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Does Gratitude Satisfice?

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Abstract

Our emotion plays a crucial role in evaluating and choosing a suitable alternative, though they may not be rational. Experimental studies on Gratitude show that the feeling of Gratitude has its own bias in decision-making. The influence of Gratitude on evaluating alternatives, related to maximizing tendency, is explored in this paper by studying the students' decision-making process (n = 157 and n = 126) through two studies. We found that Gratitude does influence 'maximizing tendency'. We found a logarithmic relationship between Gratitude and that 'maximizing tendency'. The results have been discussed, followed by future research directions.

Keywords: Gratitude, bounded rationality, maximizing, satisficing, decision making, positive emotion.

¿Satisface la gratitud?

Resumen

Nuestras emociones desempeñan un papel crucial a la hora de evaluar y elegir una alternativa adecuada, aunque no sean racionales. Los estudios experimentales sobre la Gratitud muestran que el sentimiento de Gratitud tiene su propio sesgo en la toma de decisiones. La influencia de la Gratitud en la evaluación de alternativas, relacionada con la tendencia a maximizar, se explora en este trabajo estudiando el proceso de toma de decisiones de los estudiantes a través de dos estudios (n = 157 y n = 126). Se utilizó la regresión jerárquica para examinar la influencia de la gratitud en la «tendencia maximizadora». Se encontró una relación logarítmica entre la gratitud y esa 'tendencia maximizadora'. Se han discutido los resultados, seguidos de futuras direcciones de investigación.

Palabras clave: Gratitud, racionalidad limitada, maximización, satisfacción, toma de decisiones, emoción positiva.

Introduction

There are many options available in our daily lives to consume, whether it is about choosing a restaurant or choosing the food inside a restaurant. The decision-making involves processing the information to arrive at objectives. The decision-making is usually 'satisfactory' (good enough). According to maximization theory, in a decision scenario, every living tends to maximize return (Rachlin, Battalio, Kagel, & Green, 1981). While dealing with this 'paradox of choice' in getting maximum benefits, some people, termed maximizers, exert more effort while choosing the best option. They contemplate a multitude of choices to arrive at a decision. Other people choose a "fairly good" option (satisficers) and may tend to consider a few criteria (Schwartz et al., 2002) to arrive at a decision. This relentless search for alternatives may cause decision-making difficulty as the choice complexity increases (Greifeneder, Scheibehenne, & Kleber, 2010). Maximizers struggle with decision-making because they tend to maximize everything and want only the best. (Moyano-Díaz, & Mendoza-Llanos, 2021). This 'self-interest' focussed decision may promote personal benefit, ignoring the other consumption aspect such as 'green or sustainable consumption. We argue that maximizers inadvertently promote the philosophy of "consume more," which is antithetical to sustainable consumption strategies like "sharing" and "voluntary simplicity."

Maximization tendencies can negatively influence the well-being of decision-makers. Though maximizers try and make better decisions than satisficers, they may have poorer well beings and satisfaction with the decision (Álvarez et al., 2014). The maximizing tendencies among decision-makers can lead to a reduction in happiness and well-being. The maximizers may search for more information to choose the best alternatives, which may drain their energy (Vargová, Zibrínová, & Baník, 2020). Maximizers are likelier to engage in upward social comparison and regret their decisions in bargaining games (Misuraca, Faraci, Gangemi, Carmeci, & Miceli, 2015). Research in

the consumer domain found that the maximizing tendency and the purchase regret (of expensive and inexpensive recent purchases) positively correlated (Dar-Nimrod, Rawn, Lehman, & Schwartz, 2009). In job selection, maximization tendency and salary satisfaction were negatively related (Iyengar et al., 2006). In a social relationship, maximization tendency was negatively related to satisfaction with life and positively related to negative affect and regret (Newman, Schug, Yuki, Yamada, & Nezlek, 2018). Typical consumer decision-making maximizes immediate benefits for the individual, whereas sustainable choices emphasize longer-term benefits for others and the environment. (White, Habib, & Hardisty, 2019).

As maximizers find it challenging to simplify their choice, they may have developed several alternatives and criteria to choose the best alternative. Maximizing tendency may lead to unsustainable buying behavior, resulting in ill-being (Vargová, Zibrínová, & Baník, 2020). Therefore, maximization can be unhealthy and leads to unsustainable life and hence needs to be curtailed. We propose that the moral emotion of Gratitude can be an antidote to the maximizing tendency. A grateful person may be content; hence, Gratitude can reduce the insatiable yearning and life's ills.

Gratitude is a generalized tendency to recognize the benefit received from other people's unselfish, moral acts (McCullough, Emmons, & Tsang, 2002). Gratitude results in physical, & mental well-being and social well-being (Jans-Beken et al., 2020). Gratitude enhances one's well-being and the well-being of others. Gratitude helps form new relationships and strengthen current relationships. Given that Gratitude enables reciprocal exchanges in all social interactions, Gratitude is also positively associated with prosociality. (Ma, Tunney, & Ferguson, 2017; Tsang, 2020).

Even though Gratitude is a well-researched topic in the academic literature, there needs to be more studies on how it affects decision-making. Gratitude's consequences can be an antidote to 'maximizing tendency.' However, studies have yet to

explore the Gratitude and maximization tendency relationship. The research suggests that gratitude biases beneficiaries in decision-making (Kates & DeSteno, 2020; Zhang, Chen, & Ni, 2020). Those who experience Gratitude may not continue to maximize by continuously developing and searching for alternatives. Dissatisfaction with available options creates a tendency to seek more alternatives when deciding. As maximisers seek greater buy-in, they are dissatisfied with given choices and may seek additional alternatives.

In contrast, Gratitude broadens life orientation and enables one to notice and appreciate the world's positives (Wood, Froh & Geraghty, 2010). Grateful people are satisfied with what they possess as they count their life's blessings. They are likelier to have better life satisfaction (Emmons, Froh, & Rose, 2019; Alkozei, Smith, & Killgore, 2018). As a result, we posit that people with Gratitude will have a reduced tendency to search for more choices. Grateful people tend to be satisfied with their available choices and are disliked to seek more choices. Thus, they contribute to sustainable living by not maximizing their consumption.

The study intends to find out whether Gratitude influences the maximizing tendency. We conducted a survey and an experiment on a sample of Indian students. Recent research distinguished maximizing as a strategy and goal (Schwartz, 2016). The 'maximizing as a strategy' seeks more and better decisions. The meaning of 'maximizing as a goal' is to set better standards for oneself. Maximizing as a strategy was maladaptive and negatively associated with well-being (Cheek & Schwartz, 2016; Misuraca, Faraci, Gangemi, Carmeci, & Miceli, 2015). People with a high tendency 'to search for alternatives look for the best choice so that they may need more than the available alternatives. They may be tired and frustrated after exhausting all or maximum alternatives. The 'maximizing' construct comprises three sub-components: high standards, alternative searches, and decision difficulties (Schwartz et al., 2002; Nenkov et al., 2008). Some researchers excluded

decision difficulties (Diab et al., 2008; Lai, 2010); others do not consider 'high standards as part of maximizing (Turner et al., 2012; Āurinik et al., 2018). We have excluded both the 'high standards and 'decision difficulties' parts.

Our study makes the following contributions. By exploring Gratitude's relation with the maximization tendency of budding managers, we have shown that Gratitude can counter the maximization tendency. Drawing from the find, remind & bind Gratitude theory (Algoe, 2008). we contend that Gratitude influences the positive appraisal of the alternatives. It reminds us of life's blessings and promotes contentment. Thus, Gratitude's 'remind' function includes remembering blessed relationships and life's blessings in other aspects.

According to the moral affect theory (McCullough et al. (2001), Gratitude, as a moral emotion, prompts the moral act of helping others without any hidden motive. Gratitude expression by the beneficiary reinforces the benefactor to behave morally in the future. Moreover, Gratitude facilitates the development of adequate inner resources, which broaden the scope of an individual's attention, thinking, and behavior.' (Fredrickson & Branigan, 2005). Therefore, these resources help to regulate the tendency to maximize as the resources enable the grateful person to be reflective and control the maximizing tendencies. The inner resources can be attributed to the inner sense of abundance that a grateful heart foster.

Theory and Hypotheses Development

One of the problems with striving for more is that it can lead to anxiety and insecurity. Grateful people, on the other hand, are contented with life (Cunha, Pellanda, & Reppold, 2019) and are less prone to such strivings because they view their lives as more secure, safe, and ultimately fulfilling (Jiang, Sun, Liu, & Pan, 2016). According to the Moral affect theory of Gratitude, Gratitude is a moral affect (Lu, Huang, & Luo, 2021; McCullough et al., 2001), and grateful people are more likely

to process any decision as a moral decision as opposed to one that maximizes the outcome for the self. Since morality deals with the inherent goodness of decision, grateful people are likely to have higher prosociality and therefore are more likely to consider the implication of their decision on others (Park, VanOyen-Witvliet, Barraza, & Marsh, 2021) as well as the environment (Chen, Liu, Fu, Guo, & Chen, 2022) and beyond. According to moral affect theory, prosocial generosity nature of Gratitude, people with Gratitude tend to invest in social relations, be supportive, have communalistic values (McCullough, Emmons, & Tsang, 2002), tend to be less materialistic (Reyes et al., 2022), and satisfied overall with their life (Jans-Beken et al., 2020). Gratitude will build a sense of satisfaction with life, which will make individuals less inclined to pursue striving for more (Chaplin, John, Rindfleisch, & Froh, 2019; Lambert, Fincham, Stillman, and Dean, 2009).

Extant literature suggests that Gratitude has the potential to reduce excessive economic impatience. In an experimental study, the participants in different emotional inducement conditions (Gratitude, Happy and Neutral) were asked to choose between receiving smaller cash amounts immediately and more significant ones in the future (after a week or months). People with higher Gratitude demonstrated higher patience than participants with lower Gratitude (DeSteno, Dickens, and Lerner, 2014). They could wait longer and postpone their goals. Grateful people may not focus on striving for more, searching for better alternatives or possessions of wealth; Rather, they would be expected to contemplate the positive experiences or outcomes (McCullough, Emmons, and Tsang, 2002). Pleasant events come to mind more easily for grateful individuals than for less grateful ones. Because trait gratitude was positively associated with a positive memory bias (Alkozei, Smith, Waugaman, Kotzin, Bajaj, & Killgore, 2019; Watkins & Bell, 2017). Not only do grateful individuals recall more positive memories when instructed to do so, but they also tend to have more positive memories even when

attempting to remember life's adverse events. (Pillay, Park, Kim, & Lee, 2020; Watkins, Grimm, and Kolts, 2004). Grateful people demonstrate concern for others in decision-making and are less concerned about their goals.

The most significant difference between the maximizers and satisficers is how they evaluate the choice (Misuraca, Faraci, Gangemi, Carmeci, & Miceli, 2015). Drawing from the find, remind & bind theory of Gratitude (Algoe, Haidt, & Gable, 2008). We contend that Gratitude reminds us of life's blessings and satisfies us, which further influences people not to go beyond the available options. In some experiments, under the grateful condition involving resource sharing, or cooperation vs. non-co-operation, the participants positively appraised the situation and the helpers (Algoe, Haidt, & Gable, 2008). As a result, when confronted with making choices under the influence of Gratitude, people prefer to cooperate with the helpers immediately, sometimes even with strangers (Balconi, Fronza, & Vanutelli, 2019; DeSteno, Bartlett, Baumann, Williams, & Dickens, 2010). The positive appraisal of the situation or helpers' act makes them biased toward the helpers and prevents them from looking for more opportunities or searching for alternatives. This enables them to be satisfied with life. The experience of Gratitude may foster eudaimonic well-being, such as autonomy, personal growth, purpose in life, and self-acceptance (Emmons & Crumpler, 2000). Cancer patients' dispositional Gratitude (high and low Gratitude) reduced distress and increased well-being, mainly referring to hedonic, i.e., relaxation and contentment (Ruini & Vescovelli, 2013). Grateful adolescents were socially integrated and higher in absorption, satisfied with life, and less envious and depressed than their less grateful counterparts (Emmons, Froh, & Rose, 2019). They will save their time going for numerous alternatives in every life decision. To state formally:

The 'tendency to search for more alternatives' maximization component differs significantly between the low and high gratitude group members.

These hypotheses imply that those with high Gratitude will have a lesser tendency to maximize, i.e., search for alternatives.

Methodology

We conducted two studies.

Study 1

We administered the first study's Gratitude and maximization tendency questionnaire to examine the relationship. We contacted 180 students MBA students from universities in the Eastern part of India through online mode and offline modes. We have received 171 responses. After removing for missing variables, we have taken 157 responses for analysis.

Because generalized 'trait' gratitude differs from specific 'state' gratitude, trait gratitude measures the general tendency to feel grateful ("Overall, I feel grateful, or I feel grateful most of the time"). State gratitude is a momentary feeling of grateful emotions linked to immediate happenings and responses to specific situations and activities. It emerges whenever the individual feels grateful for those specific events. For example, studies of sports and organizational literature have used domain-specific ('I feel grateful to my coach,' 'I feel grateful to my organization') Gratitude (Chen & Chang, 2017; Ford, Wang, Jin, & Eisenberger, 2018; Ruser, Yukhymenko-Lescroart, Gilbert, Gilbert, & Moore, 2020; Ward, 2017). Research suggests that when Gratitude is felt for a specific reason, the predictability may be higher than when it is felt for a general reason (Ma, Tunney, & Ferguson, 2017). Some popular gratitude interventions to elicit Gratitude are gratitude journal writing and expression

(Cunha, Pellanda, & Reppold, 2019; Jans-Beken et al., 2020; Sztachañska, Krejtz, & Nezlek, 2019).

Measures

All the variables were measured on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) through self-reporting.

Gratitude

The Gratitude was measured using the Gratitude Adjective Checklist (GAC, McCullough, Emmons, & Tsang, 2002). The GAC comprises three affect adjectives (grateful, appreciative, and thankful) and has been used to assess both state and trait gratitude. The scale has three items ("I usually feel grateful"). It was a modified version ("How grateful do you feel toward the other participant?") of Bartlett and DeSteno, (2006). It measures both benefit-triggered and generalized Gratitude (Cronbach's α value 0.84).

Maximizing. Maximizing was measured by the inventory of Schwartz et al. (2002) 10 items scales. It has three sub-components: the tendency to search for alternatives (When I watch T.V., I channel surf, often scanning through the available options even while attempting to watch one program), decision-making difficulties (When shopping, I have a hard time finding clothing that I love) and the high-status regard ("No matter what I do, I have the highest standards for myself"). The scales' Cronbach's α value was 0.87.

Analysis For Study 1

Descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations, and alphas for the different measures) of this study's variables are presented in Table 1.

Table 1
Descriptive statistics (Study1)

Descriptive Statistics and Correlation Table							
Variable Name	Var. No.	N	Mean	S.D.	1	2	3
<i>Maximizing Tendency</i>	1	157	3.77	0.69	1.00		
<i>Gender</i>	2	157	1.47	0.50	-0.04	1.00	
<i>Gratitude</i>	3	157	3.70	0.71	0.28	###	1.00

Since all students were in the age group of 22-25, 95% of them had similar educational backgrounds. We did not include demographic variables except gender, as all participants had similar demographics. Before calculating descriptive statistics, confirmatory factors analysis was done to ensure the items were loading to desired two factors (state gratitude and maximization tendencies). As expected, the two-factor solution was the best fit during the CFA ($\chi^2=6.63$, $p=0.085$, CFI=.91, TLI=.94, RMSEA=.08). The composite alphas were moderate: 0.45 for MA (3 items) and 0.74 for S.G. There were no cross-loadings. We mean-split sample to compare maximization tendencies between students feeling high and low Gratitude. This allowed us to compare the maximization score of students with high and low Gratitude. We category-coded students with low and high Gratitude and used one-way ANOVA to understand the relationship between gratitude and maximizing tendencies (Mean maximizing

tendency (low Gratitude) =3.63, Mean maximizing tendency (low Gratitude) =3.95, and $F(6.08, 1, 155)$. These ANOVA results show significant differences in the maximizing tendencies suggesting that maximizing tendencies were higher for respondents with higher gratitude scores. These results were against the hypothesized relationship between Gratitude and M.A.

We also checked for the relationship between Gratitude and M.A. to investigate further. To do so, we ran three models with hierarchical regression. In the first stage, we entered gender as a control variable, and in the second step, we entered Gratitude as the independent variable ($\beta = 0.28$, $p < 0.001$). In this stage, we added a Gratitude log as an additional variable. After the third step was added, the relationship between the logarithmic value of Gratitude and M.A. changed ($\beta = 0.33$, $p < 0.001$), as Gratitude was the independent variable and M.A. was the dependent variable.

Table 2
Regression Analysis (Study 1)

Dependent Variable: Maximization Tendency									
Independent Variable	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3		
	Std. Beta	Tolerance	VIF	Std. Beta	Tolerance	VIF	Std. Beta	Tolerance	VIF
Gender	-0.044	1	1	-0.04	1	1	-0.05	0.99	1.004
Gratitude	-	-	-	0.28***	1	1	-	-	-
Log of Gratitude	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.33***	1	1
R Sqr		0			0.067			0.099	
Change in R sqr		-			0.067			0.099	
F-Statistics		0.29			6.57**			9.5***	

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

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

The hypothesis posited that Gratitude might be negatively related to maximization tendency. We found a logarithmic relationship between these two variables. Regression analysis results are presented in table 2. The strength of the relationship between Gratitude and maximization tendency is significant ($\beta = -0.33$, $p < 0.001$). We followed the process Aiken and West (1991) outlined to plot the

main effects for both groups, as shown in Figs—1 and 2, respectively.

Study 2

Since the first study found a logarithmic relationship between Gratitude and M.A., we examined the literature to explore the reason for this relationship. The literature presented two

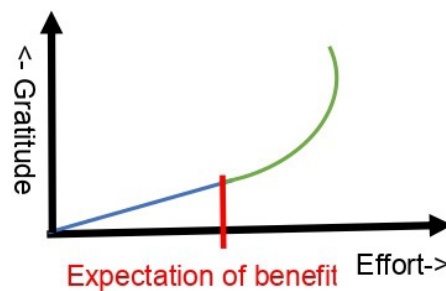
contradictory conclusions regarding Gratitude. The first set of studies alluded that the gratefulness of the recipient should be proportionate to the effort exerted by the benefactor. According to these studies, beneficiaries evaluate the efforts of benefactors and feel grateful for the following efforts. The more incredible the giver's generosity, the greater the receiver's Gratitude. Individuals are typically more appreciative when the benefactor exerts more effort (McCullough, Tsang, 2004).

The second group of studies indicates that the Gratitude felt by the recipient may be considerably more significant than the efforts exerted by the benefactor, significantly when the perceived benefits of the beneficiary exceed the "expected benefit". In other words, in some situations, Gratitude has spillover effects. People are overwhelmed by feelings of Gratitude when they perceive that the benefits they have received exceed their expectations. When individuals feel Gratitude, they are more likely to assist others and develop greater trust in others. Not only do they help benefactors, but such individuals also assist those from whom they have received no benefit (Lee, Bradburn, Johnson, Lin, & Chang, 2019).

We propose reconciling two seemingly contradictory strands of the literature by dividing Gratitude into two "intensity categories": below-expected help and above-expected help. At the lower intensity level, a beneficiary's Gratitude is proportional to his/her perceived efforts. At these levels, the person can accurately perceive and process information. The efforts and benefits are assessed reasonably accurately. However, when the actual benefits exceed the expected benefits in a given circumstance, the gratefulness demonstrates spillover effects. The feeling of Gratitude becomes intense and overwhelming, causing the recipient to want to help and support others. This may be why grateful individuals reciprocate more than the benefits received even when it costs them (Watkins & Scheibe, 2017) or helps even unknown

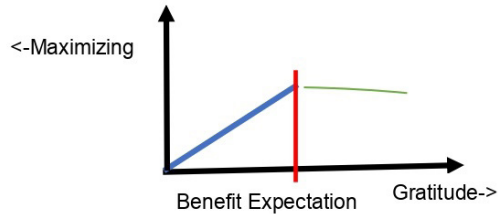
third parties (Shiraki & Igarashi, 2018). At higher levels of intensity, Gratitude overwhelms the individual's information processing capacity to the extent that the individual's decision may become biased. The person is so overwhelmed to lose assessment of efforts and benefits. The reconciled view is presented in Figure 1 below:

Figure 1
Reconciled Effort (axis x)-Gratitude (axis y) relationship Above and Below Expected Benefits



Consequently, the relationship between effort and Gratitude can also be divided into two stages: 1. benefits below expectations or expected utility and 2. benefits beyond expectations. We hypothesize that below the expectation level, Gratitude is a rational process, but when it exceeds expectations, it results in a spillover of awe and prosociality. According to Broaden and Build theory, Gratitude aids in developing and conserving psychosocial resources. At the same time, according to moral affect theory, Gratitude is a moral affect that increases individuals' prosocial orientation, making them less selfish. In other words, at a higher level of Gratitude, the decision-making process becomes non-rational because the match between resources and goals changes from the level at which Gratitude was low. Hence, it can be expected that Gratitude will have a positive relationship with maximization tendency till the expectation level. However, when Gratitude overwhelms, the individual shifts to a non-rational and satisfactory solution, leading to a lower M.A. (see Figure 2 below).

Figure 2
Relationship between Gratitude (axis x) and maximization (axis y)



About the Study 2. We wanted to validate the first study's results with another study. Hence, we

surveyed students in business schools in Eastern India. The same survey was administered to the students, with one difference being that survey was administered after students had finished the gratitude meditation session. Gratitude meditation was one of the reliable interventions to elicit Gratitude (Duthely, Nunn, & Avella, 2017; Rao & Kemper, 2017). Participation in the survey was voluntary. A request to complete the survey was sent to a total of 180 students, out of which 126 responded. Table no 3 captures the descriptive statistics and correlation of study 2.

Analysis for Study 2

Table 3
Descriptive Statistics and Correlation Table (Study2)

Descriptive Statistics and Correlation Table							
Variable Name	Var No	N	Mean	S.D.	1	2	3
Maximizing Tendency	1	157	2.90	.85	1.00		
God	2	157	1.28	.45	.21	1.00	
Gratitude	3	157	4.20	.73	.22	.16	1.0

Interestingly, compared to the first study, the mean of Gratitude in 2nd study (4.20) was significantly higher, while M.A. tendencies (2.98) were significantly lower than in the previous study (3.77).

This variation could be because of the meditation effect. We can see that both variables (M.A. and Gratitude) were correlated significantly.

Table 4
Regression of S.G. square on M.A. (Study2)

Dependent Variable: Maximizing Tendency									
Variable	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3		
	Std. Beta	Tolerance	VIF	Std. Beta	Tolerance	VIF	Std. Beta	Tolerance	VIF
God	0.2837206	1	1	0.255	0.97	1	.025**	0.93	0.88
Gratitude	-	-	-	0.39	0.2	5	-0.46**	0.3	3
Gratitude*God	-	-	-	-0.151	0.2	5	0.11	0.2	5
Square of Gratitude	-	-	-	-	-	-	-0.58***	0.2	5
Square of Gratitude* God	-	-	-	-	-	-	-0.48***	0.2	5
R Sqr	0.073	0.1	0.211						
Change in R sqr		0.027	0.111						
F Statistics	11***	5.6**	7.7***						

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

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

Like the previous study, Gratitude had a logarithmic relationship with maximization tendencies ($b=-0.33$, $p\text{-value}<0.005$). The logarithmic relationship shows that M.A. also increases to a certain level as Gratitude increases from the lowest levels. However, after Gratitude reaches moderately high levels, the M.A. tendencies tend to stabilize. Figure.2 captures the results of study 2.

The green line indicates the relationship between the high level of Gratitude and maximizing tendency. The blue line indicates the relationship between the average level of Gratitude and maximizing tendency. The red line will indicate the relationship between the average level of Gratitude and maximizing tendency. We also checked for the moderating role of whether the person feels grateful toward God and found the moderating effect to be significant ($b=0.16$, $p\text{-value}<0.05$).

Discussion

This study was intended to explore whether Gratitude influences maximizing tendency among a group of people through the survey method. The survey was conducted among post-graduate students at two higher educational institutes in India. For the samples of 1st study, we directly administered the survey. For the second sample of the student, we have stimulated Gratitude through gratitude meditation. The study's strength lies in its methodology. First, we examined the trait of Gratitude, and later, we examined the state of Gratitude. Another addition we made in the 2nd study was the differentiation towards the target to whom Gratitude was felt: God or a human being? We found similar results across the two different groups of students. This is the first study relating Gratitude and maximization tendency.

The study threw up exciting conclusions. We found that Gratitude had a logarithmic relationship with both groups 'tendency to maximize' (tendency to search for more alternatives). Initially, Gratitude (low level of Gratitude) had positive correlations with the maximization tendency, and later, as the gratitude score increased, there was an insignificant

or negative correlation. This was further validated in the second study. The study results are in line with the previous findings. As a moral emotion, Gratitude may be associated with decision-making that involves moral dilemmas (DeSteno et al., 2010). Studies have also found that Gratitude is a biased, partial influence on decision-making (Zhang, Chen, & Ni, 2020). The following may be the reasons for the logarithmic relationship.

The logarithmic relationship between Gratitude and M.A. indicates that maximization tendencies reduce when Gratitude is high. We guess that Gratitude has a more individualistic implication at the lower level. However, when Gratitude increases, the person starts to think about the social consequences of their action and may reduce tendencies to maximize. Gratitude may increase the clarity of decision-making at a lower level, while at a higher level, it may increase prosocial behavior with a reduction in selfish behavior.

First, Gratitude, at a low score, may be too weak to influence the maximization tendency. That is why initially, it had a positive relationship. Second, searching for alternative maximization tendencies beyond a certain level becomes pathological, causing stress and ill-being. So, Gratitude correlates to a certain level. Beyond that level, grateful emotion 'reminds' the participants about the blessing in life, makes them content with what they have, and thus limits the 'alternative searching' tendency. Maximizers are not happy or content with what they have. Making them feel grateful may increase the accessibility and recollection of pleasant memories of life, including their personal and social benefits (Watkins, Emmons, & McCullough). The 'remind' function of Gratitude also enables them to recollect the blessed social relationship they have in life. This may give a feeling of 'secured,' 'content,' and a sense of abundance, discouraging the maximizers from searching for more alternatives. Instead, they invest time and money in communal values instead of materialistic ones.

The findings of the two studies can be restated regarding two crucial decision-making

components: objective function and psychosocial resources. The results indicate that a high level of Gratitude influences objective function. Highly grateful people do not maximize their returns; they also consider others. Secondly, grateful people develop more excellent psychosocial resources. Lower selfish goals and increased resources also result in a greater capacity for conserving psychosocial resources. To summarise, high Gratitude changes objective function and increases the psychosocial resources, hence changing the nature of the decision. From a different lens, individuals high on Gratitude tend to satisfy with building and conservation of resources. This interpretation differs from Herbert Simon's (1987) conception of satisficing, in which limited cognitive capacity is one of the reasons for satisficing behavior. A high level of Gratitude leads to satisfaction and yet abundant socio-emotional-cognitive resources.

The available studies of Gratitude and cognition are related to cooperating or helping aspect of cognition (Balconi, Fronza, & Vanutelli, 2019; Fox, Kaplan, Damasio, & Damasio, 2015; Vayness, Duong, & DeSteno, 2020) or the moral aspect (Drażkowski, Kaczmarek, & Kashdan, 2017; Syropoulos, Watkins, Shariff, Hodges, & Markowitz, 2020). Research has shown the consequences of 'counting your blessings' in well-being or social relation (Deng et al., 2019; Jans-Beken et al., 2020). We have contributed to the literature by showing the influence of Gratitude beyond social relations and personal well-being to the alternative searching aspect in decision-making. Moreover, the difference in influence at lower and higher levels differentiates Gratitude's power to influence.

Conclusion

As a positive emotion, whether the emotion of Gratitude will act as an anecdote to the 'maximizing' tendency was the study's objective. The role of emotion in decision-making has been widely studied (Bubić & Erceg, 2018; Lerner, Li, Valdesolo,

& Kassam, 2015; George & Dane, 2016). Gratitude's influence on decision-making has been examined in the context of prosocial and risk preference, but its role in maximizing vs. satisficing has not been explored. We found support for our hypothesis. Gratitude does influence the maximizing tendency of the individual. The limitations of the study throw light on the future direction of research.

Limitations and Direction for Future Research

First, the study was self-reported. Hence, correlational, cross-sectional, and associated biases may be there. Second, the need for more activity for measuring maximization tendency was another study limitation instead of the survey. Future studies can design experiments to measure maximization tendency and examine the relationship. Third, the lack of pre-post control and treatment group may be another limitation.

We also outline some directions for future research. First, longitudinal studies can be conceived by introducing gratitude interventions among the participants and examining their 'maximizing tendency' over time. In this study, we can also measure their well-being, in addition to the maximization tendency, i.e., do they have a similar logarithmic relationship or a different relationship as their gratitude increases? Second, in terms of interventions, the future (experimental) studies can adopt the same with a still more specific 'count your blessings' kind of gratitude intervention relating to maximization (by asking the participants to count what material possession they have or feel grateful for their status in society). This will give rise to a grateful feeling related to the 'maximization tendency' only and thus may be more specific. Third, future studies can explore if Gratitude towards God significantly differs from Gratitude felt when we receive individual benefits. Replicating similar studies among western samples may reveal the cultural difference in participants' Gratitude towards God and human being and their consequences in maximizing tendency.

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