Text presentation ECP 2015 Milan

Thank you for attending my presentation about gratitude. My name is Lilian Jans-Beken and I am a PhD candidate at the Open University of the Netherlands.

Today, I want to talk about gratitude. You can look at gratitude from different points of view: biological, social, emotional, evolutionary. The focus of this research was gratitude as a trait, the grateful disposition

The grateful disposition is defined by McCullough, Emmons, and Tsang (2002) as a generalized tendency to recognize and respond with grateful emotion to the roles of other people’s benevolence in the positive experiences and outcomes that one obtains. Wood and colleagues described gratitude as part of a wider life orientation towards noticing and appreciating the positive in the world.

Research shows that the grateful disposition is positively related to mental health as well as physical health.

There has been repeatedly shown that there is a positive association between the grateful disposition and mental health. The study of McCullough and colleagues (2004) showed that individuals high in dispositional gratitude reported higher life satisfaction, vitality, optimism, hope, and positive affect in undergraduate students and adults from the general population. These high scoring individuals also reported lower levels of anxiety and depressive symptoms. Important to note is that these outcomes were not only present in self-reports but also in informant-reported gratitude. Although most studies are correlational, there is some work available that suggest that the grateful disposition can predict higher well-being but that this relationship does not work the other way around (Wood, Maltby, Gillett, Linley, & Joseph, 2008).

Maybe there are some health psychologist in the audience so I also want to point to some benefits of the grateful disposition on physical health. Few studies to date show that the grateful disposition can have benefits related to sleep, and cardio vascular disease. Wood, Joseph, Lloyd, and Atkins (2009) showed that a higher grateful disposition was associated with self-reported sleep, sleep duration and daytime functioning. The grateful disposition was particularly inverse associated with negative pre-sleep cognitions; Pre-sleep cognitions are thoughts that focus more on worries, problems and noises in the environment or, on the other hand, thoughts that are focused on 'nothing in particular' or positive thoughts.

Because of the apparent benefits for mental as well as physical health, we want to conduct more research in Dutch speaking countries to see whether these benefits are also applicable to these individuals.

To be able to conduct research on the grateful disposition in a Dutch speaking population, there was a need for Dutch questionnaires. We chose to translate and validate two gratitude questionnaires: The Gratitude Questionnaire (GQ6) and the Short Gratitude, Resentment and Appreciation Test (SGRAT). The GQ6 is developed by McCullough, Emmons and Tsang in 2002. The questionnaire consists of 6 items and is a one-factor questionnaire to measure the grateful disposition. The SGRAT is developed by Thomas and Watkins in 2003. This questionnaire consists of 16 items and is a three-factor questionnaire to measure the grateful disposition. The subscales of the SGRAT are called: lack of a sense of deprivation, simple appreciation, and appreciation of others.

Our sample consisted of 706 participants, 486 women and 220 men. Their mean ages were 43 for women and 46 for men. The range of the sample was 18 years to 80 years. At the second time of measurement after six weeks, 440 participants filled out the questionnaires again.

Methods

First we translated these questionnaires into Dutch and then they were back translated into English.

Reliability CFA EFA ICC

RegressionsTo validate the questionnaires, we compared the outcomes of the Dutch versions to measures of subjective well-being. Subjective well-being is defined by Myers and Diener (1995) as frequent positive affect, infrequent negative affect, and a global sense of satisfaction with life. So we chose the Positive Affect and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS) and the Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS) to use in our analyses. The choice was twofold; First, these questionnaires measure the factors of subjective well-being as defined by Myers and Diener. Second, they have been previously used to validate the GQ6 and SGRAT so in this way we also were able to replicate these previous studies.

The linear regression analysis showed a significant positive association between the grateful disposition and life satisfaction with an R squared of point 19. When looking at the association between the grateful disposition and positive affect, we again found a significant positive association with an R squared of point 23. The linear regression between the grateful disposition and negative affect was also significant with an R squared of point O seven

With these results we were able to replicate previous studies of the grateful disposition associated with measures of subjective well-being. Our outcomes resemble those of other studies examining the grateful disposition and other validation studies of the grateful disposition questionnaires using the PANAS and SWLS.

According to our study, the Dutch GQ6 and SGRAT appear to be valid and reliable to measure the grateful disposition. This means that these questionnaires are to be used in future studies of the grateful disposition in Dutch speaking participants. I am looking forward to new findings regarding this trait.

If you are inspired by my talk to do research of the grateful disposition yourself, I collected a list of the GQ6 in several European languages. I don’t know if the presentations will be made available to you so if you would like a copy of my presentation and text, please leave your business card with me and I will make sure you will receive it by e-mail after the congress.

I have come to the end of my presentation but there is still time to answer questions if there are any.

Thank you for your interest!

Bibliografie

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