



## Research on the Status of Gratitude Therapy of High School Students in Da Nang City

Tran Nguyen Chau Uyen<sup>1</sup>, Ho Tran Nhu Mai<sup>2</sup>, Ms. Le Phan Quynh Trang<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1,2,3</sup>Le Quy Don High School for the Gifted DaNang, Vietnam.

ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Published Online: 03 December 2021	Gratitude is an extremely necessary spiritual element in our lives. Grateful people experience life in a more peaceful, and happy way. The study was conducted on 762 students from two clusters of gifted and non-specialized high schools in Da Nang city to describe the current situation, perception of gratitude and factors affecting the level of gratitude in high school students. Research results show that 79% of students are not grateful. A special thing is that the factors such as academic ability, age, and gender do not completely affect the gratitude level of high school students. Based on the findings, the study proposes a number of measures that partially affect the educational methods of schools and families, as well as directly affect the survey subjects.
Corresponding Author: <b>Ho Tran Nhu Mai</b>	
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### INTRODUCTION

Gratitude is a positive human emotional state, which is acknowledging and appreciating the help of others, which is natural to each individual. Be grateful for your life to become lighter, more refined and more meaningful.

High school students are the group subjects that has the same full style to get the world around, awareness of valuable life, especially the true meaning of gratitude. Overtime, there have been many grateful researchers in the world in many aspects, such as psychology, religion, age, gender, culture of the authors Rosmarin, DH, Pirutinsky, S., Cohen, AB, Galler, Y., & Krumrei, EJ (2011), Morgan et al (2017), Krause, N., Emmons, RA, Ironson, G., & Hill, PC (2017), Bono G, McCullough ME (2007), Tudge, JRH, Freitas, LBL, & O'Brien, LT (2016) but in Viet Nam there has been yet to be an opinion research on high school students aged 15-18 years old.

The article investigates the reality of the perception of gratitude, as well as the relationship between the level of gratitude and the factors: education, age, gender in high school students in Da Nang city. And from that, devegrade experimental solutions to raise awareness of gratitude therapy, spread gratitude, help survey subjects feel more appreciative of life and apply awareness to life by expressing gratitude.

### LITERATURE REVIEW

Gratitude is a positive emotional response to receiving a benefit that is believed to result from the good intentions of

another (Tsang JA, 2006). Gratitude is the act of feeling and expressing gratitude for people, situations and material possessions in the life of each individual and of the community. This positive mentality promotes a sense of appreciation for the present moment in individuals in ways that make us feel complete and appreciated in life (Luis E. Romero, 2017). A broader scale has been proposed (Morgan, 2017), named "The Multi-Component Gratitude Measure" (MCGM). This scale measures the virtue of gratitude in four different components: understanding of gratitude, feelings of gratitude, attitudes toward gratitude, and ways of expressing gratitude. Questionnaire from group of authors McCullough, Emmons and Tsang (2002), which is a 6-item scale that measures the intensity, frequency, distance, and density of gratitude.

McCullough et al. (2001) also suggested that gratitude has three moral functions. Gratitude is defined as a moral influence similar to other moral emotions such as empathy and guilt. Gratitude has three functions that can be conceptualized as morally relevant: (a) a measure of morality (that is, it is a response to the perception that one has been the beneficiary of the action) morality of others); (b) a moral motive function (i.e. it motivates the grateful person to behave socially towards the benefactor and others); and (c) the moral reinforcement function (i.e., when expressed, it encourages benefactors to behave ethically in the future). Personality and social factors associated with gratitude are also consistent with a concept of gratitude as a relevant influence on human cognition and behavior in the field of ethics.

In studies of children and adolescents, girls report being more grateful than boys (Froh, Yurkewicz, & Kashdan, 2009), (Froh, Emmons, Card, Bono, & Wilson, 2011). However, one study found that boys may derive more social benefits from gratitude because they show a stronger link between gratitude and emotional support from family. However, it is also possible that gratitude may be a consequence of that support rather than its cause (Froh, Yurkewicz, et al., 2009).

Adult women also reported more gratitude traits than adult men (Sun & Kong, 2013, (Kong, Ding, & Zhao, 2015), (Morgan et al., 2017), (Yost-Dubrow & Dunham, 2017). A study of college students and older adults found that “men are less likely to feel and express gratitude, make more critical judgments about gratitude, and receive less benefit” (Kashdan, Mishra, Breen, & Froh, 2009)

From a religious perspective, gratitude is an important component of many religious traditions, and several studies have investigated the potential relationship between personal reverence and gratitude, with the following results: different. Other studies have found a positive association between gratitude and a number of religious attributes, including frequent participation in religious activities, suggesting that the importance of religion is related to a personal relationship with God, experiencing spiritual transcendence (Emmons & Kneezel, 2005), and demonstrating religious allegiance (Rosmarin, Pirutinsky, Cohen, Galler, & Krumrei, 2011).

Research by Morgan et al., (2017) shows that Christians have shown a significantly higher attitude of gratitude than non-Christians. Research by (Rothenberg, Pirutinsky, Greer, & Korbman, 2015) showed evidence that religious participation was significantly positively associated with gratitude, increasing gratitude.

According to Bono G, Krakauer M, Froh JJ (2015) in “The Power and Practice of Gratitude. Posit Psychol Pract Promo Hum Flourishing Work Heal Educ Everyday Life Second Ed” studies effective gratitude interventions such as keeping a gratitude journal. Although gratitude is linked to the positive development and well-being of adolescents, its application in school settings is still lacking (Bono G, Krakauer M, Froh JJ (2015) research on gratitude leads to many positive outcomes of central importance in adolescent development (eg, happiness, relationships social systems, improved motivation, school satisfaction, and focus on priorities and planning for the future). Therefore, the application of gratitude in schools promises to promote student learning and school engagement. Bono G, Krakauer M, Froh JJ (2015) also studied how gratitude can easily complement social-emotional learning programs and can enhance bullying and character education programs. , which helps to improve school sentiment in general. Promoting gratitude early in the educational development process will

certainly create many benefits for individuals and society in the future.

Colette Lafia (2016) published "21 Days of Gratitude: Awakening the Heart Gratitude 21-Day Gratitude Challenge" with 21 different exercises to promote gratitude in people. The 21 exercises include, for example, taking a deep breath and then observing things around with the most positive eyes, or making a list of things that the individual considers good.

In particular, author David Steindl-Rast's (2017) has discovered an extremely interesting gratitude exercise that is exploring Haiku poetry. With poems bearing the classic character of Japan, through which, people are inspired to be grateful for life. Research suggests that each person should meditate every day and meditate on a Haiku poem to increase their gratitude to people and the purity of the soul, purifying the negative, minimizing stress to the outside.

In this article, we define gratitude as a positive emotional state of each individual, the recognition of others' help to the individual, the appreciation for the different life values, is a motivating force, encourages the person being helped to act, and has an interrelationship with many factors. At the same time, we will also learn about the status of high school students' awareness of gratitude, the influencing factors and the preferred solutions to improve creativity in high school students in the city of Danang.

## OBJECTS AND METHODS OF SURVEY

- Research object: 762 high school students from high schools in Da Nang city with three grades, three genders and four academic levels.

Survey method by questionnaire: we built a questionnaire consisting of 5 parts, which include awareness, current situation, proposed measures and personal information (gender/class/school/academic ability/ conduct/...)

- Test method

Test GQ-6: The test has 6 questions about the subjects' expressions of gratitude in the most recent month with 7 levels (1= strongly disagree; 2= disagree; 3= strongly disagree agree; 4= neutral; 5= strongly agree; 6= agree; 7= strongly agree) appear in the life of high school students. Reliability results 6 answers of students achieved alpha coefficient > 0.721 with significance level  $p = 0.000$ . This confirms the data obtained... The gratitude levels are: 0-34: less grateful, 35- 38: little grateful; 39-40: moderate gratitude; 41-42: super grateful.

- Mathematical statistical methods: The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20.0 was used for data analyses. We use SPSS 20.0 software to analyze the mean score data; ratio %; standard deviation, correlation between groups. The coding procedure was performed as followed:
  - 1 = do not agree
  - 2 = agree

**RESULTS**

In terms of grade: The majority of students in all 3 grades have the ability to perceive gratitude therapy at an unappreciative level, the percentage of all 3 classes in 10th grade, respectively, is 80.00%; Grade 11 is 80.00% and grade 12 is 75.08%. The second most dominant level is the level of little gratitude, the proportion of all three classes in 10th grade, respectively, is 16.03%; 11th grade is 15.05% and 12th grade is 19.08%. There are a small number of students who are moderately grateful and super grateful, of which 4.4% of 12th graders are less grateful and moderately grateful. It

seems that 12th graders have a deeper, more mature experience than 10th and 11th graders, so it partly affects students' perception of gratitude therapy. However, in the end it can be seen that the difference in proficiency between grades is not too large.

According to one-way analysis of variance (one-way ANOVA), we get sig. = 0.521 (> 0.05). It proves that there is no difference in the perceived level of gratitude therapy among high school students in Da Nang city based on the GQ6 test between grades.

**Table 1.** Gratitude level of high school students in Da Nang City

	Grade		Gratitude level				Total
			Less grateful	Little grateful	Moderate grateful	Super grateful	
Grade	Grade 10	n	216	44	6	4	270
		%	80.0	16.3	2.2	1.5	
	Grade 11	n	248	48	12	2	310
		%	80.0	15.5	3.9	0.6	
	Grade 12	n	138	36	4	4	182
		%	75.8	19.8	2.2	2.2	
Gender	Female	n	357	82	17	7	463
		%	77.1	17.7	3.7	1.5	
	Male	n	239	43	5	3	290
		%	82.4	14.8	1.7	1.0	
	Others	n	6	3	0	0	
		%	66.7	33.3	0	0	
Academic record	Excellent	n	311	67	13	5	396
		%	78.5	16.9	3.3	1.3	
	Good	n	230	45	9	3	287
		%	80.1	15.7	3.1	1.0	
	Average	n	51	14	0	2	67
		%	76.1	20.9	0	3.0	
	Below Average	n	10	2	0	0	12
		%	83.3	16.7	0	0	

In terms of gender: Most are still not grateful and less grateful. With the level of awareness of gratitude therapy at

the level of gratitude, men (82.04%) accounted for a higher proportion than women (77.01%) and did not want to be

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specific, 66.07%. Regarding the perceived level of gratitude therapy at a moderate level of gratitude, the percentage of men was 1.7%; female accounted for 3.7% and unspecified gender accounted for 0%. Regarding the cognitive level of gratitude therapy at the super grateful level, the percentage of men was 1.0%; female is 1.5% and unspecified is 0%. It can be seen that the gender disparity is clearly shown and the difference in perception of gratitude therapy for each gender group. We hypothesized that female students have sensitive and delicate intuition, always want to feel positive things in life, and psychologically want to express gratitude.

According to sig value, T-Test is  $0.153 > 0.05$ , so we conclude: There is no statistically significant difference in cognitive level of gratitude therapy (according to GQ6 test) of students of different genders.

In terms of academic record: According to the analysis results of the GQ-6 test, the majority of cognitive levels of gratitude therapy are at the level of not grateful with good academic performance accounting for 78.05%; Good academic ability accounted for 80.01% and weak and poor academic ability accounted for 83.03%. The second most dominant level is the low level of gratitude with good academic performance of 16.09%; good academic performance is 15.07% and weak and poor academic ability is 16.07%. There doesn't seem to be a clear disparity with the different types of learning.

According to the sig value, the T-Test is  $0.845 (> 0.05)$ , so we conclude: There is no statistically significant difference in the perceived level of gratitude therapy (according to GQ-6 test) of students with different backgrounds.

**Table 2.** Assess individual differences in the proneness to experience gratitude in daily life.

	M	SD	R
If I had to list everything that I felt grateful for, it would be a very long list.	5.1024	1.63568	4
When I look at the world, I don't see much to be grateful for.	2.9252	1.70827	6
I am grateful to a wide variety of people	5.3648	1.58366	2
As I get older I find myself more able to appreciate the people, events, and situations that have been part of my life history.	5.1969	1.57697	3
Long amounts of time can go by before I feel grateful to something or someone	4.1798	1.77675	5
I have so much in life to be thankful for.	5.5643	1.61439	1

*M= Mean, SD= Standard Deviation, R=Ranking*

Through the analysis of the QG-6 questionnaire, with 6 statements as above, it can be seen that the rankings are as follows.

Taking the highest average score is the statement “I have so much in life to be thankful for.” with 5,5643 points. Taking the second majority score is the statement “I am grateful to a wide variety of people” with an average score of 5.3648. It was immediately followed by the statement, “As I get older, I find myself more able to appreciate the people, events, and situations that have been a part of my life history with a GPA of 5.1969. Ranked fourth is the statement “If I had to list everything that I felt grateful for, it would be a very long list.” with an average score of 5,1024. The fifth most

popular is the statement “Long amounts of time can go by before I feel grateful to something or someone” with an average score of 4,1798. And last is the statement “When I look at the world, I don't see much to be grateful for.” with a very low average score of 2,9252. In summary, through the above average statistical scores, the experience of gratitude in the daily life of each individual being a high school student in Da Nang city is quite high, most of them are above the average score average a lot on a scale of 7. It shows that the experience of gratitude is quite high, but when summarizing the entire survey results, the number of grateful students is not significant.

**Table 3.** Desired solutions to stimulate and increase students' gratitude

Desired solutions	Mean	SD	R
Create gratitude trees at schools.	1.7585	0.42826	3
Write a gratitude journal.	1.6037	0.48945	4
Attend classes, gratitude talks.	1.8688	0.33788	1

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Build a handbook to enhance gratitude inspiration.	1.7927	0.40567	2
List the number of times of gratitude in a day/week/month.	1.2900	0.45407	6
Practice gratitude exercises.	1.3622	0.48095	5

*M= Mean, SD= Standard Deviation, R= Ranking*

According to the results obtained when asked about the measures they want to receive from their families, the school and themselves to improve creativity, most students want the school to organize seminars, share giving myself the opportunity to share and listen to up to 71% of students, besides that, other forms are quite popular then such as building gratitude notebooks, gratitude trees, and gratitude journaling.

It can be seen that students are also eager to receive opportunities from school and family to enhance gratitude, not just temporary activities. On the other hand, activities

such as writing gratitude letters, writing gratitude journals and giving gratitude lists are less popular but still receive some attention and interest from students. Perhaps students still want to enhance gratitude through these forms, but have not had the opportunity to approach and practice them properly to keep students motivated or interested in participating. In short, students want changes and access to enhance and stimulate gratitude. Schools and families need to create conditions, and organize activities and programs properly and in accordance with students' wishes and preferences.

**Table 4.** Students' perception of the factors affecting gratitude

Factors affecting gratitude	M	SD	R
Family care for children	2.3123	1.45347	2
The care and sharing of friends	2.5328	1.14385	1
Pressure of life	2.2559	1.02344	3
The negative impact of social problems	0.6759	1.03229	7
Teacher-student relationship	2.1273	0.84132	4
Relationship with lover	2.0866	1.48858	5
Study pressure	1.9318	0.63458	6

Survey on the factors that high school students think affect the perception of gratitude therapy (Gratitude Therapy), the most chosen and almost absolute factor is “Your concern, sharing raft” (M = 2.5328). This shows that good relationships and empathy with friends have a great influence on the perception of gratitude therapy, you will use your awareness of gratitude therapy to solve a problem. topic or do what you want, but conversely, a relationship of friends that is not good, does not share and understand each other, will not have a good perception of gratitude therapy. This is similar to the 2 factors with the 2nd and 3rd largest proportions, which are “Family care for children” (M = 2.3123) and “Life pressure”. (M = 2.2559) life or family factors that will enable high school students to improve or not improve their cognitive abilities of gratitude therapy. At the same time, the relationship between teachers and students also significantly affects the perception of gratitude therapy in high school students (M = 2.1273). Teachers are open and

subtle in their behavior, ask questions or talk and lead students in the learning process, which will also help students to realize the values of life and children. The people around me are much better. The least influential factors were the relationship with the lover (M=2.0866); learning pressure (M=1.9318) and finally the negative impact of social problems (M=0.6759).

**CONCLUSION**

Through the process of writing the theoretical basis, doing practical research and analyzing the results, we have reached some conclusions as follows:

Awareness of gratitude therapy is currently receiving certain attention from schools and students in all countries around the world, including Vietnam. Regarding the actual situation, based on the results of a survey on awareness of gratitude therapy of students in Da Nang city using McCullough's Questionnaire Six Items scale, it was

found that up to 79% of students Gratitude Therapy awareness is low and quite low.

Most of the surveys have found that students have a low awareness of Gratitude Therapy and there are differences in cognitive levels between grade levels, gender, and academic ability. there are too obvious differences, specifically: differences between the sexes (male, female, do not want to be specific); Women have a higher level of awareness of gratitude therapy than men. There is not a big difference in academic performance and relationships with society (teachers, family, friends, lovers,...). Thereby, it shows that the factors of gender, grade, academic ability, behavior, and school group do not greatly affect the cognitive ability of gratitude therapy of high school students in Da Nang city.

Although not well aware of gratitude therapies, more than 71% are interested in the suggested gratitude therapies. This is also the motivation for our research team to carry out awareness raising programs on gratitude therapy (Gratitude Therapy) to achieve the highest results in increasing and stimulating gratitude in high school students.

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