Gratitude Journal as an Instrument to Increase the Level of Gratitude among Adolescent in Ambon During COVID-19

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ABSTRACT

COVID-19, which has plagued the world since 2020, has brought changes in the order of human life globally, and ultimately has an impact on the psychological state of individuals, including teenagers. The aim of this study is to find the differences between students' gratitude score before and after the implementation of writing gratitude journal regularly. Participants on this study was 20 adolescents in Ambon City Maluku Indonesia, consists of 6 boys and 14 girls. The participants age was between 15-16 years old. Quantitative Method with experimental design used in this study. From the results, it was found that the significant value in the table paired samples correlations was 0.418, meaning that there are relationship between the results of the pre-test and post-test because the value was > sig. 0.05. Although the increase in the value of gratitude among adolescents in Ambon is not too large and increases their classification to be included in the criteria for groups that have sufficient gratitude scores, the important thing explained in implementing gratitude education actually lies in its aim to inspire students that it is important to be grateful in all circumstances. and it's not just about saying thank you or showing grateful behavior.

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COVID-19 which has been going on since the beginning of 2020 has changed the way of life of the national and international community. All elements of society are affected by the social changes that have occurred due to the COVID-19 outbreak. The adolescent group is no exception affected by the existing situation. As teenagers who are vulnerable to psychological problems due to the rapid physical changes and large hormone production in this phase, making them vulnerable to various psychological problems as a result of this epidemic(Simal et al., 2022), (Benjamin et al., 2020).

The impact of COVID-19 that has hit the world since 2020 also has a strong influence on the development of today's youth. It has been reported that there has been a fairly high increase in anxiety among adolescents since the onset of COVID-19 (Carrillo-Diaz et al., 2022). Disconnection from the real world also results in increased dependence on gadgets, resulting in a low ability to manage time and stress which results in high anxiety, difficulty sleeping, and negative emotional and psychological states (Ramos-Soler et al., 2021). The results of research showed that 78% of adolescents having trouble sleeping during the Covid-19 pandemic (Hartini et al., 2021). Result reported that 62.9% students in Jakarta have sleep problems, and the problems higher during COVID-19 compared to before the COVID-19 pandemic. In Ambon itself in 2020, at the beginning of the pandemic the average gratitude score for teenagers in Maluku was 32.19, this means that the gratitude scores of students in Ambon City belonged to the very less grateful group (Rampisela, 2022).

Adolescence is the most critical period in the stages of human development where physical health is closely related to a person's mental health, so unhealthy behaviors can threaten adolescent development. According to Garcia-Poole there are three types of teenagers, namely healthy teenagers where they learn more, rarely go out at night, not consume alcohol; there are types of teenagers who use gadgets excessively to play virtual games or access social media; and the last type is the type of teenager who is not healthy, the characteristics shown are they often leaving the house even late at night, consuming alcohol, and rarely exercising, they also generally come from families with less support (García-Poole et al., 2018).

Various conditions currently faced by teenagers today certainly raise concerns about the future of the human resources condition in the future. Correct behavior patterns are needed that must be taught to adolescents so that healthy behavior can be formed which will certainly improve the health and welfare of adolescents in the future. One pattern of behavior that teenagers need today is gratitude (Gaete et al., 2021). Through gratitude, adolescents will appreciate their existence and ownership, so that they can increase positive emotions in themselves and direct them to a prosperous psychological state (Hong & Kim, 2020). Gratitude is important in the development of adolescent health. The experience and expression of gratitude will result in positive emotional appreciation, social support and overall subjective well-being. Adolescents think about the meaning of gratitude,

appreciation for others (parents and friends) and the support and help they receive from others, they tend to be more appreciative in general and specifically towards others, compared to their friends who were not taught the meaning of gratitude. In the process, gratitude is always related to the cognitive, social and emotional aspects of a person (Algoe & Haidt, 2009). Introducing gratitude into one's life early on will help individuals adapt well to new social environments, build respect for one another and promote positive cognitive experiences (Datu et al., 2022). The school environment is also believed to be a place where the development of gratitude can be strengthened. Gratitude intervention can be done through the manifestation of gratitude in the curriculum using certain techniques. In an English class, for example, the teacher can ask some questions or facilitate a discussion related to the experience of characters or expressions of gratiture in certain texts. Techniques like this can be applied in history classes as well, when discussing certain events that became history and shaped society. Students in art class can be asked to collect certain things that inspire positive feelings or emotions and store them specifically that can be used specifically to increase their positive emotions, when challenges arise (Denovan et al., 2020).

Based on the results of this study, it reflects the problems faced by this nation in the future if children continue to grow up in a state of being less grateful. According to psychologists, the increase in the value of gratitude can be increased through developing the habit of giving thanks and practicing gratitude regularly. One of the methods used in the practice of giving thanks is to write a daily journal about the things that an individual (Layous & Lyubomirsky, 2014). Therefore, the aim of this study to find the differences between adolescents' gratitude score before and after the implementation of writing gratitude journal regularly.

METHOD

This study uses a quantitative approach with the type of research pre-experimental design. While the type of research used in this study is Pre-Experimental Design (Non-designs). Pre-Experimental Design is not yet a real experiment, because there are still external variables that also influence the formation of the dependent variable. Therefore, the experimental results which are the independent variables are not solely influenced by the independent variables (Leatherdale, 2019). This can happen, because there is no control variable, and the sample is not chosen at random. The design used in this research was one group pre-test posttest model, in the form of this design there is a pretest and posttest, so the effect of treatment can be calculated by comparing the posttest score with the pretest. Before the series of journal entries were written by participants, participants had to take a pre-test about their gratitude score.

The test used is a 6 item Gratitude Questionnaire from McCullough, Emmons and Tsang (McCullough et al., 2002). In a two week study, participants were asked to regularly write a gratitude journal at the end of their day. Every day participants were asked to collect story sheets about things they were grateful for that day. On day 15, participants were asked to take the same gratitude test that was taken at the pre-test. Participants on this study was 20 adolescents in Ambon City Maluku Indonesia, consists of 6 boys and 14 girls. The participants age was between 15-16 years old. Participants in this study enrolled in the program. Prior to participating in this study, researchers provided informed consent who were asked to sign an agreement for their children to be part of this study.

The questionnaire used in this study is a questionnaire adapted from The Gratitude Questionnaire-Six-Item Form (GQ-6) (McCullough et al., 2002). This questionnaire is a self-assessment questionnaire that contains six (6) statements to assess individual differences in the tendency to experience gratitude in daily life. In carrying out the adaptation process, the researcher began by translating the original text into the target language. The translation was done by two people working independently. This questionnaire was translated by Theophanny Rampisela and Cynthia Haumahu who are a team of researchers who have good English and Indonesian skills, and also master the ability to prepare test scales. From the two translations, the similarities and differences were then searched until finally an agreed translation was obtained, hereinafter referred to as a translation scale draft. The third stage is back-translation to the original language. The draft translation scale that has been prepared is then translated back into the language from which the scale was made. The reverse translation was carried out by Debra Soplantila S.S who is a graduate of English Literature from Petra Christian University. The results of the reverse translation are then compared with the original scale, to see if there are differences in meaning in the translation results. One of the validities used is content validity. Content validity is a method of measuring validity that systematically examines whether a measuring instrument contains a representative sample of the behavioral domain to be measured (Rubio et al., 2003). Content validation is a validity test method that aims to determine whether the items contained in a measuring instrument adequately represent a domain or construct (Shrotryia & Dhanda, 2019). Content validation is basically an assessment. Given that each statement from the test tool must be known how representative the statement is, then the statement must be assessed for its relevance to something to be measured using expert judgment. Therefore, the implementation procedure in obtaining content validity is to ask for opinions from experts to analyze the items that have been made based on the results of the translation of the original test kits in a foreign language, ensuring that these items adequately represent the domain or construct to be measured.

Theoretically, content validity can be studied through expert judgment. Expert judgment can be done by asking for an assessment from people who are considered experts in the field or topic in question. In connection with the explanation above, the researchers conducted content validity with experts, in this case Criezta Korlefura, M.Psi., Psi, who is a developmental psychologist and is an expert in measurement in education as well as child development. This expert judgment is carried out to ensure the equality of meaning between the original scale and the translated scale. It also ensures that the items in each of these scales adequately represent the domain or construct to be measured. After it was determined that the two scales did not have a

different meaning, then proceed to the last stage, which is the try-out stage by piloting the test to a small number of subjects. The trial was conducted on 35 students. From these results it is known that the instructions and items on the scale can be understood well by the respondents. The last stage, after giving treatment for the journal work, the researcher then gave the same questionnaire to the same subject to be filled in again with the aim of the researcher wanting to see if there were any differences. This stage is called the Post-Test which is given to the subject after the subject has received treatment according to the research objectives.

Data analysis through validity and reliability tests as well as prerequisite tests, namely normality tests, as a condition for testing hypotheses using the Sample Paired t test (differential test) with the help of SPSS version 23. Test validity by testing the significance of the correlation coefficient at a significance level of 0, 05 means that an item is considered valid if it has a significant correlation with the total score or it is usually said that if r count r table (2-sided test with sig. 0.05) then the instrument or question items have a significant correlation with the total score (declared valid), from The results of the pilot test validity test in previous studies obtained the Pearson Correlation value to 6 items (0.746, 0.534, 0.583, 0.647, 0.744, 0.664) all of which were more than r table 0.279 (N = 50), meaning that all the question items given to the pilot subject were valid, then this questionnaire the researcher gave to 20 research subjects who followed the process of filling in the gratitude journal that had been determined by the researcher. Furthermore, the reliability test uses the Cronbach alpha technique with the Cronbach alpha criteria based on standardized items between 0.6 to 0.7 as the lowest acceptable reliability limit (Seifert & Paleczek, 2021). The results of the reliability test using Cronbach Alpha Based on standardized items are 0.678. Before the Paired Sample T test, a prerequisite test was carried out, namely the normality test using the Shapiro-Wilk Test because the research subjects were < 30 samples. When conducting the Shapiro-Wilk Test there were outliers so that outliers were removed in item 2 and item 3 pre-test and post-test for further qualitative analysis of identified outliers. Then, the results of the normality test after deletion are 0.156 which means that this data is on normal distribution. It can be seen in the image of the SPSS processing results in the image below that we use the Shapiro-Wilk test. Where the requirements if the value of sig> 0.05 then the data is normally distributed.

Table 1. Test of Normality

	Kolmogorov-Smirnova			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	Df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Pre-Test	.150	18	.200*	.938	18	.269
Post-Test	.195	18	.068	.924	18	.152

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Respondents who filled out the pre-test and post-test questionnaires were 20 students who were given the same pre-test and post-test. From table 3, it can be seen that the Mean Pre-test and post-test values experienced differences and an increase in the post-test scores with the total mean post-test value of 36.00, which is greater than the Pre-test mean of 31.83. Where the value of N with a total subject after eliminating outliers is 18, and has a deviation std of pre-test 4.90 and post-test only 2.82 and there is std. The mean error is 1.15 and 0.66 when viewed in the table below, when eliminating outliers for subjects 2 and 3, the researcher then made a qualitative analysis of the 2 subjects to find out the background that caused the value to be very extreme by also looking at the results of the gratitude journal which was filled in by the students.

Table 2. Paired Sample Statistics

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Pre-Test	31.8333	18	4.90198	1.15541
	Post-Test	36.0000	18	2.82843	.66667

To find out the relationship between the results of the pre-test and post-test can be seen in the table paired samples correlations where if the value of sig. < 0.05 then there is a relationship between the results of the pre-test and post-test tested. From the results, it was found that the significant value in the table paired samples correlations was 0.418, meaning that there are relationship between the results of the pre-test and post-test because the value was > sig. 0.05.

The results in this study are similar to previous studies whose samples in this study were also students in China (Tian et al., 2015). The mean value of the pre-test before the intervention was 25.38 while after the intervention was 29.73. This means that there is an increase of 4.35, the increase in this value is almost the same as the increase in the value in this study. In their study, researchers collected respondents both in the experimental group and the control group for 10 days in the dormitory. During those 10 days the experimental group was given material about being grateful and filling in a gratitude diary, while the control group carried out learning as usual and was asked to write down the things they did that day in a diary. The difference with this research is that the treatment in this study is writing a grateful diary only, without being given material about gratitude. The other consideration is the duration of the research is more than 4 days when compared to the research of (Seligman et al., 2005). Fourteen days was chosen, a period of 14 days because if the implementation time is shorter it will result in less time for respondents to develop the skills and experience needed to develop themselves (Bono et al., 2020). This study was also conducted for 14 days and was not carried out per week, as reported in their study of Counting Blessing versus Burdens they compared

respondents who filled out gratitude diaries on a weekly and daily basis (Emmons & McCullough, 2003). Although respondents who kept a weekly diary in Study 1 reported positive emotional and physical benefits, respondents who kept a daily diary in Study 2 reported that they were more enthusiastic, alert and able to make good decisions, and tended to be moreable to achieve goals in daily life.

A similar study was where they looked at the impact of journal writing on increasing the gratitude value of British parents aged 60—91 years (Killen & Macaskill, 2015). There were 88 parents who were asked to take part in this study. The study was conducted for 14 days each participant was asked to record in a diary that they were grateful for that day. The results of this study indicate that writing a gratitude journal increases the value of gratitude and effectively improves the psychological well-being aspects of the respondents. In their study, the gratitude scores of the respondents did not change too much during the intervention and 30 days after the intervention. In their writings, they stated that small changes in value were not very important considering that although there was not a significant increase in value, respondents reported an increase in their appreciation of things and people for which they were grateful.

Furthermore, in the research conducted by for grateful education teachers in Turkey which is based on the argument on the importance of knowing the gratitude level of grateful teachers because they must be examples for their students. Teachers with sufficient gratitude levels will increase their trust in them, their interpersonal skills are also better, they are better able to solve problems and stress at school, they are happier, more successful and experience less burnout and emotional exhaustion. They designed the Thank You-Teacher Gratitude Education Program (TYGEP-T) program which for 5 weeks carried out a Psycho-education program. Each week there is material that is distributed for 90 minutes. The methods used were the facilitator explaining the weekly learning objectives, summarizing last week's material, warm-up games, presentation of material from the facilitator, explanation of daily tasks. After that, respondents were asked to write down things they were grateful for during the week. They did a pre-test before the intervention, post-test after the intervention and a follow-up test 30 days after the last day the intervention was given. The results showed that there was a significant increase in scores before and after the intervention. Although the value of gratitude dropped again during the follow-up test, the value of gratitude in the follow-up test was still higher than the score of the respondent's pre-test. From the results of this study, it can be concluded that writing a gratitude journal should be added to teaching about gratitude in order to increase one's gratitude value and have a long-term impact (Demirbağ & Duran, 2020).

Another thing that must be considered in conducting research on gratitude journals is cultural factors. In certain cultures, increasing awareness of gratitude will increase feelings of indebtedness to those who provide assistance to them. As based on the results of research conducted in USA and Korea where researchers asked participants to write things, they were grateful for or did for the good of others for 6 weeks, the results showed that respondents in the United States showed good behavior significantly increased the well-being of the respondents. The same significance value was also obtained from grateful behavior to increase wellbeing. However, based on the results of research in South Korea, behavior showing kindness to others increases the wellbeing of respondents, while grateful behavior reduces the value of gratitude. So that writing grateful journals in some eastern cultures is not as effective as western countries (Layous et al., 2013).

Although the increase in the value of gratitude among Indonesian adolescents during COVID-19 is not too large and increases their classification to be included in the criteria for groups that have sufficient gratitude scores, the important thing explained in implementing gratitude education actually lies in its aim to inspire students that it is important to be grateful in all circumstances and it's not just about saying thank you or showing grateful behavior (Carr et al., 2015). Through gratitude education is a process where students are trained to recognize the sacrifices of those who give something to themselves, then they are able to internalize the importance of being grateful, set themselves up to train themselves to be grateful and in the end can help themselves to fight the negative traits, hedonistic nature and ultimately impact on mental health and positive behavior in the later years of his life (Zhang & Zhan, 2021).

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of research conducted, students who routinely write daily gratitude journals during COVID-19 pandemic are reported to have a significant difference between respondents' scores before the implementation of daily gratitude journal writing and after. The limitation of this research is that this research still refers to the norms and standards of gratitude in western culture, it is hoped that there will be a measuring tool for gratitude that is in accordance with the values and norms of society in the east. This research should be able to add knowledge about the value of being grateful for teenagers during the COVID-19 pandemic. It is hoped that there will be further research that can examine the value of student gratitude after the COVID-19 pandemic and further research that links the value of student gratitude with happiness, study success and social adjustment.

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