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RESEARCH ARTICLE



Validation of the existential gratitude scale (EGS) in India and its relationship with spiritual well-being and distress

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ABSTRACT

This research aimed to investigate psychometric properties of the Existential Gratitude Scale (EGS) in India. Study 1 examined the factorial validity of EGS using exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis, which suggested a two-factor structure. Study 2 examined reliability and validity of the scale derived after CFA (referred to as Indian EGS). Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability estimates provided evidence for internal consistency reliability of the Indian EGS. Adequate AVE values indicated convergent validity of the scale. Further, the EGS score reported significant positive correlations with GRAT-16 and spiritual well-being scores and a negative association with distress scores, confirming criterion validity of the Indian EGS. These results establish reliability and validity of the two-factored twelve-item EGS scale in the Indian context.

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Existential gratitude scale;
reliability; validity;
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Introduction

All humans owe their existence, achievements, endowments, and blessings to something or someone. Hence, gratitude has long been documented as a building block of all societies (Simmel, 1950). Major religions and philosophies around the world recognize the value of expressing gratitude (Shin et al., 2020). Classified in various contexts as an emotion, attitude, character trait, or moral virtue (Watkins et al., 2015), gratitude is often defined as the recognition of having received something of value from an external source (Emmons & McCullough, 2003). Conceptually, gratitude has its roots in the positive psychology literature (Emmons & McCullough, 2003; Jans-Beken & Wong, 2019; Seligman et al., 2005; Wong, 2016a). Positive psychology is a science of positive subjective experiences and positive individual traits (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). It describes gratitude as a general tendency to be aware of the role of other people's generosity in their positive experiences and outcomes and to respond to it with grateful emotions (McCullough et al., 2002). Gratitude also relates to the disposition to perceive and appreciate everything positive in the world (Wood et al., 2010).

Empirical evidence from the field of positive psychology associates gratitude with multiple positive outcomes such as hope, empathy (Akhtar, 2012), cognitive resources such as mindfulness (Fredrickson et al., 2008), resilience-promoting characteristics such as optimism, social support, and spirituality (McGuire et al., 2021), and reduced stress and anxiety (Wood et al., 2008). It thus lays the foundation for quality social relationships, better physical and mental health (Emmons & Mishra, 2011; Nelson & Lyubomirsky, 2016), general well-being (Emmons & Mishra, 2011), enduring

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