



Gratitude scales: review and future directions

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Received: 17 March 2024 / Accepted: 7 April 2025

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Abstract

The present study evaluated 18 gratitude scales on three significant aspects, i.e., theoretical framework, conceptual framework, and scale development and validation. These three aspects were evaluated using 11 criteria, including scale domain (conceptualisation and dimensionality), item generation, sample design, reliability and validity, and religious and cultural connotations of the scale. The study also listed eight significant limitations of the 18 gratitude scales. These limitations included a lack of agreement in conceptual propositions and dimensionality, inadequate linkage of gratitude definitions with dimensions, inadequate linkage of scale with the conceptual framework of gratitude, sparse adaptation in the work context, gratitude in religious interpretation, dominance of self-reported scales, inadequate content validity assessment, and inaptness in the method of scale composition. Further, future directions were discussed in light of the highlighted limitations of the scales.

Keywords Gratitude · Scale · Gratitude scale · Psychometric · Review

1 Introduction

Gratitude is regarded as a justice virtue (Aquinas 1981), civic virtue (Smith 1759), social emotion (Simmel 1950), affective trait (Mc Cullough et al. 2002), emotion (McCullough et al. 2002), moral affect (Emmons et al. 2019), trait (Watkins et al. 2003), reciprocal behaviour (De Waal and Berger 2000), pious obligation (Garg 2023), and so forth. Gratitude research has seen significant advancements since its inception, exhibiting a pivotal role in enhancing various behavioural outcomes. A

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