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**INFLUENCE OF GRATITUDE, FORGIVENESS, RESILIENCE,
GRIT, AND SPIRITUALITY ON MENTAL HEALTH OF
POSTGRADUATE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS FROM PUNJAB,
PAKISTAN: MEDIATING ROLE OF MINDFULNESS AND
MEANING IN LIFE**



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DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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**INFLUENCE OF GRATITUDE, FORGIVENESS, RESILIENCE,
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POSTGRADUATE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS FROM PUNJAB,
PAKISTAN: MEDIATING ROLE OF MINDFULNESS AND
MEANING IN LIFE**



UUM

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Abstract

Recently, the decline in mental health among university students has become a global concern. However, there is a lack of evidence in the Pakistani context compared to the extensive literature from Western perspectives. This research aims to examine the influence of gratitude, forgiveness, resilience, grit, and spirituality on the mental health of postgraduate students in universities in Pakistan. Additionally, mindfulness and meaning in life are treated as mediating variables. Furthermore, this study also aims to measure gender differences across all these variables. A total of 1527 students were selected using multistage random sampling from 10 public universities in Punjab, Pakistan. Eight instruments were used for the study namely Gratitude Questionnaire, Heartland Forgiveness Scale, Brief Resilience Scale, Short Grit Scale, Spirituality Scale, Cognitive and Affective Mindfulness Scale-Revised, Meaning in Life Questionnaire, and Mental Health Inventory. The results of the bivariate correlation showed that gratitude, forgiveness, resilience, grit, and spirituality have a significant positive relationship with mental health and psychological well-being, while negatively correlated with psychological distress. Structural Equation Modeling showed that gratitude, forgiveness, resilience, grit, and spirituality served as both direct and indirect predictors of mental health. Additionally, mindfulness and meaning in life were identified as significant partial mediators in the relationship between gratitude, forgiveness, resilience, grit, and spirituality with mental health. The independent samples t-test results showed significant gender differences, with female students showing significantly less psychological distress and higher levels of gratitude, forgiveness, resilience, grit, spirituality, mindfulness, meaning in life, and overall mental health (including psychological well-being) compared to male students. This research concludes that gratitude, forgiveness, resilience, grit, and spirituality, along with mindfulness and meaning in life as mediators, may improve the mental health of postgraduate students. The findings have numerous implications for clinical psychologists, counsellors, mental health professionals, and parents concerning the mental health of students.

Keywords: Gratitude, Forgiveness, Resilience, Mindfulness, Meaning in life.

Abstrak

Kebelakangan ini, isu kemerosotan kesihatan mental dalam kalangan pelajar universiti semakin mendapat perhatian global. Walau bagaimanapun, terdapat kekurangan literatur dalam konteks negara Pakistan berbanding kajian dari perspektif Barat. Penyelidikan ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji pengaruh rasa syukur, kemaafan, daya tahan, ketabahan, dan spiritualiti terhadap kesihatan mental pelajar pascasiswazah di universiti di Pakistan. Di samping itu, aspek ketara sedar dan makna hidup dijadikan sebagai pemboleh ubah pengantara. Selain itu, kajian ini juga bertujuan untuk mengukur perbezaan jantina dalam kesemua pemboleh ubah ini. Sejumlah 1527 pelajar telah dipilih menggunakan persampelan rawak berbilang peringkat daripada 10 universiti awam di Punjab, Pakistan. Lapan instrumen telah digunakan dalam kajian ini iaitu Gratitude Questionnaire, Heartland Forgiveness Scale, Brief Resilience Scale, Short Grit Scale, Spirituality Scale, Cognitive and Affective Mindfulness Scale-Revised, Meaning in Life Questionnaire, dan Mental Health Inventory. Hasil analisis korelasi bivariat menunjukkan bahawa rasa syukur, kemaafan, daya tahan, ketabahan, dan spiritualiti mempunyai hubungan positif yang signifikan dengan kesihatan mental dan kesejahteraan psikologi, manakala berkorelasi negatif dengan tekanan psikologi. Pemodelan Persamaan Struktur menunjukkan bahawa rasa syukur, kemaafan, daya tahan, ketabahan, dan spiritualiti berfungsi sebagai peramal langsung dan tidak langsung terhadap kesihatan mental. Selain itu, kesedaran dan makna hidup dikenal pasti sebagai pemboleh ubah pengantara separa yang signifikan dalam hubungan antara rasa syukur, kemaafan, daya tahan, ketabahan, dan spiritualiti dengan kesihatan mental. Keputusan ujian-t sampel bebas menunjukkan perbezaan yang signifikan antara jantina, dengan pelajar wanita menunjukkan tekanan psikologi yang jauh lebih rendah dan tahap rasa syukur, kemaafan, daya tahan, ketabahan, spiritualiti, kesedaran, makna hidup, dan kesihatan mental keseluruhan (termasuk kesejahteraan psikologi) yang lebih tinggi berbanding pelajar lelaki. Penyelidikan ini menyimpulkan bahawa rasa syukur, kemaafan, daya tahan, ketabahan, dan spiritualiti, dengan kesedaran dan makna hidup sebagai pengantara, dapat meningkatkan kesihatan mental pelajar pascasiswazah. Hasil kajian ini mempunyai banyak implikasi kepada ahli psikologi klinikal, kaunselor, pakar kesihatan mental, dan ibu bapa mengenai kesihatan mental pelajar.

Katakunci: Rasa Syukur, Kemaafan, Daya Tahan, Ketara Sedar, Makna Hidup.

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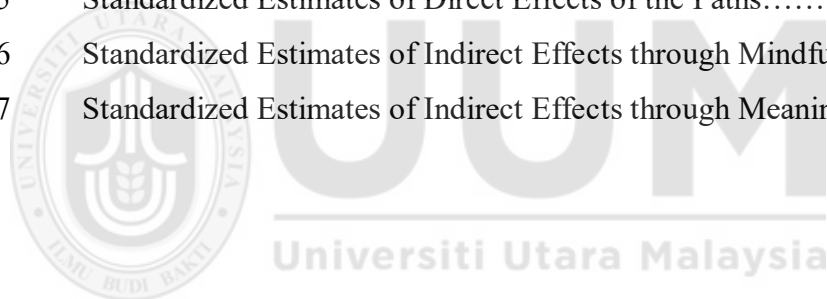
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List of Abbreviations

COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease, 2019
GQ	Gratitude Questionnaire
HFS	Heartland Forgiveness Scale
BRS	Brief Resilience Scale
SGS	Short Grit Scale
SS	Spirituality Scale
CAMS-R	Cognitive and Affective Mindfulness Scale-Revised
MLQ	The meaning in Life Questionnaire
MHI	Mental Health Inventory
M	Mean
SD	Standard Deviation
F	Frequency
α	Cronbach's alpha
r	Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient
p	Probability (level of significance)
N	Sample
SEM	Structural Equation Modeling
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
AMOS	Analysis of Moment Structure.
LL	Lower Limit of Confidence Intervals
UL	Upper Limit of Confidence Intervals
χ^2	Chi-square
GFI	Goodness of Fit Index
CFI	Comparative Fit Index
NFI	Normed Fit Index
RMSEA	Root Mean Square Error of Approximation
SRMR	Standardized Root Mean Square
$\Delta\chi^2$	Chi Square Difference
B	Standardized Estimates
SE	Standard Error of the Regression

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

The most important and basic component of health is mental health. According to Hussain, Khan, Gul, and Asad (2018), the most important universal problem regarding the health of our society is the increasing range of mental health problems. The term mental health is defined as the positive and good working ability of mental functioning. Moreover, the broad concept of mental health includes our relationships with others and with society, mood changes, the capacity to accept things, and hidden actions of the individuals (Hersi, Tesfay, Gesesew, Krah, Ereg, & Tesfaye, 2017). In the present research, mental health is measured using the dual-continuum mental health model of Keyes (2002, 2005), which represents two dimensions such as psychological well-being and psychological distress.

According to the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation. (2020), one in every eight individuals was living with mental health disorders worldwide, and overall, 970 million individuals were living with poor mental health in the world before the COVID-19 pandemic, which has since increased, now 1 billion individuals are living with mental health disorders (World Health Organization, 2020). Due to COVID-19 pandemic, the prevalence of poor mental health increased significantly, and it is estimated that 28 percent of people worldwide faced poor mental health worldwide (World Health Organization, 2022). Which is 3 percent higher than before the COVID-19 pandemic (Fleischmann & De Leo, 2014; Khan, 2016). In the United States of America (USA), every year one out of five adults is reported to be suffering from poor mental health. This number is about 46.6

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APPENDIX A

Informed Consent

Dear respondent:

I am Muhammad Adeeb, student of PhD Psychology from Universiti Utara Malaysia. I am conducting this research under the supervision of Dr. Mariny Abdul Ghani and Dr. Azlin Hilma binti Hillaluddin to measure the influence of gratitude, forgiveness, resilience, grit, and spirituality towards mental health of postgraduate university students. Further, this study also aims to investigate the mediating role of mindfulness and meaning in life in between the relationship of gratitude, forgiveness, resilience, grit, and spirituality with mental health/well-being. There are various questionnaires that you have to response on all of them. Participation in this research is entirely voluntary. The decision to participate or not to participate in this study will not affect you in any way. Only those participants will be part of this research who fully express their consent. However, without giving a reason, you can withdraw from this research at any time. In addition, you reserve the right to refuse to provide any information that could reveal your identity in any way. There are no financial benefits to participating in this research. However, the important information you provide will help to improve the mental health of Pakistani Post-graduate students. All information will be kept secure and accessible only to researcher. The results of this study will not reveal the identity of any of the participants individually but will be published collectively through articles and conferences.

If you have any questions about this research or would like to learn more about your rights as a participant, please contact the researcher below.

Kind regards,

Muhammad Adeeb

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- 1) I confirm that I have read and understood the inform consent sheet
Yes No
- 2) The researcher has given me details about the nature of the research, its objectives, its possible duration and what I need to do.
Yes No
- 3) I am voluntarily participating in this research. And I know I can withdraw this research whenever I want and it won't affect my legal rights.
Yes No
- 4) I know that all personal information obtained from me will be kept confidential and will only be used for research purposes
Yes No
- 5) I fully agree to participate in this research
Yes No

APPENDIX B

Demographic Information

Name (Optional): ----- Age: ----- Gender: Male Female

University: ----- Education: M. Phil/MS/MA PhD

Faculty: Faculty of Social Science Faculty of Arts and Humanities Faculty of Science

Department:

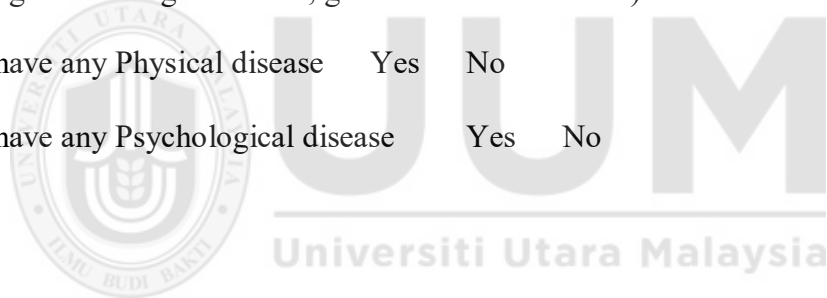
Home Residence: Rural / Urban Family monthly Income: -----

Marital Status: Married /Single /Widow/ Divorce

Family System: Separate Family System (living with only parents) Joint Family System
(living together with grandfather, grandmother and uncles).

Do you have any Physical disease Yes No

Do you have any Psychological disease Yes No



APPENDIX C

Gratitude Questionnaire

Using the scale below as a guide, write a number beside each statement to indicate how much you agree with it.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

Sr. No	Statement	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	I have so much in life to be thankful for.							
2	If I had to list everything that I felt grateful for, it would be a very long list.							
3	When I look at the world, I don't see much to be grateful for.							
4	I am grateful to a wide variety of people.							
5	As I get older I find myself more able to appreciate the people, events, and situations that have been part of my life history.							
6	Long amounts of time can go by before I feel grateful to something or someone.							

APPENDIX D

Heartland Forgiveness Scale

Directions:

In the course of our lives negative things may occur because of our own actions, the actions of others, or circumstances beyond our control. For some time after these events, we may have negative thoughts or feelings about ourselves, others, or the situation. Think about how you typically respond to such negative events. Next to each of the following items write the number (from the 7-point scale below) that best describes how you typically respond to the type of negative situation described. There are no right or wrong answers. Please be as open as possible in your answers.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Almost Always False of Me	Almost False of Me	More Often False of Me	Neutral	More Often True of Me	Almost True of Me	Almost Always True of Me

Sr.No	Statement	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	Although I feel badly at first when I mess up, over time I can give myself some slack.							
2	I hold grudges against myself for negative things I've done.							
3	Learning from bad things that I've done helps me get over them.							
4	It is really hard for me to accept myself once I've messed up.							

5	With time I am understanding of myself for mistakes I've made.							
6	I don't stop criticizing myself for negative things I've felt, thought, said, or done.							
7	I continue to punish a person who has done something that I think is wrong.							
8	With time I am understanding of others for the mistakes they've made.							
9	I continue to be hard on others who have hurt me.							
10	Although others have hurt me in the past, I have eventually been able to see them as good people.							
11	If others mistreat me, I continue to think badly of them.							
12	When someone disappoints me, I can eventually move past it.							
13	When things go wrong for reasons that can't be controlled, I get stuck in negative thoughts about it.							
14	With time I can be understanding of bad circumstances in my life.							
15	If I am disappointed by uncontrollable circumstances in my life, I continue to think negatively about them.							

16	I eventually make peace with bad situations in my life.							
17	It's really hard for me to accept negative situations that aren't anybody's fault.							
18	Eventually I let go of negative thoughts about bad circumstances that are beyond anyone's control							



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APPENDIX E

Brief Resilience Scale

Using the scale below as a guide, write a number beside each statement to indicate how much you agree with it.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

Sr. No	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
1	I tend to bounce back quickly after hard times					
2	I have a hard time making it through stressful events.					
3	It does not take me long to recover from a stressful event.					
4	It is hard for me to snap back when something bad happens.					
5	I usually come through difficult times with little trouble.					
6	I tend to take a long time to get over set-backs in my life.					

APPENDIX F

Grit Questionnaire

Directions for taking the Grit: Please respond to the following 8 items. Be honest – there are no right or wrong answers!

1	2	3	4	5
Very much like me	Mostly like me	Somewhat like me	Not much like me	Not like me at all

Sr. No	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
1	New ideas and projects sometimes distract me from previous ones					
2	Setbacks don't discourage me					
3	I have been obsessed with a certain idea or project for a short time but later lost interest.					
4	I am a hard worker.					
5	I often set a goal but later choose to pursue a different one.					
6	I have difficulty maintaining my focus on projects that take more than a few months to complete.					
7	I finish whatever I begin.					
8	I am diligent.					

APPENDIX G

Spirituality Scale

Please indicate your level of agreement to the following statements by circling the appropriate number that corresponds with the answer key.

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Mostly disagree	Mostly agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

Sr. No	Statement	1	2	3	4	5	6
1	I find meaning in my life experiences.						
2	I have a sense of purpose.						
3	I am happy about the person I have become.						
4	I see the sacredness in everyday life.						
5	I meditate to gain access to my inner spirit						
6	I live in harmony with nature.						
7	I believe there is a connection between all things that I cannot see but can sense.						
8	My life is a process of becoming.						
9	I believe in a Higher Power/Universal Intelligence.						
10	I believe that all living creatures deserve respect.						
11	The earth is sacred.						

12	I value maintaining and nurturing my relationships with others.						
13	I use silence to get in touch with myself.						
14	I believe that nature should be respected.						
15	I have a relationship with a Higher Power/Universal Intelligence.						
16	My spirituality gives me inner strength.						
17	I am able to receive love from others.						
18	My faith in a Higher Power/Universal Intelligence helps me cope during challenges in my life.						
19	I strive to correct the excesses in my own lifestyle patterns/practices.						
20	I respect the diversity of people.						
21	Prayer is an integral part of my spiritual nature.						
22	At times, I feel at one with the universe.						
23	I often take time to assess my life choices as a way of living my spirituality						

APPENDIX H

Cognitive and Affective Mindfulness Scale- Revised (CAMS-R)

Instructions: People have a variety of ways of relating to their thoughts and feelings. For each of the items below, rate how much each of these ways applies to you.

1	2	3	4
Not at all	Sometime	Often	Almost always

Sr. No	Statement	1	2	3	4
1	It is easy for me to concentrate on what I am doing.				
2	I am preoccupied by the future.				
3	I can tolerate emotional pain.				
4	I can accept things I cannot change.				
5	I can usually describe how I feel at the moment in considerable detail.				
6	I am easily distracted.				
7	I am preoccupied by the past.				
8	It's easy for me to keep track of my thoughts and feelings.				
9	I try to notice my thoughts without judging them.				
10	I am able to accept the thoughts and feelings I have.				
11	I am able to focus on the present moment.				
12	I am able to pay close attention to one thing for a long period of time.				

APPENDIX I

Meaning in Life Questionnaire

Please take a moment to think about what makes your life feel important to you. Please respond to the following statements as truthfully and accurately as you can, and also please remember that these are very subjective questions and that there are no right or wrong answers. Please answer according to the scale below:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Absolutely Untrue	Mostly Untrue	Somewhat Untrue	Can't Say True or False	Somewhat True	Mostly True	Absolutely True

Sr. No	Statement	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	I understand my life's meaning.							
2	I am looking for something that makes my life feel meaningful.							
3	I am always looking to find my life's purpose.							
4	My life has a clear sense of purpose.							
5	I have a good sense of what makes my life meaningful.							
6	I have discovered a satisfying life purpose.							
7	I am always searching for something that makes my life feel significant.							

8	I am seeking a purpose or mission for my life.							
9	My life has no clear purpose.							
10	I am searching for meaning in my life.							



APPENDIX J

Mental Health Inventory

Please indicate your level of agreement to the following statements by circling the appropriate number that corresponds with the answer key.

1	2	3	4	5	6
Always	Very often	Fairly often	Sometimes	Almost never	Never

Sr. No	Statement	1	2	3	4	5	6
1	How happy, satisfied, or pleased have you been with your personal life during the past month?						
2	How much of the time have you felt lonely during the past month?						
3	How often did you become nervous or jumpy when faced with excitement or unexpected situations during the past month?						
4	During the past month, how much of the time have you felt that the future looks hopeful and promising?						
5	How much time, during the past month, has your daily life been full of things that were interesting to you?						
6	How much time, during the past month, did you feel relaxed and free from tension?						

7	During the past month, how much of the time have you generally enjoyed the things you do?						
8	During the past month, have you had any reason to wonder if you were losing your mind, or losing control over the way you act, talk, think, feel or of your memory?						
9	Did you feel depressed during the past month?						
10	During the past month, how much of the time have you felt loved and wanted?						
11	How much time, during the past month, have you been a very nervous person?						
12	When have you got up in the morning, this past month, about how often did you expect to have an interesting day?						
13	During the past month, how much of the time have you felt tense or “high strung”?						
14	During the past month, have you been in firm control of your behavior, thoughts, emotions or feelings?						
15	During the past month, how often did your hands shake when you tried to do something?						
16	During the past month, how often did you feel that you had nothing to look forward to?						
17	How much of the time, during the past month, have you felt calm and peaceful?						

18	How much of the time, during the past month, have you felt emotionally stable?						
19	How much of the time, during the past month, have you felt downhearted and blue?						
20	How often have you felt like crying, during the past month?						
21	During the past month, how often have you felt that others would be better off if you were dead?						
22	How much of the time, during the past month, were you able to relax without difficulty?						
23	How much of the time, during the past month, did you feel that your love relationships, loving and being loved, were full and complete?						
24	How often, during the past month, did you feel that nothing turned out for you the way you wanted it to?						
25	How much have you been bothered by nervousness, or your “nerves”, during the past month?						
26	During the past month, how much of the time has living been a wonderful adventure for you?						
27	How often, during the past month, have you felt so down in the dumps that nothing could cheer you up?						

28	During the past month, did you think about taking your own life?						
29	During the past month, how much of the time have you felt restless, fidgety, or impatient?						
30	During the past month, how much of the time have you been moody or brooded about things?						
31	How much of the time, during the past month, have you felt cheerful, lighthearted?						
32	During the past month, how often did you get rattled, upset or flustered?						
33	During the past month, have you been anxious or worried?						
34	During the past month, how much of the time were you a happy person?						
35	How often, during the past month, did you find yourself trying to calm down?						
36	During the past month, how much of the time have you been in low or very low spirits?						
37	How often, during the past month, have you been waking up feeling fresh and rested?						
38	During the past month, have you been under or felt you were under any strain, stress or pressure?						