

OVERVIEW OF GRATITUDE IN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

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Abstract: The purpose of this study was to describe the profile of gratitude among high school students. This study uses a quantitative approach using a descriptive method. The population consisted of 216 students, all of whom were included as participants through saturated sampling techniques. The instrument used is a gratitude scale that has undergone validity and reliability testing. The findings revealed that students' gratitude levels are generally in the moderate category. A total of 35 students (16%) were classified as low, 145 students (67%) were moderate, and 36 students (17%) were high. These results suggest that most students have moderate levels of gratitude, although further development is needed through consistent practice and positive psychology-based interventions. Overall, the study provides a comprehensive picture of gratitude among high school students and serves as the basis for designing personal-social guidance programs in schools.

Keywords: Gratitude, Guidance and counseling, High School Students.

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INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is a developmental stage characterized by biological, cognitive, and social-emotional changes that occur significantly and intensely

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(Santrock, 2018). In this phase, individuals try to understand themselves, form personal identities, and undergo a process of adjustment to an increasingly complex social environment (Papalia & Feldman, 2015). High school teenagers in particular are in a period filled with academic demands, family expectations, and peer pressure. This condition encourages the need for emotional regulation and self-management skills so that adolescents can continue to function optimally in school and social environments. One of the positive traits that plays a role in supporting the adolescent adaptation process at school is gratitude. Emmons and McCullough (2004) explain that gratitude is an individual's tendency to recognize, appreciate, and respond to the kindness received from others as well as from events in his or her life. Within the framework of positive psychology, gratitude is seen as a force of character capable of leading individuals to a positive mindset and healthier emotional responses (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000).

Etymologically, the term gratitude comes from the Latin word *gratia* which refers to kindness, grace, or gratitude, as well as gratitude which means to please or appreciate (Emmons & McCullough, 2004). Gratitude has been a major research theme since the development of the positive psychology movement in the late 20th century. Seligman (2002) states that positive psychology shifts the focus of study from mental disorders to human strength, one of which is gratitude. In this context, gratitude is not only seen as a momentary emotional response, but as a cognitive and affective tendency that influences the way individuals evaluate life experiences. Wood et al. (2008) emphasize that gratitude is a combination of emotional responses and cognitive processes when a person is aware of the existence of external goodness in his or her life. Thus, gratitude serves as an adaptive mechanism that helps individuals develop a positive perspective.

Watkins et al. (2003) stated that gratitude consists of three important aspects, namely a sense of abundance, appreciation for simple pleasures, and appreciation for others. A sense of abundance describes the perception that life is filled with good things that are worth rewarding. Appreciation for simple pleasures refers to the individual's ability to enjoy the little things that are often missed in everyday life. Meanwhile, appreciation for others is reflected when individuals are aware of the contributions of others and respond to them with gratitude. These three aspects as a whole are fundamental to understanding the gratitude profile in individuals, including high school teens. Watkins (2014) then asserted that individuals who have high gratitude tend to rate life

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experiences more positively, have healthier social relationships, and show more stable emotional processing.

Gratitude has a high relevance in the lives of high school teens, especially since adolescence is a period full of social and academic challenges. Froh, Bono, and Emmons (2010) found that adolescents who have high levels of gratitude are better able to form prosocial relationships and show greater empathy for others. Thus, gratitude is not only related to the emotional aspect, but also affects the way adolescents interact with their social environment. Froh et al. (2011) also reported that gratitude in adolescents was associated with improved quality of social relationships, satisfaction with school, and the ability to cope with stress. This shows that gratitude can be a protective factor in dealing with various pressures in the educational environment.

Wood et al. (2010) found that individuals with high levels of gratitude tend to have better ability to regulate emotions and assess life experiences more objectively. In the context of high school students, this ability allows them to respond to academic pressure constructive way. Research support in Indonesia also shows a similar thing. Khairullah (2021) revealed that adolescents with a high level of gratitude show better emotional adaptability and interpersonal relationships. These findings reinforce the idea that gratitude plays an important role in the psychological well-being of adolescents in Indonesia.

Gratitude also has an important influence on the formation of students' prosocial behavior. Research by Perrault et al. (2023) shows that individuals who have gratitude tend to exhibit behaviors of appreciating the help of others, having a desire to return kindness, and caring more about their social environment. In the context of high school students, this prosocial behavior can be seen in the form of helping friends, respecting teachers, and obeying school rules. Watkins (2014) added that gratitude encourages individuals to pay more attention to positive aspects in interpersonal relationships, thereby improving the quality of social relationships in the context of education.

In addition, gratitude also has a strong cognitive base. Emmons and McCullough (2003) explain that being aware of the goodness in life is a cognitive process that is the basis for gratitude. McCullough, Emmons, and Tsang (2002) assert that gratitude is influenced by internal factors such as optimism, hope, and positive perceptions of life experiences. In high school students, this positive mindset can help them more easily assess academic and social situations constructively. Wood et al. (2009) also stated that gratitude is

related to a positive mindset that encourages adaptive behavior so that it can support the psychological well-being of individuals.

Other research shows that gratitude not only impacts psychological aspects, but can also affect physical well-being. Sabani and Daliman (2021) found that gratitude is linked to healthier physiological responses, including lower levels of stress. This is especially relevant for high school students who are vulnerable to academic and social pressure. Gratitude can help stabilize emotional responses and result in a calmer internal state.

Although research on gratitude in adolescents has been done quite a bit, most previous studies have emphasized the relationship between gratitude and other factors, rather than mapping how gratitude levels themselves affect students in school. For example, the research of Hayuningputri and Arbi (2022) found that gratitude is related to the way adolescents deal with problems, while the study of Hapsari and Bakan (2025) shows that gratitude plays a role in shaping adolescents' positive attitudes towards themselves. Another study by Yuditha et al. (2025) confirms that gratitude can help adolescents build better social relationships with the surrounding environment. However, the studies did not specifically describe the profile of gratitude levels (low, moderate, high categories) in high school students as a different developmental group from the orphanage setting or special adolescents. In other words, there have not been many studies that specifically examine the state of the level of gratitude of high school students when viewed from the distribution of the categories as a whole. This gap is an important basis for this study to provide a real picture of the state of gratitude of high school students, so that the results can be used as a basis for the development of Guidance and Counseling services in schools.

In the context of Indonesian culture, the concept of gratitude has its own uniqueness. Emmons (2004) states that gratitude is a universal value that emerges in various human cultures, religions, and traditions. However, research by Listiyandini et al. (2017) shows that the concept of gratitude in the Indonesian context has a stronger religious nuance, where gratitude is understood not only as a response to the kindness of others, but also as a form of recognition of God's gifts. This makes gratitude in high school students in Indonesia influenced by religious and cultural values that develop in the family and school environment.

Given the complexity of adolescent development and the important role of gratitude in shaping psychological well-being, social relationships, and emotional regulation, research on the general picture of gratitude in high school

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students is important. Froh et al. (2011) emphasize that mapping the level of gratitude in adolescents provides information about how gratitude develops in that age population. Watkins (2014) also explains that understanding the gratitude profile can help educators design more targeted character development interventions and programs. Therefore, this study was compiled to provide a comprehensive picture of the level of gratitude of high school students and which aspects need to be strengthened in the context of education.

Thus, the image of gratitude in high school students is important to learn because the ability to be grateful contributes to the emotional, social, and moral development of adolescents. Understanding the level and characteristics of gratitude in high school students can be the basis for guidance and counseling teachers and schools to develop character building programs and psychological interventions that are relevant to adolescents.

METHOD

This study uses a quantitative approach with a descriptive design that aims to obtain an objective picture of the level of gratitude in high school students based on numerical data. The population in this study is all high school students with a total of 216 people, and because all members of the population meet the criteria and can be reached for data collection, this study uses a saturated sampling technique, which is a sample determination technique that makes the entire population as a respondent (Sugiyono, 2021). The research instrument uses a gratitude scale developed based on the theory of Watkins et al. (2003) which has been adapted into Indonesian by previous researchers, covering three main aspects, namely *a sense of abundance, simple appreciation, and appreciation for others*, as commonly used in positive psychology measurements (Emmons & Mishra, 2019). Each item on the scale was compiled using a Likert scale format of 1–5, where responses were given in the range of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), as the Likert scale was considered effective in quantitatively measuring psychological attitude tendencies and providing stable results (Joshi et al., 2015). The instrument also has a high level of reliability in previous studies, with an Alpha Cronbach value above 0.80 indicating good internal consistency in measuring gratitude constructs in school-age populations (Wood et al., 2010). Data collection in this study was carried out using a questionnaire distributed online through Google Form. The selection of this method is based on considerations of ease of access, distribution efficiency, and allows all respondents to fill the instrument without time and place restrictions. The Google Form link is submitted through the BK teacher

and class group, then students are asked to fill in the scale independently according to the conditions they are experiencing. This technique is included in self-report, because the response is obtained directly from the participant's personal assessment of the statements presented in the instrument. The data obtained was analyzed using descriptive statistics. This technique is used to find out the picture of students' gratitude levels based on minimum, maximum, average, and percentage of categories. The determination of low, moderate, and high categories uses the formula of ideal score ranges and category intervals. The entire analysis process was conducted using Microsoft Excel/SPSS, which is used to calculate the frequency, percentage, and score tendency of each aspect of gratitude. The results of the descriptive analysis were then used to determine the overall gratitude profile of high school students.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

General description of students' gratitude

Based on the results of data processing, an overview of the gratitude profile of high school students was obtained. The data were categorized into three, namely high, moderate, and low categories. The following are the results of the research regarding the general picture of student gratitude

Table 1 Gratitude Review

| Score Range | Category | Frequency | Percentage | Average |
|--------------------|-----------------|------------------|-------------------|----------------|
| 129 – 180 | High | 37 | 17 % | 80 % |
| 82 - 128 | Moderate | 144 | 67 % | |
| 35 - 81 | Low | 35 | 16 % | |
| Total | | 216 | 100 | |

The results of research conducted on high school students show that the level of gratitude that students have is spread across several categories. Most of the students were in the middle category, which was 144 out of 216 respondents or about 67%. These findings suggest that the majority of students have a fairly good sense of gratitude and are relatively consistent in their daily activities, even

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though they have not yet reached very high levels. In addition, there were 37 students (17%) who were in the high category, indicating that this group had a more developed capacity to appreciate and appreciate positive meanings, such as the ability to appreciate help, be grateful for pleasant experiences, and tend to see the positive side of different situations. On the other hand, it was also found that 35 students (16%) were relatively low in the aspect of gratitude. This condition reflects that some students still face obstacles in recognizing positive things, are less sensitive to the help received, or are not used to expressing gratitude.

In general, a student's average gratitude score is in the range of 80%, which puts their gratitude level in the good category. This shows that students have a fairly strong foundation of gratitude, such as the ability to reward others, a tendency to acknowledge the kindness received, and the habit of looking at situations from a more positive perspective. The dominance of the moderate category also shows that although the development of gratitude has been formed, further strengthening is still needed through habituation, character education programs, and school activities that encourage reflection and appreciation of positive experiences. Thus, the picture of the results of this study reflects that students have the potential to increase the level of gratitude to a higher category if supported by a conducive learning environment and activities that facilitate the development of gratitude.

Gratitude Aspect Profile

Based on the results of data processing, an overview of the gratitude profile of vocational school students in Tasikmalaya City was obtained. The data were categorized into three, namely high, moderate, and low categories. The following are the results of the research regarding the general picture of student gratitude.

Table 2 Aspect of Gratitude

| No | Aspects | High | | Moderate | | Low | |
|----|--------------------|------|------|----------|------|-----|------|
| | | F | % | F | % | F | % |
| 1 | sense of abundance | 36 | 17 % | 136 | 63 % | 44 | 20 % |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|----------------------------------|----|------|-----|------|----|-----|
| 2 | Appreciation of simple pleasures | 31 | 14 % | 142 | 66% | 43 | 23% |
| 3 | Appreciation for others | 37 | 17 % | 136 | 63 % | 43 | 20% |

Based on the results of the study, the results of the analysis of three aspects of gratitude show a relatively consistent distribution pattern, where all aspects are dominated by the moderate category. In the first aspect, namely *the sense of abundance*, it was recorded that 136 out of 216 students (63%) were in the intermediate category. These findings suggest that the majority of students have been able to recognize the various forms of goodness and abundance they acquire in their daily lives, although this level of awareness is not yet fully optimal. A total of 36 students (17%) were in the high category, indicating that there was a small group that had a deep appreciation for their talents and positive experiences. Meanwhile, 44 students (20%) were in the low category, suggesting that there were some students who were not used to reflecting or being aware of the abundance they received.

In the second aspect, namely the appreciation of *simple pleasures*, it was found that 142 students (66%) were in the intermediate category. This means that most students can enjoy and appreciate simple positive experiences, such as small attention from others, pleasant routines, and everyday moments that provide emotional comfort. Only 31 students (14%) achieved the high category, which suggests that the ability to truly appreciate small pleasures is still possessed by a small percentage of students. In addition, 43 students (23%) were in the low category, suggesting that some students still struggle to recognize the value of simple worthwhile things in their lives.

In the third aspect, namely *appreciation for others*, as many as 136 students (63%) were again in the intermediate category, showing consistency in distribution with the previous aspect. This data reflects that most students tend to be able to appreciate the kindness, care, and support of those around them, even though those expressions of appreciation are not yet fully strong. A total of 37 students (17%) were classified as high, indicating that a small percentage

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of students have more developed interpersonal appreciation skills. Meanwhile, 43 students (20%) were in the low category, indicating that there are groups that are still less sensitive or less able to recognize the help and support they receive from their social environment.

The Role of Schools in Supporting Students' Gratitude

The results of the study conducted on 216 high school students showed that the level of gratitude was in the moderate category in general. The data distribution showed that 67% of students were in the moderate category, 17% were in the high category, and 16% were in the low category. These findings suggest that most students have a fairly good tendency to be grateful in their daily lives, but that capacity has not been fully developed on a deeper level. This condition is in line with the view of adolescent development, where adolescence is a transition period characterized by significant emotional, cognitive, and social changes, so that positive experiences are often perceived as fluctuate (Santrock, 2021). Research conducted by Froh et al. (2022) also found that high school adolescents tend to have a level of gratitude in the secondary category because the ability to reflect meaning has not been optimally developed compared to adult individuals. Thus, the findings of this study reinforce the view that the development of gratitude skills in adolescents is still in the formative stage and requires consistent environmental support.

Another relevant study is the study of Layous et al. (2022) which stated that high school-age students show moderate levels of gratitude if not regularly participate in gratitude habituation activities or self-reflection-based interventions. According to researchers, the practice of gratitude can develop more strongly if adolescents are heavily involved in positive social interactions, such as relationships with peers, extracurricular activities, and collaboration-based activities. This is in line with the characteristics of the students in this study, who mostly showed the ability to appreciate positive experiences but were inconsistent in expressing gratitude deeply. Thus, the dominant moderate category condition is a reasonable description in the context of adolescent development. When viewed based on each aspect of gratitude, all three aspects—feeling abundance, appreciating simple things, and appreciating others—show a similar distribution pattern, dominated by the moderate category. In terms of feelings of abundance, as many as 63% of students are in the middle category. The results show that most students have been able to realize the abundance of kindness and positive experiences they receive from the surrounding environment, even though the capacity is not yet fully strong.

This pattern is consistent with the findings of Algoe (2021) who explain that adolescents are often able to recognize the source of goodness, but are unable to understand the emotional meaning of the experience in depth.

In the aspect of appreciation of simple pleasure, as many as 66% of students are also included in the intermediate category. These findings suggest that the majority of students can appreciate small experiences in everyday life, such as attention from friends, small successes in lessons, or simple fun activities. However, the number of students who reach the high category is only 14%, signifying that a deep appreciation of small moments is still not part of their reflective habits. This is in line with research by Wang & Kong (2022) which found that appreciation for small things in adolescents is strongly influenced by the quality of the social environment, academic pressure, and emotional stability. Teens who aren't used to reflexively evaluating positive experiences tend to place simple things as neutral experiences, rather than as sources of gratitude.

The third aspect, namely appreciation for others, again shows the same pattern as the previous two aspects, namely 63% of students are in the middle category. This data shows that most students have the ability to recognize and appreciate the help, support, and attention provided by others in their social lives. However, the ability to express gratitude in verbal or prosocial actions is still not optimal. Recent research by Kim & Park (2023) shows that adolescents often show gratitude internally, but have difficulty expressing it openly due to cultural factors, school environment, and peer group influence. Thus, the results of this study show that students have the potential to develop stronger social appreciation if they receive the right stimulation.

Overall, the distribution of gratitude in the moderate category in all aspects suggests that students are at a stable but immature stage of gratitude development. This emphasizes the need for the role of schools, BK teachers, and the family environment in providing a space for habituation to encourage the internalization of gratitude values. Programs that emphasize self-reflection exercises, gratitude journaling, mindfulness-based counseling, and character-building activities have been shown to be effective in increasing students' levels of gratitude. Research by Halleyda & Japar (2023), for example, suggests that a four-week gratitude training intervention can improve prosocial behavior and emotion regulation abilities in adolescents. In addition, Apriani et al. (2025) found that the gratitude journal program can routinely increase students' gratitude categories from moderate to high in just one month.

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The results of this study provide an idea that even though high school students have shown a fairly positive capacity for gratitude, they still need reinforcement through a more structured educational approach. A conducive school environment, emotional support from teachers, and activities that encourage prosocial interaction are important factors that can strengthen the development of gratitude in adolescents. Thus, this study not only describes the condition of students' gratitude, but also emphasizes the urgency of implementing a gratitude character improvement program as an integral part of education in secondary school

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results of the research on the picture of gratitude in high school students, it can be concluded that the level of student gratitude in general is in the moderate category. The majority of students have demonstrated the ability to recognize and appreciate the various forms of kindness they receive in their daily lives, whether in the form of positive experiences, simple things, or help from others. However, the depth of appreciation and expressions of gratitude is still not optimal, shown by the fact that there is still a proportion of students who are in the low category. The three aspects of gratitude feeling abundant, appreciating simple things, and appreciating others show a consistent pattern, namely the dominance of the moderate category. This indicates that students have a fairly stable foundation of gratitude awareness, but it still needs to be strengthened through habituation, character education, and support from the school environment. Overall, this condition illustrates that high school students have great potential to improve the quality of gratitude if given the right interventions and stimulation.

Based on the results of the research, an active role of Guidance and Counseling services is needed in strengthening the development of student gratitude. Guidance and counseling teachers can integrate gratitude development programs through basic services, responsive services, and classical guidance. Activities such as gratitude journals, self-reflection exercises, group discussions about positive experiences, and strengthening mutual respect behaviors can be used to increase students' awareness of the good things they have. Guidance and counseling teachers can also work closely with homeroom teachers and parents to create a supportive social environment, as relational support has been shown to influence the development of gratitude in adolescents. In addition, schools can develop positive habituation policies such as morning reflections, character programs, or appreciation activities between

students to support increased gratitude. The implementation of this service is expected to be able to strengthen emotional well-being, improve the quality of social relationships, and help students build more adaptive emotional regulation.

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