' - Test. After the intervention, Results showed the significant difference in gratitude of new entrants in Vedic Schools due to school culture. The findings of the study have shown that after intervention there was an enhancement in the gratitude among Vedic entrants while no specific changes were measured in gratitude among Non-Vedic entrants after the intervention.

Index Terms – Gratitude, School Culture, Vedic & Non-Vedic school culture

I. INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is a period of great transition in the life of an individual's physical and psychological changes. These changes result in various mental health disorders, mood disorders, problems in adjustment and other issues among youth. The pattern of handling and overcoming these progressions depends on the critical and emotional thinking abilities of an individual that has been shaped since their childhood in the form of its upbringing.

The majority of a child's time is spent in schools. Therefore, school culture plays a vital role in shaping the personality of an individual (KNEC, 2012). The psychological, emotional or behavioral skills developed during childhood are everlasting (Sharma, 2014). The school should be proficient in monitoring and instructing students towards inculcating positive psycho-social characteristics of behavior (Kalam, 2003). Therefore, right kind of school culture is very important for the positive personality development of an individual.

School culture is the set of norms, values and beliefs, rituals and ceremonies, symbols and stories that make up the 'Persona' of the school (Peterson, 1998). Positive education promotes positive well-being that can be obtained in a positive environment. In Vedic culture schools, the main aim of education is to create an individual of values rather than merely an object of success (Chaudhary & Joshi, 2017). Vedic education helps in promoting traits of hope, gratitude, helping behavior, self-efficacy, empathy, optimism etcetera within a student which turn out to be very helpful in facing future adversities (Dash, 2003). The main difference in the pattern of Vedic & Non-Vedic culture education is the presence and lack of cultural, social and value based education. The Non-Vedic culture schooling promotes professional competence over everything (Strahlendorf & Harper, 2010). "Modern Education is spoon feeding students" (Forster, 1927). It implies that students are fed with facts and figures i.e. they are well versed with theoretical knowledge but lack of practical knowledge fails to prepare them for future adversities. And the ones who also have the practical knowledge of their subjects don't know how it can be used for the whole mankind because the school culture fails to impart social, cultural and value based knowledge. So, there is an immense need to look for alternatives that can help us survive this value crisis.

It can also be formulated that the present day school are unable to instill the life skills among students and to teach them the basic personality attributes i.e. to be happy, optimistic, hopeful, resilient, mental wellbeing, self-efficacy, helping, empathy etc. Nowadays, the major reason of stress among students is anxiety to achieve or academic stress (Bartwal & Raj, 2013).

Globally, Academic pressure is leading to stress, depression, anxiety that ends up with suicide (Ang & Huan, 2006). It directly points out at the faults in the present education system i.e. it's failing to equip individuals with the skills of leading a happy and contented life. In this age of conformity and unending competition, positive attributes are important to survive the atrocities. The feeling of gratitude is very essential to shape best humans. It acts as a means to develop social relations by helping them to realize mistakes and amend them. It's a selfless act and is carried out unconditionally.

Gratitude is one of the twelve mindful qualities of self-regulating practices like mindfulness. It correlates with well-being (Allan et al, 2013). The presence of gratitude is considered as character strength (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). It helps in developing other positive traits like helping, life-satisfaction, forgiveness, mental-wellbeing etc which are a necessity for cultivating a successful civilization (Fox et al, 2015; McCulloch et al, 2002). Various intellects have proposed the value of gratitude in day to day life. It's been considered as an important virtue for better survival (Morgan et al, 2017).

The absence of gratitude may lead to negative emotions like depression, stress, aggression etc since gratitude is negatively proportional with stress (Wood, Joseph & Linley, 2007) and gratitude has been found to positively interlinked with well-being (Proyer et al, 2013). High level of gratitude leads to higher life-satisfaction. It will also help in promoting mental wellbeing, hope and happiness. All these psychosocial attributes help in developing other positive traits of behavior. It has been observed by various researchers that at time of adversities gratitude helps an individual to overcome despair by holding on the positive side (Emmons & Shelton, 2002). Therefore, there are plenty of researchers that show the positive effects of having gratitude.

Gratitude improves physical health (Krause et al, 2010), it motivates the moral behavior of an individual by generating pro-social behavior (Emmons & Shelton, 2002), improves overall well-being (McCullough et al, 2002) hence increasing gratitude can be helpful in becoming positive and satisfied in life by reducing depression and negativity (Wood, Joseph & Maltby, 2008). Thus it becomes more necessary to study how gratitude cultivation from a tender age by imbibing it in school curriculum may help an individual in the long run since gratitude helps in molding the personality of an individual positively.

II. OBJECTIVES

- 1). To study the impact of school culture (Vedic & Non- Vedic) on the gratitude of school students.
- 2). To study the impact of school culture (Vedic & Non- Vedic) on the gratitude between girls & boys.

III. HYPOTHESES

- (H1) There would be no significant difference in gratitude of those students who study in Vedic Culture Schools & Non-Vedic Culture Schools at the entry level.
- (H2) There would be no significant difference in gratitude of those students who study in Vedic Culture Schools & Non-Vedic Culture Schools at the entry level.
- (H3) There would be no significant difference in gratitude between girls & boys.

IV. METHODOLOGY

4.1. Sample

Total 200 students from Vedic culture (experimental group) & Non-Vedic culture (control group) Schools of west Uttar Pradesh (schools of Aligarh, Hathras, Hapur, Muzaffarnagar, Meerut and Moradabad) were sampled in order to study role of school culture in enhancing gratitude of the students. The students between the age ranges of 12-18years, studying in grades 6-12th were sampled. Equal number of girls and boys were included in this study.

Group	Gender	Class	Age
Experimental Group (Vedic schools)	50 Females	VI-XII	12-18yrs
	50 Males	VI-XII	12-18yrs
Control Group (Non-Vedic Schools)	50 Females	VI-XII	12-18yrs
	50 Males	VI-XII	12-18yrs

4.2. Tool:

Gratitude Questionnaire (GQ-6)- Gratitude Questionnaire developed by Michael E. McCullough Robert A. Emmons (2002). The GQ-6 is a short, self-report measure of the disposition to experience gratitude. Participants answer 6 items on a 1 to 7 scale (1 = "strongly disagree", 7 = "strongly agree"). Two items (3&6) are the reverse -scored to inhibit response bias. It is positively related to optimism, life- satisfaction, hope, spirituality, forgiveness, empathy and pro-social behavior and negatively related to depression, anxiety, materialism, and envy. The reliability & validity is .82 & .87 are good and excellent. It was translated into English to Hindi. The GQ-6 takes less than 5 minutes to complete, but there is no time limit.

4.3. Research Design

The present research is a combination of Pre Test- Intervene- Post Test (single group design) and Experimental-Control group design. The Experimental Group (students who study in Vedic School culture) perform Havan, recite Ved-Paath and practice Yoga daily as a part of their routine curriculum. The Control group (students of Non-Vedic culture School) were not exposed to the Vedic culture Non-Vedic School students only participated in assessments at time of collecting the pre and post data. The school culture (Vedic & Non-Vedic culture) was considered as Independent Variable (IV) and Gratitude is the dependent variable of the study.

4.4. Procedure

This study was conducted in three phases. Data was collected in a group of 10-12 students at one time.

Phase- I

The permission from school principals and informed consent from the respondents, of different Vedic & Non-Vedic culture schools of west Uttar Pradesh was sought. The 200 new entrants of both the school cultures (100 students each of Vedic & Non-Vedic schools) were assessed for gratitude at the beginning of schools when they took admission. It was ascertained that students enrolled in Vedic Schools were not exposed to Vedic culture i.e. they never studied in Vedic Schools before and they did not practice Vedic rituals at home (they were never exposed to Vedic culture).

Phase- II

The new entrants of Vedic culture schools (50 boys & 50 girls) were exposed to Vedic school culture as part of intervention for six months. Once they were admitted in a Vedic school they compulsorily and customarily followed Vedic rituals, values and curriculum as part of routine (i.e. they practiced yoga, Havan & Ved-path as an integral part of their school culture along with values and practices taught).

Phase- III

The new entrants (i.e. 200 students) who were tested for gratitude at the beginning of the session (base line pretesting) were again tested after 6 months of exposure to their different cultures (Vedic and Non Vedic school culture) for assessing their Gratitude (i.e. Post-Test).

The impact of school culture was assessed after 6 months (longitudinal study of Pretest- intervention- posttest study) Vedic Culture and control group of those students who were not exposed to Vedic culture.

4.5. Statistical Analysis

The hypothesis was tested against the independent t test and Paired 't'-Test at .05 level of significance with IBM SPSS 24 Version software.

V. RESULT TABLES AND INTERPRETATION**Table 1: Baseline mean comparison of Gratitude of Experimental & Control group of school students**

Area	Experimental Group Mean (SD)	Control Group Mean (SD)	't' value	p value
Gratitude	26.81 (1.134)	26.84 (1.070)	-.192	.848 –NS

N=200 (100= experimental group, 100= control group)

In Table 1, the different facets of Gratitude are analyzed in new students of Experimental group and Control group. The mean comparison of Gratitude (as shown in Table1) reveals that there is no significant difference ($t=-.192$, $p=.848$) between experimental and control group at the entry level. Both schools have similar level of Gratitude. Hence, it indicates that the sample is homogenous.

Table 2: Baseline mean comparison of gender based on Gratitude of Experimental & Control group.

Group	Girls Mean (SD)	Boys Mean (SD)	't' value	p value
Experimental Group	26.66 (1.136)	26.96 (1.124)	-1.327	.187 –NS
Control Group	26.72 (1.161)	26.96 (.968)	-1.122	.264 –NS

N=200 (100= experimental group {50 girls & 50 boys}, 100= control group {50 girls & 50 boys})

Table 2 reports the baseline comparison of mean, SD, 't' and p value of gratitude in experimental group ($t=-1.327$, $p=.187$) and control group ($t=-1.122$, $p=.264$). The results show that there is no significant difference in gratitude of girls & boys of experimental and control group at the entry level. Hence, it indicates that girls and boys of experimental and control group are similar level on gratitude.

Table 3: Mean comparison of Gratitude of Experimental & Control group of school students (After Intervention).

Area	Experimental Group Mean (SD)	Control Group Mean (SD)	't' value	p value
Gratitude	34.13 (.720)	26.72 (1.155)	54.432	.000*

N=200 (100= experimental group, 100= control group)

In Table 3, the difference in Gratitude between the new entrants of Experimental group and Control group is analyzed. The mean comparison of Gratitude (as shown in Table 3) reveals that there is significant difference ($t=54.432$, $p=.000$) between experimental and control group after intervention. The results show that there is a significant difference in gratitude of experimental and control group after intervention. There is an improvement in gratitude. Hence, it indicates that Vedic school culture plays a significant role in developing gratitude.

Table 4: Mean comparison of gender based on Gratitude of Experimental & Control group of school students (After Intervention).

Group	Girls Mean (SD)	Boys Mean (SD)	't' value	p value
Experimental Group	34.14 (.670)	34.12 (.773)	.138	.890 -NS

Control Group	26.72 (1.144)	26.72 (1.179)	.000	1.000 -NS
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N=200 (100= experimental group, 100= control group) {50 girls & 50 boys each}

Table 4 reports the posttest comparison of mean, SD, 't' and p value of gratitude in experimental group ($t = .138, p = .890$) and control group ($t = .000, p = 1.000$). The results show that there is no significant difference in gratitude of girls & boys of experimental and control group after intervention. Hence, it indicates that girls and boys of experimental and control group similar level on gratitude.

Table: 5: Pretest-Posttest Mean comparison of gender based on Gratitude of Experimental & Control group of school students.

Group	Pretest Mean (SD)	Posttest Mean (SD)	't' value	p value
Experimental Group	26.81 (1.134)	34.13 (.720)	-52.056	.000*
Control Group	26.84 (1.070)	26.72 (1.155)	.767	.445 -NS

N=200 (100= experimental group, 100= control group)

In Table 5, the differences of Gratitude are analyzed in new students of Experimental group and Control group. The mean comparison of Gratitude (as shown in Table 5) reveals that there is significant difference ($t = -52.056, p = .000$) in the students of experimental group after intervention. The mean comparison of Gratitude (as shown in Table 5) reveals that there is no significant difference ($t = .767, p = .445$) in the new entrants of control group. The results show that there is a significant difference in gratitude of experimental group after intervention. There is an improvement in gratitude. Hence, it indicates that Vedic school culture plays a significant role in developing gratitude.

VI. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

There was no significant difference in the gratitude of new-entrants of Vedic & Non-Vedic culture schools at the entry level (i.e. during pre-test phase) [refer Table 1]. The students score ($t = -.192, p = .848$) on gratitude. The possible reasons to obtain such similarity in gratitude among the new entrants of Vedic and Non-Vedic culture schools are due to same kind of surroundings, social institutions (i.e. same school culture) and upbringing at home. These students, who took fresh admission, were previously studying in same pattern of schools where they learnt same values, beliefs and ethics which resulted in developing alike personality attributes. If students study in same culture based schools then it's hard to find differences in their personality attributes, values, beliefs and achievements (Lunenborg & Ornstein, 2008). These similarities have also been found equally in girls and boys irrespective of their gender. If there are differences in the behavioral or personality attributes of students, it's because of the differences in their cultural background or cultural upbringing (Maslowski, 2006). There is no significant difference in gratitude between the students of Vedic and Non Vedic culture schools due to their respective school cultures at entry level (phase I).

The post-test results have shown a significant difference in the level of gratitude ($t = 54.432, p = .000$) {refer Table 3} between the new-entrants of Vedic & Non-Vedic culture schools. The hypothesis was supported which reveals that Vedic school culture significantly enhances gratitude among students of Vedic culture schools after intervention. The school goes about as a developing environment for students; it instills deep rooted values and positive behavioral characteristics. School Culture impacts the learning, value installation and personality development of an individual which shapes their future life (Moran, 2005).

The present research made an attempt to show how gratitude grows in different school cultures. It focuses on promotion of gratitude instillation within an individual since childhood by means of school culture (i.e. Vedic school culture) since the absence of gratitude A student shows differences in its behavioral traits, values, beliefs and personality traits if he studies in various schools having different cultures (Nautiyal & Chauhan, 2007). The post-test results of our research also show a significant difference in the gratitude trait of new-entrants. After intervention, the new entrants of Vedic culture schools ($t = -52.056, p = .000$) {refer Table 4} shows difference but the new entrants of Non-Vedic culture schools ($t = .138, p = .890$) {refer Table 4} do not show any difference in the gratitude level.

The major reason behind these differences in gratitude scores of Vedic new-entrants and the similarity in gratitude scores of Non-Vedic new-entrants is the culture of their schools which has shaped their values, beliefs and other personality traits. The new entrants of Vedic schools were exposed to Vedic school culture which was new to them and caused a difference in their gratitude level whereas there was no change in the school culture of Non-Vedic students. The differences in school culture are responsible for differences in gratitude (Cohen, 2007).

The present research is in accordance with the past research which demonstrated that in the event that we outfit students with positive esteems, they will turn out to be disciplined, independent and integrated individuals later on (KNEC, 2012). There are ample of researches reporting the usefulness of gratitude in an individual's life (Peterson & Sellgman, 2004; Krause et al, 2010), but they are in no line with this research since none of them have been conducted with reference to school culture or how come a positive school culture play a vital role in developing gratitude among students.

The main purpose of the present study was to assess the difference in the level of Gratitude between the students of two different school culture i.e. Vedic & Non-Vedic School Culture, in order to find out the association between culture and gratitude. The findings of the current study suggest that the level of gratitude is medium in students of Non-Vedic Schools. The most important

findings that can be drawn from this study were that a positive and statistically significant relationship exists between the components of Gratitude and school culture (Vedic & Non-Vedic school culture).

The descriptive statistics from Table 4.1 showed that the values were normally distributed about their mean and variance. This indicated that aggregate stock prices on the KSE and the macroeconomic factors, inflation rate, oil prices, exchange rate, and interest rate are all not too much sensitive to periodic changes and speculation. To interpret, this study found that an individual investor could not earn higher rate of profit from the KSE. Additionally, individual investors and corporations could not earn higher profits and interest rates from the economy and foreign companies could not earn considerably higher returns in terms of exchange rate. The investor could only earn a normal profit from KSE.

V. CONCLUSION

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