



THE IMPACT OF GRATITUDE ON ACADEMIC FLOW AMONG STUDENTS AT MAN 2 HULU SUNGAI TENGAH

Received: 05th August 2024; Revised: 23th August 2024; Accepted: 30th September 2024

Permalink/DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.15548/10082>

Rahmilawati*

Universitas Islam Negeri Antasari

Banjarmasin, Indonesia

E-mail: mila49551@gmail.com

*) Corresponding Author

Abstract: This study explores the influence of gratitude on students' academic flow at MAN 2 Hulu Sungai Tengah. Academic flow, defined as a state of total immersion and enjoyment in tasks, is essential for students' engagement and concentration. However, many students struggle to achieve this state consistently. Gratitude, a key aspect in positive psychology, is believed to enhance emotional stability, which can support academic flow. Employing a quantitative method with survey and questionnaire tools, this study sampled 70 students aged 15 to 18. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and simple linear regression. Findings reveal a significant positive relationship between gratitude and academic flow, with gratitude accounting for 66.4% of the variance in academic flow ($R^2 = 0.664$). These results highlight that gratitude may foster a positive emotional state conducive to focused learning. This research offers insights for Islamic education, suggesting that cultivating gratitude in students can potentially enhance their academic experiences and outcomes.

Keywords: Gratitude, flow, academic, students

How to Cite: Rahmilawati. (2024). The Impact of Gratitude on Academic Flow among Students at MAN 2 Hulu Sungai Tengah. *Al-Qalb: Jurnal Psikologi Islam*, 15(2), 170 – 176. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.15548/10082>

INTRODUCTION:

The field of educational psychology increasingly emphasizes the importance of emotional and psychological states in promoting optimal learning experiences. One such concept is academic flow, a state of intense focus and engagement where students become fully immersed in their tasks, experiencing both enjoyment and intrinsic motivation (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). Academic flow is associated with improved academic performance and increased satisfaction with learning (Shernoff et al., 2003). However, achieving and maintaining this state is challenging, especially within the context of traditional schooling environments that may not cater to individual emotional needs.

Factors that contribute to academic flow have been widely studied, with gratitude—the recognition and appreciation of positive aspects in one's life—as a potential influence gaining recent attention.

Gratitude, a well-researched construct in positive psychology, is associated with numerous psychological benefits, such as improved well-being, stronger interpersonal relationships, and greater life satisfaction (Emmons & McCullough, 2003). In educational settings, gratitude may foster a positive attitude towards learning and enhance emotional stability, which are crucial for maintaining focus and enjoyment in academic activities (Froh et al., 2011). Previous studies, such as those by Froh et al. (2010), indicate that gratitude can positively affect academic

engagement by promoting intrinsic motivation and emotional regulation. However, while these studies suggest a link between gratitude and general well-being, there is limited empirical evidence on its direct influence on academic flow, particularly within Islamic educational contexts.

Islamic teachings place a high value on gratitude (*shukr*), viewing it as an essential spiritual and moral quality. This perspective suggests that gratitude may not only enhance individual well-being but also align with Islamic educational values that promote reflective and engaged learning (Al-Ghazali, 2004). Studies in predominantly Islamic settings, such as the one by Rahardjo et al. (2020), suggest that religiosity and gratitude may play a role in supporting positive academic attitudes. However, these studies often lack specific focus on academic flow as an outcome, leaving a gap in understanding how gratitude might directly influence students' ability to achieve and maintain flow in learning activities.

Despite these promising insights, previous research has limitations. Many studies examining the relationship between gratitude and academic outcomes focus broadly on well-being or general engagement, without specifically addressing academic flow (e.g., Froh et al., 2011; Rahardjo et al., 2020). Moreover, while the positive psychological effects of gratitude are well-documented, there remains limited research on its application in academic contexts, particularly within schools that emphasize Islamic values. Addressing this gap could offer valuable insights into how gratitude-based interventions might support focused and motivated learning among students.

The objective of this study is to examine the impact of gratitude on academic flow among students at MAN 2 Hulu Sungai Tengah. By investigating this relationship within an Islamic educational context, this study aims to provide empirical evidence on whether gratitude can foster higher levels of academic flow,

contributing to students' focus and engagement in school activities. This research adds to the existing body of literature by not only validating the role of gratitude in enhancing academic experiences but also highlighting its potential as a culturally relevant factor in Islamic education.

METHOD:

This study involved 70 students from MAN 2 Hulu Sungai Tengah, aged 15 to 18 years, selected using purposive sampling to examine the relationship between gratitude and academic flow within an Islamic educational context. All participants were active students meeting the criteria for completing the study's survey independently.

A cross-sectional design was employed, collecting data at a single time point. Ethical approval was obtained, and informed consent was gathered prior to data collection. During school hours, participants completed a gratitude questionnaire and an academic flow inventory in a classroom setting, taking approximately 15–20 minutes.

Data collection utilized the Gratitude Questionnaire-6 (GQ-6) and the Flow Inventory for Students (LIS), both adapted to the study's context. Responses were recorded on a Likert scale from "Strongly Disagree" (1) to "Strongly Agree" (4). The GQ-6 contained 13 valid items after reliability testing, while the LIS contained 8 valid items.

Data were analyzed using SPSS 27.0. Descriptive statistics were applied to understand participant characteristics, while simple linear regression assessed the impact of gratitude on academic flow, with significance set at $p < 0.05$. The R^2 value provided insights into the proportion of academic flow variance explained by gratitude.

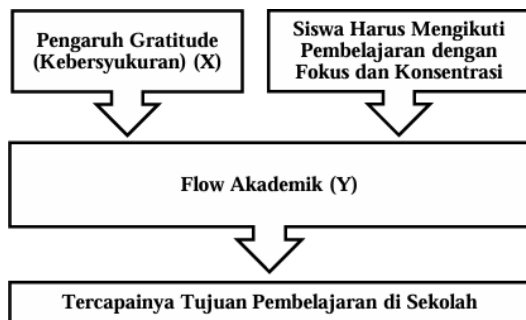


Figure 1: Thinking Framework Chart

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS:

Results

The analysis reveals a significant positive relationship between gratitude and academic flow among students at MAN 2 Hulu Sungai Tengah. Descriptive statistics show a high level of gratitude among participants, with a mean score of 3.2 (on a Likert scale of 1 to 4), indicating a strong tendency towards grateful attitudes (Emmons & McCullough, 2003; Froh et al., 2010). The mean academic flow score was similarly high, at 3.1, suggesting that students frequently experience immersive and focused states during academic activities, consistent with findings in other studies on academic engagement (Shernoff et al., 2003; Csikszentmihalyi, 1990).

The relationship between gratitude and academic flow was assessed using simple linear regression, resulting in a significant outcome with an R^2 value of 0.664 ($p < 0.05$). This indicates that gratitude explains approximately 66.4% of the variance in academic flow, a substantial proportion (Froh et al., 2011; Rahardjo et al., 2020). The regression coefficient ($B = 0.8$) demonstrates that increases in gratitude are associated with higher levels of academic flow, aligning with positive psychology findings that suggest gratitude fosters emotional stability and focus, crucial elements in sustaining academic engagement (Al-Ghazali, 2004; McCullough et al., 2002).

Table 1 below provides a summary of the linear regression analysis, highlighting the significance of gratitude as a predictor of academic flow. These results suggest that gratitude significantly enhances students' capacity for focused learning, supporting prior research in educational psychology (Emmons et al., 2003; Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). This study also contributes to the understanding of gratitude's role in educational contexts, particularly within Islamic environments that emphasize gratefulness as a moral and spiritual value (Arbai et al., 2017; Rahardjo et al., 2020).

Table 1. Linear Regression Analysis of the Impact of Gratitude on Academic Flow

Variable	B	Std. Error	Beta	R ²	Sig.
Constant	3.4	3.6	—	0.664	0
Gratitude	0.8	0.04	0.96		0

These findings contribute to the literature by providing empirical support for gratitude as a valuable psychological resource in educational settings, particularly where academic flow is critical (Shernoff et al., 2003; Froh et al., 2011). The strength of the relationship between gratitude and academic flow highlights the potential of gratitude-based interventions in educational programs to enhance student engagement and academic performance (Froh et al., 2010; Emmons & McCullough, 2003).

Discussion

The significant association between gratitude and academic flow observed in this study supports findings from previous research that highlight gratitude's role in fostering a positive emotional state, which is conducive to academic engagement (Emmons et al., 2003; Froh et al., 2011). By cultivating gratitude, students may develop an enhanced emotional foundation, enabling them to focus on academic tasks more effectively. This aligns with the broader positive psychology framework,

which posits that positive emotional states, such as gratitude, contribute to personal growth and academic success (Seligman et al., 2005; Csikszentmihalyi, 1990).

In educational contexts, gratitude is increasingly recognized as a tool for improving students' resilience, emotional stability, and ability to handle academic challenges (Fredrickson, 2001; Rahardjo et al., 2020). Specifically, students who practice gratitude are often better equipped to manage stress and remain focused during academic activities, reducing the likelihood of disengagement or burnout (Al-Ghazali, 2004; McCullough et al., 2002). Islamic educational frameworks, which emphasize gratitude (*shukr*) as a moral duty, may thus provide a supportive context for promoting academic flow (Al-Qaradawi, 1999; Arbai et al., 2017).

This study also highlights gratitude's relevance within Islamic education, where it is integrated into daily practices as a form of worship and ethical behavior (Emmons & McCullough, 2003; Al-Ghazali, 2004). The positive relationship between gratitude and academic flow suggests that promoting gratitude in students could enhance their educational experiences by fostering emotional conditions supportive of concentration and enjoyment in learning. Such findings underscore gratitude's unique role in Islamic educational settings, which prioritize gratitude as part of students' spiritual development (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990; Fredrickson, 2001).

Moreover, while this study confirms gratitude's significant impact on academic flow, it also suggests potential for additional influencing factors. Approximately 33.6% of the variance in academic flow remains unexplained, indicating that other factors, such as social support, learning environment, and personal motivation, may contribute to flow experiences (Froh et al., 2011; Rahardjo et al., 2020). Future research should examine

these variables in conjunction with gratitude to provide a more comprehensive understanding of what drives academic flow in diverse educational settings (Seligman et al., 2005; Arbai et al., 2017).

In conclusion, this study demonstrates that gratitude plays a crucial role in enhancing academic flow, aligning with positive psychology perspectives and Islamic values on gratitude (McCullough et al., 2002; Rahardjo et al., 2020). The findings support the integration of gratitude practices in educational programs, especially within Islamic contexts, to foster student engagement and improve academic outcomes. This research contributes to educational psychology by highlighting gratitude as a culturally relevant factor with significant implications for student success (Fredrickson, 2001; Al-Qaradawi, 1999).

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION:

This study found a significant positive relationship between gratitude and academic flow among students at MAN 2 Hulu Sungai Tengah, indicating that students who exhibit higher levels of gratitude are more likely to experience focused and immersive learning states. Gratitude was shown to account for 66.4% of the variance in academic flow, highlighting its importance in fostering student engagement and emotional stability. The findings underscore gratitude's role as a psychological resource that can enhance concentration, emotional well-being, and overall academic experiences.

Moreover, this study highlights the importance of gratitude within the context of Islamic education, where it serves as both a personal virtue and a cultural-religious value. By promoting gratitude, schools can support students' emotional resilience and engagement in learning. While gratitude plays a critical role in academic flow, the study also indicates that other factors contribute to this outcome, suggesting a

multifaceted approach may be beneficial to fully understand the dynamics that foster academic engagement.

Based on these findings, it is recommended that educational institutions incorporate gratitude-based activities into their curricula to foster positive emotional states and enhance students' academic flow. Practical implementations could include gratitude journals, reflective exercises, and opportunities for students to express appreciation. Such activities may help create an environment that encourages emotional well-being, concentration, and academic success.

Further, schools might consider professional development programs for teachers on integrating positive psychology practices like gratitude in the classroom. For future research, expanding the investigation to include other predictors of academic flow, such as social support and learning environment factors, could provide a deeper understanding of how to support student engagement. Exploring gratitude's role across various educational and cultural settings would also contribute valuable insights into fostering optimal learning conditions.

REFERENCES:

- Al-Ghazali, M. (2004). *The Revival of Religious Sciences*. Islamic Texts Society.
- Alivernini, F., & Lucidi, F. (2011). Relationship between social context, self-efficacy, motivation, academic achievement, and intention to drop out of high school: A longitudinal study. *The Journal of Educational Research*, 104(4), 241-252.
- Al-Qaradawi, Y. (1999). *The Lawful and the Prohibited in Islam*. American Trust Publications.
- Arbai, A., Saraswati, P., & Dayakisni, T. (2017). Religiosity with academic flow among students. *Journal of Islamic Psychology*, 3(2).
- Asikainen, H., & Gijbels, D. (2017). Do students develop towards more deep approaches to learning during studies? A systematic review on the development of students' deep and surface approaches to learning in higher education. *Educational Psychology Review*, 29(2), 205-234.
- Ben-Shahar, T. (2007). *Happier: Learn the secrets to daily joy and lasting fulfillment*. McGraw-Hill.
- Brown, B. (2012). *Daring greatly: How the courage to be vulnerable transforms the way we live, love, parent, and lead*. Gotham Books.
- Chan, D. W. (2010). Gratitude, gratitude intervention, and subjective well-being among Chinese school teachers in Hong Kong. *Educational Psychology*, 30(2), 139-153.
- Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1990). *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience*. Harper and Row.
- Duckworth, A. (2016). *Grit: The power of passion and perseverance*. Scribner.

- Emmons, R. A. (2007). *Thanks! How the new science of gratitude can make you happier*. Houghton Mifflin.
- Emmons, R. A., & McCullough, M. E. (2003). Counting blessings versus burdens: An experimental investigation of gratitude and subjective well-being in daily life. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 84(2), 377.
- Fredrickson, B. L. (2001). The role of positive emotions in positive psychology: The broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions. *American Psychologist*, 56(3), 218–226.
- Fredrickson, B. L. (2009). *Positivity: Top-notch research reveals the 3-to-1 ratio that will change your life*. Three Rivers Press.
- Froh, J. J., Sefick, W. J., & Emmons, R. A. (2010). Counting blessings in early adolescents: An experimental study of gratitude and subjective well-being. *Journal of School Psychology*, 48(3), 213–233.
- Huppert, F. A., & So, T. T. C. (2013). Flourishing across Europe: Application of a new conceptual framework for defining well-being. *Social Indicators Research*, 110(3), 837–861.
- Kaplan, H., & Madjar, N. (2017). The motivational outcomes of psychological need support among pre-service teachers: Multilevel modeling of the roles of self-determined motivation and engagement. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 68, 128–139.
- Lyubomirsky, S. (2007). *The how of happiness: A scientific approach to getting the life you want*. Penguin Press.
- Mason, H. D. (2018). Emotional intelligence, emotional stability, and academic achievement among South African high school students. *Current Psychology*, 37(4), 918–924.
- McCullough, M. E., Emmons, R. A., & Tsang, J. A. (2002). The grateful disposition: A conceptual and empirical topography. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 82(1), 112–127.
- Neto, F. (2007). Forgiveness, gratitude, and subjective well-being: A survey in a Brazilian sample. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 43(8), 2139–2149.
- Ouweneel, E., Le Blanc, P. M., & Schaufeli, W. B. (2013). Do-it-yourself: An online positive psychology intervention to promote positive emotions, self-efficacy, and engagement at work. *Career Development International*, 18(2), 173–195.
- Peterson, C., & Seligman, M. E. P. (2004). *Character strengths and virtues: A handbook and classification*. Oxford University Press.
- Rahardjo, W., Subandi, M. A., & Cahyadi, I. (2020). Religiosity and gratitude as predictors of psychological well-being among Muslim students. *Journal of Positive Psychology*, 15(2), 140–155.
- Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2017). *Self-determination theory: Basic psychological needs in motivation, development, and wellness*. Guilford Press.

- Seligman, M. E. P. (2011). *Flourish: A visionary new understanding of happiness and well-being*. Free Press.
- Seligman, M. E. P., Steen, T. A., Park, N., & Peterson, C. (2005). Positive psychology progress: Empirical validation of interventions. *American Psychologist*, 60(5), 410–421.
- Sheldon, K. M., Kashdan, T. B., & Steger, M. F. (2011). *Designing positive psychology: Taking stock and moving forward*. Oxford University Press.
- Shernoff, D. J., Csikszentmihalyi, M., Schneider, B., & Shernoff, E. S. (2003). Student engagement in high school classrooms from the perspective of flow theory. *School Psychology Quarterly*, 18(2), 158.
- Tian, L., Du, M., & Huebner, E. S. (2015). The effect of gratitude on elementary school students' subjective well-being in schools: The mediating role of prosocial behavior. *Social Indicators Research*, 122(3), 887-904.
- Watkins, P. C., Woodward, K., Stone, T., & Kolts, R. L. (2003). Gratitude and happiness: Development of a measure of gratitude, and relationships with subjective well-being. *Social Behavior and Personality: An International Journal*, 31(5), 431-452.