

# GRATITUDE AS A POSITIVE CHARACTER STRENGTHS: HOW TO DEVELOP AS AN ADOLESCENT WITH IN ROLE OF A SCHOOL COUNSELOR

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## ABSTRACT

Gratitude is one of the virtues transcendence character strengths that can help adolescents achieve a higher quality of life. Adolescents who have a high level of gratitude will have greater life satisfaction, joy, and well-being, being able to live a more positive life. The state of today's adolescents, who are prone to developing mood disorders such as worry, stress, and depression in dealing with life's issues, exemplifies the phenomena of low gratitude. The purpose of this study is to figure out how school counselors might help adolescents develop gratitude by offering psycho-educational services. A comprehensive literature review using content analysis methodologies was utilized to determine the role of school counselors in undertaking intervention activities to develop adolescent gratitude. 10 key research papers were examined in the study. The study's findings provide a conceptual framework for psycho-educational services based on particular training such as counting blessings, three good exercises, and a gratitude visit that school counselors can use to assist adolescent cultivation of gratitude. This study can serve as a model for future studies on to develop adolescent gratitude.

**Keywords:** gratitude, positive character, character strengths

## INTRODUCTION

Adolescents' quality of life can be improved by focusing on a variety of factors that aid their development, one of which is gratitude, which is part of a positive psychology study. Gratitude has been shown to be an effective aspect of character strength in changing an individual's attitude to be positive, especially when facing obstacles and issues in life, according to the development of positive psychology. (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). When people feel the benefits and practical benefits they receive from God, whether individually or transpersonally, they are more appreciative for the life events they encounter. (Allen, 2018; McCullough et al., 2002). Adolescents who have a high level of gratitude are more content with their lives, respect others' contributions to their well-being, and have a greater appreciation for simple pleasures. (Syropoulos et al., 2020; Wood et al., 2010). Research conducted Wilson (2016) reveals that appreciation has the potential to heal, strengthen, and change lives on a psychological, spiritual, social, and cognitive level, which can lead to improved academic performance. Besides that, Rotkirch et al. (2014) In addition, his research suggests that adolescents with a high level of appreciation have greater emotional control when confronted with environmental challenges, which can increase their personal intimacy and emotional relationships with others, particularly their peers. This study demonstrates that gratitude can become a significant emotional resource in adolescence, promoting social stability and academic success, therefore advice and counseling are needed to understand and aid adolescents in developing their gratitude.

Adolescents who experience lack of acceptance and tolerance for the challenges and problems they face in life will have an affect on their low appreciation, causing them to feel dissatisfied with all of their accomplishments and life situations (Bono et al., 2012). Adolescents who have low levels of appreciation are more likely to experience anxiety, jealousy, stress, and, even worse, sadness, which can be a precursor to suicide conduct (White et al., 2017). The phenomenon of the low gratitude of adolescents today can be seen from the condition of adolescents who are prone to experiencing mood disorders such as stress and depression in dealing with life problems. According to the findings of Basic Health Research by Indonesian Ministry of Health (2019), depressive disorders can strike anyone between the ages of 15 and 24, and the

risk of developing one increases with age. The findings of the study were bolstered by a team from the University of Indonesia's Faculty of Health's Division of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, which conducted research on adolescents aged 16 to 24 years and found that 95.4 percent had experienced anxiety and 88 percent had experienced depression. With a prevalence of 51.4 percent and a desire to end life as high as 57.8%, many of them end up injuring themselves (Kaligis et al., 2021) . Adolescents in this situation will certainly have an impact on their social and intellectual at school environment , thus attempts to cultivate gratitude should begin to build at a young age in order to avoid developmental roadblocks that may arise in the future. Research conducted Lambert et al. (2009) The findings suggest that gratitude and a sense of coherence, which includes elements of life satisfaction, pleasure, and social desirability, have a link. A sense of well-being, improved social integration, fewer levels of depression, and better school activities are all linked to higher levels of gratitude, according to multiple other studies. (Chaplin et al., 2018; Portocarrero et al., 2020; Wilson, 2016; Wood et al., 2010) .

Many research findings on gratitude point to the need of cultivating gratitude in adolescents in order to help current situation being accepted . Psycho-educational are one of the several service that the school counselor could provide because of their ability to help . Essentially, the psycho- educational services process has shifted from a problem-oriented to a strength -oriented approach (Gysbers & Henderson, 2012) . As a result, attempts to promote gratitude as a character strength can be carried out through psycho-educational services combined with positive psychological intervention. Positive psychological intervention should be used. According to the professional expert , positive psychological intervention can be used to promote mental health, happiness, well-being, life satisfaction, and reduce stress and depression symptoms so that people being able to focus more on being grateful for all of their circumstances in life . (Magyar-Moe, 2009; Proctor, 2017; Proctor & Linley, 2013; Schueller & Parks, 2014) . Research conducted Kwok et al. (2016) found that positive psychological interventions can help children feel less depressed and more satisfied with their lives. Muro et al. (2018) also said that positive psychological counseling was also proven to improve the motivation and achievement of students who had previously fought with their academic performance. Further research is also carried out Hammill et al., (2020) who discovered that using positive psychological interventions to promote student engagement and well-being could be beneficial. some of these research reveal that using a positive psychological intervention in a group context has been shown to developer other s positive factors linked to gratitude . As explained Peterson & Seligman (2004) that i individuals who are grateful will have greater life satisfaction, joy, and well-being, allowing adolescents to live more in positive existence.

According to numerous specialists, positive psychology intervention can be implemented through a variety of exercises at improving adolescent development through specialized practice activities such as counting blessings, three good things, and a gratitude visit (Magyar-Moe, 2009; Parks & Scueller, 2014; Proctor & Linley, 2013) . The application of this technique is in accordance with popular opinion by Stockton et al. (2016) a according to the study, little tasks like remembering and writing all the wonderful things acquired in life can help increase gratitude. This study intends to determine the role of school counselors in delivering psycho-educational services that can assist adolescent develop their gratitude, based on the preceding explanation. This study's findings could have ramifications for the establishment of comprehensive guidance and counseling programs to help adolescents improve their gratitude

## METHOD

This study is based on a literature review of numerous scholarly studies. The research was conducted using science direct, google scholar, research gate, springer, and sage journals, with the keywords gratitude, school counselor's role, and positive psychological intervention being used to search for related papers. Content analysis was performed to analyze the data. The subject examined concerns the role of school counselors in the development of adolescent gratitude. The year of publication of scientific works is not

restricted, and all searches were restricted by field (abstract), source type (academic journals and books), age (adolescence), and language (English and Indonesian). This study covers research with a predominantly teen sample (ie, mean age 12-21 years). The intervention research included is a study that discusses positive psychological interventions specifically to increase gratitude and related positive variables (well being, happiness and life satisfaction), with the number of main research articles used as many as 10 articles.

Table 1. Inclusion Criteria and Search Keywords

|                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Inclusion Criteria<br>Publication Year<br>Source Type<br>age<br>Publication Language<br>Construct Required<br>Gratitude relationship with other positive variables<br><br>School counselor's role | Any<br>Academic Journals, Books<br>Adolescence (ie, mean age 12-21 years)<br>English and Indonesian<br>Adolescence's gratitude<br>Well-being (broadly)<br>Happiness<br>Life Satisfaction<br>Positive Psychological Intervention<br>Counting Blessing<br>Three Good Thing<br>Gratitude Visit |
| Search Keywords<br>Gratitude relationship with other positive variables<br>Initial Search<br>Subsequent search<br><br>School counselor's role<br>Initial Search<br>Subsequent search              | “Gratitude” and “adolescence”<br>“Gratitude” and “well-being” or “happiness” or “life satisfaction”<br><br>“School counselor” and “intervention”<br>“School counselor” and “adolescence”                                                                                                    |

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Many research findings on gratitude , point to the need of cultivating gratitude in adolescents in order to help them accept their current situation. According to prior study, the use of positive psychological interventions can develop a variety of positive factors such as life satisfaction , happiness , and well-being , which can help people achieve a healthy mental state . (Kwok et al., 2016; Muro et al., 2018; Schueller & Parks, 2014) . As a result, school counselors can play a role in helping adolescents acquire gratitude by implementing psycho-educational services through positive psychological intervention. Summary of the findings of a literature review on positive psychological interventions that can help people feel more grateful.

Table 2. Summary of Reviewed Intervention

| Study                 | Sample             | Intervention Type                                                     | Group N                           | Results                                                    |
|-----------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| Caleon et al., (2017) | Secondary students | Gratitude collage, counting everyday blessings, mental subtraction of | Control = 57<br>Intervention = 46 | The intervention has a positive change effect on gratitude |

| Study                    | Sample                                                                      | Intervention Type                                                                         | Group N                                                    | Results                                                                                                                |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                          |                                                                             | blessings, car-writing, reflection and feedback                                           |                                                            |                                                                                                                        |
| Froh et al., (2008)      | Community school students                                                   | Counting blessings (listing up to 5 things for which one is grateful)                     | Control = 61 (3 classes)<br>Intervention = 160 (8 classes) | The intervention gave an increasing effect on gratitude, optimism, life satisfaction, and decreased negative effects   |
| Froh et al., (2009)      | Parochial school students                                                   | Letter-writing activity                                                                   | Control = 45<br>Intervention = 44                          | The intervention has a positive increasing effect on gratitude                                                         |
| Kwok et al., (2016)      | Government school and private school middle school and high school students | Session topics: gratitude, intention journaling, cost story, benefit, thank you note/card | Control = 82<br>Intervention = 34                          | The intervention has a positive effect on life satisfaction, which is mediated through hope and gratitude              |
| Owens & Patterson (2013) | Community samples                                                           | Drawing gratitude sources                                                                 | Control = 17<br>Intervention = 23                          | The intervention has an increasing effect on gratitude and self-esteem                                                 |
| Khanna & Singh (2016)    | Student North India                                                         | Gratitude journal, giving tree, thank you note/card                                       | Control = 82<br>Intervention = 95                          | The intervention has a positive effect on psychological well-being, positive feelings, life satisfaction and gratitude |
| Tagalidou et al., (2019) | Students                                                                    | Coping humor, three funny things, three good things                                       | Control = 76<br>Intervention = 106                         | The intervention gave the expected change effect on increasing happiness and decreasing depressive symptoms            |
| Lai & Carroll, (2017)    | Adolescents and adults                                                      | <i>Three good things</i>                                                                  | Control = 57<br>Intervention = 51                          | The intervention has a positive effect on increasing gratitude and well-being                                          |
| Stefan et al., (2021)    | Students                                                                    | <i>Gratitude letters and gratitude visits</i>                                             | Control = 23<br>Intervention = 100                         | The intervention has a positive impact on increasing well-being, happiness and the meaning of life satisfaction        |
| Bahník et al., (2015)    | Students                                                                    | <i>Three good things</i> in life                                                          | Not using the control group<br>Intervention = 183          | The intervention has an effect on increasing happiness and life                                                        |

| Study | Sample | Intervention Type | Group N | Results                                    |
|-------|--------|-------------------|---------|--------------------------------------------|
|       |        |                   |         | satisfaction and reducing negative effects |

Positive psychological intervention has been shown to be effective in the past. Various self-reflection exercises that emphasize the necessity of elaborating the reasons why gratitude occurs in the situation described can be used to promote gratitude. (Emmons & McCullough, 2004; Seligman et al., 2005) . The exercise intervention that falls under the area of growing gratitude also has a social component, implying that the exercises aren't just for reflecting on, but also for expressing thanks. A person is urged to express their thanks to a specific individual in depth through a written letter in the contemplative and expressive gratitude intervention. Most versions of this practice highlight the necessity of handing a letter to someone who has done them a favor, preferably in person, or perhaps reading it aloud (Schueller & Parks, 2014; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000) .

Related with the features of appreciation mentioned in table 2, if it is associated with the aspects of gratitude described Watkins et al., (2003) , using counting blessings activities that aim to help youngsters remember every blessing they experience every day, the sense of abundance element associated to the inner state related to the sensation of abundance in his life can be cultivated (Emmons & McCullough, 2003; Froh et al., 2008; Philip C. Watkins, 2014) . Related to the gratitude aspect which is appreciation of simple pleasure and appreciation of others positively should be develop through three good things exercises, which aim to help youngsters remember at least three good occurrences that occur in their lives every day (Bahník et al., 2015 ; Lai & Carroll, 2017a; Tagalidou et al., 2019) . While the ability to express gratitude for one's will and good intentions can be developed through a gratitude activity, which aims to help adolescents express gratitude by writing a letter of gratitude, the aspect of expressing gratitude related to the ability to express gratitude for one's will and good intentions can be developed through a gratitude visit activity (Christanto et al., 2017; Stefan et al., 2021) . So that school counselors can increase adolescent gratitude through specific training activities such as counting blessings, three good things, and gratitude visits. The conceptual framework of psycho-educational services that can be done by school counselors in increasing adolescent gratitude is through specific training activities, counting blessings, three good things, and gratitude visits (Magyar-Moe, 2009; Parks & Sculler , 2014; Proctor & Linley, 2013) .

In counting blessings activity , participants were asked to write down up to five blessings per day within a defined time restriction. "There are many blessings that occur in our lives, both from positive events or negative events, both big things and small things, please remember from yesterday to today (according to the time limit agreed upon), then write down in the section provided five blessings that you feel in your life," the participants will be told. Participants take part in this intervention every day for a mutually agreed-upon amount of time (Emmons & McCullough, 2003; JJ Froh et al., 2008; Proctor & Linley, 2013) . The three good things during the activity, participants were asked to write down three good things that happened to them every day for the time limit that was set jointly. The three excellent things range from small, everyday goodness to large, life-changing events. Participants wrote reflections on why the good happened, what the goodness meant to them, and what needed to be done to increase the possibility of good happening again in the future in each note they wrote (Bahník et al., 2015; Lai & Carroll, 2017a; Parks & Sculler, 2014; Seligman et al., 2005; Tagalidou et al., 2019) .

The gratitude visit activity required participants to recall or write down numerous acts of kindness they had received from others over the course of one week, after which they were directed to write a letter of gratitude to someone who had been very nice to them. The letter must be sent to the person who, in his opinion, has not had the opportunity to express his gratitude, and it must be delivered immediately (personal). This activity was in positive changes in the participants, including an increase in gratitude

(Christanto et al., 2017; Proctor & Linley, 2013; Stefan et al., 2021; Toepfer et al., 2012) The guide service with positive psychological intervention is based on a number of technical activities that might be used. Three meetings for adolescent participants might be held by school counselors. The activity is divided into three stages: the initial stage, which includes greetings, prayers, reviews, and ice breaking; the core stage, which includes counting blessings, three good things, and a gratitude visit; and the final stage, which includes a review, drawing conclusions, and evaluating activities

## CONCLUSION

Based on the preceding explanation, it can be inferred that school counselors can play a role in developing adolescent gratitude by providing psycho-educational services such as counting blessings, three nice things, and gratitude visits. This psycho-educational service can be completed in three meetings, with the first stage consisting of greetings, prayers, reviews, and ice breaking, the second stage consisting of specific counting blessings, three good things, and gratitude visits, and the third stage consisting of a review, draw conclusions, and evaluate activities. More study is needed to validate the conceptual framework of this psycho-educational service so that school counselors can use it as a resource in helping adolescents develop gratitude.

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