

The Relationships Between Gratitude and Resilience among Nigerian Married Couples

Princess Lovely Atoki¹ Ruchi Gautam²

Abstract

This study investigates the complex connections between resilience and gratitude in Nigerian married couples. Robust literature establishes gratitude as a basic human virtue that contributes to a "good life," while resilience is interpreted as a person's ability to adjust to the difficulties they face in life. With 304 married participants, the study uses a quantitative methodology to measure resilience and gratitude using standardised questionnaires. The hypothesis that there is no association between the gratitude and resilience is rejected by the results, which show a strong positive association between resilience and gratitude ($r=0.329$). Furthermore, the outcomes of the t-test show a significant difference in means, confirming the effect of gratitude on resilience among married Nigerian couples. It's interesting to note that being grateful has additional benefits, such as improving everyday happiness and flexibility. These results add to the body of literature by highlighting the critical role that gratitude plays in marriages, impacting resilience and the overall quality of the partnership. The study emphasises how gratitude has a good energy and can strengthen close relationships with others. Subsequent investigations may explore more thoroughly the mechanisms by which gratitude enhances relationship dynamics, providing valuable perspectives for therapeutic therapies and relationship-building initiatives. All things considered, this study has important ramifications for strengthening resilience and gratitude among married couples in Nigeria.

Keywords: Gratitude, Resilience, Correlation, Married Couples

INTRODUCTION

Marriage is a dynamic journey characterized by various challenges and triumphs. Within this context, the psychological constructs of gratitude and resilience play pivotal roles in shaping the quality and longevity of marital relationships. Gratitude has been linked to improved marital satisfaction and general well-being. It is characterised as the recognition and gratitude for the positive aspects of one's existence (Algoe et al., 2010; Lambert et al., 2011). A happy feeling that may or may not come out when someone helps someone else is gratitude. This person is known as the benefactor. Resilience, or the capacity to overcome adversity, is essential for navigating the inevitable ups and downs of married life, even though it has been believed for a number of years that the main social purpose of gratitude is to motivate the beneficiary to give back to the giver (McCullough et al., 2001). Gratitude in married couples shapes the dynamics of the partnership in ways that go beyond personal fulfilment. Gratitude-focused couples enjoy higher levels of communication, overall well-being, and relationship satisfaction in their day-to-day interactions (Leong, 2009). Moreover, gratitude serves as a buffer against the damaging impacts of stressors and adversities, preventing relationship unhappiness and decline (Gordon et al., 2011). Couples can foster an environment that supports and nurtures each other's growth and flourishing by fostering a culture of gratitude in their relationship.

The Need for Gratitude in Daily Life of Married Couples

Among other things, gratitude described as a positive attitude, a coping mechanism, an ethical feeling, an emotion, a virtue, and a motivation (Emmons & Crumpler, 2000). Essentially, being grateful is about being grateful, which is recognising and appreciating the good things that happen to you every day (Rashid & Seligman, 2018). This study focuses primarily on gratitude as an affective characteristic, sometimes known as a "grateful disposition" or a "nature towards gratitude." A widespread propensity to acknowledge and react with gratitude to the kindness of others in the good things that happen to one" (p. 112) is how McCullough et al. (2002) define a character towards gratitude. Interestingly, those who are appreciative seem to be less likely to

¹ Research scholar, Sharda School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Department of Humanities, Sharda university, India, Email: 2021826174.princess@dr.sharda.ac.in

² Associate Professor of Psychology, Sharda School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Department of Humanities, Sharda university, India

become accustomed to favourable life circumstances, which may help them maintain their subjective welfare and contentment even in trying conditions (McCullough et al., 2002). Said another way, practicing gratitude may help one feel more good emotions and develop internal resources that they can draw upon in a time of need.

In order to improve relationship dynamics and overall wellbeing, married couples should make it a daily practice to cultivate gratitude. Gratitude exercises, like verbalising appreciation, penning letters of gratitude, or maintaining gratitude diaries, can help couples become more conscious of the good things in their relationship and cultivate a grateful culture. Gratitude has a big impact on married couples' daily lives, according to a lot of research and literary works. As per the research findings and theoretical framework presented in Emmons and McCullough's (2004) seminal work on the psychology of gratitude, as well as empirical studies conducted by Gordon et al. (2011), Leong et al. (2020), and Fincham & May (2021), it is feasible to lower the probability of miscommunications and dispute escalation by integrating appreciation into conflict resolution protocols and communication approaches. (Jiang, et al., 2022). Ultimately, prioritising appreciation in daily interactions fosters an atmosphere of resilience, respect, and support—all of which are advantageous to the long-term health and vitality of marital marriages. Couples were feeling more appreciative, which suggests that both therapies were working. The beneficiaries (enactors) and benefactors (targets) had different changes in marital satisfaction as a result, with men who felt their wife's expressed thanks was not as genuine experiencing a fall in marital satisfaction. The findings have significance for social exchange and marital therapy as well as for defining the boundary requirements for assessing acts of appreciation and relationship progress (Leong, J. L., et al., 2020). Furthermore, findings imply that decisional forgiveness, emotional forgiveness, and gratitude among partners may be focal points for educational initiatives meant to improve relationship satisfaction as well as possible areas of intervention for the treatment of emotional traumas (Wu, Q., Chi, P., et al., 2022). Couples that place a strong focus on positivity are better equipped to handle stress and failures because of their increased emotional resilience. In the context of marriage, expressing and receiving gratitude has been repeatedly associated with greater levels of relationship satisfaction (Gordon et al., 2011). Gratitude acts are statements of love, respect, and recognition that strengthen the link and promote emotional intimacy between partners. Married couples who consistently demonstrate gratitude in their daily lives see improvements in their relationships, communication skills, and emotional fortitude. Couples can build a strong, satisfying marriage that endures over time by making it a habit to express gratitude and appreciation to one another.

Gratitude

A common definition of gratitude is that it is a fundamental human virtue, moral virtue or feeling, personality disposition, or individual feature that is necessary to live a "good life" (Tudge, et al., 2015; Morgan, et al., 2017). Watkins et al. (2003) and McCullough, Emmons, & Tsang (2002) define it as a crucial component of life satisfaction and well-being. McCullough et al. (2002) pay particular attention to gratitude as an emotional quality. According to McCullough et al. (2002), they also think that attributions are connected to a gratitude ful disposition, which is the propensity to feel good about other people. For instance, gratitude ful individuals recognise the helpful role that others have had in their accomplishments in addition to their own hard work. By including the significance of other people who aid in enhancing their well-being, they consequently broaden the scope of their internal attributions.

Gratitude is linked to both personal and relational progress for both parties in continuous partnerships, according to recent correlational data. It would be easy to recommend interpersonal thankfulness exercises as a way to strengthen relationships based on these observations (Jam et al., 2018). Couples in this experiment were randomised to either a relationally active control condition or an expression of gratitude over the course of a month. The disease had minor consequences on relational and personal well-being, according to the results. In contrast to individuals in the control group, those whose partners were thought to be especially receptive when they expressed gratitude during the first lab session demonstrated higher levels of well-being across a variety of outcomes (Algoe, S. B., & Zhaoyang, R. 2016).

It been discovered that gratitude is correlated with other human virtues that support wellbeing, such as empathy, humbleness, and compassion (Kim et al. 2018). Researchers have discovered that a person's inclination towards

gratitude is also closely related to their capacity for moral thinking, particularly when it comes to the empathetic procedure (McCullough, et al., 2001). Research indicates a favourable correlation between gratitude and affective and cognitive empathy, and a negative correlation with aggressive or harmful behaviour (DeWall, et al., 2012). Additionally, McCullough (2002) discovered a negative correlation with sentiments of envy and a favourable association with both affective and cognitive empathy.

Since gratitude is a reaction to other people's actions and can encourage prosocial behaviour, it can be viewed as a moral and prosocial emotion (McCullough et al., 2001). Overall, the prosocial nature of gratitude implies that an attitude of gratitude stems from the fundamental quality of empathy, which guides individuals towards the awareness and care of others. Furthermore, gratitude was linked to a number of factors that are critical for intimate social ties in small local settings, like small work communities: enhancing the organisational environment (Emmons & McCullough, 2003), collaboration, and a sense of security and belonging (Di Fabio, et al., 2017). It aligns with the description of a microsystem provided by Bronfenbrenner, which is the closest environment in which it teaches people to interact with one other face-to-face and cultivate gratitude for others (Rosa & Tudge, 2013).

Among married couples, gratitude has been connected to lower conflict levels and more stable relationships. Gratitude works as a buffer against bad interactions and lessens the impact of stressors on relationship satisfaction by creating a pleasant emotional climate and encouraging prosocial behaviours (Jiang et al., 2022). Grateful couples are more inclined to approach arguments with empathy and understanding, which makes them more capable of resolving issues in a productive manner. Additionally, expressing gratitude encourages cooperation and positive self-talk in the other person, which reduces the likelihood of continuous conflict and fosters forgiveness and trust (Leong et al., 2020). According to Fincham and May (2021) emphasise the value of gratitude in strengthening the foundation of marriages, emphasising its ability to foster adaptability and fortitude in the face of adversity. Expressing gratitude to a partner creates a sense of affirmation and appreciation that enhances intimacy and develops emotional bonds. The study state that when a person feels appreciated and loved by their spouse, they are more likely to feel the same way, creating a positive feedback loop that fosters emotional connection and appreciation (Gordon et al., 2011).

Resilience

According to Luthar, Cicchetti, and Becker (2000), resilience is the ability to change positively and dynamically in the face of new challenges. According to Iacoviello and Charney (2014), resilience may also be thought of as a collection of adaptive skills or a psychological toolbox that a person can utilise to help them deal with adversity both inside and outside of a challenging circumstance.

Previous research demonstrates a favourable association between personality traits and self-control, emotional stability, optimism, openness to new experiences, and feeling of self-coherence (particularly meaningfulness) (Ogińska-Bulik & Juczyński, 2008). Research has shown that individuals who exhibit good resilience are also likely to be optimistic, well-being (Vinayak & Judge, 2018), energetic, interested, and open to new experiences in life (Tugade & Fredrickson, 2007).

Additionally, it has been discovered that resilience is associated with a reduction in stress symptoms as well as prosocial and adaptive coping mechanisms (Wood, et al., 2007; Dusen et al. 2015). While Wood (2007) discovered that coping mechanisms might play a significant role in explaining why gratitude has a negative correlation with stress, they don't seem to be the primary mechanism linking happy feelings to wellbeing. Since some writers contend that resilience is the only concept that can accurately predict psychological health and well-being, the relationships between resilience, empathy and gratitude might potentially be mediated by additional factors associated to stress (Akbari & Khormaiee, 2015; Vinayak & Judge, 2018). Resilience has been shown by Akbari and Khormaiee (2015) to act as a partial mediator between psychological well-being and emotional indicators such as emotional intelligence.

Resilience in Marital Relationships

Resilience, which is characterised as the capacity to overcome hardship, is essential for preserving people's wellbeing in married relationships. According to research, resilience is essential for reducing the negative impacts of stress and marital dispute on mental health.

(Adeyemi 2022; Chinawa et al., 2024). Adeyemi (2022) conducted a study on the impact of interpersonal stress on communication resilience in romantic partners amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. The findings highlighted that couples exhibiting greater resilience were better able to manage obstacles and sustain positive communication patterns.

Additionally, studies have shown how resilience acts as a moderator to lessen the negative effects on psychological well-being of stressors such as domestic abuse and infertility-related anxiety (Ugwu et al., 2018; Satheesan et al., 2018). Similarly, Onyedibe & Ugwu (2014) investigated the link between intimate partner violence, distress tolerance, rage expression, and resilience, proposing that greater resilience was linked to a decreased vulnerability to relationship violence.

The Current Study On Gratitude and Resilience among the married couple among Nigeria

The present study attempts to explore the relationships between gratitude, self-compassion, and resilience because previous research indicates that these relationships are nuanced and unclear. Empathy, for instance, has been demonstrated in studies to be a strong predictor of resilience and possibly a necessary emotional skill for fostering resilience (Mathad, et al., 2017; Morice, et al., 2018). However, other researchers have not discovered any meaningful connections between resilience and empathy (Olson, et al., 2015). Theoretical and empirical research indicates that gratitude and resilience are positively correlated, but it does not examine the relationship between married couples' gratitude and resilience (Gomez, et al., 2013). While studies have shed light on the significance of resilience in marital relationships, there is a need to further explore complementary factors such as gratitude and their implications for mental health. Gratitude, defined as the appreciation for and recognition of the good in one's life, has been linked to enhanced psychological resilience and overall well-being (Chinawa et al., 2024).

In the context of married couples in Nigeria, cultivating gratitude can serve as a protective factor against the strains of marital conflicts, economic hardships, and societal pressures. By fostering a sense of appreciation for each other's strengths and contributions, couples can build emotional resilience and strengthen their bond amidst challenges. Additionally, integrating gratitude practices into marital therapy and counseling interventions can promote positive communication patterns, conflict resolution skills, and marital satisfaction. As a result, there is still a gap in the literature and disagreement among academics regarding married Nigerians. Previous research on gratitude has confirmed that there are notable variations in appreciation levels based on age or gender. To the best of our knowledge Despite the existing literature on gratitude, a critical void exists in understanding its specific impact on married couples in Nigeria. Previous research has underscored significant variations in gratitude levels based on factors like age or gender. However, to date, no studies have delved into the unique relationship between resilience and gratitude within the Nigerian marital landscape. Therefore, this study endeavours to bridge this gap in scholarly understanding and contribute to a deeper comprehension of marital dynamics in Nigeria. In general, the current investigation sought to determine the following: (1) the impact of gratitude on resilience in Nigerian married couples; and 2) the relationship between Nigerian married couples' resilience and gratitude.

METHOD

Participants and Procedure

The study was carried out in 2023 via offline methods in Nigeria, with a sample size of 304 participants (152 women and 152 men), all of whom were married. The study's first author used convenience sampling to collect data, and all participants gave clear instructions and ethical guidelines in order for them to participate. The procedures carried out during the study were compliant with the Committee's ethical standards.

Instruments

Preceding convenient sampling assessment. A quantitative approach will be utilized evaluating race and traits, i.e. social-economic background, will be accessed through a demographic Questionnaire also previously established standard questionnaire to assess Gratitude, self-compassion, mental health and Resilience.

The Gratitude Questionnaire (GQ6)- The GQ-6 has a high level of internal consistency, which is indicative of the scale's reliability. The GQ-6 has strong reliability, according to McCullough, Emmons, and Tsang's (2002) assessment, with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.82. This implies that the questionnaire's components measure the same aspect of appreciation proneness over time.

Resilience Scale- The Scale of Connor-Davidson Resilience The CD-RISC typically consists of 25 items designed to assess resilience in individuals. In their psychometric assessment of the test among Indian students, Singh and Yu (2010) found that the CD-RISC had a high internal consistency reliability with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.87.

Data Analysis

The statistical analysis involved multiple multivariate approaches to validate the study hypotheses. First, we used the independent t test to determine whether any of the variables under study were significant. To find any correlational correlations between the variables under study, authors calculated the Pearson correlation coefficients. SPSS version 21 was used to compute all statistical analyses in the study.

RESULTS

Relationship Between Gratitude and Resilience Among Married Couples in Nigeria

The correlation that has been detected is statistically significant at the 0.01 significance level (two-tailed), as indicated by the notation 0.329^{***}. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)". The present study observed association can be considered highly confident. In conclusion, the correlation analysis reveals that, in the dataset that was provided, there is a positive and statistically significant association between gratitude and resilience, with those who report feeling more grateful also generally showing higher levels of resilience (table 1).

Table 1- Relationship between gratitude and resilience among married couples in Nigeria

		Correlations	
		Gratitude	Resilience
Gratitude	Pearson Correlation	1	.329**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	304	304
Resilience	Pearson Correlation	.329**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	304	304

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table (1)

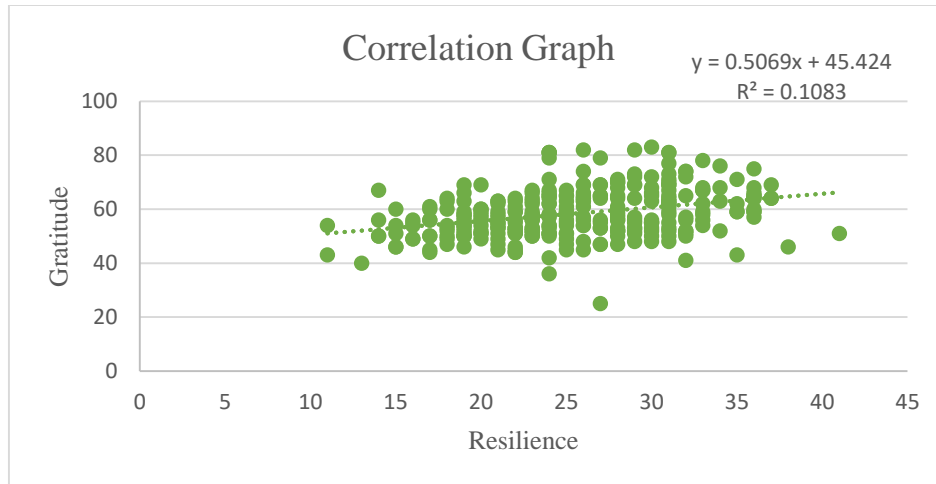


Figure 3.1 Gratitude and Resilience among married couples in Nigeria.

Table (2) - Gratitude and Resilience among married couples in Nigeria.

Measures	Groups	Mean	S. D	p- value
Resilience	Male	25.5987	8.4	.001
	Female	58.3092	9.3	
Gratitude	Male	58.3158	5.8	.001
	Female	25.2500	5.6	(p < 0.001)

Table (2)

Evaluation of males and females on the measures of Resilience, Gratitude, along with significant difference reported in table 2. On the measures of gratitude and resilience the significant gender difference was observed significantly lesser changes. The t-test yielded a t-statistic of -54.205 with 519.884 degrees of freedom when equal variances were not assumed. There is still a significant difference in means, as indicated by the p-value ($p = .0001$). Assuming equal variances yields results consistent with the mean difference and the 95% confidence interval of the difference. In conclusion, the statistical conclusion is not significantly affected by the decision to assume equal variances or not, as the t-test findings show a significant difference in means between the groups (tab 2).

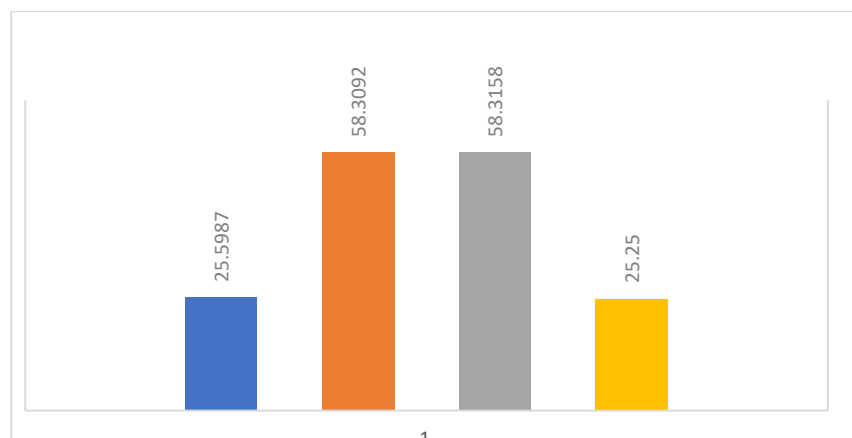


Fig 3.2 Graph showing Means and Standard deviations of resilience, and gratitude.

DISCUSSION

The study's shed important light on the connection between gratitude and resilience among married couples in Nigerian. The study aims to investigate the effect of gratitude on resilience in married couples by using

correlation analysis and t-tests. The null hypothesis that gratitude had a major impact on resilience in married Nigerian couples was refuted by the t-test results, which showed a significant difference in means between the groups.

The table 2 shows the t-test results in which there was a significant difference in the means of resilience and gratitude between the female and male competitors. This shows actions towards gratitude and resilience in marriages are influenced by their gender. The Pearson correlation analysis reported a strong positive association between gratitude and resilience among married couples in Nigerian. This suggests that more appreciation is connected with stronger resilience, underscoring the importance of gratitude in building resilience in marital couples. These findings are in line with past studies that characterised gratitude as a positive psychological concept that has favourable effects on relationships and overall well-being. In essence, the study highlights the positive effects for successful relationships and contributes to the growing body of evidence demonstrating the significance of thankfulness in helping married couples in Nigeria develop resilience and effective relationships. The study focuses on how expressing gratitude in a relationship can enhance several aspects of relationship dynamics and may even be protective. The study discovered additional benefits of gratitude, particularly in relation to resilience and positive feelings on a daily basis (Barton et al., 2023; Fredrickson et al., 2008; Catalino & Fredrickson, 1998)

CONCLUSION

The study comes to the conclusion that gratitude has a significant role in shaping the resilience traits of married Nigerian couples. By finding a strong and positive association between gratitude and resilience using correlation analysis and the effect of gratitude and resilience using t-tests, the study disproved the null hypothesis, which claimed that there is no significant association between gratitude and resilience among married couples in Nigeria. The t-test results demonstrated a substantial difference in means, underscoring the importance of resilience and gratitude for both males and females. Additionally, the work contributes to the growing corpus of research indicating gratitude as a positive psychological construct, with implications for resilience outcomes. According to the study, expressing gratitude also improves daily happiness and flexibility among married relationships. Therefore, practicing gratitude can serve as a mechanism to strengthen the bonds between spouses and serve as a reminder of their love for one another. It can also serve as a community process that can have a favourable impact on the health of the marriage. More research could go into greater detail about the ways that gratitude improves relationship dynamics and offer insightful information for relationship-building and therapeutic therapies.

Contributions to the Field

This study enhances to the increasing quantity of research on the aids gratitude for strengthening marriages' resilience. Empirical evidence linking resilience and gratitude in married Nigerian couples helps us better understand the characteristics that lead to stable and happy marriages.

The outcomes point out potential benefits of implementation of gratitude exercises into couples counselling and relationship education initiatives. Through encouraging couples to express gratitude to one another and cultivate a gratitude mindset, counsellors and educators can help create better marriages and resilience in the face of tragedy.

Conflict of Interest

The writers have disclosed no competing interests.

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